

# SIDE 'O' WILL, VIRGIL, BO, GRACE, ELMA, CHERIE

BO. (Stands facing Will.) I loved her. (Virgil crosses D. R. near door.)

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. (Comes D. R., sits at chair R. of C. table.) I ain't gonna get down on my knees and beg. (Virgil crosses D. S. L. of R. table.)

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 threshed 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 hosom pals till he died a few years ago. (He turns to Virgil.) Has he done what I asked him to?

VIRGIL. Not yet, sheriff. (Sits at a table.)

WILL. (To Bo.) 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. (Elma is R. with dust pan.)

BO. I'll mean it.

WILL. All right then. Go ahead. (Will crosses U. C. Slowly, reluctantly, Bo gets to his feet and awkwardly, like a guilty boy, makes his way over to the counter to Grace. Carl crosses to stove.)

BO. Miss, I . . . I wanna apologize.

GRACE. What for?

BO. Fer causin' such a commotion.

54

GRACE. Ya needn't apologize to me, cowboy. I like a good fight. You're welcome at Grace's Diner any time. I mean any time.

BO. (With an appreciative grin.) Thanks. (Now he goes to Elma U. R.) I musta acted like a hoodlum. I apologize.

ELMA. (Steps L. to him.) Oh, that's all right.

BO. Thank ya, Miss.

ELMA. (Crosses L., empties dust pan in can under sink.) I'm awfully sorry we never got to see your rope tricks. (Puts broom and dust pan away, sits on stool.)

BO. They ain't much. (Pointing to the sleeping Dr. Lyman.) Have I gotta wake up the professor t'apologize t'him? (Carl drifts toward counter.)

WILL. You can overlook the professor. (He nods toward Cherie, whom Bo dreads to confront, most of all. He starts toward her but doesn't get very far.)

BO. I can't do it. (Turns U. C. Virgil rises.)

VIRGIL. (Disappointed.) Aw, Bo!

BO. I jest can't do it.

WILL. (Crosses D. L. a few steps.) Why not?

BO. She'd have no respect for me now. She saw me beat

WILL. (Crosses to him.) You gave me your promise. You owe that girl an apology, whether you got beat or not, and you're going to say it to her or I'm not lettin' you back on the bus. (Bo is in a dilemma. He wipes his brow.)

VIRGIL. G'wan, Bo. G'wan. (Steps U. L.)

BO. Well . . . I . . . I'll try. (He makes his way to her tortuously and finally gets out her name.) Cherie!

CHERIE. (Rises.) Yah?

BO. Cherie . . . it wasn't right a me to treat ya the way I did, draggin' ya onto the bus, tryin' to make ya marry me whether ya wanted to or not. Ya think ya could ever forgive me?

CHERIE. (After some consideration) I guess I been treated worse in my life.

BO. (Taking out his wallet.) Cherie . . . I got ya here and I think I oughta get ya back in good style. So . . . take this. (He hands her a bill.)

CHERIE. Did the sheriff make you do this?

BO. (Angrily.) No, by God! He din say nothin' 'bout my givin' ya money.

55

WILL. (Crosses D. L. of Cherie's table.) That's his idea, Miss. But I think it's a good one.  
CHERIE. Ya don't have to gimme this much, Bo.  
BO. I want ya to have it.  
CHERIE. Thanks. I can sure use it.  
BO. And I . . . I wish ya good luck, Cherry . . . Honest I do.  
CHERIE. I wish you the same, Bo.  
BO. Well . . . I guess I said ev'rything that's to be said, so . . . so long.  
CHERIE. (In a tiny voice.) So long. (Awkward and embarrassed now, Bo returns to his corner, and Cherie sits back down at the table, full of wistful wonder.)  
WILL. Now that wasn't so bad, was it, son?  
BO. I'd ruther break in wild horses than have to do it again. (Will laughs heartily, then strolls over to the counter in a seemingly casual way.)

WILL. How's your headache, Grace?

GRACE. Huh?

WILL. A while back, you said you had a headache.

GRACE. Oh, I feel fine now, Will.

WILL. (He looks at Carl.) You have a nice walk, Carl?

CARL. Yah. Sure.

WILL. Well, I think ya better go upstairs 'cause someone took your overshoes and left 'em outside the door to Grace's apartment. (Will laughs long and heartily, and Elma cannot suppress a grin. Carl looks at his feet and realizes his oversight. Grace is indignant.)

GRACE. Nosy old snooper!

WILL. I'll have me a cup of coffee, Grace, and one of these sweet rolls. (He selects a roll from the glass dish on counter, sits on a stool. Grace motions Elma to get Will coffee, which she does.)

VIRGIL. Come on over to the counter now, Bo, and have a bite a breakfast.

BO. I ain't hungry, Virge.

VIRGIL. Maybe a cup a coffee? (Grace sits on stool behind counter.)

BO. I couldn't get it down.

VIRGIL. Now what's the matter, Bo? Ya oughta feel purty good.

The sheriff let ya go and . . .

BO. I might as well a stayed in the jail.

VIRGIL. Now, what kinda talk is that? The bus'll be leavin' purty soon and we'll be back at the ranch in a coupla days.  
BO. I don't care if I never see that dang ranch again.  
VIRGIL. Why, Bo, you worked half yor life earnin' the money to build it up.  
BO. It's the lonnest damn place I ever did see.  
VIRGIL. Well . . . I never thought so.  
BO. It'll be like goin' back to a graveyard.  
VIRGIL. Bo . . . I heard Hank and Orville talkin' 'bout the new school marm, lives over to the Stebbins'. They say she's a looker.  
BO. I ain't int'rested in no school marm.  
VIRGIL. Give yourself time, Bo. Yor young. You'll find lotsa gals, gals that'll love you, too.  
BO. I want Cherry. (And for the first time we observe he is capable of tears.)

VIRGIL. (With a futile shrug of his shoulders.) Aw—Bo—  
BO. (Dismissing him.) Go get yourself somethin' 'eat, Virge. (Bo remains in isolated gloom as Virgil makes his slow way to the counter. Suddenly the telephone rings. Grace jumps to answer it. Elma gives Virgil coffee. He sits on stool to drink it.)

GRACE. My God! the lines are up. (Onto the telephone.) Grace's Diner! (Pause.) It is? (Pause.) O.K. Will tell him. (Hangs up and turns to Carl.) Road's cleared now but you're gonna have to put on your chains 'cause the road's awful slick.

CARL. God damn! (Gets up and bustles into his overcoat, going c. to make his announcement.) Road's clear, folks! Bus'll be ready to leave as soon as I get the chains on. That'll take about twenty minutes . . . (Stops and looks back at them.) . . . unless someone wants to help me. (Goes out front door. Will gets up from the counter.)

WILL. I'll help ya, Carl. (He goes out front door. Cherie makes her way over to Bo.)

CHERIE. Bo?

BO. Yah?

CHERIE. I just wanted to tell ya somethin', Bo. It's kinda personal and kinda embarrassin', too, but . . . I ain't the kinda gal you thought I was. (Elma and Grace are busy clearing counter.)

BO. What ya mean, Cherry?

CHERIE. Well, I guess some people'd say I led a real wicked life. I guess I have.