

SIDE 'N' CARL & GRACE

ACT III

~~By this time, it is early morning, about five o'clock. The storm has cleared, and outside the window we see the slow daoning, creeping above the distant hills, revealing a landscape all in peaceful white.~~

~~Bo, Cherie and Virgil are back now from the sheriff's office. Bo has returned to his corner, where he sits as before, with his back to the others, his head low. We can detect, if we study him, that one eye is blackened and one of his hands is bandaged. Virgil sits close to him on the bench, like an attendant. Dr. Lymon is still asleep on the bench, snoring loudly. Cherie tries to sleep at one of the tables. Elma is clearing the tables and sweeping. The only animated people right now are Carl and Grace. Carl is at the telephone trying to get the operator, and Grace is behind the counter.~~

START SIDE 'N' GRACE

CARL. (After jiggling the receiver.) Still dead. (He bangs up.)
GRACE. (Pauses.) 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.) Yare?

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. (Elma sweeps U. S. and toward front door R.)

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

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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?

GRACE. 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 fleeing attraction. Now Will comes stalking in through the front door, a man who is completely relaxed with the authority he possesses. He speaks to Grace.)

~~WILL. (Crosses L. to R. of Carl.) One of the highway trucks just stopped by. They say it won't be very long now. (Elma crosses D. R. to sweep near Cherie.)~~

GRACE. I hope so.

WILL. (With a look around.) Everything peaceful?

GRACE. Yes, Will.

WILL. (He studies Bo for a moment, then goes to him.) 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 l'il 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? (Grace leans on counter.)

BO. I don't feel like talkin' Mister.

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

BO. The what act?

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

VIRGIL. That'd be a serious charge, Bo.

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STOP SIDE 'N'