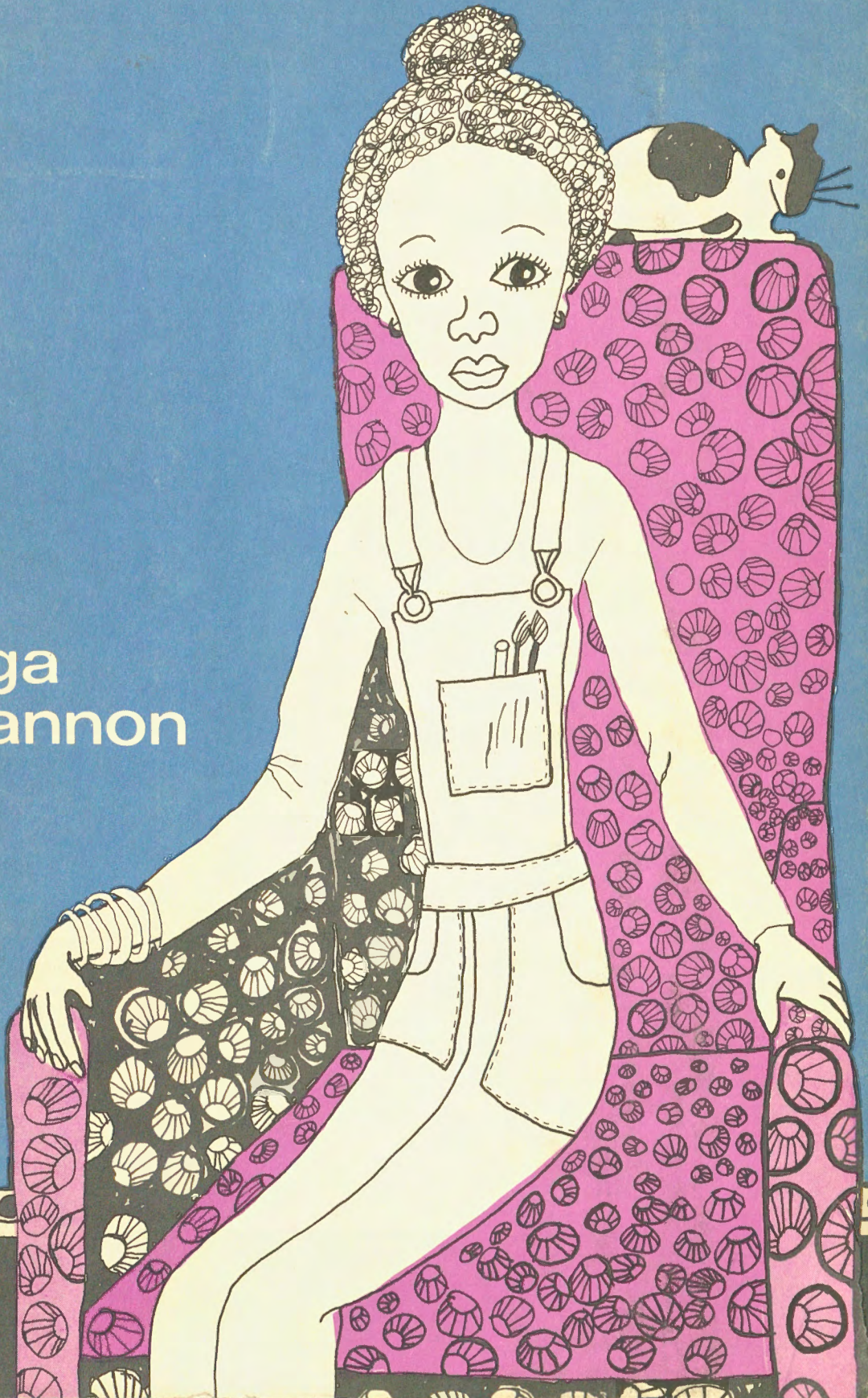


PEACHES

Dindga
McCannon





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written and illustrated by
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Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co. / New York



I see you dere, rolling yo' eyes at me. Bes' roll dem all you kin now—in a few years you won't be so new and cute.

Hee-hee-hee-hee-hee. Chile, you sure is crazy. Shakin' yo' hand at me. Come on now and finish yo' bottle, Miss Stinky.

You know I called you that last night front of yo' mother and she liken to had a fit!

"Don't be callin' ma chile Stinky!" she whined.

"Hmm-mph!" I tole her. "Don't sass me, woman. Dis is ma first grandchile and I'll call her what I want."

I been calling you that for all the time you been here. But I started thinkin' about it. Nicknames can stick sometimes and I kin hear dem teasing you—"Stinky stinks." That ain't too good, specially for a girl. So I think I'm gon' change it to somethin' else. I member when yo' granddaddy and I met in a place where it was all pretty with Georgia peach trees. I always said I was gon' name my first grandchile Peaches, but I forgot 'bout that till I had this dream last night—wonder if he sent me that dream.

I had figured that when I started to get up in age and closer to God, I'd need a pretty memory. Those were the most beautiful times I ever had and I always smile when I think of them. That was way before he went all the way crazy and threw himself off this damn roof upstairs. God, have mercy on him.



double-faced friend, jumped out, then faded into blurs as we walked along. We went zigzagging across the wide street with its crisscrossing traffic, and on past the store on the corner which held my boyfriend Mickey prisoner till way past the time I was allowed to stay out.

"Stop here. I want to buy a shopping bag," Bumpsi stated.

"What do you think we is—Rockerfellers?" I pouted. "We only got two dollars between us."

"Don't worry. We gon' steal most of the stuff. We can buy some fish and chips with that money. You still dig fish and chips, right?"

"Of course, but—steal? We gon'—we ain't never stole anything, Bumpsi." I was lying like a dog. I had stolen money from my mother's purse several times, mostly to buy books (till the preacher told how thieves are punished in hell and I believed him). But I wasn't gonna tell Bumpsi that.

"Well, I ain't got no money so I hafta steal. All my five sisters and even little Louis have to. My mother and father jus' don't have enough for all of us," Bumpsi said. "I thought y'all knew something. You don't know a damn thing."

"You sure curse a lot."

"Peaches, you is the oldest. What are you—a big baby or something?"



