

Scene 1: WILL, CHERIE (optional ELMA)

WILL: (*Coming to CHERIE with a professional interest*)
What's the trouble, miss?

CHERIE: (*Looking at WILL suspiciously*) You a p'liceman?

WILL: I'm the local sheriff.

CHERIE: Well . . . I ain't askin' t'have no one arrested.

WILL: Who says I'm gonna arrest anyone? What's your trouble?

CHERIE: I . . . I need protection.

WILL: What from?

CHERIE: There's a man after me. He's a cowboy.

WILL: (*Looking around*) Where is he?

CHERIE: He's on the bus, asleep, him and his buddy. I jumped off the bus the very second it stopped, to make my getaway. But there ain't no place to *get* away to. And he'll be in here purty soon. You just *gotta* make him lemme alone.

WILL: Ya meet him on the bus?

CHERIE: No. I met him in Kansas City. I work at the Blue Dragon night club there, down by the stockyards. *He* come there with the annual rodeo, and him and the resta the cowboys was at the night club ev'ry night. Ev'ry

night there was a big fight. The boss says he ain't gonna let the cowboys in when they come back next year.

WILL: Then he followed ya on the bus?

CHERIE: He *put* me on the bus. I'm bein' abducted.

WILL: Abducted! But you took time to pack a suitcase!

CHERIE: I was goin' somewhere else, tryin' to get away from him, but he picked me up and carried me to the bus and put me on it. I din have nothin' to say about it at all.

WILL: Where's he plan on takin' ya?

CHERIE: Says he's got a ranch up in Montana. He says we're gonna git married soon as we get there.

WILL: And yor against it?

CHERIE: I don't wanta go up to some God-forsaken ranch in Montana.

WILL: Well, if this cowboy's really takin' ya against yor will, I s'pose I'll have to stop him from it.

CHERIE: You just don't know this cowboy. He's mean.

WILL: I reckon I kin handle him. You relax now. I'll be around mosta the night. If there's any trouble, I'll put a stop to it.

ELMA: You're safe with Will here. Will is very respected around here. He's never lost a fight.

WILL: What're ya talkin' about, Elma? Of course I've lost a fight . . . once.

ELMA: Grace always said you were *invincible*.

WILL: There ain't no one that's . . . *invincible*. A man's gotta learn that, the sooner the better. A good fighter has gotta know what it is to *get* licked. Thass what makes the diff'rence 'tween a fighter and a *bully*.

CHERIE: (*Shuddering*) There's gonna be trouble. I kin feel it in my bones.

Scene 2: CARL, GRACE

CARL: Ya know what, Grace? This is the first time you and I ever had more'n twenty minutes t'gether.

GRACE: (*Coyly*) So what?

CARL: Oh, I dunno. I'll prob'ly be here mosta the night. It'd sure be nice to have a nice li'l apartment to go to, some place to sit and listen to the radio, with a good-lookin' woman . . . somethin' like you . . . to talk with maybe have a few beers.

GRACE: That wouldn't be a hint or anything, would it?

CARL: (*Faking innocence*) Why? Do you have an apartment like that, Grace?

GRACE: Yes, I do. But I never told *you* about it. Did that ornery Dobson fella tell you I had an apartment over the restaurant?

CARL: (*In a query*) Dobson? Dobson? I can't seem to remember anyone named Dobson.

GRACE: You know him better'n *I* do. He comes through twice a week with the Southwest Bus. He told me you and him meet in Topeka sometimes and paint the town.

CARL: Dobson? Oh, yah, I know Dobson. Vern Dobson. A prince of a fella.

GRACE: Well, if he's been gabbin' to you about my apartment, I can tell ya he's ony been up there *once*, when he come in here with his hand cut, and I took him up there to bandage it. Now that's the ony time he was ever up there. On my word of honor.

CARL: Oh, Vern Dobson speaks very highly of you, Grace. Very highly.

GRACE: Well . . . he better. Now, what ya gonna have?

CARL: Make it a ham and cheese on rye.

GRACE: I'm sorry, Carl. We got no cheese.

CARL: What happened? Did the mice get it?

GRACE: None of your wise remarks.

CARL: O.K. Make it a ham on rye, then.

GRACE: (*At breadbox*) I'm sorry, Carl, but we got no rye, either.: How's fer whole wheat, Carl?

CARL: O.K. Make it whole wheat.

Scene 3: BO, WILL, VIRGIL

WILL: *(In a firmer, louder voice)* Cowboy, will you have the decency to shut that door!

(VIRGIL now responds immediately and quickly closes the door as BO turns to WILL)

BO: *(There is nothing to call him for the moment but insolent)* Why, what's the matter with you, mister? You afraid of a little fresh air? *(WILL glowers but BO is not fazed)* 'Why, man, ya oughta breathe real deep and git yor lungs full of it. Thass the trouble with you city people. You git *soft*.

VIRGIL: *(Whispering)* He's the sheriff, Bo.

BO: *(In full voice, for WILL's benefit)* S'posin' he *is* the sheriff! What's that matter *t'me*? That don't give him the right t'insult my manners, does it? No man ever had to tell *me* what t'do, did he, Virge? Did he?

VIRGIL: No. No. But there allus comes a time, Bo, when ...

BO: *(Ignoring VIRGIL, speaking out for the benefit of all)* My name's Bo Decker. I'm twenty-one years old and own me m'own ranch up in Timber Hill, Montana, where I got a herd a fine Hereford cattle and a dozen horses, and the finest sheep and hogs and chickens anywhere in the country. And I jest come back from a rodeo where I won 'bout ev'ry prize there *was*, din I, Virge? *(Joshingly, he elbows VIRGIL in the ribs)* Yap, I'm the prize bronco-buster, 'n steer-roper, 'n bulldogger, anywhere 'round. I won 'em all. And what's more, had my picture taken by *Life* magazine. *(Confronting*

WILL) So I'd appreciate your talkin' to me with a little respect in yor voice, mister, and not go hollerin' orders to me from across the room like I was some no-'count servant. *(WILL is flabbergasted)*

WILL: *(Finally finds his voice and uses it, after a struggle with himself to sound just and impartial)* You was the last one in, cowboy, and you left the door open. You shoulda closed it, I don't care *who* y'are. That's all I'm saying.

BO: Door's closed now. What ya arguin' 'bout? Seems like we're gonna be here a while, Virge. How's fer some grub?

VIRGIL: Not yet, Bo. I'm chewin' t'backy.

BO *(Slapping a thigh)* Thass ole Virge for ya. Allus happy long's he's got a wad a t'backy in his mouth.

Scene 4: BO, CHERIE, WILL

BO: (*Shaking CHERIE by the shoulders*) Tell me! What's yor suitcase doin' there b'hind the counter? What were ya tryin' to do, *fool* me? Was you plannin' to git away from me? That what you been sittin' here plannin' t'do?

CHERIE: (*Finding it hard to speak while he is shaking her*) Bo . . . lemme be . . . take your hands off me, Bo Decker.

BO: Tell me, Cherry. Tell me.

WILL: Leave the little lady alone, cowboy.

BO: (*Turning on WILL fiercely*) Mister, ya got no right interferin' 'tween me and my feeancy.

WILL: Mebbe she's yor feeancy and maybe she ain't. Anyway, ya ain't gonna abuse her while *I'm* here. Unnerstand?

BO: *Abuse* her?

WILL: (*To CHERIE*) I think you better tell him now, miss, jest how you feel about things.

(BO *looks at CHERIE with puzzled wonder*)

CHERIE: (*Finding it impossible to say*) I . . . I . . .

BO: What's this critter tryin' to say, Cherry?

CHERIE: Well . . . I . . .

WILL: You better tell him, miss.

CHERIE: Now, Bo, don't git mad.

BO: I'll git mad if I feel like it. What you two got planned?

CHERIE: Bo, I don't wanta go up to Montana and marry ya.

BO: Ya do too.

CHERIE: I do not!

BO: Anyways, you'll come to like it in time. I *promised* ya would. Now we been through all that b'fore.

CHERIE: But, Bo . . . I ain't goin'.

BO: (*A loud blast of protest*) *What?*

CHERIE: I ain't goin'. The sheriff here said he'd help me. He ain't gonna let you take me any farther. I'm stayin' here and take the next bus back to Kanz City.

BO: (*Grabbing her by the shoulders to reassure himself of her*) You ain't gonna do nothin' of the kind.

CHERIE: Yes, I am, Bo. You gotta b'lieve me. I ain't goin' with ya. That's final.

BO: (*In a most personal voice, baffled*) But, Cherry . . . we was *familiar* with each other.

CHERIE: That don't mean ya gotta *marry* me.

BO: (*Shocked at her*) Why . . . I oughta take you across my knee and blister yer li'l bottom.

CHERIE: (*More frightened*) Don't you touch me.

BO: (*To WILL*) You cain't pay no tension to what she says, mister. Womenfolk don't know their own minds. Never did.

(*Back to CHERIE*)

CHERIE: Don't you come near me!

BO: Yor gonna follow me back to Timber Hill and marry up. You just think you wouldn't like it now 'cause ya never been there and the whole idea's kinda strange. But you'll get over them feelin's. In no time at all, yor gonna be happy as a mudhen. I ain't takin' *no* fer an answer. By God, yor comin' along.

WILL: You're not takin' her with ya if she don't wanta go. Can't you get that through your skull? Now leave her be. (*Bo stands looking at WILL with sullen hatred. CHERIE trembles.*)

BO: (*Confronts WILL threateningly*) This ain't no biznes of yors.

WILL: It's *my* business when the little lady comes t'me wantin' protection.

BO: Is that right, Cherry? Did you go to the sheriff askin' fer pertection?

CHERIE: (*Meekly*) . . . yes, I guess I did.

BO: (*Bellowing out again*) *Why?* What'd ya need pertection for . . . from a man that wants to *marry* ya?

CHERIE: (*Shuddering*) . . . 'cause

BO: (*Bellowing angrily*) 'Cause *why?* I said I *loved* ya, din I?

CHERIE: (*About to cry*) I know ya did.

BO: (*Confronting WILL with a feeling of angry unjustness*) See there? I told her I loved her and I wanta marry her. And with a world fulla crazy people goin' 'round killin' each other, *you* ain't got nothin' better t'do than stand here tryin' to keep me from it.

WILL: Yor overlookin' jest one thing, cowboy.

BO: (*With gruff impatience*) Yor so smart. Tell me what I'm overlookin'.

WILL: Yor overlookin' the simple but important fack that the little lady don't love *you*.

Scene 5: ELMA, LYMAN

ELMA: . . . And where else did you teach?

DR. LYMAN: My last position was at one of those revolting little progressive colleges in the East, where they offer a curriculum of what they call *functional* education. Educators, I am sure, have despaired of ever teaching students anything, so they have decided the second-best thing to do is to *understand* them. Every day there would be a meeting of everyone on the entire faculty, with whom the students ever came into any contact, from the President down to the chambermaids, and we would put our collective heads together to try to figure out why little Jane or little Mary was not getting out of her classes what she *should*. The suggestion that perhaps she wasn't studying was too simple, and if you implied that she simply did not have the brains for a college education, you were being undemocratic.

ELMA: You must have disapproved of that college.

DR. LYMAN: My dear girl, I have disapproved of my entire life.

ELMA: Really?

DR. LYMAN: Yes, but I suppose I couldn't resist living it over again.

(There is a touch of sadness about him now)

ELMA: Did you resign from that position?

DR. LYMAN: One day I decided I had had enough. I walked blithely into the Dean's office and said, "Sir! I graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Chicago, I studied at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, and returned to take my Ph.D. at Harvard, receiving it with highest honors. I think I have the right to expect my students to try to understand *me*."

ELMA: *(Very amused)* What did he say?

DR. LYMAN: Oh, I didn't wait for a response. I walked out of the door and went to the railroad station, where I got a ticket for the farthest place I could think of, which happened to be Las Vegas. And I have been traveling ever since. It's a merry way to go to pot.

(He chuckles)

ELMA: I had thought *I* might teach one day, but you don't make it sound very attractive.

DR. LYMAN: Ah, suit yourself. Don't let me influence you one way or the other. **(ELMA smiles and DR. LYMAN gives in to the sudden compulsion of clasping her hand)** You're a lovely young girl.

ELMA: *(Very surprised)* Why . . . thank you, Dr. Lyman.

DR. LYMAN: *(Clears his throat and makes a fresh approach)* Did you tell me you plan to go to Topeka tomorrow?

ELMA: *(Looking at clock)* You mean *today*. Yes. I have a ticket to hear the Kansas City Symphony. They come to Topeka every year to give a concert.

DR. LYMAN: (*Feeling his way*) You say . . . you stay with your sister there?

ELMA: Yes, then I take an early morning bus back here, in time for school Monday. Then after school, I come here to work for Grace.

DR. LYMAN: (*Obviously he is angling for something*) Didn't you say there was a university in Topeka?

ELMA: Yes. Washburn University.

DR. LYMAN: Washburn University—of course! You know, it just occurs to me that I should stop there to check some references on a piece of research I'm engaged on.

ELMA: Oh, I've been to Washburn library lots of times.

DR. LYMAN: You have? (*He shows some cunning, but obviously ELMA does not see it*) Perhaps you would take me there!

ELMA: (*Hesitant*) Well, I

DR. LYMAN: I'll arrive in Topeka before you do, then meet your bus.

ELMA: If you really want me to.

DR. LYMAN: You can take me to the library, then perhaps we could have dinner together, and perhaps you would permit me to take you to the symphony.

ELMA: (*Overjoyed*) Are you serious?

DR. LYMAN: Why, of course I'm serious. Why do you ask?

ELMA: I don't know. Usually, older people are too busy to take notice of kids. I'd just love to.

DR. LYMAN: Then I may depend on it that I have an engagement?

ELMA: Yes. Oh, that'll be lots of fun. I can't wait.

DR. LYMAN: But, my dear . . . let's not tell anyone of our plans, shall we?

ELMA: Why not?

DR. LYMAN: You see . . . I have been married, and I am somewhat older than you, though perhaps not quite as old as you might take me to be . . . anyway, people might not understand.

ELMA: Oh!

DR. LYMAN: So let's keep our plans to ourselves. Promise?

ELMA: O.K. If you think best.

DR. LYMAN: I think it best.

Scene 6: BO, VIRGIL

BO: That dang sheriff! If it wasn't fer *him*, I'd git Cherry now and...I...

VIRGIL: Where would ya take her, Bo?

BO: There's a justice a the peace down the street. You can see his sign from the window.

VIRGIL: Bo, ya cain't *force* a gal to marry ya. Ya jest cain't do it. That sheriff's a stern man and he'd shoot ya in a minute if he saw it was his duty.

BO: Virge, I hate to sound like some pitiable weaklin' of a man, but there's been times the last few months, I been so lonesome, I . . . I jest didn't know what t'do with m'self.

VIRGIL: It's no disgrace to feel that way, Bo.

BO: How 'bout you, Virge? Don't you ever git lonesome, too?

VIRGIL: A long time ago, I gave up romancin' and decided I was just gonna take bein' lonesome for granted.

BO: I wish I could do that, but I cain't.

BO: Tell me somethin', Virge. We been t'gether since my folks died, and I allus wondered if mebbe I din spoil yer chances a settlin' down.

VIRGIL: (*Laughs*) No, you never, Bo. I used to tell myself ya did, but I just wanted an excuse.

BO: But you been lookin' after me since I was ten.

VIRGIL: I coulda married up, too.

BO: Was ya ever in love?

VIRGIL: Oncet. B'fore I went to work on your daddy's ranch.

BO: What happened?

VIRGIL: Nuthin'.

BO: Ya ask her to marry ya?

VIRGIL: Nope.

BO: Why not?

VIRGIL: Well . . . there comes a time in every fella's life, Bo, when he's gotta give up his own ways.

BO: How ya mean?

VIRGIL: Well, I was allus kinda uncomfortable around this gal, 'cause she was sweet and kinda refined. I was allus scared I'd say or do somethin' wrong.

BO: I know how ya mean.

VIRGIL: It was cowardly of me, I s'pose, but ev'ry time I'd get back from courtin' her, and come back to the bunkhouse where my buddies was sittin' around talkin', or playin' cards, or listenin' to music, I'd jest relax and feel m'self so much at home, I din wanta give it up.

BO: Yah! Gals can scare a fella.

VIRGIL: Now I'm kinda ashamed.

BO: Y'are?

VIRGIL: Yes I am, Bo. A fella can't live his whole life dependin' on buddies.

BO Why don't she like me, Virge?

VIRGIL (*Hesitant*) Well...

BO Tell me the truth.

VIRGIL: Mebbe ya don't go about it right.

BO: What do I do wrong?

VIRGIL: Sometimes ya sound a li'l bullheaded and mean.

BO: I do?

VIRGIL: Yah.

BO: How's a fella s'posed to act?

VIRGIL: I'm no authority, Bo, but it seems t'me you should be a little more gallant.

BO: Gall—? Gallant? I'm as gallant as I know how to be. You hear the way Hank and Orville talk at the ranch, when they get back from sojournin' in town, 'bout their women.

VIRGIL: They like to brag, Bo. Ya caint b'lieve ev'rything Hank and Orville say.

BO: Is there any reason a gal wouldn't go fer *me*, soon as she would fer Hank or Orville?

VIRGIL: They're a li'l older'n you. They learned a li'l more. They can be *gallant* with gals . . . when they *wanta* be.

BO: I ain't gonna *pertend*.

VIRGIL: I cain't blame ya.

BO: But a gal *oughta* like me. I kin read and write, I'm kinda tidy, and I got good manners, don't I?

VIRGIL: I'm no judge, Bo. I'm used to ya.

BO: And I'm tall and strong. Ain't that what girls like? And if I do say so, m'self, I'm purty good-lookin'.

VIRGIL: Yah.

BO: When I get spruced up, I'm just as good-lookin' a fella as a gal might hope to see.

VIRGIL: I know ya are, Bo.

BO: (*Suddenly seized with anger at the injustice of it all*) Then hellfire and damnation! Why don't she go back to the ranch with me?

Scene 7: CHERIE, ELMA

CHERIE: Mebbe I'm a sap.

ELMA: Why do you say that?

CHERIE: I dunno why I *don't* go off to Montana and marry him. I might be a lot better off'n I am now.

ELMA: He says he *loves* you.

CHERIE: He dunno what love is.

ELMA: What makes you say that?

CHERIE: All he wants is a girl to throw his arms around and hug and kiss, that's all. The resta the time, he don't even know I exist.

ELMA: What made you decide to marry him in the first place?

CHERIE: (*Giving ELMA a wise look*) Ya ain't very experienced, are ya?

ELMA: I guess not.

CHERIE: I never *did* decide to marry him. Everything was goin' fine till he brought up *that* subjeck. Bo come in one night when I was singin' "That Ole Black Magic." It's one a my best numbers. And he liked it so much, he jumped up on a chair and yelled like a Indian, and put his fingers in his mouth and whistled like a steam engine. Natur'ly, it made me feel good. Most a the customers at the Blue Dragon was too drunk to pay any attention to my songs.

ELMA: And you liked him?

CHERIE: Well . . . I thought he was awful *cute*. (*She shows a mischievous smile*)

ELMA: I think he looks a little like Burt Lancaster, don't you?

CHERIE: Mebbe. Anyway . . . I'd never seen a cowboy before. Oh, I'd seen 'em in movies, a course, but never in the *flesh* . . . Anyway, he's so darn healthy-lookin', I don't mind admittin', I was attracted, right from the start.

ELMA: You were?

CHERIE: But it was only what ya might call a *sexual* attraction.

ELMA: Oh!

CHERIE: The very next mornin', he wakes up and hollers, "Yippee! We're gettin' married." I honestly thought he was crazy. But when I tried to reason with him, he wouldn't listen to a word. He stayed by my side all day long, like a shadow. At night, a course, he had to go back to the rodeo, but he was back to the Blue Dragon as soon as the rodeo was over, in time fer the midnight show. If any other fella claimed t'have a date with me, Bo'd beat him up.

ELMA: And you never told him you'd marry him?

CHERIE: No! He kep tellin' me all week, he and Virge'd be by the night the rodeo ended, and they'd pick me up and we'd all start back to Montana t'gether. I knew that if I was around the Blue Dragon that night, that's what'd happen. So I decided to beat it. I went to the Blue Dragon last night and just sang fer the first show. Then I told 'em I was quittin' . . . I'd been wantin' to find another job anyway . . . and I picked up my share of the kitty . . . but darn it, I had to go and tell 'em I was takin' the midnight bus. They had to go and tell Bo, a course, when he come in a li'l after eleven. He paid 'em five dollars to find out. So I went down to the bus station and hadn't even got my ticket, when here come Bo and Virge. He just steps up to the ticket window and says, "Three tickets to Montana!" I din know what to say. Then he dragged me onto the bus and I been on it ever since. And somewhere deep down inside me, I gotta funny feelin' I'm gonna end up in Montana.

ELMA: Gee, if you only loved him!

CHERIE: I'm beginnin' to seriously wonder if there *is* the kinda love I have in mind.

ELMA: What's that?

CHERIE: Well . . . I dunno. I'm oney nineteen, but I been goin' with guys since I was fourteen.

ELMA: (*Astounded*) Honest?

CHERIE: Honey, I almost married a cousin a mine when I was fourteen, but Pappy wouldn't have it.

ELMA: I never heard of anyone marrying so young.

CHERIE: Down in the Ozarks, we don't waste much time. Anyway, I'm awful glad I never married my cousin Malcolm, 'cause he turned out real bad, like Pappy predicted. But I sure was crazy 'bout him at the time. And I been losin' my head 'bout some guy ever since. But Bo's the first one wanted to marry me, since Cousin Malcolm. And natur'ly, I'd like to get married and raise a fam'ly and all them things, but . . .

ELMA: But you've *never* been in love?

CHERIE: Mebbe I have and din know it. Thass what I mean. Mebbe I don't know what love is. Mebbe I'm expectin' it t'be somethin' it ain't. I jest feel that, regardless how crazy ya are 'bout some guy, ya gotta feel . . . and it's hard to put into words, but . . . ya gotta feel he *respects* ya. Yah, thass what I means.

ELMA: (*Not impudent*) I should think so.

CHERIE: I want a guy I can look up to and respect, but I don't want one that'll browbeat me. And I want a guy who can be sweet to me but I don't wanta be treated like a baby. I . . . I just gotta feel that . . . whoever I marry has some real regard for me, apart from all the lovin' and sex. Know what I mean?

ELMA: (*Busily digesting all this*) I think so.

Scene 8: LYMAN, ELMA

DR. LYMAN It takes strong men and women to *love*. People strong enough inside themselves to love . . . without humiliation. (*He sighs heavily and looks about him with blurred eyes*) People big enough to *grow* with their love and live inside a whole, wide new dimension. People brave enough to bear the responsibility of *being* loved and not fear it as a burden. (*He sighs again and looks about him wearily*) I . . . I never had the generosity to love, to give my own most private self to another, for I was *weak*. I thought the gift would somehow lessen *me*. *Me!* (*He laughs wildly and starts for the rear door*) Romeo! Romeo! I am disgusting! (ELMA hurries after him, stopping him at the door)

ELMA Dr. Lyman! Dr. Lyman!

DR. LYMAN Don't bother, dear girl. Don't ever bother with a foolish old man like me.

ELMA You're not a foolish old man. I like you more than anyone I've ever known.

DR. LYMAN I'm flattered, my dear, and pleased, but you're young. In a few years, you will turn . . . from a girl into a woman; a kind, thoughtful, loving, intelligent woman who could only pity me. For I'm a child, a drunken, unruly child, and I've nothing in my heart for a true woman.

ELMA Let me get you something to make you feel better.

DR. LYMAN No . . . no . . . I shall seek the icy comfort of the rest room.

Scene 9: GRACE, CARL

CARL: *(After jiggling the receiver of the phone)* Still dead.

GRACE: *(Yawns)* I'll be glad when you all get out and I can go to bed. I'm tired.

CARL: *(Returning to counter, he sounds a trifle insinuating)* Had enough a me, baby? *(GRACE gives him a look, warning him not to let ELMA overhear)* I'm kinda glad the highway was blocked tonight.

GRACE: *(Coquettishly)* Y'are?

CARL: Gave us a chance to become kinda acquainted, din it?

GRACE: Kinda!

CARL: Just pullin' in here three times a week, then pullin' out again in twenty minutes, I . . . I allus left . . . just wonderin' what you was like, Grace.

GRACE: I always wondered about *you*, too, Carl!

CARL: Ya did?

GRACE: Yah. But ya needn't go blabbing anything to the other drivers.

CARL: *(His honor offended)* Why, what makes ya think I'd . . .

GRACE: Shoot! I know how you men talk when ya get t'gether. Worse'n women.

CARL: Well, not *me*, Grace.

GRACE: I certainly don't want the other drivers on this route, some of 'em especially, gettin' the idea I'm gonna serve 'em any more'n what they order over the counter.

CARL: Sure. I get ya. *(It occurs to him to feel flattered)* But ya . . . ya kinda *liked* me . . . din ya, Grace?

GRACE: *(Coquettish again)* Maybe I did.

CARL: *(Trying to get more of a commitment out of her)* Yah? Yah?

GRACE: Know what I first liked about ya, Carl? It was your hands. *(She takes one of his hands and plays with it)* I like a man with big hands.

CARL: You got everything, baby.

(For just a moment, one senses the animal heat in their fleeting attraction.)

Scene 10: WILL, BO

WILL Cowboy, if yor holdin' any grudges against *me*, I think ya oughta ask yourself what you'd'a done in my *place*. I couldn't let ya carry off the li'l lady when she din wanta go, could I? (Bo *has no answer. He just avoids WILL'S eyes. But WILL is determined to get an answer*) Could I?

BO: I don't feel like talkin', mister.

WILL: Well, I couldn't. And I think you might also remember that this li'l lady . . . if she wanted to . . . could press charges and get you sent to the penitentiary for violation of the Mann Act.

DO The *what* act?

WILL: The Mann Act. You took a woman over the state line against her will.

BO: I loved her.

WILL: That don't make any difference.

BO: A man's gotta right to the things he loves.

WILL: Not unless he deserves 'em, cowboy.

BO: I'm a hard-workin' man, I own me my own ranch, I got six thousand dollars in the bank.

WILL: A man don't deserve the things he loves, unless he kin be a little humble about gettin' em.

BO: I ain't gonna get down on my knees and *beg*.

WILL: Bein' humble ain't the same thing as bein' *wretched*. (Bo *doesn't understand*) I had to learn that once, too, cowboy. I wasn't quite as old as you. I stole horses instead of women because you could *sell* horses. One day, I stole a horse off the wrong man, the Rev. Hezekiah Pearson. I never thought I'd get mine from any preacher, but he was very fair. Gave me every chance to put myself clear. But I wouldn't admit the horse was his. Finally, he did what he had to do. He thrashed me to within a inch of my life. I never forgot. 'Cause it was the first time in my life, I had to admit I was wrong. I was miserable. Finally, after a few days, I decided the only thing to do was to admit to the man how I felt. Then I felt different about the whole thing. I joined his church, and we was bosom pals till he died a few years ago... Have you done what I asked you to?

VIRGIL Not yet, sheriff.

WILL: Why should ya be so scared?

BO: Who says I'm scared?

WILL: Ya gimme yor word, didn't ya?

BO: (Somewhat resentful) I'm gonna do it, if ya'll jest gimme time.

WILL: But I warn ya, it ain't gonna do no good unless you really mean it.

BO: I'll mean it.

WILL: All right then. Go ahead.

Scene 11: BO, CHERIE

BO: Cherry . . . would I be molestin' ya if I said somethin'?

CHERIE: No.

BO: Well . . . since you brought the subject up, you *are* the first gal I ever had anything to do with. *(There is a silence)*
By God! I never thought I'd hear m'self sayin' that, but I said it.

CHERIE: I never woulda guessed it, Bo.

BO: Ya see . . . I'd lived all my life on a ranch . . . and I guess I din know much about women . . . 'cause they're *diff'rent* from men.

CHERIE: Well, natur'ly.

BO: Every time I got around one . . . I began to feel kinda scared . . . and I din know how t'act. It was aggravatin'.

CHERIE: Ya wasn't scared with *me*, Bo.

BO: When I come into that night club place, you was singin' and you smiled at me while you was singin', and winked at me a coupla times. Remember?

CHERIE: Yah. I remember.

BO: Well, I guess I'm kinda green, but . . . no gal ever done that to me before, so I thought you was singin' yor songs just fer *me*.

CHERIE: Ya did kinda attract me, Bo

BO:: Anyway, you was so purty, and ya seemed so kinda warm-hearted and sweet. I . . . I felt like I *could* love ya and I did.

CHERIE: Bo—ya think you really did love me?

BO: Why, Cherry! I couldn't be *familiar* . . . with a gal I din love.

(CHERIE is brought almost to tears)

BO: Cherry, I promised not to molest ya, but if you was to give yor permission, it'd be all right. I . . . I'd like to kiss ya g'bye.

CHERIE: Ya would? *(BO nods)* I'd like ya to kiss me, Bo. I really would. *(A wide grin cracks open his face and he becomes all hoodlum boy again, about to take her in his arms roughly as he did before, but she stops him)* Bo! I think this time when ya kiss me, it oughta be *diff'rent*.

BO: *(Not sure what she means)* Oh! *(BO then takes her in his arms cautiously, as though holding a precious object that was still a little strange to him)* Golly! When ya kiss someone fer serious, it's kinda scary, ain't it?

CHERIE: Yah! It is.

(Anyway, he kisses her tenderly)

BO: Cherry?

CHERIE: (*A little expectantly*) Yah?

BO: I been talkin' with my buddy, and he thinks I'm virgins enough fer the two of us.

CHERIE: (*Snickers, very amused*) Honest? Did Virgil say that?

BO: Yah . . . and I like ya like ya are, Cherry. So I don't care how ya got that way.

CHERIE: (*Deeply touched*) Oh God, thass the sweetest, tenderest thing that was ever said to me.

BO: (*Feeling awkward*) Cherry . . . it's awful hard for a fella, after he's been turned down once, to git up enough guts to try again.

CHERIE: Ya don't need guts, Bo.

BO: (*Not quite sure what she means*) I don't?

CHERIE: It's the last thing in the world ya need.

BO: Well . . . anyway, I jest don't have none now, so I'll just have to say what I feel in my heart.

CHERIE: Yah?

BO: I still wish you was goin' back to the ranch with me, more'n anything I know.

CHERIE: Ya do?

BO: Yah. I do.

CHERIE: Why, I'd go anywhere in the world with ya now, Bo. Anywhere at all.

BO: Ya would? Ya would?