

SIDE 'C' CARL, WILL, LYMAN, ELMA

pulls out and he finds I ain't on it. Thaas th' only thing I know t' do. (Crosses to stove.)

ELMA. (Taking the suitcase and putting it behind counter, U. R. end.) Oh, you needn't worry with Will here.

CHERIE. Think so? (She studies Will.) Looks kinda like Moses, don't he? (Crosses to counter, sits on stool D. L.)

ELMA. He is a very religious man. Would you believe it? He's a deacon in the Congregational Church.

CHERIE. (Just because she happens to think of it.) My folks was Holy Rollers. Will ya gimme a cup of coffee, please? Lotsa cream.

(Elma draws a cup of coffee for her. Then Carl, the bus driver, comes in, followed by Grace. Carl is a hefty man, loud and hearty, who looks very natty in his uniform.)

WILL. (Calling to him from across the room.) Howdy, Carl! You bring this wind? (Cherie drinks her coffee.)

CARL. (Jittering back.) No! It brought me! (This greeting probably has passed between them a dozen times, but they still relish it as new.)

GRACE. (Slaps Carl on shoulder.) Arent you the comedian? (Takes off coat, puts it in closet and crosses to counter.)

CARL. The wind is doin' ninety miles an hour. The bus is doin' twenty. What's your guess about the roads, Will?

WILL. (Rises, moves C.) They got the highway gang out. It may take a few hours.

CARL. Telephone lines down, too?

WILL. Yah. But they're workin' on 'em. (Dr. Lyman, having got his extremities warmed at the fire, seeks Carl privately to make certain clarifications.)

DR. LYMAN. Driver, it seems to me we are still in the state of Kansas. Is that right?

CARL. What do ya mean, still? You been in the state of Kansas about a half hour.

DR. LYMAN. But I don't understand. I was told, when I left Kansas City, that I would be across the state line immediately.

And now I find . . .

CARL. (Eying Dr. Lyman suspiciously.) You was kinda anxious to get across that state line, too, wasn't you, Jack?

DR. LYMAN. (Startled.) Why . . . what ever do you mean?

CARL. Nothin'. Anyway, you're across the line now. In case you didn't know it, Kansas City is in Missouri.

DR. LYMAN. Are you joking?

CARL. There's a Kansas City, Kansas, too, but you got on in Kansas City, Missouri. That's the trouble with you Easterners. You don't know anything about any of the country west of the Hudson River.

DR. LYMAN. Come, come now. Don't scold.

GRACE. (As Carl gets out of his heavy coat.) Carl, let me hang up your coat fer ya, while you get warm at the stove. (She bangs up his coat as he moves to stove. Dr. Lyman's eyes brighten when he sees Elma, and he bows before her like a cavalier.)

DR. LYMAN. "Nymph in thy orisons, be all my sins remembered!" (Moves D. L. to counter.)

ELMA. (Smiling.) I'm sorry your bus is held up.

DR. LYMAN. Ooh! Is that a nice way to greet me?

ELMA. (Confused.) I mean . . . (Grace is U. C. near Carl L. of stove.)

DR. LYMAN. After my loving greeting, all you can think of to say is, "I'm sorry your bus is held up." (Sits on stool at counter.) Well, I'm not. I would much rather sit here looking into the innocent blue of your eyes than continue riding on that monotonous bus. (Grace gets coffee, takes it to Carl.)

ELMA. Don't you have to get somewhere? (Will gets magazine, drifts to bench by window.)

DR. LYMAN. I have a ticket in my pocket to Denver, but I don't have to get there. I never have to get anywhere. I travel around from one town to another just to prove to myself that I'm free.

ELMA. The bus probably won't get into Denver for another day.

DR. LYMAN. Ah, well! What is our next stop?

ELMA. Topeka.

DR. LYMAN. Topeka? Oh, yes! That's where the famous hospital is, isn't it?

ELMA. The Menninger Clinic? Yes, it's a very famous place. Lots of movie stars go there for nervous breakdowns and things.

DR. LYMAN. (Tidyly.) Does the town offer anything else in the way of diversion?

ELMA. It's the capital of Kansas. It's almost as big as Kansas City. They have a university and a museum, and sometimes symphony concerts and plays. I go over there every Sunday to visit my married sister.

DR. LYMAN. Aren't there any Indian tribes around here that have war dances?

ELMA. (*Laughing*) No, silly! We're very civilized.

DR. LYMAN. I'll make my own judgment about that. Meanwhile, you may fix me a double shot of rye whiskey . . . on the rocks. (*Rises, moves R.*)

ELMA. (*Leans on counter*) I'm sorry, sir. We don't sell drinks.

DR. LYMAN. You don't sell drinks?

ELMA. Not intoxicating drinks. No, sir.

DR. LYMAN. Alas!

ELMA. We have fresh coffee, homemade pies and cakes, all kinds of sandwiches . . .

DR. LYMAN. No, my girl. You're not going to sober me up with your dainties. I am prepared for such emergencies. (*Draws a pint bottle of whiskey from his overcoat pocket.*) You may give me a bottle of your finest lemon soda. (*Elma gets bottle of lemon soda from refrigerator.*)

ELMA. (*Whispering*) You'd better not let Will see you do that. You're not supposed to.

DR. LYMAN. Who is he, the sheriff?

ELMA. Yes. Lots of people do spike their drinks here and we never say anything, but Will would have to make you stop if he saw you.

DR. LYMAN. I shall be most cautious. I promise. (*She sets the bottle of soda before him as he smiles at her benignly. He pours some soda in a glass, then some whiskey, and ambles over to a table, far R., sitting down with his drink before him. Will rises, moves over to Carl, who's at the end of the counter chiding Grace, where the two of them have been standing, talking in very personal voices that can't be overheard.*)

WILL. I sure don't envy ya, Carl, drivin' in weather like this. (*Grace crosses behind counter.*)

CARL. (*Making it sound like a personal observation.*) Yah! March is comin' in like a lion.

WILL. This all the passengers ya got?

CARL. There's a coupla crazy cowboys rolled up in the back seat, asleep. I thought I woke 'em, but I guess I didn't.

WILL. Shouldn't you go out and do it now?

CARL. I'd jest as soon they stayed where they're at. One of 'em's a real troublemaker. You know the kind, first time off a ranch and

wild as a bronco. He's been on the make fer this [?] blonde down here . . . (*Indicates Cherie.*)

WILL. She was tellin' me.

CARL. I've had a good mind to put him off the bus, the way he's been actin'. I say there's a time and place for ev'rythin'.

WILL. That bus may get snowbound purty soon.

CARL. I'll go wake 'em in a minute, Will. Just lemme have a [?] time here. (*Will fixes up the situation as Carl returns his attention to Grace, then Will picks up a copy of the Kansas City Star, sitting down close to the fire to read. Carl leans over counter.*) Ya know what, Grace? This is the first time you and I ever had more'n twenty minutes together.

GRACE. (*Cooly.*) So what?

CARL. Oh, I dunno. I'll prob'ly be here mosta the night. It'd sure be nice to have a nice [?] 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. (*Taking 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. (*On a query.*) Dobson? Dobson? I can't seem to remember anyone named Dobson. (*Elma is wasting, drying dishes behind counter.*)

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 ornery 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 oney time he was ever up there. On my word of honor. CARL. Oh, Vern Dobson speaks very highly of you, G-race. Very highly.

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

CARL. (*Sits on stool at counter.*) Make it a ham and cheese on tye.

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