

SIDE 'F' BO, GRACE, WILL, CHERIE, VIRGIL, ELNOR

DR. LYMAN. Ah! I wish I had been there to see. (Cherie feels called upon to explain her own position in regard to Shakespeare, as Elma resumes work behind counter. Grace crosses to sink washes dishes.)

CHERIE. Where I went to school, we din read no Shakespeare 'til the ninth grade. In the ninth grade everyone read Julius Caesar. I oney got as far as the eighth. I seen Marlon Brando in the movie, though. I sure do like that Marlon Brando.

DR. LYMAN. (Now that Cherie has called attention to herself.) Madam, where is thy Lochinvar?

CHERIE. (Giggling.) I don't understand anything you say, but I just love the way you say it.

DR. LYMAN. And I . . . understand everything I say . . . but privately despise the way I say it.

CHERIE. (Giggling.) That's so cute. (A memory returns.) I had a very nice friend once that recited poetry

DR. LYMAN. (With spoofing seriousness.) Whatever could have happened to him?

CHERIE. I dunno. He left town. His name was Mr. Everett Brubaker. He sold second-hand cars at the corner of Eighth and Wyandotte. He had a lovely Pontiac car-with-the-top-down. He talked nice, but I guess he really wasn't any nicer'n any of the others.

DR. LYMAN. The others?

CHERIE. Well . . . ya meet quite a few men in the place. I worked at, the Blue Dragon night club, out by the stockyards. Ever hear of it?

DR. LYMAN. No, and I deeply regret the fact.

CHERIE. You're just sayin' that. An educated man like you, you wouldn't have no use fer the Blue Dragon.

DR. LYMAN. (With a dubious look.) I wouldn't? (The front door swings open again and the two cowboys, Bo Decker and Virgil Blessing, enter. Virgil enters first, crosses u. l. c. Bo stands inside door R., looks around. Cherie moves D. L. Their appearance now is rumplessly picturesque and they both could pass, at first glance, for outdoors. Bo is in his early twenties, is tall and slim and good looking in an outdoors way. Now he is very unkempt. He wears faded jeans that cling to his legs like shedding skin, his boots, worn under his jeans, are scuffed and dusty, and the Stetson on the back of his head is worn and tattered. Over a faded deni

shirt he wears a shiny horsehide jacket, and around his neck is tied a bandana. Virgil is a man in his forties who seems to regard Bo in an almost parental way. A big man, corpulent and slow moving, he seems almost an adjunct of Bo. Dressed similarly to Bo, perhaps a trifle more tidy, he carries a guitar in a case and keeps a bag of Bull Durham in his shirt pocket, out of which he rolls frequent cigarettes. Both men are still trying to wake up from their snooze, but Bo is quick to recognize Cherie. Neither cowboy has thought to shut the door behind them and the others begin to shiver.)

BO. (In a full voice accustomed to speaking in an open field.) Hey! Why din anyone wake us up? Virg'n I mighta froze out there.

GRACE. Hey! Shut the door.

BO. (Calling across the room.) Cherry! how come you get off the bus, 'thout lettin' me know? That any way to treat the man you're gonna marry?

WILL. (Lifting his eyes from the paper.) Shut the door, cowboy! (Bo doesn't even hear Will, but strides across the room to Cherie, who is huddled over the counter as though hoping he might overlook her. Virgil, still rubbing sleep out of his eyes, drifts near the stove.)

BO. Thass no way to treat a fella, Cherry, to slip off the bus like ya wanted to get rid of him, maybe. And come in here and eat by yourself. I thought we'd have a l'il snack t'gether. Sometimes I don't understand you, Cherry.

CHERIE. Fer the hunderth time, my name ain't Cherry.

BO. I can't say it the way you do. What's wrong with Cherry?

CHERIE. It's kinda embarrassin'.

WILL. (In a firmer, louder voice.) Cowboy, will you have the decency to shut that door! (Virgil now responds immediately, crosses R. and quickly closes the door as Bo turns to Will.)

BO. (There is nothing to call him for the moment but insolent as he crosses U. R. c. to Will.) 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 your lungs full of it. Thass the trouble with you city people. You git soft.

(Will rises, comes L. of Bo.)

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

BO. (In full voice, for Will's benefit.) Sposin' he is the sheriff!

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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 . . . (Virgil puts his guitar down, Bo puts his hat on top of it.)

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? (Jostling, he elbows Virgil in the ribs. Will drifts d. s., looking at Bo.) 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 *Ejfe* 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.)

CHERIE. (Privately to Elma.) Did ya ever see anybody like him? 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 yare. That's all I'm saying.

BO. Door's closed now. What ya arguin' 'bout? (Leaving a bushed and somewhat awed audience, Bo strides over to the counter and drops to a stool.) Seems like we're gonna be here a while, Virge. How's fer some grub? (Will turns u. c.)

VIRGIL. (Remaining by magazine counter.) Not yet, Bo. I'm chewin' t'backy. (Takes off coat and hat.)

BO. (Slapping a thigh.) Thass ole Virge for ya. Allus happy long's he's got a wad a t'backy in his mouth. Well, I'm gonna have me a lil' snack. (To Elma.) Miss, gimme 'bout three hamburgers.

ELMA. Three? How do you want them? (Will crosses to stove, watches Bo.)

BO. I want 'em raw. (Cherie makes a sick face. Dr. Eymann quietly withdraws, taking his drink over to the window.)

ELMA. Honest?

BO. It's the only way 'reat 'em, raw, with a thick slice a onion and some pickalili.

ELMA. (Hesitant.) Well . . . if you're sure you're not joking.

BO. (His voice holding Elma on her way to refrigerator.) Jest a minute, Miss. That ain't all. I'd also like me some ham and eggs . . . and some potato salad . . . and a piece a pie. I ain't so pertikler what kinda pie it is, so long as it's got that murrang on top of it. (Grace gives hamburger and eggs to Elma.)

ELMA. We have lemon and chocolate. They both have meiningue. (Virgil crosses u. s., sits near stove. Grace crosses u. R., sits on bench.)

BO. (Thinking it over.) Lemon'n chocolate. I like 'em both. I dunno which I'd ruther have. (Ponders a moment.) I'll have 'em both, Miss. (Cherie makes another sick face.)

ELMA. Both?

BO. Yep! 'N set a quart a milk beside me. I'm still a growin' boy. (Elma starts preparations as Bo turns to Cherie.) Travelin' allus picks up my appetite. That all you havin', jest a measly doughnut?

CHERIE. I ain't hungry.

BO. Why not?

CHERIE. I jest ain't.

BO. Ya oughta be.

CHERIE. Well—I ain't!

BO. Wait till I get ya up to the Susie-Q. I'll fatten ya up. I bet in two weeks time, ya won't recognize yorself. (Now he puts a beatlike arm around her, drawing her close to him for a smugle, kissing her on the cheek.) But doggone, I love ya, Chery, jest the way ya are. Yor about the cutest lil' piece I ever did see. And man! when I walked into that night club place and hear you singin' my favorite song, standin' before that orkster lookin' like a angel, I told myself then and there, she's fer me. I ain't gonna leave this place without her. And now I got ya, ain't I, Chery?

CHERIE. (Trying to avoid his embrace.) Bo . . . there's people here . . . they're lookin' . . . (And she's right. They are.)

BO. What if they are? It's no crime to show a lil' affection, is it? Specially, when we're gonna git married. It's no crime I ever heard of. (He squeezes her harder now and forces a loud, smacking kiss on the lips. Cherie twists loose of him and turns away.)

CHERIE. Bo! Her cryin' out loud, lemme be! (Breaks away r.)

BO. (Following her, grabs her shoulders.) Chery, thass no way to talk to yor husband.

CHERIE. (Breaks away r. c.) That's all ya done since we left Kanz City, is manf me. (Sits at table.)

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BO. Oh, is zat so? (This is a deep-cutting insult.) Wall, I certainly aint' one to pester any woman with my affections. I never had to beg no woman to make love to me. (Calling over his shoulder to Virgil.) Did I, Virge? I never had to coax no woman to make love to me, did I?

Virgil. (In a voice that sounds more and more restrained.) No

BO. (Still in full voice.) No! Ew'rywhere I go, I got all the wimm'n I want, don't I, Virge? I gotta fight 'em to keep 'em off me, don't I, Virge? (Virgil is saved from having to make a response as Elma presents Bo with his hamburgers.)

ELMA. Here are the hamburgers. The ham and eggs will take a little longer.

BO. (Sits at counter, eats.) O.K. These'll gimme a start. (Grace rubs her forehead with a feigned expression of pain.)

GRACE. (Rises, crosses L. to U. S. end of counter.) Elma, honey, I got the damndest headache.

ELMA. I'm sorry, Grace.

GRACE. Can you look after things a while?

ELMA. Sure.

GRACE. 'Cause the only thing for me to do is go upstairs and lie down a while. That's the only thing gonna do me any good at all. (Starts U. L.)

WILL. (From his chair.) What's the matter, Grace?

GRACE. (At the rear door.) I got a headache, Will, that's just drivin' me wild.

WILL. That so? (Grace goes out rear door.)

DR. LYMAN. (Crosses to U. S. end of counter. To Elma.) You are now the Mistress of the Inn.

ELMA. You haven't told me anything about your first wife.

DR. LYMAN. (To D. S. end of counter.) Now, how could I have omitted her?

ELMA. What was she like? (Bo eats, peeks at Cherie now and then.)

DR. LYMAN. (Still in the highest of spirits.) Oh . . . she was the loveliest of them all. I do believe she was. We had such an idyllic honeymoon together, a golden month of sunshine and romance, in Bermuda. (Sits on stool. Elma leans on counter.) She sued me for divorce later, on the grounds of mental cruelty, and persuaded the judge that she should have my house and my motor-

car, and an alimony that I still find it difficult to pay, for she never chose to marry again. She found that for all she wanted out of marriage, she didn't have to marry. (The chuckles.) Ah, but perhaps I am being unkind. (Elma is a little mystified by the humor with which he always tells of his difficulties. Bo nods over the counter and interrupts.)

BO. Miss, was you waitin' fer me to lay them eggs?

ELMA. (Hurrying to stove.) Oh, I'm sorry. They're ready now. (Bo jumps up, grabs a plate and glides over the counter for Elma to serve him from the stove.)

BO. Them hamburgers was just a horse d'oozey. (The grins with appreciation of this word. Elma fills his plate.) Thank ya, Miss. (He starts back for the stool but trips over Cherie's suitcase on the way.) Dagonel! (He looks down to see what has stopped him. Cherie holds a rigid silence. Bo brings his face slowly up, looking at Cherie suspiciously. Puts plate of eggs on counter.) Cherie!

(She says nothing. He crosses slowly toward her.) Cherie, what'd ya wanta bring yor suitcase in here fer? (She still says nothing.) Cherie, I'm askin' ya a civil question. What'd ya bring yor suitcase in fer? Tell me? (Will rises.)

CHERIE. (Frightened, rises.) I . . . I . . . now don't you come near me, Bo. (Backs R.)

BO. (Crosses, 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, Cherie. Tell me. (Now Will intercedes, coming up to Bo, laying a hand on his shoulder.)

WILL. Leave the little lady alone, cowboy.

BO. (Turning on Will fiercely. Cherie backs R.) Mister, ya got no right interferin' 'tween me and my feecancy.

WILL. Mebbe she's yor feecancy and maybe she aint'. Anyway, ya aint' gonna abuse her while I'm here. Understand?

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 . . .