

The Queen of Sodom
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. PORCH - DAY

1930s, New Orleans. 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 - DAY

1918. 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

He helped a white girl - she was driving herself, flat tire. He drove her home. And there you go.

RUBY

A colored boy 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. PORCH - DAY

1930s. Back to Ivy and Grady.

IVY

No, he had no father.

GRADY

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

IVY

(smiles in disbelief)
These people who wanted to hang the Kaiser -- oh my goodness, the Germans, the brutality!

GRADY

She gets exercised about this.

IVY

Same people sat under that tree with fried chicken, while one of their own neighbors was being tortured and torn apart.

GRADY

For fixing a tire. Abraham Brown.

IVY

They had a party. Watermelon and Co-Colas. I was young and confused.

GRADY

Tell them the rest of the story.

EXT. ROADSIDE NEAR THE WOODS - 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

(stricken look)

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. PORCH - 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 Klan.

GRADY

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

IVY

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

GRADY

Because he brought all his enemies right into the heart of Klan country. And all hell broke loose.

They laugh.

IVY
It sure did. Poor Daddy.

EXT. ROADSIDE NEAR THE WOODS - DAY

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

MASON
Did the Lord's work tonight. The
hosts of the Lord are on the
advance, we're gonna keep marching!
No retreat! No hesitation!

BEAU
Prohibition bill coming up again.
Gonna kill John Barleycorn dead.

MASON
Write to our man in the statehouse,
and then our Congressman.

BEAU
They better be voting prohibition
or they hear from us in November.

MASON
Get the Kleagles out, the White
League, the Red Shirts.

BEAU
Get the Empire back on the march!

MASON
Next stop, Mississippi legislature!

INT. 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
Almost. 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, get off the
train, use the toilet and buy food,
just like 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, 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
When rich folks ran things, it was
bad. Now it's worse.

MOSES
White trash?

MRS. JOHNSON
My husband had enough of their
police, they had enough of him.
(MORE)

MRS. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

He thinks Chicago is the promised land.

She looks at her husband.

MOSES

Chicago is better than the delta, you still got a fight coming.

MRS. JOHNSON

Lots of factories, right?

MOSES

Factories 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.

MRS. JOHNSON

So what do we do?

MOSES

Get your man hired on at the stockyard, railroad. Find a place with a roof, fast, don't matter how fancy. Homer, you getting off?

HOMER

Going to see my gal in Kentucky.

MOSES

You know where I'll be. Go past you this way, go 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.

Mrs. Johnson begins plucking out a song on the guitar, clearly something she's used to distract her kids, and her son is soon bobbing along.

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

GRADY

Sorry.

CAROLLO

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

He gives him a direct look.

GRADY

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. 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, 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 week, I keep secrets for a living. It's me. Sam.

GRADY

They used to hang fellas like me. Got beat up every week for about five years. My folks got me a boy's school - obviously that didn't cure anything.

CAROLLO

Boy's school.

GRADY

You wouldn't believe the bedhopping. In the city you meet people at parties and clubs, "special" parks.

CAROLLO

Get raided by the police?

GRADY

You hold a man's hand on the street, you get a night in jail, get fired next morning....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 - pass the liquor law, got a thousand speakeasies now, fairy people got this whole new world to hide in.

GRADY

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

CAROLLO

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, don't need to go to jail. That town's where prohibition started. Preacher there went to the statehouse, then Virginia, Carolina.

CAROLLO
Then we should go there.

GRADY
To teach him a lesson?

CAROLLO
To thank him.

They both smile. A door opens and they hear Mrs. Johnson's guitar, and they look at each other.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Waiting at the station is Beau, shotgun across his lap, for no discernable reason. Homer, Grady and Carollo get off, and they all notice Beau. And he notices them.

BEAU
And who might you be?

HOMER
Name's Homer.

CAROLLO
He's with me.

BEAU
And who might you be?

CAROLLO
Sam Carollo. I'm a businessman.

BEAU
And you're here for --

CAROLLO
Business.

EXT. OUTSIDE SALOON - 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, hasn't changed. Man like me gets a pile of money, I'm a target. Don't know my place. Some nights got 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

You build a club in Klan country, put a colored man out front handling the money...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.

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, smiling.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Nice to meet you, Grady.

HOMER
For luck, pepper in the doorway.
Whisky bottle under the porch, make
folks thirsty, fill this place up.

He picks up a broom.

HOMER (CONT'D)
Nighttime, broom in the doorway,
keep out witches and 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
They call me Bon Dieu, king of
voodoo.

Homer smiles, holds up a bottle.

HOMER (CONT'D)
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. ALLEY - DAY

Sam sees Beau on the main street, and 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. 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.

(MORE)

CAROLLO (CONT'D)

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, to make
sure I got the message.

IVY

Famous person?

CAROLLO

I stopped em right at the station.
We smashed their fingers, put em
right back on their train. Make
sure he got the message. Didn't
even let him take a piss at the
station. 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 on Sunday. It's my bar. I'm bringing my New Orleans friends to town. If your Jesus Posse wrecks my bar, I 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 two thousand years, but if he comes back for you, I'll be waiting at the station, have a talk with him.

EST. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ivy is pursuing a smiling Carollo down Main Street. She gives Beau a glare.

INT. SALOON - 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!

He takes her hand again.

CAROLLO
(gentle throughout)
Yes. And he's helping me build a speakeasy in a town that has tar and feather parties. For fun. Saw the colored jail behind the court. Those boys in cages. And I heard about the lynching. Don't ever come into my saloon and lecture me about morality again. Alright?

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. You visit folks, join clubs.

IVY
My father loves me? You are new in town.

GRADY
I live like a spy. I'm in enemy territory, especially with country folks. My whole life is hidden. It's exhausting.
(MORE)

GRADY (CONT'D)

We have our little tricks,
roommates, fake employees, secret
codes, we spend our whole lives
lying. Everything good in my life,
is something stolen.

IVY

It's the law.

GRADY

And someday I'm gonna die. 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, gonna have the time of
my life, run a saloon, the very
best liquor, one long party. And
you and your father ain't gonna
ruin it for me. 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. OUTSIDE SALOON - NIGHT

Beau and the local toughs watch; Carollo's BOUNCERS watch the
toughs from the doorway. Ivy, Coralee and Ruby arrive.

BEAU

Ivy, you alright?

IVY

Just fine.

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. 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,
 needs to know her Mamma and Daddy.

GRADY
 Maybe you're right.

IVY
 First real trip to a saloon, I was
 scared. Grown woman, 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 his town. And
 women didn't drink alone in public,
 less 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. SALOON - 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.)

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. 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 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. Boy, they know
how to live. Every kind of music
you never heard of. Best food in
the world. French wine if you know
who to ask. Had theater and opera
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 SALOON - DAY

This time they're in a barn. 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! 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. Course it looks regular.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

You jazz it up, but only on the inside - on the outside it has to be original 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 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

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 before time runs out. You're not bothered by these fairy people coming to your town?

ROY

Back in the war, the trenches. You think we didn't have men knocking knees with other men? Every army in history must have had men marching out without women, so I think you can guess the rest.

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.

ROY

Here comes trouble, a woman in my kitchen.

Down the street, Beau and the toughs are watching.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

The barn. 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? 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 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. 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 opera, 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)

Mojo. Pig bristle, John the Conqueror root. Get you a husband. Hide it, next to your skin.

She half-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)

Over here, picture of Saint John. Patron saint of drinkers. 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.

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. She beams.

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. I'm watching you boys.

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

CORALEE
You're forming a ladies book club. We read every book in our library. We're begging you for mercy.

CAROLLO
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. Lady
Chatterley - so sinful they had to
go to Italy to find a printer.

GRADY

Moll Flanders, story about a hoor.
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. 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

Priest tells her his pecker is the
devil, her snatch is hell, put the
devil into hell, you 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 had a
girl, but he couldn't, you know,
deliver the mail, when the time
came.

EMMA LEE

Deliver the mail?

CAROLLO

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 Kentucky
The 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. Ain't skeered of
 nothing. I survived Grant's army,
 ain't no book gonna kill me.

CAROLLO
 I don't know. 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.
 (MORE)

CLEM (CONT'D)

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! 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.)

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, I haven't heard they were complaining any too much. So it was a happy little town.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

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

IVY

Daddy heard about 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 willing to read the Bible all 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, excited, flip through notes throughout the scene.

RUBY

Actually, Peter, Paul and James
said Christians don't need to
follow Leviticus, the Pentateuch.

CORALEE

Laws about ham, shrimp, tattoos.
And homophiles. They said ignore
that stuff.

RUBY

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.

CORALEE

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
said ignore the old laws. I can see
why: Deuteronomy says if your bride
ain't a virgin, you can kill her?

CORALEE

Exodus. If a bull tramples someone,
stone him 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. 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

Men in the Old Testament had two wives, men in the New Testament left 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

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, 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 talk to the dead.

CORALEE

Matthew, you got zombies. Tombs
broke open, people who had died
were raised to life, they came out
of the tombs.

RUBY

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

MASON

This land 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."

RUBY

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?

RUBY

Even if it was a choice...so what? 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. CHURCH - NIGHT

HARLEY, the elderly sheriff, is trying to talk sense to the preacher. Roy and Beau listen.

MASON

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

HARLEY

Can't do nothing til they break the law, gotta find that saloon. All I got is Beau, 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! 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.

ROY

Those Jews and Eye-talian Catholics you love so much, they're millionaires, selling liquor. 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 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 queer bars, those cocksuckers have their own saloons - you created that, with the prohibition.

ROY

Colored music. That jazz stuff, blues, ragtime. The devil singing to our people.

HARLEY

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 (CONT'D)

I gotta say, you got the Midas touch. My job is law enforcement.
(MORE)

HARLEY (CONT'D)

In two months you managed to bring the Klan, bunch of queers, and Italian criminals into my town. Thank you so much. Next week it'll be a bunch of goddamn pirates.

Exits.

BEAU

If Harley can't get it done, you know where to find me.

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. We need to go back to the old way. Keep your eyes out. Anybody who's a stranger.

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 town? Got lost? Fancy suit. Silk tie. Got a lot of strangers these days. I don't like strangers. No indeed.

He looks at his posse.

BEAU (CONT'D)

Give him a nice Kentucky howdy, put him back on the train, he can tell his little friends it's time they went back 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. 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. 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? Colored boy help a white girl with her car. Strung him up. 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

You kicked that boy awful hard. Right in the head. He was down.

Beau points to Jimmy, speaks calmly and quietly.

BEAU

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)

Most of this county is colored. We're surrounded. 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 what needs to be done. We understand each other?

INT. SALOON - DAY

They are in a new building. A man hollers outside. Ivy, Homer, Grady, Roy and Carollo unpack saloon bits. Clem reads.

MAN (V.O.)

Damn cocksuckers.

IVY

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

CAROLLO

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.

IVY

Saw a picture of a Ferris wheel once.

CAROLLO

Air conditioning, blows cool air
into the saloons. Got a beauty
parade, 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. 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

They're gonna burn you down. You
saw how quick they found this
place. We move every few weeks.

IVY

You do the furniture, like waving a
red flag at a bull. You make sin
look like heaven, they think you're
mocking God.

GRADY

So we're doomed?

CAROLLO

You have to think on your feet.
When they burn this place down,
where you go next?

GRADY

Not a clue.

CAROLLO

A great saloon is a church - it's
not the building, it's the people.

GRADY

Maybe we should move now.

CAROLLO

Let em burn you down. Let em think they beat you. Go down Main Street, your face hanging low. 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. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

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

A wild crowd is outside a shack, 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, you going to jail. 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 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
Listen, some people need a hand
getting to the doctor. Need folks
for the bucket brigade.

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. Your daughter Ivy was in there when the fire started.

MASON

Where is she?

CAROLLO

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

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

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

INT. 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

Remember what happened to Sodom. The Lord didn't pick and choose his sinners, no no no. Wiped out the whole town. Even killed the girl who looked back on the Lord's work.

BEAU

This sodomite could destroy us all. May need to do something drastic. That fire didn't do the job.

MASON

Heard folks complain about my sermons. Went to the Baptists. Got a young preacher coming.

BEAU

New preacher?

MASON

If he seems like the right sort,
I'll marry Ivy off. 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".

BEAU

Boy, what is that? Devil got what?

BOY

Colored boy taught me to play it.

People file out and Ivy enters.

MASON

Everything's unsettled round here,
thinking about the future. You been
a real help, the church, the money,
the weekly bulletin. You got the
makings of a 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

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. SALOON - DAY

New saloon. Ivy, Carollo, Grady and Clem stand before jars of
liquor. Homer sets up at the other end of the bar.

CLEM

Come on, show him, girl!

CAROLLO

Let's test your memory. 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

Mint leaves, 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 always seems to burn us out
Saturday night. Tell Roy to deliver
the liquor Sunday while they're in
church. No sense letting it burn.

CLEM

Struck gold with the house near the
bus station - the pansy crowd hop
right off the bus, come down our
way.

HOMER

And the army fort - it's a real
gusher. 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. OUTSIDE 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 says. 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. 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, down the sink,
make it good later. When the lights
go 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 some
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

Let me make a few things clear. Don't be assuming I'm stupid. 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. Gonna ruin the party for all of you.

TRIXIE

Up 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, 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, show's
over. Tonight on the radio, Barn
Dance show out of Nashville if the
weather cooperates, dance your
shoelaces off.

A few whoops.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Later got the guitar boy right here
in the joint. And then we need a
new place to hide.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

The back saloon. BOBBY and EARL, two gay men, whisper in a
corner. Earl is in his 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
been up to?

EARL

You're gonna do what?

BOBBY

And I'm so young. Taken advantage
of, by an older man. That store, it
be the end, wouldn't it?

EARL

I don't believe this.

BOBBY

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. 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. 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. Murdered in broad daylight. They made a party of it. My father said nothing. He loved it. 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-rike 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 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 Little Sugar? Ask him why
Earl sold his store. Sugar spends
an awful lot of time talking to the
sheriff.

He points at the yokels.

GRADY (CONT'D)
He knows where your stills are,
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.

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.

(MORE)

GRADY (CONT'D)

Swim with the swimmers, wrestle
with wrestlers....You take care,
Little Sugar.

Smiles 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. OUTSIDE 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 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

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

(laughs)

Don't put me in one of your love songs, they 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 bottom of the bottom. Down with the animals. Like it don't 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

You cheat. Listen to the tuning. Even with no fingers, got a chord. First chord, open, second chord -

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

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Good lord, girl. Slide 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
Next we move to the red barn. You
okay back home? With your father?

IVY

Leave him be. 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.

GRADY

And your father...

IVY

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 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, 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 corn squeezins. Haven't had a chance to visit 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. 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 that 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

When we started it was fun, joke on your father. Now it's war with Beau and his army.

IVY

I don't understand.

GRADY

Been waiting for this. All the bullies on my street, all the sadists at school, all the police. 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 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 mark their doors on Passover? Didn't he even know which ones were the Israelites praying to him?

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'd 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, 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. Third time, anyway. Have Ivy give that book to the mayor's wife, 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 a mortal sin. Thirty years ago they have the premiere of this opera in Rome, most Catholic place on earth.

IVY

An opera?

GRADY

Carollo got me onto this. It's called Tosca. Just plain demonic.

IVY

Oh my.

GRADY

You got this choir, singing in church. Outside, the villain, singing about his evil plots, 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! Sing this devil's music in front of the priests - here, 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)
Like I been asleep. You woke me up,
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. OUTSIDE SALOON - 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. CELLAR - NIGHT

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

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

RUBY
The whole place is illegal! Okay, 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.

She begins to cry.

IVY

Hey, sweet.

RUBY

It's been a long couple of days.

IVY

You fight the whole world, you ignore what everyone says, ignore the boys, ignore common sense and risk your neck for that girl. And you know why?

RUBY

Tell me why.

IVY

Because you know she's magic. And you never turn your back on magic. Like turning your back on lightning.

RUBY

You're sure you don't like girls?

IVY

The dance was nice. I need to go.

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? Go
out with one boy after another,
wondering what's wrong with me?

BUFORD
Lucky. You found each other young.
You know how hard it is for the
rest of us to find The Big One?

EARL

Hadn't been for the saloon, I never would have found him.

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 clubs, wrote stories. He used his real name - big mistake.

CLEM

Why not?

GRADY

Post office grabbed everything he wrote - 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. Went to the fruitcake factory, got his works cut off like a steer.

CLEM

Lord.

GRADY

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

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 it. I asked. Bout
time we had some fun around here.
Last time it 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 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 your friends. Council stuck me with you as deputy, I'm still the sheriff. And...you been drinking? On fair day?

EXT. 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. The whole town is having a blast.

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

WRESTLER

Next victim, 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 is that?

GAY PATRON

That's a half nelson. Can't do a full nelson, I'd break your neck. Oklahoma A&M, got a team.

He fetches his shoes and belt.

GAY PATRON (CONT'D)

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. 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 elixir has a hundred uses! The things scientists can do. Couple years ago, feller up Boston, built a rocket, flies into space. Someday we ride straight up into the heavens! Who's gonna be 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

This is just the thing for a hot night in New Orleans. Ain't you boiling in that thing you got on?

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 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 when Beau's out drinking. Two summers back we went for a ride in a car, Beau got all hands and fingers with me.

She looks at the carnies.

IVY (CONT'D)

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. FIELD - NIGHT

The sun is going down. Grady and Ivy see a fire burning at the end of the field. Folks having a blast.

An African-American fortune teller in robes holds the hands of 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. 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 say. 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. 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, now you go 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
 Years back, had a bullwhip contest.
 They stopped cause my daddy won
 every year. My folks been training
 animals since the Revolution.
 Always been 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...You're gutshot, get you a doctor. He missed 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. HILLTOP - 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. Kept a shack for the old slaves who were too crippled to work, gave em food. 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. Father passed, I took over the shack, these old 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. Points to a grave.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

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, starved her. She went simple in the head.

(MORE)

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

Ethan, planted his own food, feed his family. They whipped him, did 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. 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)

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 still beat you at stud poker, I come up there find you someday. But not just yet.

She steps away to spit.

EMMA LEE (CONT'D)

My last time coming. 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)

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, stick it on a shelf. You ain't gonna sleep 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 robbing you blind. You know
we're your boys, we ain't seen no
money for a month. We need to go
back or we lose the whole city.

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. 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. This actress, Mae West,
 wrote this play, The Drag. Broadway
 show. It's about two fairies like
 you, doctor wants to use science to
 cure them.

GRADY
 You're joking.

CAROLLO
 The show made a ton of money, then
 the police closed down the theater.
 (laughs)
 I mean, they should have known
 better. You can't have gay actors
 on Broadway!...I mean it's just
 silly.

INT. 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. 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 at all. It's a crisis. Got Italian crooks here, Klan gets riled, pansy boys, council wanted a change.

IVY

All the men you could have picked when the chips are down, 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

I need the state troopers too. You town fellas, you know everybody in 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)

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.

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

BEAU (CONT'D)

State troopers are fine for some things, but for the rest, we need 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. Every
night.

CAROLLO

Tennessee road?

ROY

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. OUTSIDE SALOON - NIGHT

Montage. Each of the bar crew drives to an isolated 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 locals thought we were building a new saloon so they burned it down.

IVY

So that's not our new location.

ROY

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

We need to stop this. Hey. 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, we got Beau's boys beating people up, Carollo's bouncers, Clem shooting her gun.

GRADY

Somebody's gonna get killed.

IVY

Give Daddy his town back. We can 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

My life? 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)

You save me. But now there's gonna be trouble.

GRADY

Story of my life.

IVY

I mean now. Beau's coming back with a redneck army. 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. Beat em to the draw. Invite the town. Have a party.

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. 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 on your soul, carry around that sinful money. I help you out. Take it to the grocery store, pay off my line. A bunch of us save 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 send Emma Lee some books. Her husband looks a little poky.

EXT. OUTSIDE SALOON - NIGHT

Most of the town is at the burning saloon. Having a blast.

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. Colored people. Nobody's afraid. You know who's afraid? The boys with the sheets. 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

So the town empties out. All the homophiles go home, and lie and pretend again. Sure was fun though.

To the crowd.

GRADY (CONT'D)

You fellas spread the word - I'm opening up shop down New Orleans. 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. First thing, every morning, come downstairs, there's a girl there, somebody who cares about me. Somebody who will remember me when I pass. It's my one important thing every day.

IVY

Daddy -

MASON

And now you need to get out of this town. See the world. Otherwise you're gonna sit there hating me in that kitchen.

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. Grady approaches.

MASON

So have you turned into one of these homophiles?

IVY

Yes, Daddy, I like girls.

MASON

(seeing her smile)

Yeah. If I ever want to know if you're lying, that's the face I'll look for.

IVY

Still like the boys, Daddy.

GRADY

(smiles)

Yes, she's a throw back. A horse and buggy in a Chevrolet world. I just had to give up on her.

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.

GRADY

Folks figured out that people who spit chaw and eat pig's guts shouldn't be appointing themselves Archangels of the Lord.

IVY

I'm not quite ready to forgive these people yet.

GRADY

Abraham Brown? You don't think the town has changed?

IVY

Some of them. But then you got 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, 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! 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.

(MORE)

CLEM (CONT'D)

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)

Got 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 the 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? 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, 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)

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 OFFICE - 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 Beau 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

Me neither. Love you, baby girl.

Ivy hugs him.

EXT. PORCH - 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. Got to be bartender in
the front room, living the life.

(MORE)

IVY (CONT'D)

People realized they missed us more than they missed the Klan.

GRADY

So the town got back to normal. So have you let go of Abraham Brown yet?

IVY

I forgive, I don't forget. Homer's sheriff's husband, king of the town, but I don't think he forgot Abraham Brown either. But I think 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. 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.