

The Queen of Sodom
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. A PORCH IN NEW ORLEANS, 1930s -- DAY

A white couple around 40 years old, IVY and GRADY, sitting with a biracial PRETEEN GIRL.

IVY

It all began with a lynching. 1918.
The guest of honor at our Saturday
jamboree was a colored boy who --
well, details were hard to come by.

EXT. ROADSIDE NEAR THE WOODS, 1918 -- DAY

We flash back to CORALEE and RUBY, two white teenage girls, sharing food near a roadside filled with festive people, in Kentucky. Aftermath of a lynching.

CORALEE

They say he helped that white girl
- she was driving by herself, had a
flat tire. He drove her home. And,
there you go.

RUBY

A colored boy just can't be doing
that.

CORALEE

They messed him up pretty bad
before they strung him up -

RUBY

Least they didn't set him on fire -

CORALEE

Yeah, there are children here, and
folks want to have a little lunch.

RUBY

The colored boy didn't have a
father around. A father could have
told him what the rules were.

EXT. A PORCH IN NEW ORLEANS, 1930s -- DAY.

Back to Ivy and Grady.

IVY

No, he had no father.

GRADY

He had a mother and a sister who waited in the woods for the party to be over, so they could cut him down and take him home.

IVY

Even now, it puzzles me. The people who wanted to hang the Kaiser for all his brutality, were the same people under that tree with their fried chicken, while one of their neighbors was being tortured, and killed, and torn apart.

GRADY

For fixing a tire. Boy was Abraham Brown.

IVY

I was young and confused.

EXT. ROADSIDE NEAR THE WOODS, 1918 - DAY

The lynching. Photographer arrives with a camera.

CORALEE

Left my biology book at the library.

RUBY

There's a new National Geographic at the library, unless they banned it again.

CORALEE

Not a black face anywhere.

RUBY

Colored folks knew better than to come.

CORALEE

Isn't that the colored school bus?

A bus rolls into view; boys throw stones at it.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Folks, soon as I get set, you can take photos with the body, make a postcard!

CORALEE
 (a stricken look on her
 face)
 Meet me in the shed?

Coralee runs to a shed. Ruby follows. They slip into the shed, and then hold each other.

CORALEE (CONT'D)
 And every kiss is stolen.

RUBY
 I don't want to be alone. They
 strung up that boy for fixing a
 flat tire. What would they do to us
 if they knew?

EXT. A PORCH IN NEW ORLEANS, 1930 -- DAY.

IVY
 And with that big audience, the
 preacher saw his chance. And he
 couldn't resist.

GRADY
 A chance to beat liquor. Demon Rum.

IVY
 My father. The preacher. And
 spiritual adviser to the local
 Klan.

GRADY
 He started an avalanche that day.
 Him and Abraham Brown.

IVY
 By the time all the dust settled,
 Daddy's whole world was damn near
 destroyed.

GRADY
 Because he brought all his enemies
 right into the middle of Klan
 country.

IVY
 And all hell broke loose.

They laugh.

GRADY
 It sure did.

EXT. ROADSIDE NEAR THE WOODS, 1918 -- DAY

Down the road, a knot of men surround MASON, the middle-aged preacher, and BEAU, a young deputy.

MASON

Boys, want to thank you. Did the Lord's work tonight. The hosts of the Lord are on the advance, and we're gonna keep marching! No retreat! No hesitation!

BEAU

The prohibition bill is coming up again. We're gonna kill John Barleycorn dead.

MASON

I need you to write to our man in the statehouse, and then our Congressman.

BEAU

You tell both of em they better be voting for prohibition or they'll be hearing from us in November.

MASON

Get the Kleagles out, all our brothers, the White League, the Red Shirts.

BEAU

Get the whole Empire back on the march!

MASON

Next stop, the Mississippi legislature!

INT. A TRAIN CAR -- DAY

Packed train leaves Mississippi for Tennessee, 1920s. A black family sits, the JOHNSONS, with a guitar, father, mother and son. A black conductor, MOSES, walks the aisle. Some passengers including young HOMER (also black) stand.

MOSES

Your boy finally asleep?

MRS. JOHNSON

He's not used to wearing shoes, except in church.

MOSES

Your husband?

MRS. JOHNSON

Stayed up all night getting ready.
Hanging on to that guitar.

MOSES

Got a hundred and ten of you
tonight. Was there another hanging?

MRS. JOHNSON

Beating in Tutwiler. A twelve-year-
old boy. Eyeballed a white girl.

MOSES

Hope you all brought food.

MRS. JOHNSON

Can't we get food on the way?

MOSES

Once we get up north, be easier to
get off the train and use the
toilet and buy food, just like the
white folks. Got biscuits til then.

MRS. JOHNSON

Farm pays plantation money, not
real money. Took us time to get the
train fare. ...Lord, it's hot.

MOSES

Don't open the windows til we slow
down, you get coal cinders in here.
We're right behind the engine. The
white people are further back.

MRS. JOHNSON

Had to leave my mother behind. If
we can't send her money, don't know
what she's gonna do.

MOSES

Can't go back?

MRS. JOHNSON

Back when the rich folks ran
things, it wasn't so bad. Now it's
the white trash, mean as snakes. My
husband had enough of their police,
they had enough of him. He thinks
Chicago is the promised land.

She looks at her husband.

MOSES

He needs to stop reading the Defender. Chicago is better than the delta, but you still got a fight on your hands.

MRS. JOHNSON

Lots of factories, right?

MOSES

The factories that hired our people during the war, now the white folks are back from France, want their jobs back, they ain't gonna throw you a parade when you get there. Get your man hired on at the stockyard, railroad. Find someplace with a roof, fast, don't matter how fancy....Homer, you getting off?

HOMER

Going to see my gal in Kentucky.

MOSES

Well, you know where I'll be. Going past you this way, going past you that way.

MRS. JOHNSON

You going to Kentucky?

A white conductor enters.

WHITE CONDUCTOR

What did I tell you? Your job is back there in the white cars. Don't make me tell you again.

INT. ANOTHER TRAIN CAR -- DAY

Continuation. Moses goes to the back of the train, where Grady finds SAM CAROLLO, a 30-year-old Italian who lives in New Orleans. Grady is of course younger than we see him in 1930. He sits.

GRADY

Sam Carollo! Done with that newspaper?

CAROLLO

Grady. Sure, help yourself. I wouldn't say no to a snort from your flask.

GRADY

What flask?...I'm taking a break from New Orleans.

Grady passes a flask and Sam drinks.

CAROLLO

Me too...Jesus. What is this stuff? Never had shine like this. Nectar of the Gods.

GRADY

Town in Kentucky. Boy I know, makes this up special. I swing by there to load up.

CAROLLO

How long you been at Bailey's place down the boulevard?

GRADY

Two years.

CAROLLO

You're king of the street, best barman in town. When my girl Clem went down, you were a big help, coming over to my place. But you wouldn't come full-time.

GRADY

Sorry.

CAROLLO

And not once did you go upstairs with my working girls. They're good girls, you know. I get em to a doctor once a month.

He gives him a direct look.

GRADY

So what are you doing up here, anyway?

CAROLLO

I need to clear out of New Orleans for a while, for reasons that are a little complicated. Looking for a new place to strike it rich.

GRADY

River country, outside the city? Rough country for liquor.

CAROLLO

Not across the river. We got a bunch of towns run by crooks, we own the police. Hot Springs, Arkansas -

GRADY

Arkansas? You're kidding!

CAROLLO

Gambling capital of the world, in Arkansas. Ten big casinos. San Antonio, a thousand call girls, black girls and white boys, white girls and darkies -

GRADY

All out in the open?

CAROLLO

Find me a new place, do it all again. This city in Kentucky, is it big enough to hide a speakeasy? Can you find me the fella makes this?

GRADY

Sure.

CAROLLO

You looking for work? A saloon to run?

GRADY

You better know what you're getting into. You know the kind of man I am?

CAROLLO

You're in my bar every Monday, I keep secrets for a living. It's me. Sam.

GRADY

Well. I was born in Carolina. Didn't last long there. They had the death sentence, hanging, for fellas like me, not too long ago. Got beat up every week or so for about five years. My folks tried me out in a boy's school - obviously that didn't cure anything.

CAROLLO

Boy's school.

GRADY

You wouldn't believe the bedhopping in a boy's school. Moved up north. In the city you meet people at parties and in clubs, but mostly it was the "special" parks, the police were raiding all the time. You hold a man's hand on the street, you get a night in jail, you get fired next morning. So have you broken the code yet? You can't catch it from a bottle of whisky.

CAROLLO

Got fellas like you all over the city. Not sure that's what those Baptists had in mind - they pass the liquor law, got a thousand speakeasies now, fairy people had this whole new world to hide in.

GRADY

I know the pansy places better than you, trust me.

CAROLLO

Interesting. What say we go look at this town of yours? Business, I mean, I'm not proposing anything, here.

GRADY

Well I knew that.

CAROLLO

I keep your secrets, you keep mine.

GRADY

Good, I don't need to go to jail again. That town, it's where the prohibition started.

(MORE)

GRADY (CONT'D)

The preacher pushed the folks in the statehouse, then did the same in Mississippi, Virginia, Carolina.

CAROLLO

Then we should go there.

GRADY

To teach him a lesson?

CAROLLO

To thank him.

They both smile.

EXT. OUTSIDE A CHEAP SHACK -- DAY

A saloon-to-be in Kentucky. A white girl, CLEM, unloads bottles. A young TOUGH approaches, more young lads watching. Homer approaches warily.

TOUGH

What the hell is all this?

CAROLLO

Drugstore. Sells dry goods and notions.

HOMER

You looking for help behind the bar?

CAROLLO

What bar?

HOMER

(not fooled)

I ran a juke joint in Mississippi. Ran like clockwork. Name's Homer.

CAROLLO

So, how'd you end up here?

HOMER

You ever been to the Mississippi delta?

CAROLLO

Not for a long time.

HOMER

Well, it hasn't changed. Man like me gets a pile of money, I'm a target. Don't know my place. Delta got so bad, some nights they'd have a hundred colored folks on that train, run away from their debts.

CAROLLO

So instead of Chicago, you came here?

HOMER

Came to see a girl. She got a new man. You gonna have two bars, right?

CAROLLO

Need two barkeeps. Get you all sharp, new shirt, put you in the front saloon -

HOMER

Mister, you're new out here. You build a club in the middle of Klan country, put a colored man out front handling the money...they burn you out in a week.

CAROLLO

I'm bringing muscle. Grady, need to tell him the other part. Is that alright?

Grady looks at Homer.

GRADY

Well, you're a bartender, already running from the law anyway.

CAROLLO

We're running an establishment for a particular clientele. Folks like Grady here.

HOMER

Folks like you?...Suppose I'll just get used to it. You just keep your business out of my business.

CAROLLO

You want to pack a gun back there too.

Homer pulls out a gun.

HOMER

Been packing since Mississippi. So
if I hear trouble out front...

CAROLLO

Feel free to sort things out.
Although the other bartender is
pretty tough too.

HOMER

Who is he?

CAROLLO

She. Meet my friend Clementine,
from down the Quarter. Sweet as can
be. Met her in church, Saint
Mary's.

CLEM

Pleasure's all mine.

Homer picks up a nearby broom.

CAROLLO

Clem, you heard that last bit. The
kinda folks we'll be bringing here?

CLEM

Sam, you already got nancy boys in
your club in the city. You just
didn't know.

She hesitates, then takes his hand.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Nice to meet you, Grady.

HOMER

For good luck, pepper in the
doorway. Whisky bottle under the
porch, make folks thirsty, they
fill this place up. Nighttime, a
broom in the doorway, keep out the
witches and the voodoo queens.

CAROLLO

Does it keep the Klan away?

CLEM

You can try to stop the Klan with a
broom, I'm gonna try my way.

Clem shucks her shotgun and slides it onto the porch, and smiles sweetly.

CLEM (CONT'D)
And I'm ready to begin my day!
Anyone for a cold drink?

Young tough returns.

TOUGH
Don't look like no shopkeeper.
Who's the colored boy?

Homer smiles, holds up a bottle.

HOMER
They call me Bon Dieu, king of
voodoo. You come any closer to this
stuff, your little rooster gonna
fall right off.

The tough backs away slowly. The bar crowd collapses in laughter. Coralee and Ruby arrive.

RUBY
New drugstore? You got makeup,
lipstick?

CLEM
Y'all too young. ...Aw, those puppy-
dog eyes. Here, I'll show you some
blush.

EXT. AN ALLEY - DAY

Sam takes an alley into town, to avoid detection. He goes behind the jail, and sees the part of the jail reserved for blacks. It's horrendous. He enters Main Street and heads to the church.

INT. A SOUTHERN CHURCH -- DAY

Continuation. Carollo approaches Mason.

CAROLLO
Good day to you. Are you the
reverend?

MASON
Yes, I am.

CAROLLO

Bless me father, for I have sinned.

MASON

Bless -- you a Catholic? This is a Baptist church, but I can try --

CAROLLO

Sam Carollo. New Orleans. I'm not here to seek forgiveness for my sins.

MASON

Your sins?

CAROLLO

Although I should, because my sins are many, and they are terrible. In fact, you might say I am the King of Sin in all of Louisiana, and that's quite a distinction, given the competition.

MASON

The King of Sin?

CAROLLO

I am deeply ashamed. Down New Orleans, I run it all. Houses of sin, ladies of the night, games of chance, Demon Rum. I run that town. When I meet the mayor, I don't go to him, he comes to me.

MASON

Doesn't sound like you came to repent.

CAROLLO

No, I didn't.

Ivy, a 20-ish girl at this point, enters.

IVY

Daddy, we're running a little late.

CAROLLO

Sam Carollo, nice to meet you.

He takes the hand of the twenty-ish girl, continues to hold her hand through the story.

CAROLLO (CONT'D)

Ah, che bella. Tell you a story. I sell liquor to speakeasies, hotels, all over. One day a famous person from up north came all the way down to see me. He told me in plain English I was gonna start selling liquor for his racket up north. He brought his muscle boys with him, to make sure I got the message.

IVY

Famous person?

CAROLLO

This fella and his men, I stopped em right at the station. Me and my boys. We smashed their fingers, put em right back on their train. To make sure he got the message. Didn't even let him take a piss at the station. They never came back. You know who this person was? Al Capone.

He looks at the girl's fingers.

IVY

Al Capone?

CAROLLO

THE Al Capone. King of Chicago. The would-be King of New Orleans for about five minutes.

MASON

And why are you telling me this?

CAROLLO

That saloon keeps moving place to place, the one you holler about every Sunday. It's my bar. I'm bringing my New Orleans friends to town. I'm here to tell you, if your Jesus Posse wrecks my bar, I'm gonna burn down your church. And I'm not going to be too particular about whether you're still in it or not.

[Carollo is bold because he was a real-life mobster and he did, in fact, stare down Capone.]

MASON

My Lord and Redeemer is a little more powerful than Al Capone.

CAROLLO

Well, he's been missing for two thousand years, but if he comes back for you, then I'll be waiting at the station, to have a talk with him.

EST. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ivy is pursuing Carollo down Main Street.

INT. BARN -- DAY

Continuation. Ivy follows Carollo to the alley where his saloon is setting up in a barn. Grady, exhausted, sits on a bench with a flask; curled up against him is a young man reading a paper. Homer kicks up sawdust as he sets up, and a bit of sawdust settles into the young man's hair; Grady gently brushes it out of his hair. Ivy stares at them for a moment and then turns back to Carollo.

IVY

Hey, Mister New Orleans!

They enter the bar. Carollo trips over a broom.

CAROLLO

What is this broom doing here?

IVY

Hey. I'm talking to you!

CAROLLO

Church lady, right? Ivy.

IVY

Where do you get the gall to enter God's house and talk to a preacher like that?

CAROLLO

Yes, it's shocking, isn't it?

IVY

I know every white man in town, I can have you tarred and feathered by sundown.

CAROLLO

You know every white man in town.
Must be quite the social butterfly.

IVY

That's not what I meant!

CAROLLO

I know this town better than you
think. Listen, girly, I'm not
really gonna burn down your church.
Probably.

IVY

Why are you picking on our town?
Why can't you do this somewhere
else?

CAROLLO

I like the liquor. And maybe you
people need to be taught a lesson.

IVY

(points at Grady)
Can't believe you brought that,
that --

GRADY

That would be me she's talking
about.

IVY

He's a sodomite!

CAROLLO

Yes. You're right. And he's helping
me build a speakeasy in a town that
has tar and feather parties. For
fun. I've seen the colored jail
behind the courthouse. Those boys
in cages. And I've heard about the
lynching.

(cool and calm)

So don't ever come into my saloon
and lecture me about morality
again.

IVY

(in a bit of a fog)
Abraham Brown.

Grady gets up, approaches, pours her a drink.

CAROLLO

Come again?

GRADY

You're welcome to a drink. It's mighty fine. Course, if you're afraid.

IVY

Ain't afraid.

Ivy sips, tries to hide the fact that she's impressed by the liquor. But she licks her lips.

GRADY

Beautiful girl, you have it all, you're home. Someday you tell the town, this is the man I love, get married, have babies. They love you, they accept you, the town folks, your father. You visit with folks, join clubs. Your husband takes you to meet folks he works with, he doesn't get fired for it.

IVY

My father loves me? You are new in town.

GRADY

I live my life like a spy. I'm in enemy territory, especially with country folks like here. My whole life is hidden. It's exhausting. We have our little tricks, our roommates, fake employees, secret codes, but we spend our whole lives lying. Everything that's good in my life, is something stolen.

IVY

It's the law.

GRADY

And someday I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die alone. Won't be family there. Just some police or a hotel maid to find me and pack me away. But before that happens, I'm gonna have the time of my life, run a saloon, best liquor in the world, gonna be one long party. And you and your father ain't gonna ruin it for me.

(MORE)

GRADY (CONT'D)

Because it's all I'm ever gonna get. You know you want to finish that drink.

She looks at it. Grady and Carollo smile.

CAROLLO

And here she goes. It's the devil, calling out to you.

She drinks, and smiles when they laugh.

EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

Local toughs watch; Carollo's BOUNCERS watch the toughs from the doorway. Coralee and Ruby arrive.

BOUNCER

Told you last night, you're too young.

Next they confront Ivy.

CAROLLO

I know this girl.

BOUNCER

You sure?

CAROLLO

(to Ivy)

Are you sure? Where's your father?

IVY

It's just me.

CAROLLO

Preacher's daughter, in the house.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ivy and GRADY Flash forward to 1930s. Grady indicates the biracial girl.

GRADY

You sure she's old enough for this?

IVY

She's gonna have a rough ride in life, she needs to know about her Mamma and Daddy. My first real trip to a saloon, I was scared.

(MORE)

IVY (CONT'D)

I was a grown woman, and my father
still gave me twenty questions
every time I was out after dark.

GRADY

He was worried about you.

IVY

He wanted his eye on me. He was
losing control over everything. And
women didn't drink alone in public,
unless they were, you know,
working. And there were colored men
there.

GRADY

Ivy, I remember when you walked in.
Don't get me wrong, girls aren't my
thing, but even for me...folks
stopped and looked, baby.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Back in time. The saloon is jammed, a dance crowd. Ivy does
look gorgeous.

IVY (V.O.)

A girl notices things. There were a
lot of men, and then a bunch of
women in a corner, in their own
little world. The way they moved,
the way their eyes wandered across
the crowd. Hungry eyes, eager. And
not to flatter myself, but I was
expecting to get more looks from
the boys than from the girls.

Music begins, and then dancing. The guitarist, Johnson,
stamps his feet to keep the rhythm.

IVY (V.O.)

Boy with the guitar starts playing.
The fellas start dancing. And then
I knew. It wasn't just that they
were dancing with each other. They
were just too good. I mean, folks
in Baptist country just don't dance
like that. Unless there's something
else going on.

GRADY (V.O.)

And you kept coming back.

IVY (V.O.)

It was the music. I was stunned.
You don't sing about the devil in
public. Playing the notes that
aren't on the piano. I was like a
morphine addict.

Mrs. Johnson reveals she can flat-out sing. A gospel blues
like "Jesus Make My Dying Bed". A smile spreads across Ivy's
face.

Two women leave the bar holding hands. Ruby and Coralee
watch, agog. Ruby takes Coralee's hand and then they dissolve
into hysterics. They realize they are home.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Grady counts money; Ivy enters.

GRADY

Miss Ivy.

IVY

You been to New Orleans?

GRADY

Live there. Til I came here.

IVY

Going back?

GRADY

Absolutely. Ain't nothing like it.
Not even New York City or Chicago.

IVY

You're joking.

GRADY

City's still French, you know. Boy,
do they know how to live. Every
kind of music you never heard of.
Best food in the world. French
wines if you know who to ask. They
had theater and opera way back
before Napoleon.

IVY

I'd love to see the real theater.

GRADY

Had a street set aside for
prostitutes. Not that you'd be
interested in that.

IVY

You hush.

GRADY

I'd never lead a preacher's girl
astray.

He reaches below the bar and pulls out a very dusty bottle;
he pours very dark liquor into a beautiful glass. Sets it on
the bar and slides it a few inches in her direction. Then a
few inches more. She smiles and takes it.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Mon petit chouchou.

IVY

Shooshoo? What on earth is that?

GRADY

It means my little cabbage.

She laughs.

GRADY (CONT'D)

No, it's a good thing! The French,
they're a funny bunch.

EXT. OUTSIDE A BARN -- DAY

Carollo talks to a BOUNCER and a moonshiner named ROY, in his
30s. A tough with a cigar watches.

CAROLLO

This is Roy. Gonna help with the
liquor. My boys here, they mostly
work muscle, not liquor. Without
Roy, we're sunk.

BOUNCER

God damn, what's that smell?

ROY

Moonshine stinks like crazy, gets
into your clothes.

(points)

Hey! Boy with the see-gar, stay
over there!

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

One spark, I could blow up into flames like Joan of Arc So, a pansy club in Kentucky?

CAROLLO

These fairy people, they're everywhere. Nashville right down the road, Memphis, bus station brings em all right here.

ROY

You lost your mind. You get that sugar? Need tons of it.

BOUNCER

You one of these crazy Jesus people?

ROY

Not all of us are waiting for the Rapture with stars in our eyes. My family needs to eat. And I love running shine in my truck. She's a beauty.

The bouncer looks at the truck and laughs.

BOUNCER

Bullshit. Looks like a regular truck, right from the factory.

ROY

Boy knows his cars. Of course it looks regular. You jazz it up, but only on the inside - on the outside it has to look like original stock equipment.

CAROLLO

I've heard of em. Stock cars.

ROY

You make em look fancy, the cops pull you over for sure.

BOUNCER

So this thing is not exactly stock?

ROY

Hell no. Got tough nasty suspension, fancy breather box, fake plates.

BOUNCER

Want me to try on your next one?

ROY

Gotta know the road well enough to run em in the dark. We do money runs at midnight when the roads are clear. When the moon is new and the trees get their leaves, it's like driving with a sack over your head.

CAROLLO

One or two wrecks out there?

ROY

Try you out daytime, first. Can you do a half-spin?

BOUNCER

Half-spin?

ROY

Yank the wheel over, spin the car until you're pointing the way you came, run right back at the police when they're chasing you? In the dark?

BOUNCER

You're joking.

ROY

Kept me out of jail once. See, where you come from, the police are is civilized, you just pay em. This is the Wild West.

CAROLLO

If you fellas in the hills see any law around, asking about me, let me know?

ROY

Got a little trouble?

CAROLLO

I'm playing for time, til I go to jail. Hide here for a few months before time runs out. You're not bothered by these fairy people coming to your town?

ROY

Back during the war, the trenches.
You think we didn't have men
knocking knees with other men in
those tents? You know, every army
in history must have had men
marching cross country without
their women - I bet you every army
in history was part fairy.

CAROLLO

Navy too. Drummer boys, cabin boys.

ROY

And I make crazy piles of money
with this pansy stuff. Not just
being nice.

CAROLLO

Ivy, this boy makes our whisky.

Ivy is approaching; Ivy and Roy in a staredown.

IVY

This is the man?

ROY

You brought the preacher's girl?

IVY

You need some lemon peel in your
mash. The yellow part.

Down the street, the toughs are watching.

INT. A BARN - NIGHT

Roy, Carollo, Grady and others discuss the bar.

CAROLLO

They still out there?

ROY

They're all friends of that deputy
Beau. Bad news, all of em.

CAROLLO

We've been in this barn two weeks,
it's too close to town. Where can
we go next? Annie offered her
place.

ROY

She wants a bunch of money and she won't let us open on Sunday. Cause of God.

CAROLLO

Getty?

ROY

Nope. He's afraid they gonna burn his place down.

CAROLLO

Alister offered too.

ROY

Alister's cousin is the deputy, Beau. He's Klan. It's a trick. They're trying to flush us out.

CAROLLO

Roy, can you take a turn?

ROY

Don't shit where you eat. My stills are all up there. Klan comes hunting for you, they get me too, then you got no liquor for months. I'm not even telling you where it is.

CAROLLO

So pass the word, back Memphis, the bus station, about the hats.

ROY

Hats?

INT. THE SALOON -- DAY

Johnson, tunes his guitar while the bar folks confer.

CAROLLO

We got the preacher and the Klan heated up, time for a distraction. Round up the womenfolk once a week, we're gonna have a book club.

CLEM

I don't see your point.

CAROLLO

(smile)

Wait til the books get here, you'll see. And the other thing...

He shows them a record player.

CAROLLO (CONT'D)

We're going to the opera!

CLEM

Great, we can get us some dance music!

JOHNSON

(holds up guitar)

You already got dance music!

CAROLLO

Dance records make a racket, we're too close to town. We tell the local ladies it's for opera, we tell em it's culture.

CLEM

Culture. We could use it. Some of these fellers think soap is the exotic perfume of Persia.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Continuation, other end of the bar. Johnson records a slow blues as Clem and Homer dance; Homer looks nervously around.

CLEM

Haven't been to a dance since Bourbon Street. You said to tell you when I cut my hair.

HOMER

Looks fine. Gimme the bits from the floor.

She does, and he puts them in a tiny red cloth, tying string around the ends so it forms a little ball. Pours a drop of whisky on it.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Good luck mojo. Got hair, pig bristles, John the Conqueror root. Might get you a husband. Hide it, next to your skin.

She turns, hides it in her shirt. Crosses herself. Homer smiles.

HOMER (CONT'D)

Cross yourself all you want, can't nothing stop the mojo.

CLEM

Want to see something sinful?

She pulls up her skirt: a flask held by a garter.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Case I get thirsty. And over here, just for you Homer. Picture of Saint John. Patron saint of drinkers, protect us all. A saint, a shotgun, my mojo and my man - let the Rapture come, I'm ready, Lord!

HOMER

Criminal element looks different from back in my day. How many times you been in jail?

CLEM

Only four-five. It's civilized down there.

HOMER

Four-five. Well, you're a white girl.

Homer carries a bottle to Grady.

GRADY

For the love of God, careful with Clem.

HOMER

Listen. You of all people, ain't gonna tell me who I spend my nights with.

GRADY

It's not safe -

HOMER

Don't push your luck, boy.

INT. SALOON -- DAY

The back saloon. Coralee looks at a lyric sheet.

CORALEE

You sure I can sing this?

CAROLLO

Gotta learn some Italian. Can you read?

CORALEE

What in blazes is that?

CAROLLO

Italian.

CORALEE

(laughs)

You're pulling my leg. In-egg -

CAROLLO

Ineggiamo. Like a J.

CORALEE

And this one - dis - cheese -

CAROLLO

Dischiuso. Like a K.

CORALEE

Italian doesn't make any sense.

CAROLLO

Hey, I was seven, I had to learn English. What a mess. I before E...

CORALEE

What's this? Is that Italian too?

CAROLLO

No, that verse is in Latin.

CORALEE

Why are all the damn words twice as long?

CAROLLO

Here, just listen.

He plays the "Ineggiamo" from Cavalleria Rusticana on the record player.

CORALEE

Good Lord.

INT. SALOON -- DAY

Continuation. Carollo moves to the front saloon, with the book ladies and a crate. One is EMMA LEE, 70s. Ivy, Coralee and Ruby are there too.

CAROLLO

Well, you did it. Got yourself a bar. A pit of sin. Damnation.

GRADY

Damn. Sodom and Gomorrah. I am King of Sodom.

CLEM

You're the Queen of Sodom.

After a moment, Grady busts out laughing.

IVY

And don't you blaspheme in here.

CAROLLO

You girls are awful young, I'm not comfortable with -

CORALEE

Mister, you're forming a ladies book club. Me and Ruby read every book in our library. We're begging you for mercy.

CAROLLO

Good day, Emma Lee, how you keeping?

EMMA LEE

I'm gonna make it, one way or another. Lug around this biscuit flour. Where's your spittoon?

CLEM

Don't know as we have one.

EMMA LEE

You bringing high-tone culture to this place, don't even have a spittoon.

She steps outside to spit.

CAROLLO

Well, two pieces of good news. When the town holds their summer fair, gonna bring carnival folks from New Orleans. Gonna be one big party.

IVY

And I see you got the books.

CAROLLO

Down the city the monsignor confiscates books. Got em for free. Sure didn't want em going through the post office.

CLEM

Look at all those books!

CAROLLO

I guess New Orleans really is the sin capital of the world...Let's see. Lady Chatterley - this book is so sinful they had to go to Italy to find a printer. Moll Flanders, story about a hoor.

GRADY

Ulysses - ooh, it has an orgasm in it. Loosen up these redneck gals.

CLEM

What the hell is an orgasm?

GRADY

You know, you just don't know you know. Episode 13, you'll see. Look for the page that is really, really dog-eared.

CAROLLO

The Decameron, there's this peasant girl doesn't know the difference between a man's, you know -

CORALEE

His pecker.

EMMA LEE

His tallywacker. He's right, you are too young.

CAROLLO

And then the girl's...

EMMA LEE

Her snatch.

CLEM

Her Virginia.

EMMA LEE

Her Elsewheres. Got a lot to learn about telling a story, sonny.

CAROLLO

So a priest tells her his pecker is the devil, her snatch is hell, and if you put the devil into hell, you get to go to heaven. So she does it over and over.

IVY

So the girl wasn't too bright.

EMMA LEE

Sounds pretty clever to me.

CAROLLO

Hemingway, there's a man, let's say he had a girl, but he couldn't, you know, deliver the mail, when the time came. Girl runs off and finds a teenage bullfighter who knows all about delivering the mail... You ladies sure this stuff is alright?

EMMA LEE

Son, we're farm kin. We see animals humping each other all day.

CAROLLO

Homer, you want Uncle Tom's Cabin?

He gives him a book.

CAROLLO (CONT'D)

Probably the only copy in KentuckyThe Marquis de Sade - no, that'll just give em nightmares.

Grady looks into the bottom of the box.

GRADY

Oh, good lord, you didn't. You can't give em that one!

CAROLLO

Why not?

GRADY

You can't! I think you all know I'm
am open-minded kind of person -

CLEM

Ain't that the truth.

GRADY

That's the Babe Ruth of dirty
books! You read this, you go
straight to hell!

IVY

Well what on earth is it?

CAROLLO

Fanny Hill.

EMMA LEE

Gimme that. I ain't skeered of
nothing. I survived Grant's army,
ain't no book gonna kill me. Hmmp. Hmmp.
Fanny Hill.

CAROLLO

I don't know, Emma Lee. The priest
down there practically gave it to
me with the tongs from the
fireplace.

CLEM

(reading)
Good Lord.

GRADY

Episode 13? Ulysses?

CLEM

Eyes fastened upon her set her
pulses tingling. The first quick
hot touch of his lips. She saw a
long Roman candle going over the
trees, up, up, and in the tense
hush...her face was suffused with a
blush...nainsook knickers, the fabric
that caresses the skin... she was
trembling in every limb ... and she
wasn't ashamed. She cried to him
chokingly, the cry of a young
girl's love that has rung through
the ages. A rocket sprang and bang!
Shot blind blank and O! and burst
and it was like a sigh of O! and
cried O! O!

(MORE)

CLEM (CONT'D)

in raptures it gushed out of it a
stream of rain gold hair threads
and they shed and ah! they were all
dewy stars! Then all melted away
dewily in the grey air: all was
silent.

IVY

And Fanny Hill is hotter than that?

CAROLLO

By a mile.

CLEM

I don't exactly know what nainsook
knickers are, but I'll take a pair
in my size.

Carollo looks out the window and sees the sheriff and deputy
watching the bar.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

We see some of the smiling local women leading their confused
men indoors to deliver the mail.

GRADY (V.O.)

The women work hard but they had
free time on their hands, they were
eating up these books.

IVY (V.O.)

And suddenly their husbands found
themselves delivering the mail at
night, at lot more than they were
used to.

GRADY (V.O.)

The menfolk didn't know what the
hell was going on, but I haven't
heard they were complaining any too
much. So it was a happy little
town.

INT. THE CHURCH - DAY

Ivy and Grady sit on chairs in back of the church.

IVY

Daddy heard about the homophiles coming to town, and he was magnificent in his rage, specially since he couldn't find where they were.

GRADY

He had this brilliant idea. Bible class at the high school.

IVY

He was gonna get the kids to read the Bible all the way through, to teach everybody how evil the homophiles were.

GRADY

(grin)

And then he made his mistake. He asked for volunteers.

IVY

And the only people who were willing to read the Bible all the way through were...Coralee and Ruby. The bookworms, read every book in our library.

GRADY

The two girls who never had boyfriends.

IVY

And never will.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mason and high school kids, flashback to the 20s.

MASON

Let's congratulate the girls on getting all the way through the King James! Now, tell us what you learned!

CORALEE

You keep giving us the Leviticus, saying homophiles are sinners.

The girls flip through notes throughout the scene.

RUBY

Actually, Peter, Paul and James said Christians don't need to follow Leviticus, the Pentateuch. Laws about ham, shrimp, tattoos. And homophiles. They said ignore that stuff. Paul said it in Romans, Ephesians, Galatians, Colossians, and Hebrews.

CORALEE

"You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace..."

RUBY

"If you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law." Jesus violated the laws all over the place. The big churches said the same thing. You can't take all the Bible literally.

MASON

Now wait, what are you --

CORALEE

Catholic church. Church of England, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans.

RUBY

Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. They all said ignore the old laws. I can see why: Deuteronomy says if your bride ain't a virgin, you can kill her?

Coralee smiles.

CORALEE

Exodus. If a bull tramples someone, he must be stoned to death. Ever tried to throw a bunch of rocks at a bull? Specially a bull who likes to stomp the snot out of people? Are these people stupid? Must be city folks.

RUBY

Leviticus only talks about homophile men.

(MORE)

RUBY (CONT'D)

You know what the Bible says about girls who love girls? Lebanese?

CORALEE

Lesbians.

RUBY

Lesbians. Bible says nothing about em.

MASON

I will not have you using that word in this building! Love means one husband and one wife.

RUBY

Those men in the Old Testament had two wives, and men in the New Testament abandoned their wives to go preaching.

CORALEE

God's plan wasn't one man and one woman. Genesis. God didn't try to partner man with a woman at first. He tried to partner man with an animal. Woman was an afterthought.

RUBY

The first great king of Israel, David, was a homophile. Jonathan loved David. He took off his clothes and gave them to David. David and Jonathan "became one".

CORALEE

Jonathan made David swear he loved him. David promised to keep away from women. They said they shared a love surpassing the love of women.

RUBY

(grinning)
Surpassing the love of women!

MASON

You are profaning the name of the king of Israel! Killed Goliath!

CORALEE

Jonathan's love for David made him defy his father, because the father said the relationship was shameful.

(MORE)

CORALEE (CONT'D)

They had secret meetings, they
kissed, they wept.

RUBY

They made a covenant together. It
sounds like they were married.

MASON

Those men in the saloon. What they
are doing is unnatural!

CORALEE

Unnatural? It happens all over.
Swans, ducks. Homophile penguins
and dolphins.

Ruby checks her notes - anything scientific delights her.

RUBY

Sheep and apes. Elephants and
giraffes. I love science!
Dragonflies have homophile sex even
though it can damage their heads.

CORALEE

Makes me think maybe they're doing
it wrong.

RUBY

You know what's unnatural? The
Bible, hate to break it to you.

CORALEE

Angels and dragons. Demons and
unicorns.

MASON

Where do you get the gall --

RUBY

Talking snake, talking donkey.
Witches talking to the dead. Gospel
of Matthew, you got zombies. The
tombs broke open, and the people
who had died were raised to life,
they came out of the tombs.

CORALEE

Jesus violated nature with miracle
after miracle. It's why they say
he's divine.

MASON

This country was built by God-fearing men, and God hates homophiles.

RUBY

The founding fathers wore wigs and lace and satin tights. I seen the pictures.

CORALEE

Corinthians. "However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you." Sounds like homophiles were just born like they are. Made that way by God.

MASON

These people made a choice, they choose to defy the revealed word!

CORALEE

You think they chose to be homophile cause it's gonna make their lives easier? Hunted like criminals all their lives? Even if it was a choice...so what?

RUBY

Love is always a choice. Always. Just like hate is a choice.

EXT. FRONT OF CHURCH - DAY

Coralee and Ruby exit the church. Coralee looks worried; Ruby tries not to laugh. Behind them, in the doorway, is Mason, arms folded, agitated.

IVY (V.O.)

Coralee and Ruby got sent home. Didn't see em at school that Monday.

INT. THE CHURCH -- NIGHT

HARLEY, the elderly sheriff, is trying to talk sense to the preacher.

MASON

So when are you do something? Got these gangsters all over town, the homophiles.

HARLEY

Can't do nothing til I catch em breaking the law, gotta find that saloon. All I got is me and that boy Beau, he's more trouble than he's worth.

MASON

Maybe you should step back, let Beau keep an eye on things. Whole town is coming apart at the seams. Read these filthy books.

HARLEY

Reverend, we were wondering what you were going to say in church next Sunday?

MASON

You want my sermon ahead of time?

HARLEY

You've pushed us all way out there.

MASON

We're winning the war! We banned liquor! It's in the Constitution! You ever seen the hand of God so clear?

HARLEY

Brewers can't brew beer, now the whole country is drinking cheap whisky out of flasks.

ROY

And getting hammered every night.

HARLEY

Up north there's thirty thousand of these illegal speakeasies -

MASON

Across America?

HARLEY

Thirty thousand just in New York city. Police haven't got a prayer of fighting it.

(MORE)

HARLEY (CONT'D)

You did this for Jesus, but liquor is the national religion now, because you told em they couldn't have it. Those Jews and Eye-talian Catholics you love so much, they're millionaires, selling liquor -

ROY

Shooting up the streets.

HARLEY

Even down here, half the trucks in this county are jazzed up under the hood so they can run liquor through the hills. Ain't that so, Roy?

ROY

You're asking me?

HARLEY

Have you seen your daughter lately?

MASON

My daughter?

ROY

Back in the day, you never see women drink in public. Now they're out in the saloons. Darkies drinking and dancing with white women.

HARLEY

And the queer bars, those cocksuckers have their own saloons all over - you created that, with the prohibition.

ROY

And the music they listen to? Colored music. That jazz stuff, blues, ragtime. The devil singing to our people. This is the world you created, with this holy war on liquor. It's ricocheting on you.

Harley is on his way out the door.

HARLEY

I gotta say, you got the Midas touch. My job is law enforcement. In two months you managed to bring the Klan, bunch of queers, and Italian criminals into my town.

(MORE)

HARLEY (CONT'D)

Thank you so much. Next week it'll
be a bunch of goddamn pirates.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Beau and his toughs watch the train depot. Clem is watching everything that happens.

BEAU

Right, where are these cocksuckers
coming from? What do we know?

KLANSMAN

Train, buses, cars.

BEAU

So how do they know where to go?

KLANSMAN

Somehow they get the word out. They
got a new place every two weeks or
so. Where's the sheriff?

BEAU

Sheriff's gone soft on us. We need
to go back to the old way. Keep
your eyes out. Anybody who's a
stranger in town.

A train arrives. They see Ruby put on a hat and tug the brim;
a new arrival sees her and follows. It happens twice.

BEAU (CONT'D)

See that boy with the hat?

Another new arrival, JIMMY, holds a hat. They cross to him.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Hey, we got a fish on the line.

JIMMY

What the -

BEAU

Hold on up, there.

JIMMY

Who are you?

BEAU

Well, I'm a sheriff's deputy. Ask
you again, who are you?

JIMMY
Name's Jimmy.

BEAU
Where you from?

JIMMY
I'm not from around here.

BEAU
How you end up in our little town?
Got lost? Fancy suit for Kentucky.
Silk tie. Got a lot of strangers
these days. I don't like strangers.
No indeed.

He looks at his posse.

BEAU (CONT'D)
Go easy on this one. Give him a
nice Kentucky howdy and put him
back in the train, so he can go
back tell his little friends it's
time they went back to where they
came from.

The tough pulls him into an alley and punches him. A few
punches and then a shotgun blast rings out.

KLANSMAN
Shoot, it's that girl Clem.

BEAU
Who?

KLANSMAN
Friend of that Grady boy. Every
time we find one of these sissy
boys, there she is with that
shotgun.

Beau steps back onto Main Street and there she is, gun still
smoking. They stare at each other for a minute. She reloads.

BEAU
Well, isn't that interesting.
Alright, enough for one day.

Grady runs down the street, kneels, picks up Jimmy's head,
almost like a Pieta. Ivy watches as Grady brushes the boy's
hair out of the way. She smiles, thinking it looks romantic,
but Grady is all business.

GRADY

Hey, girl, come here. You heard of that new stuff, Mercurochrome?

IVY

Doc has it. I'll go see if he's sober.

GRADY

Bring me needle and thread too.

She runs off. Homer arrives.

HOMER

Another nancy boy gets a whupping.

GRADY

This is just a whupping. You heard about the lynching? Couple years back, colored boy helped a white girl with her car. Strung him up. Not half a mile that way. These people find out about Clem and -

Homer remains calm.

HOMER

Gonna tell you one more time. You mind your business. Stitch up this sissy boy and go home.

Beau and his posse round a corner, where they can still see Jimmy and Grady.

KLANSMAN

Beau, you kicked that boy awful hard. Right in the head. He was down.

Beau points to Jimmy, speaks calmly and quietly.

BEAU

This boy, we found one, there's a hundred more out there. This town, it's not just a town. It's our castle. Where we keep our wives and daughters.

He points to the surrounding hills.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Look up the hills. Most of this county is colored. We're surrounded. This town is the Alamo.

(MORE)

BEAU (CONT'D)

Used to be, colored folks knew better than to come to town except Sunday. They cause trouble in town, we beat em down. Only way to prevent chaos.

Points to Jimmy.

BEAU (CONT'D)

We got a new army marching toward our castle. The enemies of God Almighty. The only thing keeping em out, was the law. But now the sheriff don't respect the law, he's turning a blind eye, he's past it. Harley let the enemy inside our castle, and if they can get in...

He points to the hills.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Those other folks get in. Whole 20th century comes crashing in, big city ideas, New York morality. Only thing stopping it is me and you. We find that bar, shut it down, do whatever needs to be done. We understand each other?

INT. THE SALOON - DAY

A man hollers outside. Ivy, Homer, Grady, Roy and Carollo do bits of saloon business. Clem reads.

MAN (V.O.)

Damn cocksuckers.

IVY

Of all the dirty, nasty towns, which one's your favorite? New Orleans?

CAROLLO

(smiles)

Galveston Texas. In the harbor, a whole row of ships loaded with liquor - Rum Row. Cops mind their business, streets are safe. Ferris wheel, roller coaster. Air conditioning, blows cool air into the saloons. Got a beauty parade, the girls march in swim suits.

GRADY

Hey, Sam, you know what I'd really like? It's silly. A world-class chandelier.

CAROLLO

Chandelier? Only a guy like you.

GRADY

I want this to be a palace. Get a real piano. Mirror behind the bar. Get the splinters out of the floors.

CAROLLO

We're not going to spend big on the decorations. We can't.

GRADY

Why not?

CAROLLO

Because they're gonna burn you down. You know that, right? There's no way they let you stay in once place for good, so we move every few weeks. We spend money on liquor, bartender, boy on the guitar. We go big with furniture, it's like waving a red flag at a bull.

IVY

You make sin look like heaven, they think you're mocking God.

GRADY

So we're doomed?

CAROLLO

No. You just have to think on your feet. When they burn this place down, where do you go next? Do you know? A great saloon is like a church - it's not the building, it's the people.

GRADY

Maybe we should move now.

CAROLLO

No! Let em burn you down. Let em think they beat you. Go down Main Street, your face hanging low.

(MORE)

CAROLLO (CONT'D)

The price you pay for pissing off
the locals.

GRADY

Then we keep moving from place to
place?

CAROLLO

Once we finally wear this place
out, you roll out with cash in your
pocket.

CLEM

(reading)

Oh my Lord.

ROY

What's she reading over there?

IVY

The farm report.

EXT. THE STREET -- NIGHT

Coralee and Ruby carry Ivy down the street; she's been
injured. Burned.

A wild crowd is outside the saloon, which is burning,
including some yokels following TRIXIE, a black man in drag.
Beau watches.

TRIXIE

Are you the state police?

POLICEMAN

Yeah, what's this all about?

Trixie looks over his shoulder. The cop does too, and sees
the local deputies and an ugly mob.

TRIXIE

Just get me out.

POLICEMAN

What if I let em have you? Hands on
your head boy, you going to jail.
Violation of article 78 of the
state code.

He cuffs Trixie, puts him in his car. And laughs.

TRIXIE

Article 78?

POLICEMAN

Unlawful feeding of garbage to pigs. Always wanted to use that one. Drop you at the bus station. You can go on and git.

Back on the street.

CLEM

This is why I told Grady - closing time, everybody go home in pairs.

ROY

Did Grady tell the preacher about what happened to Ivy? The fire?

CLEM

Hell no, he's at the doctor's. Okay, listen, got some people need a hand getting to the doctor. And we need folks for the bucket brigade. Who's got buckets handy?

She walks over to some yokels. Beau joins them.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Boys, let's go, need to get water on this thing!

They don't budge.

CLEM (CONT'D)

This is your town, could be your houses go up next, we don't put this out! Aren't you the deputy?

BEAU

I work for the sheriff, not you. Don't know nothing about fires.

Jimmy approaches.

JIMMY

Where the buckets at? Come on, let's go.

A group of gay bar customers follows him to a nearby store where buckets are being assembled.

At the church, around the corner. Carollo approaches.

MASON

What the hell you want here? I was here all night, I got witnesses! You can't blame that fire on me!

CAROLLO

Yes, I know, you'd never do a thing like that, without other people to hide behind. I came to let you know, your daughter Ivy? She was in the saloon when the fire started.

MASON

Where is she?

CAROLLO

Took her to the doctor. They're treating her for burns. Her arm, and her face. So I'm giving you a free pass tonight.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Grady sits by Ivy's bedside; she sleeps. She has burns and some of her hair is gone.

INT. THE CHURCH -- DAY

Mason talks to Beau, Roy, the sheriff, a few others. A boy fiddles with a guitar in a corner. Mason is good and riled.

MASON

Open your book, read what happened to Sodom. The Lord didn't pick and choose his sinners, no no no. He wiped out the whole town. He even killed the girl who wanted to look back on the Lord's work. This sodomite could destroy us all.

BEAU

May need to do something drastic. That fire didn't do the job.

MASON

Well, I heard folks complain about my sermons. I went to the Baptists in Nashville. Got a young preacher coming to us. If he seems like the right sort, I'm gonna marry Ivy off to him. Settle her down.

BEAU

I came back from the war, thinking she was gonna marry me.

MASON

What can I say. A woman's mind changes.

Boy begins playing "Devil Got My Woman".

MASON (CONT'D)

Boy, what is that? Devil got what?

BOY

Colored boy taught me to play it.

People file out and Ivy enters.

MASON

Everything's getting unsettled in this town, I'm starting to think about how to set things right, for the future. Now you've been a real help to me, over the church, with the money, the weekly bulletin. You got the makings of a right smart preacher's wife.

IVY

Preacher?

MASON

So, convention last winter, you know I meet the other preachers.

IVY

Good God, it's not Alvin, is it?

MASON

No. And watch your mouth in my house. I saw Old Man Dundee...

IVY

Oh God. Percy Dundee? His son?

MASON

Now you hold on -

IVY

The man's an animal.

MASON

Ivy.

IVY

You remember? He beat on that colored boy for spilling tea on him at the picnic. I'd rather marry Alvin.

MASON

Percy remembers you, Ivy, his father spoke to me -

IVY

I can't believe this.

MASON

Ivy, you been getting a little wild and woolly, I think Percy is the man to settle you down.

IVY

So do I get a say in this?

INT. THE NEW SALOON -- DAY

Carollo, Grady and Clem stand in front of jars of liquor. Ivy watches. Homer is setting up at the other end of the bar.

CAROLLO

Okay, let's test your memory. Ivy, you want to be a real bartender? It's Saturday night, customers are three deep, hollering orders. French 75.

IVY

Sugar and water, you boil it in the morning, chill it. Gin and lemon.

CAROLLO

Mint julep.

IVY

Take mint leaves and bruise them gently. Bourbon and sugar. Been practicing.

CAROLLO

Bee's knees.

IVY

Let honey dissolve in water so it doesn't get lumpy. Gin and lemon.

CAROLLO
Angel Face. Show me.

IVY
(actually mixes this one)
Gin, apple brandy, apricot brandy
if we had it, rub the rim with an
orange peel. So, got a new one?

Grady tastes her work, approves, and begins mixing a new one.

GRADY
The Hanky Panky. Martini, Fernet
Branca, two jars of ice. You don't
shake it, you strain it through the
ice five times exactly. So you cool
it without making it weak.

IVY
Now you're just showing off.

He slides a jar toward Ivy.

IVY (CONT'D)
Oh, baby. It's not sweet at all.
It's like love in a jar.

GRADY
Love in a jar.

HOMER
Klan throws one of their bonfires,
always seems to be Saturday night.
Tell Roy to deliver the liquor
Sunday while they're in church. No
sense letting it all burn up.

CLEM
We struck gold with the new house.
Down that-away got the bus station
- the pansy crowd, they hop right
off the bus and come down our way.

HOMER
And the army fort - it's a real
gusher. The colonel has a list of
bars that are off-limits, so right
away the soldier boys know where we
are.

CLEM
And boy does this crowd love a
young man in uniform.

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

Continuation. Army boy enters the saloon. Rednecks roll up in a truck and throw a hammer through the window. Grady is coming down the steps with a baseball bat. Carollo's musclemen pursue in a car.

TRIXIE
They're getting away!

CLEM
Not a chance. Carollo's muscle boys cut em off in that Ford.

TRIXIE
They're beating the stuffing out of em.

And indeed they are.

CLEM
Carollo doesn't horse around. Two more Klan boys for the doctor's office.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Continuation. Bouncer enters, bloody knuckles.

BOUNCER
Can we sit in a corner somewhere?

CLEM
Away from the clientele?

BOUNCER
I just do what Sam tells me. I'm not here to pick up your guys, and they better not be trying to pick me up.

CLEM
Got more Jam in the house!

BOUNCER
Jam?

CLEM
That's you, boys who like girls. Regular folks. Jam. Cause you're so sweet.
(to the clientele)
Girls, police coming.
(MORE)

CLEM (CONT'D)

Keep your hands above the table, no monkeying around. You boys ain't gonna get me sent back to jail.

HOMER

One at a time in the men's room.

Clem passes a bucket.

CLEM

Gimme the liquor, right down the sink, I'll make it good later. When the lights go all the way up, they're coming in.

Harley approaches the muscle boys.

HARLEY

Evening. Having a night on the town?

BOUNCER

We're not customers, believe me. We work for -

HARLEY

I know who you work for. Had a couple of local boys got beat pretty good. You know anything about that?

BOUNCER

Just ordering some tea with my associate here.

CLEM

They been in here all night.

HARLEY

Don't insult my intelligence.

Harley sees Trixie, black man in a dress.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

Damn. And I was almost done for the night. What's your name, boy?

TRIXIE

Trixie.

HARLEY

Barkeep? Let me make a few things clear to you. Don't be assuming I'm stupid.

(MORE)

HARLEY (CONT'D)

I'm turning a blind eye to an awful lot. This place is supposed to be a secret - comes out in the open, I shut you down.

He picks up a bottle which has fallen.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

I'm on a short leash. Town council appointed me, I'm past retirement age. This goes any further, they get rid of me and pick a new kind of sheriff. You know the kind I mean?

He comes behind the bar, smashes the bottle. A tiny fragment cuts Clem's cheek.

HARLEY (CONT'D)

That kind. You want that kind of sheriff in this town?

CLEM

No sir.

HARLEY

And one thing you can't do in Kentucky, is wear that. This here, gonna ruin the party for all of you. Are you even from here?

TRIXIE

Up in New York, Chicago, they put a ban on the drag. Put pants on or go to jail. So we're all on the road. Everywhere.

HARLEY

Like they said. Put pants on or go to jail. I'm telling you once. And you, my friend, will not like our jail. And they won't like you.

He leaves.

CLEM

And Trixie? Don't be tricking for money here. If you were white, you might talk your way out of trouble, but you, a colored man, and then...

TRIXIE

Go ahead, say it.

CLEM

A fairy.

TRIXIE

Up north, the word is
"temperamental".

CLEM

Might be easier for you to hide in
Memphis. New Orleans.

TRIXIE

But who wants to hide?

CLEM

You do! Believe me. Okay girls,
show's over. Tonight we play the
radio, Barn Dance show out of
Nashville if the weather
cooperates, you can dance your
shoelaces off. Later we got that
Johnson boy right here in the
joint.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

The back saloon. BOBBY and EARL, two gay men, whisper in a
corner. Earl is in his late 20s, Bobby younger. Bobby
whispers while Earl drinks hard.

BOBBY

Now listen, things awful tight now.

EARL

Are they?

BOBBY

You been helping, I appreciate it.

EARL

Do you?

BOBBY

Now I'm thinking, the money, we
make it like a regular thing.

EARL

You think? You seen the store?
Empty. Things are hard all over.

BOBBY

Don't I know it. And how hard would things be if I told folks what we've been up to? And I'm so young too. Taken advantage of, by an older man. That store, that would be the end, wouldn't it? I got a gal I want to marry. So you're gonna take care of Little Sugar. I'll be by each Friday.

He exits. A gay man, Buford, in his 20s, enters.

EARL

Hello little boy, you're the one I want.

BUFORD

Hello? My name is -

CLEM

No names. Anybody gets word, you can get fired. Make one up.

BUFORD

Had a beverage or two?

EARL

I have been over-served. Had a young lad, he turned sour on me.

BUFORD

Found another man?

EARL

Found a woman. Getting married. Looking for a tidy place to hide from himself. With my money. Just sold my store, loaded with cash.

BUFORD

I don't want to take advantage, are you sure you want to -

EARL

Tonight more than ever.

He points to the bar tabs on the bar.

EARL (CONT'D)

My good man, I will take the smallest bill you have. Good batch. Tastes like lemon.

GRADY

(to the bouncers)

Hey, fellas. Uh, thanks. You really know how to drive that thing now.

MUSCLE GUY

Got yourself a baseball bat. Well, I gotta say, you got balls. Didn't see that coming. Carollo's sending more of us up, keep an eye on things.

GRADY

You can come out now, Ivy.

Ivy enters, with scars, bandages and shorter hair.

IVY

I need to get home. Maybe one of the Carollo boys can -

GRADY

No, I'll do it.

IVY

You're crazy. Those boys wanna kill you!

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuation. Grady takes Ivy's good arm, a book in his hand, walks her down the middle of Main Street. Locals watch through curtains.

IVY

Maybe this will fool em.

Ivy kisses him in front of the church. He laughs.

GRADY

I think they know all about me, but it was sweet of you to give it a try. Your hair's growing back real nice.

IVY

My father has my husband picked out. A preacher. What am I going to do?

GRADY

You can't make peace with your father?

She shakes her head.

IVY

Abraham Brown. Colored boy murdered in broad daylight. They made a party of it. My father, next Sunday, said nothing. He was loving the whole thing. Now he wants me to marry a man just like him. Boy with a big mouth and big hands.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuation. Grady walks the street back to the bar alone, singing a blues song, holding the book. Emma Lee, in the doorway, looks at the Klan boys warily, and spits her chaw.

GRADY

Emma Lee. Beautiful dress you have on.

EMMA LEE

I'll be damned.

Grady sees toughs watching him, including Bobby. One of them spits chaw on Grady's trouser leg.

SPITTER

Stee-ribe down the middle. You don't belong here.

GRADY

Son, I don't belong anywhere...Well, Bobby. Answer to a prayer. Been looking all over for you.

BOBBY

And what in the world do you think you're doing here?

BEAU

Come to bring back my hammer?

Grady smiles.

GRADY

You fellas got that look on your faces like you think I'm coming for your womenfolk. And I'm really, really not.

BEAU
How long do you faggots think
you're gonna last here?

GRADY
Faggot? Faggot?

He puts on a tragic look and theatrically dabs one eye, and
then the other, with a hankie.

GRADY (CONT'D)
What a terrible word.
(points)
What you think about that, Little
Sugar?

BOBBY
You leave me out of -

He stops himself.

GRADY
You know about Little Sugar? Ask
him why Earl sold his store. Little
Sugar spends an awful lot of time
talking to the sheriff. About all
sorts of things.

He points at the yokels.

GRADY (CONT'D)
He knows where every one of your
stills is, all your trucks. Never
build a still on your own land, law
gonna get you!

He holds up the book.

GRADY (CONT'D)
Earl asked me to give this back to
you. He said you're sentimental.

BOBBY
Don't know what you're talking
about!

GRADY
That so? Pity. I love Walt Whitman.

Grady walks over and looks the spitter in the eye.

SPITTER
What you looking at me for?

GRADY

I sing the body electric; the expression of a well-made man appears not only in his face. It is in his limbs, his hips. The strong, sweet, supple quality he has, strikes through the cotton and flannel. You linger to see his back, and the back of his neck and shoulder.

The swimmer naked as he swims through the transparent green-shine, or lies with his face up. He rolls silently to and fro in the heave of the water.

And then he walks over to Beau.

BEAU

You watch your step, boy.

GRADY

The young fellow hoeing corn. The sleigh-driver guiding his six horses through the crowd. The wrestle of wrestlers, two apprentice boys, quite grown, lusty, good-natured, native-born, out on the vacant lot at sundown, the coats and caps thrown down, the embrace of love and resistance, the upper-hold and the under-hold, the hair ruffled over and blinding the eyes.

And then over to Bobby.

BOBBY

Grady, please --

GRADY

The march of firemen, the play of masculine muscle through clean-setting trousers and waist-straps. Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers....You take care, Little Sugar.

Looks at the locals.

GRADY (CONT'D)

This is a tough little town.

INT. SALOON -- NIGHT

Johnson plays devil-inspired blues, then flips his guitar to pound out the beat on the back, still singing. The floor is packed with dancers.

EXT. SALOON -- NIGHT

A ruckus outside the saloon. Drunks fighting with knives. Clem and a bouncer are on the front steps. Ivy is in the doorway behind them, holding a bar rag.

BOUNCER

So which is it this time? The homophiles, the mafia boys, the Klan?

Clem marches out, passing a bouncer.

BOUNCER (CONT'D)

I got this one.

CLEM

Never you mind. Hey! Told you Friday!

Drunk takes a swing at her and she grabs his shirt.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Did you honest to God take a poke at me?

DRUNK

No -

CLEM

Did you? Your wife came here looking for you. You need to sober up and get back there. Your corn's coming in.

DRUNK

Only place I can get a drink in town.

CLEM

Well, you had your drink and the next ten people too. Leave some for the rest of us.

One of the other drunks sneers at her.

SECOND DRUNK

Where's your gun?

CLEM

Don't need no gun.

Carollo approaches.

CAROLLO

We talked about this, didn't we?
Come on, I'll get you home again.

Puts his arm around the drunk. Beau arrives.

BEAU

What the hell is going on?

CLEM

Not a thing. Boy feeling poorly.

INT. SALOON -- DAY

Ruby is doing Coralee's hair. Ivy, behind the bar, watches Johnson tune his guitar.

CORALEE

I should cut it soon.

RUBY

Child, you look beautiful.

IVY

(to Johnson)

How you do that? Like you sing
between the white keys and the
black keys.

JOHNSON

You just do it.

Sings with flatted thirds and fifths, as he plays. She approaches.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Sweet little Ivy, gonna let her
hair hang down.

IVY

Don't be putting me in one of your
love songs, they'll beat the straw
out of you! I ain't letting my hair
down for you. What's left of it.

JOHNSON

(sings)

Sweet Ivy, why you go breaking my
heart?

IVY

Never heard a man sing like you do.

JOHNSON

Being colored in the delta, it's
the bottom of the bottom. Down with
the animals. Like it don't even
matter what I feel. So I sing about
what I feel.

IVY

Teach me one. I can't be singing no
songs about the devil.

JOHNSON

They're all about the devil.

IVY

So how you do all that slidy stuff?

JOHNSON

Well, you cheat. Listen to the
tuning. Even with no fingers, got
yourself a chord. So you do that
first chord, open, and then the
second chord -

He whips out a knife and she shrieks. He laughs.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Good lord, girl. Slide the knife up
to the five here, got yourself a
new chord. Up to seven, got
another.

IVY

You make music with a knife?

JOHNSON

Not always. Used to bust off the
neck of a liquor bottle.

IVY

Those are my choices, a knife and a
busted bottle?

She pulls out an ornate hairbrush.

IVY (CONT'D)
Watch and learn.

She manages a few chords with the brush.

JOHNSON
Play the blues with a white lady's
hairbrush? What is this world
coming to?

Takes the guitar.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Gimme that, gonna drive the devil
right out of this here guitar, then
where will I be? You gotta be the
whitest girl in the world.

IVY
Can you show me some more Sunday?

JOHNSON
Play for the white folks Sunday.
Course the songs are a little
different.

Does absurd exaggerated verse of "Camptown Races". She
smiles.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Give the people what they want.

Mrs. Johnson enters.

MRS. JOHNSON
Only reason I went along with this
saloon, all of the girls here like
girls. What you up to?

IVY
It's just music.

MRS. JOHNSON
Devil's music.

Grady enters, Johnson heads out the door.

GRADY
You okay back home? With your
father?

IVY
Leave him be. Please? Everybody
thinks he's getting mean.
(MORE)

IVY (CONT'D)

He's afraid. Soldiers back from Europe, new ideas, folks talk about what they hear on the radio, girls go on dates in cars, women got the vote. Nobody listens to Daddy. And you ain't helping.

GRADY

But you're here almost every night.

IVY

Only time I feel like I'm alive.

GRADY

Like being let out of a cage? Trust me, I know.

IVY

What you did with those boys out there? Bravest thing I ever saw.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SALOON - DAY

Continuation. Beau spots Johnson.

BEAU

Evening. Not sure if I caught your name.

JOHNSON

Johnson.

BEAU

Mister Johnson. County law. If I find any vagrants in this county, I have to put em to work.

JOHNSON

I live with Homer, and last night I made more money than you did this week.

He saunters away. Ivy comes out. Beau pulls out a flask.

BEAU

Ivy. Got some corn squeezins. Haven't had a chance to visit with you for a while. Got yourself some new friends.

IVY
Corn squeezins. Are you serious?
You and your little posse just set
me on fire.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Roy uses a half-spin to elude a cursing Beau and is shocked to hear Beau firing at him. Beau loses Roy, and pulls up behind a truck belonging to one of his buddies. He gets out and approaches his buddy. Furious.

BEAU
Lost Roy. Where did that boy Grady
get to? I want to know where he is.
Now!

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

A boy runs up to Grady.

BOY
Grady, come quick, it's Ivy!

Grady rounds the corner, finds half a dozen toughs waiting for him. They give him a whupping.

BEAU
Okay, he's had enough. Next time
you get a nigger necktie. I'll make
sure Ivy's there to watch.

Beau and his posse disperse. Clem emerges onto the street, walks and looks, sees Grady, and runs to him. Ivy sees him too, screams, and runs after.

INT. SALOON -- NIGHT

Ivy cleans Grady's wounds.

IVY
Well, here we are at the doctor's
again. You're gonna be purple for a
few days.

GRADY
Takes a little longer than it used
to.

IVY

This happened before? Stupid question.

GRADY

We tossed em some red meat tonight, maybe they leave us alone for a while?

IVY

Stupid question. We got to stop this.

GRADY

Remember how this started? It was fun, practical joke on your father. Now it's war with Beau and his army. Been waiting for this. After all the bullies on the street where I played, all the sadists at school, all the police and their batons. Not backing down again.

IVY

So all the bullies you ever met, Beau is the one you want to take on? He's a crazy man.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mason with the Sunday school kids again.

IVY (V.O.)

Daddy tried to have another go at the girls. Save their souls.

Mason is losing control of the discussion and his temper.

MASON

Jesus wants us to uphold the laws of the Old Testament.

CORALEE

Jesus said sometimes the Old Testament laws are wrong. Sermon on the mount.

RUBY

The old law says, hate your enemies, but I say, love them.

CORALEE

The old law says, give your wife a divorce, but Jesus says that's adultery.

RUBY

Jesus said the old law taking an eye for an eye is the work of the devil. Turn the other cheek instead!

MASON

You are talking about the revealed law of the Almighty!

CORALEE

Read Matthew, Jesus says don't listen to men who claim they talk to God.

RUBY

That erases Moses and all Old Testament law.

MASON

The God I know sees all and knows all. He made all.

RUBY

If he knows everything, why did the Jews have to mark their doors on Passover? Didn't he even know which ones were the Israelites praying to him every night?

MASON

God proved his divinity when he created a perfect universe.

CORALEE

In almost all of the universe, no life can survive. It's empty.

MASON

What about the human body, it's not just perfect, it's a miracle!

CORALEE

Perfect? The appendix can outright kill you.

RUBY

Tonsils, nipples on men, baldness and wrinkles, all the smells?

CORALEE

Blindness and deafness, rotting
teeth, hemorrhoids, warts, colic,
cancer...?

RUBY

If Ford made a car like that, it
would be sent back, they couldn't
sell it. The guy who built it would
be fired.

CORALEE

I know women were supposed to be
God's afterthought, but seriously -

RUBY

Birthing babies!

CORALEE

Yeah, what kind of near-sighted ham-
fisted ten-thumb tinker designed
the process of childbirth? I mean,
was the Lord drunk that day?

RUBY

And he put the clitoris in
completely the wrong place? A
little joke on the girls?

CORALEE

Like building a car and putting the
starter button under the damn hood!
It's Cli-TOR-is.

RUBY

It's CLIT-oris.

Mason's face falls.

IVY (V.O.)

Daddy didn't know what a clitoris
was. Week later he found out, the
girls got expelled from high
school.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SALOON -- DAY

Emma Lee crosses Main Street, spits chaw. Coralee walks down
Main Street singing the Ineggiamo; she sees Carollo looking
at her.

CORALEE

What?

CAROLLO
You're flat.

She looks at her chest.

CORALEE
And you're rude. Talking about my
lulus right in the middle of Main
Street.

CAROLLO
Your singing. You're flat. You're a
soprano! Fly high!

EMMA LEE
Fanny Hill.

Emma Lee carries a shovel and a book, she hands him the book
and then holds up a finger and thumb.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)
Fanny Hill. That close to heart
failure.

CAROLLO
Emma Lee. You had some sort of
episode?

EMMA LEE
No. My husband. The third time,
anyway. Have Ivy give that book to
the mayor's wife, that'll
straighten her right out.

CAROLLO
That'll get people talking about
Ivy.

EMMA LEE
That book ought to be sold with a
doctor's prescription.

CAROLLO
What are you up to with the shovel?
Doing some planting? Need any help?

EMMA LEE
No, I'm gonna do this by myself.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Grady with the record player and Ivy who is drying glasses.

GRADY

Brace yourself. This song is practically a mortal sin. Twenty, thirty years ago they have the premiere of this opera in Rome, the most Catholic place on earth.

IVY

An opera?

GRADY

Carollo got me onto this back home. It's called Tosca. Just plain demonic. You got this choir, singing in church Sunday. Outside, there's the villain, singing about his evil plots, gonna kill everybody, rape the girl, Tosca.

IVY

Oh good Lord!

GRADY

And he's singing it all along with the church people - he's mocking them while they're praying!

IVY

So?

GRADY

Girl, this was Rome! You do not mock the church right down the street from the Pope! So the premiere. They sing this devil's music in front of the priests - here, listen to this last bit.

He plays the last two minutes of Act 1 of TOSCA. She is emotionally overcome and takes a second to catch her breath.

IVY

Turn it off, it's too much!

She points at the record player.

IVY (CONT'D)

That is the most EVIL thing I've ever heard in my life.

GRADY

You want it again.

IVY

Oh Good Lord yes. Whole thing, from the beginning... We're going straight to hell, aren't we?

GRADY

On the express train.

IVY

(laughs)

Feel like I been asleep. Somehow you woke me up, with that devil music. Like I'm taking my first breath. Hey. When a woman is in bed with a man...

Points at the record player.

IVY (CONT'D)

It's like that, isn't it?

GRADY

Once you get the hang of it. You'll see. Hey, Tosca, this is just Act One.

IVY

Oh Lord, don't tell me how it ends!

GRADY

This is Italian opera. Every dies. It's bloody. It's glorious.

He puts the needle back to the beginning of Scarpia's terrifying ARIA.

IVY

Oh my Lord.

[If you want to use these bits of Tosca, here's one version. For the first cue in our scene, we'd just be using a bit of the ending, starting round the 2:30 mark, and then the first minute of the cut for the second cue.]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0euYKIMfv4I>]

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE BAR - DAY

A young man named DAVID hears TOSCA wafting down the street. He smiles.

DAVID

Puccini in Kentucky.

He finds the bar. He knocks and Grady opens the door.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This has got to be the place.

They both smile.

INT. SALOON, IN THE CELLAR -- NIGHT

Ruby teaches Ivy to dance; Coralee, Buford and Earl watch.

IVY
You know you're too young to be here?

RUBY
Ivy, the whole place is illegal! Alright, you got the Charleston without knocking over the furniture. You think she's ready for the tango?

CORALEE
She's a Baptist. She does the tango, she's going to hell.

IVY
Lorda mercy.

RUBY
It's nice and slow. Sorta romantic.

IVY
You lead again?

RUBY
I always lead. Just ask her.

She indicates Coralee. She tangos slowly with Ivy.

RUBY (CONT'D)
See how we did that? ...Your hair tried to make an escape.

She puts Ivy's hair back in place, smiles at her.

IVY
I really do like boys, you know. Sorry!

RUBY
Yes, I know, you're hopeless.

IVY

The dance was nice. I need to get back.

RUBY

So now it's just us.

INT. SALOON -- NIGHT

Continuation. The two gay couples have gone downstairs. Earl and Buford chat on a couch while Ruby and Coralee chat on another. The lights go off and on rapidly. Buford jumps up, grabs Ruby and pushes her toward Earl, and then he sits with Coralee. The two men kiss the women; two policemen come down for a look, and leave.

BUFORD

Hang on. These knuckleheads, there could be more of em.

The two couples curl up together.

CORALEE

So, you finally got to kiss a girl.

BUFORD

Not so bad really.

CORALEE

Not so bad?

BUFORD

Compared to getting beat up by deputies.

Coralee laughs, leans her head on his shoulder.

CORALEE

Fuck you.

EARL

Are they gone?

CORALEE

Quick on your feet. Thanks, sweetie.

RUBY

You moving in on my gal?

BUFORD

Absolutely.

RUBY

Knock you into the middle of next week!

BUFORD

It won't happen again. Trust me...

Ruby laughs and throws her arm around Coralee.

CORALEE

What if I was born in another town? What if I never found all this? Who could I tell? Go out with one boy after another, wondering what's wrong with me?

BUFORD

Lucky. You found each other when you were young. You know how hard it is for the rest of us to find The Big One? Hadn't been for the saloon, I never would have found Earl.

RUBY

Clem double-booked us. You boys want the room first? I want to take my time with Coralee. Don't want to be rushed.

BUFORD

Sure thing.

RUBY

Hey. Wait a minute.

CORALEE

What?

RUBY

Coralee. What if we got married?

EARL

Honey, it's illegal everywhere.

RUBY

No no. The four of us, we're together every night anyway. What if we had a house?

CORALEE

So who marries who?

RUBY
Toss a coin?

CORALEE
Ruby. Are you serious about this?

RUBY
Do you love me?

CORALEE
Yes.

RUBY
To the last trump of judgment?

CORALEE
To the last...whatever it is. By the time I got to the book of Revelation I was a little woozy.

RUBY
What about you two knuckleheads?

EARL
Yes.

RUBY
I got a job. I'll take the mechanic, you take the boy with the store.

Coralee smiles, looks at her chest.

CORALEE
I knew a gal dressed like a man to get a job, but obviously I ain't got a chance.

EARL
Hey, don't we get a vote?

RUBY
Not really.

BUFORD
What if this town doesn't work for us? I mean, look at this place.

RUBY
Then we all leave together. Or not. And it's all nice and legal.

CORALEE
Let's go. All four of us.

EARL
I'm leaving. Sold out my store.

BUFORD
You sold it?

EARL
Bank bought my inventory, got
enough money to get out of here.

CORALEE
So...me in my tuxedo?

EARL
And me in my dress? Let's not push
our luck.

They laugh.

INT. SALOON -- DAY

Grady nails a piece of paper to the wall. Clem watches.

CLEM
What's that?

GRADY
It's a poem. Boy I knew. He was
special. He joined one of those
homophile societies, wrote stories.
He used his real name -never use
your real name.

CLEM
Why not?

GRADY
Post office grabbed everything he
wrote, it was obscene - you know
the mailman here will send postcard
pictures of lynchings, but a love
letter from a man like me - that's
obscene. Anyway, he wrote me a
poem.

CLEM
This is a pretty terrible poem. So
what happened to him?

GRADY
Went from the police to a hospital,
lawyers arguing whether what he did
was a sin or a crime or a sickness.
(MORE)

GRADY (CONT'D)

Went to the fruitcake factory, got his works cut off like a steer - could have been worse, now they want to grab guys like me, cut open our brains, electric shock. Guys I know, jump off a bridge, string themselves up, can't take it. All my life, been hiding from white trash like these folks right here.

He points outside. Clem stares at the poem.

CLEM

Maybe it's not so terrible.

GRADY

And there's a rule. We're all hidden. The ones get caught - don't look for the rest to help you out. And don't be pointing your finger, save yourself by bird-dogging another guy. We're all on our own. We fight our battles alone.

CLEM

You pointed the finger at Bobby.

GRADY

Little Sugar was blackmailing people in my saloon. He broke the rules.

CLEM

You tossed him out there like fresh meat for the gators. They could have lynched him. Or cut off his works like a steer.

GRADY

Maybe there's another way I could have handled that. I was angry.

Clem pulls out her shotgun to tend to it.

CLEM

Those boys gonna whup you again.

GRADY

Spent years hiding under my bed. Got to the point, the hiding hurts as much as the beating.

CLEM

But you want me to hide under my bed? Break it off with Homer?

GRADY

They find out what you're doing with Homer, he's a dead man.

CLEM

So you told Homer to leave me.

She takes shells out of the gun, reloads, slams the gun back on the bar.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Walk yourself home.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Continuation. Clem goes downstairs. Ruby and Coralee are in the basement, asleep, intertwined.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Music in the distance. The preacher comes out of the church, looking at all the strangers on the street. He listens to the music. He is defeated.

At the other end of town, Clem is slowly walking the street, just watching.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ivy and Grady at one end of Main Street. The summer fair is setting up, with exhibitions of farm animals, food, etc.

IVY

Got a new wrinkle this year.
Carollo's bringing in some carnival folks from New Orleans. Look!

They look in a field at the end of Main Street where two truckloads of carnies are setting up. A creek is nearby.

GRADY

Town council let Carollo do that?

IVY

They let ME do that. I asked em.
Bout time we had some fun around
here. Last time we did this was a
lynching.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Continuation. Down the road a piece, Harley is talking to
Beau and Carollo.

HARLEY

Alright, got lots of people here
rubbing elbows. I want you to tell
your folks, I don't want no
trouble.

BEAU

You got that straight, Mister
Carollo?

HARLEY

Beau, I'm mostly talking to you.
You and your friends. Council stuck
me with you as a deputy but I'm
still the sheriff. And...you been
drinking? On fair day?

EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

The local fair is losing foot traffic to the out-of-towners
in the field. Children watch jugglers, gymnasts, clowns, and
one poor carny trying to manage a unicycle in a dirt field.

Deeper in the field, men surround two WRESTLERS. They cheer
as a strapping lad pins his victim.

WRESTLER

Next victim, I only want a quarter!
Two bits! Come on, I work right
over the feed store, you know I'm
good for it!

A GAY PATRON from the saloon steps forward, holding a
quarter. The reigning champ is wary.

WRESTLER (CONT'D)

You're joking.

GAY PATRON

It ain't contagious.

WRESTLER
Quarter's a quarter.

They remove shoes and belts, and go at it. The gay wrestler pins him in short order.

WRESTLER (CONT'D)
What was that? Ain't never seen that -

GAY PATRON
Keep the quarter. Look at your feet. Put that one back a bit.

The other wrestler warily does as instructed.

GAY PATRON (CONT'D)
Now get down lower. Even more. Now go.

Second bout is longer, gay wrestler wins again.

WRESTLER
Alright, I give. What the hell is that?

GAY PATRON
That there's a half nelson. Can't do a full nelson, I'd break your neck. Learned it at Oklahoma A&M, got a team. Keep your quarter, go find a nice farm girl and get her a Co-Cola.

The wrestler looks him up and down.

WRESTLER
Damnedest thing I ever saw.

EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

Mason and Ivy walk arm in arm. Four BATHING BEAUTIES stand knee-deep in the creek in swimsuits near a CARNY. Town girls talk, laugh. Boys stare.

CARNY
Okay boys, who do you think? Girl on the end, or the girl in blue?

Mason and Ivy keep walking, toward town, and see a dramatically robed figure with a CARNY nearby.

SECOND CARNY

And now from the most distant east,
our newest attraction. Half man,
half woman!

Mason stares.

MASON

Half man, half woman.

Ivy and Mason keep walking. A ventriloquist is entertaining children who are laughing.

VENTRILLOQUIST'S DUMMY

Hey there, preacher, keep a good
hold of your girl!

MASON

Stop for a cold drink.

He buys two lemonades. They find Johnson busking, making great money. Coralee and Ruby dance. Other kids watch.

CORALEE

Ivy, come dance with us!

Then the girls recognize the preacher.

IVY

I'm with my daddy.

RUBY

Reverend.

Ivy and Mason come upon a snake-oil SALESMAN pitching "medicine".

SALESMAN

Folks, this has a hundred uses! The things scientists can do. Couple years ago, feller up Boston, built a rocket, flies all the way into space. Someday we be taking a ride straight up into the heavens! So who's gonna be my first?

Ivy and Mason see a TATTOOED WOMAN talking to local girls.

TATTOOED WOMAN

This one here, got inspired in church. David killing Goliath, see right there.

Ivy and Mason see that the bathing beauties are now wearing dresses. One smokes a cigarette.

LOCAL GIRL

Gonna catch your death in that dress.

BATHING BEAUTY

Lord, this is just the thing for a hot night in New Orleans. Ain't you boiling over in that thing you're wearing?

Ivy and Mason walk.

IVY

You were very patient. And they all go back to New Orleans tomorrow. Everybody's having so much fun.

MASON

Well, if it isn't the saloon keeper.

Grady appears in the distance, looking for Ivy.

IVY

I just want to talk to him. Believe me, that man has never laid a finger on me.

MASON

Saloon keeper. I don't recollect what we told you about your mother passing -

IVY

The influenza.

MASON

It was liquor. She drank herself to death. It runs in families. And now we got a saloon in town, somewhere. I'm done for the night.

He walks to town. Grady approaches; Beau watches.

IVY

Take my arm.

GRADY

You sure?

IVY

Don't like being alone on the street when Beau's running around drinking. Two summers back we went for a ride in a car, Beau got all hands and fingers with me. ...Wonder if those carny folks got room for one more in that truck.

GRADY

They came from New Orleans.

IVY

I'm going there. Gonna see the world, New Orleans have to do for a start.

EXT. THE FIELD - EVENING

The sun is going down. Grady and Ivy see a fire burning at the end of the field. An African-American fortune teller in robes holds the hands of to a young girl while Carollo, Clem and Homer watch. Grady nods warily at Clem.

IVY

Magician. My father would fly off the handle, he saw this.

FORTUNE TELLER

Child, you don't find love, love finds you. You too young, but it will happen. You go find your Mamma.

She lets go of the young girl, takes Clem's hands.

CLEM

Don't bother, I'm just born for trouble, I'm an old outlaw.

FORTUNE TELLER

You been in jail, but you're no outlaw. I see what you're going to do. I won't speak of it. But it will turn out better than you expect.

The fortune teller looks over at Homer. Clem smiles. The fortune teller takes Ivy's hands.

FORTUNE TELLER (CONT'D)

See girls like you all the time.
Torn in two.

(MORE)

FORTUNE TELLER (CONT'D)

Your father loves you, you know.
But soon you're going to spread
your wings.

She takes Carollo's hands.

FORTUNE TELLER (CONT'D)

You know full well where you're
going. You been dancing a long
time, and now you go back home, pay
the piper.

She takes Grady's hands and laughs.

FORTUNE TELLER (CONT'D)

You are a silly boy. I never find
love, I'll die alone! Boy, there's
someone who loves you, right in
this stupid little one-horse town.

A look of alarm.

FORTUNE TELLER (CONT'D)

There's something wrong. Very
wrong.

And Beau has come to this end of the field. Drunk.

FORTUNE TELLER (CONT'D)

I don't want your money. Folks,
that's all for tonight!

She tries to leave; Beau snatches her wrist.

BEAU

You just hold my hand, right?

FORTUNE TELLER

I saw you coming. I smelled it.
Blood. Nothing but blood.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Beau is with his buddies in front of a stable. He's been
drinking steadily. He picks up a whip.

BEAU

Few years back, we have a bullwhip
contest. They stopped cause my
daddy kept winning every year. My
folks been training animals since
the Revolution.

(MORE)

BEAU (CONT'D)

Always been awful good with a
bullwhip. Handy down in cotton
country.

Beau sees David crossing the street wearing a fedora. Beau lets the whip fly, removing the hat from the boy's head. The hat tumbles to the ground. David picks it up, and the hat has essentially exploded, a giant rent across it. He touches his head and looks at Beau in disbelief. Beau glares back at him.

Down the street, a dozen saloon patrons watch. And they've had enough. They look at Beau, then at each other. And begin walking the long way down the street. David joins them.

Beau, who has never had anyone stand up to him, and who has never been outnumbered before, is suddenly afraid. He pulls out his gun and shoots. David falls, shot in the gut.

BEAU (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Remember the Alamo.

Clem steps in front of the boy.

CLEM

Beau, don't you move a muscle.

Beau sees the look in her eye and hurries away.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Me without my gun. Here, let's take
a look at him. ...Alright, you're
gutshot, we'll get you to the
doctor. He missed all the important
stuff. You were lucky.

DAVID

Yeah, today sure is my lucky day.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Panting dancers including Coralee and Ruby. People are restless and upset from earlier events.

JOHNSON

Let's do something quiet, let
people catch their breath.

His wife sings the gospel tune, "Dark Was The Night". Ruby begins to cry. Thunder roars.

RUBY

They sang that in my church. Back
when they were letting me in.

EXT. THE SIDE OF A HILL - DAY

Emma Lee, the Johnson couple, Grady and Homer ascend a hill.
Emma installs chaw in her mouth.

EMMA LEE

Pull out that stone, bring it here
next to the other six. Grady, got a
book for you in my poke.

GRADY

Uh oh.

Emma Lee smiles.

EMMA LEE

My father was a horse doctor going
back before the War Between the
States. He took care of the slaves.

GRADY

So he did slaves and animals?

EMMA LEE

He wrote it all down. He kept a
shack in the woods for the old
slaves who were too crippled to
work, gave em food. He got runaways
through here too.

She waves the book.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

These were slaves they couldn't
break. Throwaway horses they made
into glue. Throwaway slaves came
here. When Father passed, I took
over the shack, these old colored
folks, even after they were free.
This is where we bury them, last
one died just recent.

GRADY

And he wrote it all down?

EMMA LEE

Right til he died. Hang on.

She steps away to spit, not wanting to spit on the graves.
She's dry-eyed through the scene.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

This grave here. This was Rachel,
got caught teaching her children
the alphabet. Shackled, branded,
then flayed off some of her skin.

HOMER

Dead people? Right here?

He backs away.

EMMA LEE

Samuel, made a drum, they thought
he was trying to raise a revolt.
They whipped him, made him wear a
spiked collar on his neck for six
months.

GRADY

Samuel who?

EMMA LEE

Just Samuel. Sarah, tried to wear a
white woman's castoff clothes. They
whipped her, worked her sixteen
hours a day, nearly starved her to
death. She went simple in the
head.

Ethan, planted his own food, feed
his family. They whipped him,
performed experiments on him. Only
time he ever saw a doctor, til he
was free.

Big Tom. Every time he ran they
took a piece of him. Chopped off
his foot, knocked out his teeth,
cut his ear, his tongue, his nose.
Still kept running. Then they
castrated him, put out his eye. Had
enough of his extra parts to stitch
together a whole nother slave.

She smiles.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

He died after the war, old overseer
wanted to cut off his head, make
sure he was really dead.
Solomon. They beat him with
shovels, set the dogs on him.

(MORE)

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

When he tried to defend himself,
they whipped him, rubbed turpentine
in the wounds. Tough as a sack of
horseshoes, they all were.

MRS. JOHNSON

This a new one?

EMMA LEE

Rebecca. Master wanted to sell her
as a prostitute, she fought back.
Overseer raped her, made her
husband watch. Sold her in
Kentucky, prostitute. Sold her
daughter in Alabama, prostitute.
She told Paw to fix it she could
never have children again. She was
my last one. Must have been ninety,
nobody knows. I thought she was
gonna bury me....Homer, her head
was right there.

He puts a stone where she's pointing. She kneels.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

Thank you. Miss Rebecca, I hope
you're at peace. Back with your
girl, your man. Remind Big Tom to
keep an eye on Sarah like always,
she wanders off and gets lost.

She smiles again.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

Just remember darlin, I can still
beat you at stud poker, I'll come
up there to find you someday. But
not just yet.

She steps away to spit.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

My last time coming here. I wanted
you folks to know where it is.
Fetch my shovel, I'm done with it
now.

MRS. JOHNSON

You dug this last grave yourself?

EMMA LEE

Dug all of em. Just had trouble
with that last stone.

(to Grady)

(MORE)

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

Here, you like collecting scary books. Put it somewhere safe.

MRS. JOHNSON

Let me see it first.

She looks at her for a moment, gives it to her.

EMMA LEE

I were you, I'd stick it on a shelf. You ain't gonna sleep much after you read it - you best hope their ghosts don't follow you down the hill.

She looks at the graves and takes Grady's hand.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

Not sure which be worse, forgetting the past, or remembering. Take me to town, get me a drink.

She pauses, turns, looks at graves.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

Goodbye.

INT. SALOON -- DAY

More mobsters hang around out front. Locals watch them. Carollo reads a newspaper, eats lunch.

BOUNCER

Mister Carollo? Trouble down south.

CAROLLO

New Orleans?

BOUNCER

The law came for us, now the other rackets, it's all out of control, nobody paying their weekly roll.

CAROLLO

I can't go down there, it's too hot.

BOUNCER

They're stealing you blind. You know we're your boys, but we ain't seen no money for a month. We need to go home or we lose New Orleans, the whole thing.

CAROLLO

I go back there, I go to jail.

BOUNCER

We all got to go to jail sometime.
Price we pay.

CAROLLO

I gotta say, Roy, you can actually
cook.

ROY

Cook moonshine, roast a duck, it's
all the same.

CAROLLO

Kinda heavy on the peppercorns.

Roy laughs.

ROY

Peppercorns? That's bird shot.

CAROLLO

Bird shot? I'm eating bullets?

He looks at the new doormen.

ROY

Clem shot him. She's wicked with a
gun. Your new boys from down south,
they're working out okay?

CAROLLO

More fights with the locals.
(reading the paper)
Goddamn bootleggers!

ROY

What the hell did I do?

CAROLLO

This bootlegger in Washington. He
had a gold mine - sell liquor to
the guys in Congress. Just before
the election he tells the papers
all those Senators are a bunch of
drunks. Election comes, prohibition
types get thrown out of Congress.
Now they gonna repeal Prohibition!

ROY

Liquor's gonna be legal!

CAROLLO

Grady, listen to this. This actress, Mae West, wrote this play, The Drag. It's about two fairies like you, and a doctor wants to use science to cure them. The show made a ton of money for two weeks, then the police closed down the theater.

(laughs)

I mean, they should have known better. You can't have gay people in a Broadway show! I mean it's just silly.

INT. IN THE CHURCH - NIGHT

Mason and Harley sit, after a town council meeting breaks up.

MASON

Harley?

HARLEY

Town council?

MASON

I tried to slow things down. Nobody listens to me. You can stay on as deputy, or you can go fishing, you earned it. Beau be the new sheriff.

HARLEY

So now I'm working for Beau?

MASON

Beats not working for anybody. It's a crisis. Got Italian crooks here, Klan gets riled, the pansy boys, council wanted a change. Fellas are afraid, they follow the loudest voice.

IVY

All the men you could have picked when the chips are down, and you picked that? Beau pulls the wings off flies, he belongs in the crazy house!

EXT. SALOON -- NIGHT

A rock comes through the window. A car races away. A bouncer steps out with a rifle.

CLEM

Here they come. What you got there?

She grabs the rifle.

BOUNCER

Hey, that's not a shotgun, that's a real rifle.

CLEM

No, really?

She sweeps the rifle to her shoulder and shoots out the tire of the retreating car. She looks at the rifle suspiciously.

BOUNCER

So you've shot a rifle before.

CLEM

Clean that thing right, so it doesn't blow your fool head off.

BOUNCER

I think I'm in love.

CLEM

I'm not surprised. I'm the only straight girl in the building.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Beau has borrowed troopers from the state police. His Klan posse is helping.

BEAU

Alright, I'm gonna need the state troopers and the local boys. You town fellas, you know everybody in this town. You look at the folks getting off this train - anybody you don't know, you tell em, get back on the train or go to jail.

He addresses the arrivals on the platform.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Okay, you folks, I want to know who you are and what you're doing in my town. You ain't got legitimate business here, you get right back on that train.

TRAIN PASSENGER

Paid good money to come all the way here, mister -

BEAU

Well, next time you'll know better. Sergeant, next thing, road block at the top of Main Street where it hits the Tennessee road.

Carollo's Mafia boys roll into Main Street and watch the troopers. The troopers notice.

BEAU (CONT'D)

State troopers are fine help for some things, but for the rest of it, we need real help. The boys from the hollow.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Ivy, Grady, Carollo and Roy drink and worry.

IVY

Bad news. The new sheriff, Beau? He's going down to Tennessee, round up some more Klan folks. But why?

CAROLLO

So they can come up here, push aside my gangster boys, start tearing the place apart. There's gonna be a war.

ROY

So Beau's out of town, then?

CAROLLO

He told Harley he's gone for a week.

Wicked smile spreading on Roy's face.

ROY

Listen, how many of you can drive? We need every car you have.

CAROLLO

What for?

ROY

Everybody drive to the red barn down the Tennessee road.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

Every night. Make sure the Klan boys see you. Then go round back, take the river road back to town.

CAROLLO

Why?

ROY

You'll see.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Montage. Several scenes in which Grady, Carollo, a couple of bouncers and Roy walk to their cars, looking around to see who's watching. The local toughs are indeed watching.

EXT. AN ISOLATED BARN -- NIGHT

Montage. Each of the bar crew drives to the red barn, one by one. Toughs follow. As instructed the bar folks drive around back to get out of the area.

After a few repetitions of this, we see the red barn in flames. The saloon gang is on a hilltop watching it burn.

CAROLLO

So can we go?

ROY

Couple more minutes.

The barn explodes. They flinch. Roy lets out a whoop of joy.

ROY (CONT'D)

Couple of Klan boys down there just lost their eyebrows.

CAROLLO

Okay, Roy, what are we doing?

ROY

We kept coming to this barn. The local yokels thought we were building a new saloon so they burned it down.

IVY

So that's not our new location.

ROY

No. That's the barn where Beau was building his own still.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

Cutting into my business. That's why it exploded.

They all explode in laughter.

CAROLLO

The new sheriff, with a still?

ROY

Yes, shocking, isn't it? The other boys didn't know what he was up to. Serves him right for leaving town.

CAROLLO

But now he's coming back with his redneck army. And he's gonna be some kinda pissed.

Grady arrives. Ivy pulls him aside.

IVY

Remember Sam said you need to get ready for the next saloon? After they burn down this one? There isn't going to be a new place. Tell me why you really came here.

GRADY

Hard to say.

IVY

No it's not. Daddy got the state houses to pass the dry laws. You came here to fool with him. Pay him back.

GRADY

Well, maybe a little bit.

IVY

It's not just Daddy stomping around mad all the time, we got Beau's boys beating people up, Carollo's bouncers, Clem shooting off her gun. Somebody's gonna get killed.

GRADY

Yeah.

IVY

It's time for you to give Daddy his town back. Stop fussing with these country folks. Sam will help us if we start a saloon in New Orleans.

GRADY

You said "we"? You got your father to take care of, the church.

IVY

If I can run the books for a church, I can do it for a saloon.

GRADY

But your whole life is here!

IVY

What do you know about my life? Am I gonna spend the next 40 years counting up cake sale money, married to a man like my father? I mean, look at the men in this town!

GRADY

You think I haven't? So you're proposing we open a new saloon?

IVY

And I do love you, baby. You're about the only man I'm sure I love.

GRADY

Well, isn't that inconvenient for you. You know I could find a man someday.

IVY

Hope so. Either way, I'll make you a promise: you ain't gonna die alone.

He hugs her tight.

IVY (CONT'D)

Before you came, Daddy was fixing to marry me to that man Percy. I would have turned into somebody just like Percy. You came along, I barely know who I am now. But I know what I'm not. Not anymore. There gonna be trouble.

GRADY

Story of my life.

IVY

I mean now. Beau's coming back with a whole redneck army. It's gonna be a war.

(MORE)

IVY (CONT'D)

They want to see the saloon burn.
So that's the first part of the
plan.

GRADY

I don't follow you.

IVY

We burn down the saloon ourselves.
Friday night. Beat em to the draw.
And invite the whole town. Have a
party. Our party, not theirs.

She begins to laugh.

IVY (CONT'D)

Lord, it was fun while it lasted!

EXT. OUTSIDE A SMALL FARMHOUSE - DAY

Ivy and Grady find a young black woman, IDA.

IVY

Miss Brown? You're Abraham's
sister?

IDA

I know who you are. What's she
doing here? Your father would lose
his mind --

IVY

My name's -

IDA

I don't want trouble! It's broad
daylight! Anybody see you come
here?

IVY

Listen. All of this, everything
that happened - it all began that
day on the road, the night your
brother - well -

IDA

The night he was killed.

IVY

And after that, nobody from town
came here to say anything, to...?

IDA

What were they gonna do, show up at our house with pies and fried chicken? After they did that?

IVY

Well, we're leaving. We want you to have this. Part of what's left of that joint.

IDA

You bring the devil's money to my mother's house?

GRADY

'Fraid so. This is the most sinful money there is. Liquor, women, criminals. Guys like me.

IDA

Well, it must be terrible for your soul, carrying around that sinful money. I'm gonna help you out. Take it to the grocery store, pay off my line. A bunch of us are saving up for a radio, once we get the electric. I'll have a talk with the Lord, put in a good word for you, it'll be alright.

She counts the money and looks over her shoulder.

IDA (CONT'D)

Ooh, a nice radio. Mama doesn't need to know everything.

IVY

It's blood money.

IDA

It's a Depression. It's all blood money.

IVY

Good luck.

IDA

You too.

Ivy and Grady walk away.

IVY

You should send Emma Lee some books. Her husband looks a little poky.

EXT. OUTSIDE ANOTHER BURNING SALOON -- NIGHT

Almost the whole town is at the fire.

GRADY

Well, I saved my poem. Saint John. The rest...there she goes.

CLEM

This thing, it wasn't just the bar.

IVY

These folks came for you.

GRADY

They just like to see a fire.

CLEM

Women, out alone at midnight. Colored people. Nobody's afraid. You know who's afraid? Look around. The boys with the sheets. Cowards hate a fair fight. So, nice job. You did that. For strangers.

GRADY

You were right, Ivy. Being mad all the time, it's hard work.

CLEM

But it's time to shut down, now.

Locals come shake Grady's hand and drink from his flask. Emma Lee hugs him.

Earl sits on a step, his arm around Buford. Grady sits by them.

GRADY

So now the town empties out. All the homophiles. We all go back home, and lie and pretend again. Sure was fun though. You fellas spread the word - I'm opening up shop down in New Orleans. Listen up folks - the saloon is moving south - you come find us down there!

Cheers.

CAROLLO
Hey kid. How about now?

CORALEE
I was practicing it for Easter,
it's an Easter song.

CAROLLO
Perfect time for it. The new rising
from the ashes of the old.

Coralee does most of a verse of the Ineggiamo. Mason arrives.

MASON
What on earth is that? I can't even
understand it.

IVY
Daddy, it's okay.

GRADY
Sing in praise, the Lord is rising.

MASON
You mocking our Savior, boy?

GRADY
The Lord is rising, he is shining,
he has opened the tomb. Praise him,
the risen Lord ascends today the
glory of heaven. Pretty song.

Mason looks him over for a moment.

MASON
Tell the gal to sing it again.

She sings; Mason goes to look at the fire.

CORALEE
Everybody, sing it with me!

People laugh.

CLEM
Folks don't parlay-voo much here.

Ivy walks to Mason who is fascinated by the fire.

MASON
Damn cinder in my eye.

IVY

Like a vision of hell. ...Even in a depression, there's one man who always has a job. Sin never sleeps.

MASON

Sin. You said a cotton-pickin mouthful.

IVY

Daddy. Sin isn't your whole job, is it?

MASON

What they did to your face. I think you need to get out of town. See the world. Otherwise you're gonna sit there hating me day and night.

IVY

So your grand scheme with Percy...

MASON

Can't see you with Percy. You come home Christmas, make me a ham.

IVY

Ain't allowed in the Bible.

MASON

Make me one anyway.

IVY

Christmas.

She takes his hand; they look at the fire.

CAROLLO

Gotta say, I like the folks here. Even the Jesus people don't bother us. Just a couple of knuckleheads want to ruin it for everybody else.

CLEM

Folks figured out that people who spit chaw and eat pig's guts shouldn't be appointing themselves Archangels of the Lord. Can't believe this is the same town lynched that boy. What was his -

HOMER

Brown. Abraham Brown.

CLEM
What changed here?

CAROLLO
Everything, except these boys here.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Continuation. Beau and carloads of Klan types arrive at one end of town, no hoods; the locals go to see. The Klan boys and Carollo's mobsters have a long staredown. Emma Lee breaks the tension by crossing the street, not a care in the world.

EMMA LEE
The saloon already burned down,
didn't you hear? Looks like a lot
of fellers wasted a trip.

She laughs, and she spits. Beau approaches Harley.

BEAU
When I'm out of town, you're in
charge. What happened to my barn?

The bar crowd laughs.

CAROLLO
Okay, Clem, now for the cherry on
top of the cake. You've wanted to
do it all summer. Right now, middle
of Main Street.

Clem takes Homer by the hand to the middle of the street, looks at the Klansmen, and kisses Homer.

CLEM
Maybe you were right about my mojo.
Homer, I'm gonna marry you.

HOMER
Can't marry a colored man, it's
illegal.

She points northward.

CLEM
It's illegal in Kentucky.
Cincinnati is up there. I asked a
lawyer two months ago. Right after
I saw the doctor.

She beams.

CLEM (CONT'D)
The look on your face.

She hugs him; crosses to the out-of-towners.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Jesus and Mary! Look at this truck!
Tennessee plates! This sumbitch
came all the way from another
state, just to burn down my bar.
Did you kill all the Jews and
darkies back home already, you
gotta bring your nonsense up here?

She laughs, crosses to Beau.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Evening, Sheriff. Let's have a
conversation. I'm here to report a
crime. I took a colored man into my
bed. I'm gonna marry him. I'm gonna
have his child. I broke state law.

She waits, then shakes her head.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Some sheriff...Hold still.

She smiles, takes his badge, pins it on her dress.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Beau, you're fired.

BEAU
According to who?

CLEM
According to me. You want to try to
take your badge back, I'm easy to
find. Look at that ammunition belt.
You fixing to put down a revolution
in Mexico? How much firepower you
need for a town this small?

Beau looks at his gun; she turns to the crowd.

CLEM (CONT'D)
I see the whole town council here.
Bunch of ten-watt light bulbs.
Which one of you broke-dick idiots
picked this maniac to be the
sheriff? Show of hands!

COUNCILMAN

He was the only one taking the law serious. All these strangers in town. He knows how to enforce the law.

CLEM

What does he know about enforcing the law, cept for shooting an unarmed man in the gut? A highly dangerous nancy boy with a busted hat. You hired Beau because you're afraid, like he is. You still want him? Wanna come take this badge off of me? Come on, step up, let's hear it.

No one moves.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Thought so. Only time we have peace on Main Street is when I go out there and bang heads together, so I'm making it official.

She taps the badge. Back to Beau.

CLEM (CONT'D)

It's a landslide, there, Beau. Only reason I'm allowing you to keep breathing, is that boy lived. Gutshot. You can't even shoot straight when a man is looking you in the eye.

She looks at the badge.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Well, I'm so glad we had this conversation. By the by, I'm awful good with that shotgun of mine, put a part in your hair from fifty yards out. You bring your hammer anywhere near me or mine again...

She points toward the sky.

CLEM (CONT'D)

...your next conversation's gonna be with Saint Peter. Have a nice night.

Back to the out-of-towners.

CLEM (CONT'D)

And the rest of you - the state
line is back that way. Let's go.

She and Harley share a look; he takes out his baton and beats
on the hood of the first car.

HARLEY

You hard of hearing?

Everyone watches the out-of-towners drive away. Clem crosses
to Homer, smiling.

CAROLLO

Jesus. I said kiss him, not start a
war.

HOMER

I give you one little mojo, you
turn into Wyatt Earp.

CLEM

I'm in my third month, I'm a little
moody. This here is your fault.

Clem approaches the preacher.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Reverend, wonder if you might help
me. I'm planning on staying here. I
got a baby coming.

MASON

I'm not allowed to marry you to
that boy. But I'll do the
christening for your child.

CLEM

No matter what color he is?

MASON

My congregation gets smaller every
day, I'm not fussy. You a Catholic?

CLEM

Yessir.

MASON

I only know the Baptist service.

CLEM

General principle's the same.

MASON

Pretty soon that saloon be legal.

CLEM

A sheriff shouldn't keep a saloon.
Just looking for trouble that way.
Grady and them going back home now.

INT. DOCTOR'S HOME - DAY

Grady and Clem visit David, who is healing from his gunshot.

CLEM

I gotta tell you, the whole town is
in shock. That night at the fair,
there were eleven of you, a whole
gang. You terrified the old sheriff
so much that he pissed his pants.

David begins to laugh and Grady smiles.

CLEM (CONT'D)

Eleven unarmed sissy boys.

DAVID

Ow. Girl, you're gonna make my
stitches come out!

CLEM

Sheriff had a gun and a bullwhip
and he pissed his pants. You boys
come to town like the Barrow gang,
we may need to call the FBI.

David is still laughing.

GRADY

Clem, the boy's gonna spring a leak
here.

CLEM

I gotta go calm down the townfolk.

DAVID

So you're really the sheriff now?
Who's gonna make my Hanky Panky?

CLEM

You nancy boys with your fancy
drinks, like I'm running a
chemistry lab back there. Give me a
nice French white any day. You chat
with Grady here.

Grady shares a look with Clem and she leaves.

GRADY
So the infection's finally gone?

DAVID
How'd you know?

GRADY
(embarrassed)
We took turns changing your
bandages. Partly my fault you being
here, being so stubborn.

DAVID
Not bothered.

GRADY
That boy Earl had a store, got you
a hat. Old one looks like it went
through a war.

He pulls out a sharp looking fedora.

DAVID
You really didn't have to.

GRADY
Young man needs his hat. You okay
getting out of here? Where you
from?

DAVID
Philadelphia. I'm a designer. Got
fired.

GRADY
Fired. What kind of designer?

DAVID
Opera.

Grady can't help smiling.

GRADY
Got great opera in New Orleans.
Bunch of us heading down in a car.
I'm connected down there.

DAVID
Imagine that.

GRADY

So you want to go? We can wait til
you're ready.

DAVID

Much obliged.

GRADY

Girl coming along, Ivy. She fell in
love with the Puccini. Tosca.

DAVID

Tosca. Pure evil.

GRADY

Pure evil.

They look at each other and smile.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ivy, Grady and David load a car. Mason steps out of the
shadows.

MASON

You ready to say goodbye?

IVY

Hell no.

MASON

Well me neither. Love you, baby
girl.

Ivy hugs him.

EXT. A PORCH IN NEW ORLEANS -- DAY

Drinking lemonade. Grady fans himself with Emma Lee's book.
Ivy sits with the biracial girl.

GRADY

The law in New Orleans finally got
Sam Carollo.

IVY

They tried to get the law on us
too. Mann Act!

GRADY

Since when is it an immoral purpose
to take a woman across the state
line and then NOT sleep with her?

IVY

Roy and his whisky, famous now.
That man has a gift, right there in
his fingertips.

GRADY

You know what they say back in
Ireland? He has the gift of the
fairies.

He laughs. Clem and Homer come outside.

IVY

Clem had her baby and went back to
being sheriff.

GRADY

It's the damnedest thing, she was
the biggest gun-toting outlaw in
the bunch, now she's got a badge.

IVY

And Homer. The sheriff's husband.
King of the whole town. Got to be
the bartender in the front room,
living the life. People realized
they missed us more than they
missed the Klan.

GRADY

So the town got back to normal
again.

IVY

Down here in New Orleans, we're
doing just fine too, even with all
those troubles, all that sinning.

GRADY

What a town. You can't keep her
down.

IVY

I guess Daddy was wrong. The Lord
has forgiven us.

GRADY

(looks at Emma Lee's book)
He must be a good sport after all.

CLEM
 Okay, baby girl, come on with
 Mamma. Back to Kentucky. Christmas
 is over.

Homer extends his hand to Grady.

HOMER
 Thanks. Put on a nice spread for
 us.

GRADY
 Outlaws need to stick together. You
 sure she's ready for this book?

HOMER
 Bout time she learned.

Grady goes to the girl, gives her Emma Lee's book.

GRADY
 Scary stories from the past.
 Slaves. When you're done, do me a
 favor? Couple of flowers on Emma
 Lee's grave?

The girl smiles and nods. David emerges with two jars.

DAVID
 Try this real quick. Hanky Panky.

Clem sips.

CLEM
 That's not a Hanky Panky.

DAVID
 I used Branca Menta instead of
 Fernet Branca. Smoother.

CLEM
 Too sweet.

He passes it to Grady.

DAVID
 But it's just the way Grady likes
 it, when he comes home at night.

Grady and David share a look.

GRADY
 Like love in a jar.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

As Homer and Clem watch, the girl places flowers on Emma Lee's grave, right next to Rebecca's. An option is to use Mascagni's Ineggiamo, the song Coralee sang, over this scene.

PRETEEN GIRL

Hope you like the flowers, Miss
Emma. Got you right next to Miss
Rebecca.

She has already put flowers on all the other graves, as well.
She wipes her eyes and they go back down the hill.

FADE OUT.

THE END.