



# **Like One of the Family: Conversations from a Domestic's Life (Black Women Writers Series)**

*Alice Childress*

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*Like One of the Family*, which provides historical context for Kathryn Stockett's novel, *The Help*, is comprised of a series of conversations between Mildred, a black domestic, and her friend Marge. They create a vibrant picture of the life of a black working woman in New York in the 1950s. Rippling with satire and humor, Mildred's outspoken accounts capture vividly her white employers' complacency and condescension—and startled reactions to a maid who speaks her mind. As Mildred declares to a patronizing employer that she is not just like one of the family, or explains to Marge how a tricky employer has created a system of “half days off” to cheat her help, we gain a glimpse not only of one woman's day to day struggle, but of her previous ache of racial oppression. A domestic who refuses to exchange dignity for pay, Mildred is an inspiring conversationalist, a dragon slayer in a segregated world.

The conversations in the book were first published in *Freedom*, the newspaper edited by Paul Robeson, and later in the *Baltimore Afro-American*. The book was originally published in the 1950s by in Brooklyn-based Independence Press, and Beacon Press brought out a new edition of it in 1986 with an introduction by the literary and cultural critic Trudier Harris.

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