

SIDE 'G', BO, ELMA, CHERIE, WILL, VIRGIL, LYMAN

BO. Oh, is zat so? (This is a deep-cutting insult.) Wall, I certainly ain't 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! Ev'rywhere I go, I got all the

winnin' 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

subs her forehead with a pained 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. Jo Elma.) You

are now the Mistress of the Inn.

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

DR. LYMAN. (Jo 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 ro-

mance, 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 no marry. (The chuckles.) Ah, but perhaps I ain't being unkind. (Elma is a little mystified by the humor with which she always tells of his difficulties. Bo now leans 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'ourey. (He 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.) Daggone! (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.) Cherry!

(She says nothing. He crosses slowly toward her.) Cherry, what'd

ya wanta bring yer suitcase in here fer? (She still says nothing.)

Cherry, I'm askin' ya a civil question. What'd ya bring yer suit-

case 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

yer 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. (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 yer feecancy and maybe she ain't. Anyway, ya

ain't gonna abuse her while I'm here. Understand?

BO. Abuse her?

WILL. (Jo 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 . . .

START  
SIDE 'G'

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. (Crosses L. a few steps.) Anyways, you'll come to like it in time. I promised ya would. Now we been through all that b'fore.

(Will sits on stool at counter.)

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

BO. (A loud blast of protest.) What? (Cherie runs U. L.)

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. (Crosses U. L. 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, steps back.) Why . . . I oughta take you across my knee and blister yer lip bottom.

CHERIE. (More frightened, runs D. L.) Don't you touch me.

BO. (To Will, crosses L. a step.) You can't pay no tension to what she says, Mister. Womenfolk don't know their own minds. Never did. (Cherie runs R. near door, Bo follows.)

CHERIE. Don't you come near me!

BO. (Crosses R. to Cherie.) 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 muddhen. I ain't takin' no fer an answer. By God, yor comin' along. (He grabs her forcefully to him, as Will interferes again, pulling the two apart.)

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 and backs R. Virgil stands far R. looking apprehensive.)

BO. (Confronts Will threateningly.) This ain't no bizness of yors.

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

BO. Is that right, Cherry? (She steps back, as he steps toward her.)

Did you go to the sheriff askin' fer protection?

CHERIE. (Meekly, backs away another step.) . . . yes, I guess I did.

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

CHERIE. (Sobbing.) . . . '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 injustice.) 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. (Turns away R.)

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 fact that the little lady don't love you. (Bo now is trapped into silence. He can say nothin', and one can tell that Will has named a fact that Bo did not intend to face. Virgil watches him alertly. He can tell that Bo is angry enough to attack Will and is about to. Virgil hurries to Bo's side, holding his arms as though to restrain him. Dr. Lynnman rises, Elma starts U. L. for Grace, then stops.)

VIRGIL. (Pacifyingly, pulls Bo R.) Now, Bo. Take it easy, Bo. Don't blow your lid. He's the sheriff. Bo. Hold yor temper.

BO. (To Virgil.) That polecat bastard! He said she din love me.

VIRGIL. (Trying to draw him away from the scene over to R.) Pay no 'ention, Bo. Come on over here and sit down. Ya gotta think things over, Bo.

BO. (Twisting loose from Virgil's hold, walks D. L.) Lemme be, Virge.

WILL. Ask the lip lady, if ya don't b'lieve me. Ask her if she loves ya.

BO. I won't ask her nothin' of the kind.

WILL. All right then, take my word for it.  
 BO. I wouldn't take your word for a cloudy day. I'm tellin' ya, she loves me. And I oughta know. (Starts toward Cherie. Virgil goes r. Cherie flees to the counter, sobbing.)  
 WILL. (Stops Bo.) Wall . . . she ain't gettin' back on the bus with ya. We'll leave it at that. So you better take my advice and sit down with your friend there, and have a quiet game a pinochle till the bus gets on its way and takes you with it.  
 VIRGIL. Do like he tells ya, Bo. I think mebbe ya got the lil lady all wrong anyway. (Near a table r.)  
 BO. (A defender of womanhood.) Don't you say nothin' against her, Virge.  
 VIRGIL. I ain't sayin' nothin' against her. I jest see no reason why you should marry a gal that says she don't love ya. That's all. And I kinda doubt she's as good a gal as you think she is. Now come on over here and sit down. (Sits at table.)  
 BO. (Turns restlessly from Virgil.) I don't feel like sittin'. (Instead, he paces up to the big window, standing there looking out, his back to the audience. Will gets coat and hat.)  
 ELMA. (From behind counter, to Virgil.) What shall I do with the ham and eggs?  
 VIRGIL. Just put 'em on the stove and keep 'em warm, Miss. He'll have 'em a lil later. (She puts plate on hot plate.)  
 WILL. (To Cherie.) I don't think you'll be bothered any more, Miss. If y'are, my station's right across the road. You kin holler.  
 (Dr. Lymann returns to counter, sits.)  
 CHERIE. (Dabbing at her eyes.) Thank you very much, I'm sure.  
 WILL. Are you gonna be all right, Elma?  
 ELMA. (Surprised at the question.) Why, yes, Will! (Will just looks at Dr. Lymann who, we can tell, is made to feel a little uncomfortable.)  
 WILL. I'll look in a little later.  
 ELMA. O.K., Will (Will goes to the front door, takes a final look at Bo, then goes out.)  
 DR. LYMAN. I don't know why, but . . . I always seem to relax more easily . . . when a sheriff leaves the room. (He chuckles bravely. Cherie drifts to D. L. end of counter, sits on stool.)  
 ELMA. I think it's awfully unfair that people dislike Will just because he's a sheriff.  
 DR. LYMAN. But you see, my dear, he stands as a symbol of

authority, the most dreaded figure of our time. Policemen, teach'ers, lawyers, judges, doctors, and I suppose, even tax collectors . . . we take it for granted that they are going to punish us for something we didn't do . . . or did do.  
 ELMA. But you said you were a teacher once.  
 DR. LYMAN. But not a successful one. I could never stay in one place very long at a time. And I hated having anyone over me, like deans and presidents and department heads. I never was a man who could take orders . . . from anyone . . . without feeling resentment. Right or wrong, I have always insisted on having my own way. (Pours a drink. Bo walks slowly down from his corner retreat, seeking Virgil, who is taking his guitar out of its case. Bo speaks hesitantly in a low voice.)  
 BO. What am I gonna do, Virge?  
 VIRGIL. Bo, ya just gotta quit dependin' on me so much. I don't know what to tell ya to do, except to sit down and be peaceful.  
 BO. I—I can't be peaceful. (Moves l.)  
 VIRGIL. All right then, pace around like a panther and be miserable.  
 BO. (To himself. Turns r.) I—I jest can't believe it!  
 VIRGIL. What can't ya believe?  
 BO. (Now he becomes embarrassed. Crosses D. R.) Oh . . . nothin'.  
 VIRGIL. If ya got anything on your chest, Bo, it's best to get it off.  
 BO. (Sits at table by Virgil.) Well, I . . . I just never realized . . . a gal might not . . . love me.

CURTAIN

STOP  
 SIDE'S