

THE MISFITS

by
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THE MISFITS

It is a little before nine o'clock of a weekday morning. The Camera opens facing the beginning of an active main street in a medium-sized town. Ahead and stretched above the street is a big banner on which we read, "WELCOME TO RENO, THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD." The sun is shining.

The Camera moves ahead with a slight jerk — we are inside a vehicle but do not turn to see the driver. Through the windshield we see the great neon signs of the gambling clubs — all of them lit. We are in traffic and in a moment halt at a corner for a light. Jazz music is coming from our vehicle's radio.

Then, a very strained, polka-dot-dressed young girl carrying her three-year-old daughter on her arm, comes up to the side window of our vehicle. Both mother and child are dressed up and perspiring. In an Oklahoma accent . . .

WOMAN

Am I headed right for the courthouse, 'Mister?

DRIVER'S VOICE

Straight on one block and then two left.

WOMAN

Thank you kindly. It's awfully confusin' here.

DRIVER'S VOICE

It sure is, Ma'm.

The Woman steps away and walks on and we can see her with her child going along the sidewalk. Our vehicle moves now, but slowly in the traffic, and we keep her in camera through our side window. The Jazz on the radio ends, and a hillbilly commentator is heard, while we are still focused on the thin woman.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

Well, here's somethin' to think about while you're a-waitin' for your vacuum-packed Riddale Coffee to come to a boil. For the third month a-runnin', we've beat out Las Vegas. Four hundred and eleven divorces have been granted as of yesterday compared to 391 for Vegas. No doubt about it, partners, we are the Divorce Capital of the World. And speakin' of divorce; would you like to cut loose

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE (Cont.)

of a bad habit? How about rootin' yourself out of that chair and gettin' over to Haber's Drug Store and treat yourself to a good night's sleep with good old Dream-Z-Z?

As the above proceeds, the Camera has been enlarging its vision; in a knot of people it has picked out another woman — better dressed than the first, perhaps haughty — and utterly alone. Then another, only a girl, but clearly in a hurry to an important moment; despite the hour she is dressed up — and her face strained. The street becomes not merely populated, but from it has been selected the women — alone. We catch one through the window of a supermarket, a grocery bag in one arm, yanking a slot machine handle with the other. Another woman, suitcase in hand, is asking directions of a cop. A couple-in-love is caught staring at bridal gowns in a store window, beside which is a lawyer's shingle and the legend, "Divorce Actions." Our Vehicle now turns off the busy main street, and we are going down a tree-lined street, almost suburban, the houses very small, some of them frayed and nearly poor. Here there is a peaceful, almost somnolent quality of a hot Nevada day. As we turn . . .

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

Now naturally we don't claim to provide you with any special type of dream, friends. Dream-Z-Z's only one of them names they made up back East in New York. But it does work. I can rightly swear your sleepless nights are over; you get that dream ready, and we'll give you the sleep. Dream-Z-Z's a real little bottle of rest, folks, and relaxation, and peace. Put that burden down, Mother; Daddy? — let yourself go. Dream-Z-Z. Come on folks, let's get together here . . . say it with me now like we always do . . . all together . . .

(A mass of violins soars into a music of wafting sleep)

Dream — Eeases — Zzzzzzzzzzz . . .

The vehicle comes to a halt at the curb and the engine is shut off and the radio with it.

Guido emerges from what we see now is a tow truck. He is cleanly dressed in work pants and shirt. Referring to an address on a paper in his hand, he goes up the stoop of a house, rings the bell.

As he waits, a gigantic passenger plane flies low over the house. Guido looks up, and we see the mixture of expert appraisal and

longing in his eyes. The door at his back opens. Isabelle appears. She is a sixty-year-old tomboy, rather timid, ready for humor, incompetent, and slightly ashamed of herself. She is in a wrapper, with straight bobbed hair in the manner of the twenties. She drinks, and it is very early in the morning for her. She is sober now.

GUIDO

Mrs. Taber live here? I'm supposed to look at her car.

ISABELLE

Oh sure. You just wait right there . . .

(Glancing at her wrapper, then up
and down the street, giggling)

Oh, I guess it's all right.

(She descends past him down the
stoop. Now we see she has one arm
in a sling. HE follows)

They say things anyway. Now don't rush me, I just busted it and I'm not going to do it again. I made up my mind. There now, where is that car?

(She looks at driveway)

Oh, yes, it's in the garage. Follow me, just keep right behind me. I hope you're going to be generous with her. I hope you're not the kind to be miserly. She's a dear sweet person, Mrs. Taber.

GUIDO

Is that it?

They have halted, looking at a car which is sticking out of the garage behind the house. It is a new shiny Cadillac convertible. But every fender is smashed in, the trunk is warped, bumpers bent.

ISABELLE

Don't you be put off by appearances, young man. Keep your mind open. As open as can be.

Guido walks along the car, opens the door, looks in at the speedometer, then quickly sticks his head out, and incredulously . . .

GUIDO

Twenty-three miles!?

ISABELLE

Now you just pay attention. She only took one ride in it six weeks ago and it's been sittin' there since.

ISABELLE (Cont.)

(Intimately)

You know the men in this town — they kept runnin' in to her just to start a conversation.

(GUIDO looks doubtful)

Bang, bang, bang! — terrible! It was a divorce present from her husband, don't y'know, so it's no great loss.

GUIDO

(He has bent over to look at a tire)

They giving presents for divorces now?!

ISABELLE

(With great innocence and feeling)

Why not! On the anniversary of our divorce, my husband has never failed to send me a potted yellow rose, and it'll be nineteen years July. The heart's a tricky little thing, young fella. Of course he never paid me the alimony, but I wouldn't care to put a man out anyway.

From above Rosilyn's voice is heard calling, "Isabelle? Is?" Isabelle looks up at a screened window on the second floor.

ISABELLE

Coming right up, dear! I'm outside!

(To Guido)

Now you be your most generous self, 'cause she's got to start a new life now, you know.

With which Isabelle starts into the back door of the house, favoring her broken arm.

GUIDO

. . . You break your arm in the car?

ISABELLE

Oh no. I . . . my last roomer before Mrs. Taber — we celebrated her divorce and I . . . misbehaved.

(Suddenly ashamed and angry at her position)

I'm just so sick and tired of myself!

Almost in tears she vanishes into the house. Guido locks up at the screened window above; he can faintly hear Roslyn talking and for an instant she passes close enough to the window screen for him to see her outline, then she vanishes.

Guido goes down the driveway to his truck, leans over to pick up a battery, and a Saint's medal swings out of his shirt and brushes the battery pole and makes a quick vicious spark. He jumps back, examines the medal, which is superimposed on a crucifix whose tip has been charred. He puts it back in his shirt, carries the battery up the driveway toward Roslyn's car, his black, questioning eyes looking up toward the second floor.

Isabelle is opening the door of Roslyn's room on the second floor.

ISABELLE

It's after nine, dear girl!

She enters the room which is in chaos; bureau drawers hang open, the bed is a mess, covered with letters, a few magazines, toilet articles, hair curlers. From the closet Roslyn calls:

ROSLYN

I can't find it! Did you move it somewhere?

ISABELLE

It's the heat, dear — I'm always losing things in hot weather! What'd you lose?

Roslyn emerges from the closet, going straight to a bureau where she turns things over, searching. She is well-brushed, in a light print dress.

ROSLYN

My answers. I've got to have my answers!

ISABELLE

Oh my, your answers! What's that?

Isabelle spots a slip of paper sticking out of a mirror frame.

ROSLYN

There it is! Here. Ask me.

Isabelle sits on the bed with the slip of paper; Roslyn makes up her face at the mirror as the catechism proceeds.

ISABELLE

Now let's see. "Did your husband, Mr. Raymond Taber, act toward you with cruelty?"

ROSLYN

Well . . . yes.

ISABELLE

Just say yes.

ROSLYN

Yes.

ISABELLE

"In what ways did his cruelty manifest itself?"

ROSLYN

He . . . How's it go again?

ISABELLE

(Reading)

"He persistently and cruelly ignored my personal rights and wishes, and resorted on several occasions to physical violence against me."

ROSLYN

He persistently and cruelly ignored my . . .

(She breaks off, troubled)

Must I say that? It wasn't that way, exactly. I mean he just didn't understand anything.

ISABELLE

You can't get a divorce for that reason. Just answer the questions the way your lawyer wrote them and it'll all be over in five minutes. He did beat up on you, didn't he?

ROSLYN

Yes, but he . . . People don't know what they're doing, Isabelle. It wasn't only that he beat up on me . . . he just wasn't there. You know what I mean? I mean you could touch him, but he wasn't there.

ISABELLE

Darling child, if that was grounds for divorce there'd be about eleven marriages left in the United States. Now just repeat . . .

A car horn blows below. Isabelle hurries to the window. From the driveway Guido talks up to her.

GUIDO

They'll call in their estimate from the office.

ROSLYN

(Going to the window, calling down)
Those bumps weren't my fault, you know!

Guido now sees Roslyn for the first time, still behind the window screen, but more or less clearly. He is smiling, strangely embarrassed.

GUIDO

I'll recommend the best price I can, Miss. You can drive her now, I put a battery in.

ROSLYN

Oh, I'll never drive that car again.

GUIDO

I'll give you a lift in my truck if you're leavin' right away.

ROSLYN

Swell! Two minutes!
(To Isabelle in the room)
Get dressed, Iz, you got to be my witness!

ISABELLE

This'll be my seventy-seventh time I've witnessed for a divorce. Two sevens is lucky, darlin'.

ROSLYN

Oh, Iz, I hope!

Roslyn smiles, but fear and a puzzled consternation remain in her eyes.

We cut to the interior of the truck, Guido driving, Isabelle in the middle, and Roslyn at the window studying her answers and reading her lines to herself.

GUIDO

I went to school for a while about a hundred miles from Chicago.

ISABELLE

(ROSLYN returns to her memorizing)

Oh! You a college man?

GUIDO

That was medical school.

ROSLYN

(Turns curiously)

You a doctor?

GUIDO

No, I got drafted. . . . And a couple of other things. Going back East right away?

ROSLYN

(Shrugs)

I don't know. All I could think about here was when my six weeks would be up.

GUIDO

Don't you have family back there?

ROSLYN

No. I don't have anybody.

GUIDO

That's lucky.

ROSLYN

Why is it lucky?

GUIDO

I always prefer dealing with strangers. Kinda leaves you free.

ISABELLE

Spoken like a true Reno man!

GUIDO

(As THEY chuckle)

Here's your courthouse.

(Brings car to a halt)

My name is Guido. Guido Delinini.

ROSLYN

(Opening her door)

I'm Roslyn Taber . . . or rather . . . Well, I guess I'm still Roslyn Taber.

GUIDO

If you're not leaving town right away I'd be glad to take you out and show you the country. There's some beautiful country once you get out of this town.

ROSLYN

Thanks anyway. I don't know what I'm going to do, though.

Roslyn gets out. Then, as Isabelle is sliding out . . .

ISABELLE

My name is Isabelle Steers.

GUIDO

(He laughs at her jibe)

Okay, Isabelle. You could come along if you like.

ISABELLE

That's a sweet afterthought! Oh you Reno men!

(She laughs and goes)

Guido stares out after them as they walk across the paved paths that section the grass in front of the courthouse. Men on park-benches look up at Roslyn as she passes; men turn as she goes by. The young polka-dot woman carrying her baby is shaking hands with a lawyer on the courthouse steps. They part. Gaunt-eyed, the woman passes Roslyn.

We truck in front of Roslyn and Isabelle as they approach the steps of the court; Roslyn is rapidly going over her lines from her prompt paper. Her anxiety is tight now.

ROSLYN

I can't memorize this; it's not the way it was.

ISABELLE

You take everything so seriously, dear! Just say it; it doesn't have to be true. It's not a quiz show, it's only a court.

They start up the courthouse steps, and as Roslyn looks up after putting her paper away, she is stopped by what she sees. A man is descending the steps toward her. Well-built, tall, about thirty-eight, soft straw hat and a tie with a big design. His mind is constantly trying to tune in on the world but the message is never clear — he feels self-conscious now, having to plead; he was successful early in life and this pleading threatens his dignity. He expects that the simple fact of his having come here will somehow convince his wife how guilty she is. But he will forgive her and she will idolize him again. He is Raymond Taber, her husband. He manages a hurt, embarrassed grin.

TABER

Just got off the plane. I'm not too late, am I?

She looks at him; a rising fear for herself holds her silent. He comes up to her.

ROSLYN

Don't, Raymond. Please, I don't want to hear anything.

TABER

(Downing his resentment)

Give me five minutes, will you? After two years, five minutes isn't . . .

ROSLYN

(With a climactic, quivering intensity)

I don't want to hear it. You can't have me, so now you want me. That's all. Please . . . I'm not blaming you. I just never saw it any different. I mean I don't believe in the whole thing.

TABER

Kid, I understand what . . .

ROSLYN

You don't understand it, because nobody understands it!

(With her finger she presses his chest)

You aren't there, Raymond!

(She steps back)

If I'm going to be alone, I want to be alone by myself. . . . I always was, anyway. Go back, Raymond — you're not going to make me sorry for you any more.

She leaves him standing there in an impotent fury and goes to Isabelle who puts her arms around her; and Roslyn is inwardly quaking with sobs, but she will not cry, and they ascend the steps together.

We cut to Guido in his truck. From his viewpoint we see Roslyn going up the courthouse steps with Isabelle's arm comfortingly around her while the ex-husband furiously looks on. Guido sees that Isabelle is giving Roslyn a handkerchief to wipe away her tears as they disappear into the building.

Guido is staring in puzzlement, attracted and above all fascinated. He starts the truck and drives away.

Guido has come to a halt at the railroad tracks which cross Main Street. His eye catches a nearby man who is kissing a woman preparatory to putting her aboard the train. This is Gay. Guido calls to Gay who turns and yells back . . .

GAY

I been lookin' for you! Wait up for me!

We are close in now on Gay and the departing woman.

GAY

Good luck, now, Susan. I hope you find somebody you like real soon.

SUSAN

Promise you'll think about it, Gay. It's the second largest laundry in St. Louis.

GAY

I just ain't cut out for it, Susan. But thanks anyway.

(CONDUCTOR calls "All aboard")

Best get aboard now . . .

SUSAN

Gay! How am I going to live without you! If I write to you will you answer?

GAY

Most likely. Now be a good sport and get aboard. Go ahead, Honey.

(Gets her onto the step)

That's a girl! So long, Sue, it sure was pleasant!

(The train moves and SHE stands
appealingly weeping, as she disappears)

Gay ambles along the tracks and with Margaret, his dog, he gets into
the truck. Gay is weary and slumps in his seat.

GUIDO

Which one was that?

GAY

The laundry. One of the best things about knowin' a woman is sayin'
goodbye. Leaves things so restful.

The train clears the tracks and they drive.

(HE spits out the window, sighs)

GAY

She was appreciative, though. . . . good sport.
(Stretches)

I could sleep for about three days and a half and then rest up for a
month or two.

(GUIDO smiles; it excites him)

What say we get out in the country, Guido? I was about to look you
up, soon as she left.

GUIDO

I been thinking about it myself, but I don't know.

GAY

Seems to me you been more than a month holdin' down that job. That's
just about your limit, fella.

GUIDO

I'd like to get about five hundred before I take off this time. I'd
like to get a brand new engine.

GAY

Why? That engine'll fly you anywhere. That's a good airplane you
got there, Guido.

(With new vigor)

Pack yourself up tonight, and let's get out in those mountains! I
long for some fresh air and no damned people, male or female. . . .
Maybe we do a little mustangin' up there, what do you say?

Guido pulls up before a used-car lot. He is moved even as he speaks.

GUIDO

I just saw a hell of a lookin' woman, Gay. Sweet enough to eat.

They get out of the truck, Guido talking as they enter a small auto repair shed.

GAY

(Grinning; but he shows a certain respectful restraint)

Why, you old rabbit you — I don't believe I ever saw you worked up over a woman! You know where she lives?

GUIDO

(Idly spinning a gear with his finger, a deep uneasiness permeating his shy smile)

Yeah, but . . . I don't know, there's always so damn much useless talk you gotta go through.

GAY

It ain't the talkin' I mind, it's buyin' the drinks. Whyn't you get her to come out in the country? Things move ahead a lot faster out there. Go ahead — you gettin' awful moody, boy.

GUIDO

(With an indecisive decision)

I'll meet you over the bar later, talk about it.

GAY

Good enough — and let's go for mustangs soon, huh? You had enough wages for this year — you gonna git the habit you don't watch out.

GUIDO

See ya.

Jay ambles out of the shop, followed by the dog. We are left with a disturbed dream in Guido's face.

We cut to a shot of the fast-moving river which flows under Main Street; we see it from the railing bordering the street. It is near noon. Roslyn and Isabelle are walking along and Isabelle stops.

ISABELLE

Throw in your ring.

ROSLYN

(She looks at her wedding ring;
puzzled)

Why?

ISABELLE

It's a custom. If you throw it in you'll never have a divorce again.

(ROSLYN hesitates, turning her ring)

There's more gold in that river than the Klondike. Go ahead, honey, everybody does it.

ROSLYN

(With a certain revulsion)

Did you do it?

ISABELLE

Oh no, I lost mine on my honeymoon, and I never got time to buy another.

ROSLYN

Let's get a drink!

ISABELLE

That's my girl!

They go into a bar and sit at a table. Roslyn is suddenly grateful for Isabelle's company.

ROSLYN

I don't know what I would've done without you, Iz. You're practically the only woman who was ever my friend.

(To the WAITER, who appears)

Scotch and ice.

ISABELLE

Rye and water.

The waiter goes. There is a pause. Roslyn looks around the near-empty bar.

ISABELLE

Oh, no, you can't blame anybody.

ROSLYN

(Suddenly reaches across and grasps
ISABELLE's hand)

You're a fine woman, Isabelle. You really are. I'm thankful to you.

ISABELLE

Oh, I'm nothin'; just an old first-wife — town is full of 'em. I hope you're not going to leave. 'Cause you might find yourself here. 'Cause the wonderful thing about this town is it's always full of interesting strangers.

ROSLYN

That's all I've known, Isabelle. Interesting strangers.

ISABELLE

You could teach dancing here. There is a school, you know . . . make nice money.

ROSLYN

I never worry about money — I always made my way . . . What is there? Does anybody know? I mean . . . the whole thing . . . is . . .

(Tears are springing into her eyes. .
ISABELLE anxiously strokes her hand,
fearful Roslyn will sob)

ISABELLE

Oh, dear girl, I'm so sorry . . .

ROSLYN

I suddenly miss my mother. Isn't that the stupidest thing?

(She covers her face, but quickly
looks up, trying to smile)

Let's have another drink!

(She turns for the waiter and sees
Margaret, Gay's dog, sitting patiently
at the foot of the bar)

Oh, look at that dear dog! How sweet it sits there!

ISABELLE

Yeah, dogs are nice.

Now, looking again toward the dog, she and Isabelle see Gay placing a glass of water before Margaret. Margaret drinks. Gay glances at the two women, nods just for hello, and as he straightens up to turn back

to the bar, Guido enters, dressed in a clean shirt now and dress trousers. Guido sees Roslyn and comes over as Gay starts to greet him.

GUIDO

Oh, hello! How'd you make out?

ROSLYN

(Shyly)

Okay. It's all over.

GUIDO

(He nods, uncertain how to proceed,
and beckons GAY over in part as a
relief for his tension)

Like you to meet a friend of mine. This is Gay Langland. Mrs. Taber . . .

GAY

(Realizing she is the one)

Oh! How da do.

GUIDO

(Of Isabelle, not remembering her
name)

And this is . . .

ISABELLE

Isabelle Steers.

(To Roslyn)

One thing about Western men, they do remember the name.

(THEY laugh. To Gay — she loves
new people)

You look familiar, Mister. I think you called on a girl was living in my house. About a year ago?

GAY

What street?

ISABELLE

Sutter.

GAY

Sutter? That's possible. Yeah, I believe I did call around Sutter.

ISABELLE

Why'n't you boys sit down?

GAY

Well, thank you. Sit down, Guido. Waiter? What're you girls drinkin'?

ISABELLE

Whiskey. We're celebrating the jail burned down.

GAY

(To the Waiter)

Get four doubles.

GUIDO

I got you a good price on your car, I think. Boss'll be calling you up later about it.

ROSLYN

Oh, thanks.

(GUIDO's intensely searching stare

forces her to Gay, to whom she says . . .)

You a mechanic too?

(The WAITER serves the drinks)

ISABELLE

Him? He's a cowboy.

GAY

(Grinning)

How'd you know?

ISABELLE

I can smell, can't I?

GAY

You can't smell cows on me.

ISABELLE

I can smell the lock in your face, Cowboy.

(She reaches across and laughs)

I love 'em, though! Nothin' like a cowboy! I had a cowboy friend . . .

(She quickly sips)

He had one arm gone, but he was more with one arm than any man with two. I mean like cooking . . .

(THEY laugh)

I'm serious! He could throw a whole frying pan full of chops in the air and they'd all come down on the other side. Of course, you're all good-for-nothin' — as you know.

GAY

Well, good-for-nothin' may not be much, but it's better than wages.

GUIDO

I suppose you're headin' back East now, huh?

ROSLYN

I don't know. I'm just trying to make up my mind.

GUIDO

I'd be sorry to see you go so soon.

GAY

She's probably got a business, or somethin' . . .

ROSLYN

(Surprised)

Me?! Why'd you think I had a business?

GAY

No reason. Just that you meet so many have a business back home, or an office -- y'know, lady-lawyers, dentists, certified public accountants, writers. You a writer?

ROSLYN

Me?! I didn't even finish high school!

GAY

(Wryly)

Well, that's real good news.

ROSLYN

(Laughs)

Why? -- don't you like educated women?

GAY

Oh, I don't mind 'em. But I've known some could ask so many questions it dried out my mouth keepin' up with 'em. Always wantin' to know what you're thinkin'. There sure must be a load of thinkin' goin' around back East.

ROSLYN

Well . . . maybe they're trying to get to know you better.

(Wryly)

You don't mind that, do you?

GAY

I don't at all,

(Laughs)

. . . but did you ever get to know a man by askin' him questions?

ROSLYN

You mean, he's going to lie..

GAY

Well he might not — but then again, he just might!

(THEY laugh)

It's a little bit like a horse, ain't it? You can talk about him, you can talk to him . . . but if you gonna know him you gotta get on and ride.

ISABELLE

Till he throws you off.

GAY

Well, as the man said, that's the nature of the beast.

ROSLYN

And anyway, there's always another horse, isn't there?

GAY

(With a certain sympathy toward her)

Yes, Ma'm, I guess there always is.

ISABELLE

And some are real nice too — so let's get another drink!

ROSLYN

(A relaxed pleasure stirring in her)

Sure, let's have some more!

GAY

Can't see a bit of harm in that.

(Calls)

Fella? See if you can get us four more, will ya?

(To Guido, relaxed and happy —
trying to open the way)

How about it, Pilot? We takin' out of this town today?

GUIDO

(Spurred to open his campaign — and
a little awkward)

You been out of Reno at all, Mrs. Taber?

ROSLYN

Well, I walked to the edge of town once and looked out, but — it looks like nothing's there.

GAY

That might just be where everything is.

ROSLYN

Like what?

GAY

The country.

ROSLYN

What do you do there?

GAY

Only thing you can do there -- live.

ROSLYN

(To Guido)

You work here, though, don't you?

GUIDO

Just long enough to get back out there again. I quit just now.

GAY

You did?! That's the boy!

(To Roslyn)

Whyn't you do yourself a favor? Take a ride out with us. It's only fifty miles; we'd bring you back tonight.

ROSLYN

You have a farm or something?

GAY

I know, it's peculiar thing. When you tell people that you just live, they don't know what you're talkin' about.

ROSLYN

(Drawn in, she searches his eyes)

Well how can you . . . just live?

GAY

Well . . . you start by going to sleep. Next step is you get up when you feel like it. Then you scratch yourself.

(THEY chuckle)

Fry yourself some eggs, see what kind of day it is, throw a stone, ride a horse, read the paper, visit, whistle, get some groceries . . . It'll come to you soon as you get rid of the feelin' that somebody's chasin' you or you gotta chase somebody else.

ROSLYN

(Her eyes meet his; he has challenged her)

I know what you mean.

ISABELLE

Might be nice, dear, whya't you go out for a ride?

GUIDO

If it hit you right I've got an empty house out there you could have. . . . I don't live there myself, but it's yours if you want a little rest before you go back. I'd rent it to you cheap, if you wanted to stay a while.

ROSLYN

(Grinning)

Oh, is the last woman gone now?

GUIDO

(Flushing)

No! No kidding, I've never rented it before.

(With a sudden self-exposure that is difficult for him)

I never offered it, before.

ROSLYN

Well thanks. I wouldn't stay there, but I was thinking of renting a car and seeing what the country . . .

GUIDO

(Excitedly)

Gay's got a truck, or I could get my car.

ROSLYN

No. Then you'll have to drive me back.

GUIDO

Oh, I don't mind!

ROSLYN

No, I always . . . like my own. But thanks . . .

(A little flustered at having to stand against him, she touches his hand)

I mean I always like to . . . feel I'm on my own, y'know? Because I always used to be, and I don't intend to be any different again. I'll rent a car. Where can I?

GAY

Right now?

ROSLYN

Why not?

GAY

(Standing — enthusiastically)

Okay! You sure don't waste your time, do you!

ROSLYN

(Standing, and with a laugh)

Always have! — but not any more, if I can help it!

We cut to an endless vista of the bare, vacant Nevada hills. Now a highway — straight, white, lonely. Gay's battered truck is on it; following behind, a three-year-old station wagon.

We shoot inside the station wagon. Roslyn is driving, Isabelle beside her. Roslyn is constantly turning to stare out.

ROSLYN

What's behind those hills?

ISABELLE

Hills.

ROSLYN

What's that beautiful smell? It's like some kind of green perfume.

ISABELLE

Sage, darling.

ROSLYN

Is that sage! I always wondered what sage was! Oh, Isabelle — it's beautiful, isn't it?

ISABELLE

Oh, it's just bare, beat-up range country, honey.

(After a pause looking out)

I better tell you something about cowboys, dear.

ROSLYN

(Laughs warmly)

You really worry about me, don't you!

ISABELLE

You're too believing, dear. Cowboys are the best men in the world. I know. Providin' you don't expect they're gonna be there tomorrow. They're the last real men and as reliable as jackrabbits.

ROSLYN

(After a hesitation)

You think I'm reliable, Isabelle?

ISABELLE

I imagine with a man you'd be.

ROSLYN

Not always.

(Shyly)

In fact, mostly not, I think. I mean I never stay when it comes time to go, y'know?

ISABELLE

Well you probably never had anybody to be reliable to.

ROSLYN

Maybe I have, I don't know. I've had some awful things said to me; sometimes I wonder if maybe they're true, some of them.

ISABELLE

You haven't been understood yet, Roslyn.

ROSLYN

Is there such a thing?

ISABELLE

(Conceding . . .)

Well, it's supposed to be — you read about it.

ROSLYN

I'd like to see it once.

(With sudden energy)

Let's enjoy ourselves today! I just want to look at everything. I'm not going to care about a thing but seeing everything there is to see!

Out to the truck. Guido is driving.

GAY

Thanks for drivin', Guido. I feel like a head full of cotton.

GUIDO

(In his own world)

I couldn't hear what he said to her but . . .

(Glances at Gay for corroboration)

He looked like she left him. The husband.

GAY

Most likely. Good-lookin' woman's harder to hold than money.

GUIDO

(In his own inner, troubled world)

She's kind of hard to figure out, y'know? One minute she looks dumb and brand new. Like a kid. But maybe he caught her knockin' around. . . . What do you think? You know more about women than I do. I kind of like her but I can't figure her.

GAY

Nobody knows nothin' about women, Pilot, and the man that says he does, knows less. I just go with it, that's all, and if it don't go, I go elsewhere. Let me take a nap now.

(He curls up with his back to Guido.)

Slight pause)

GUIDO

She sure moves, doesn't she?

GAY

Mm, yeah. She's real prize.

Now the camera comes around and shoots Gay's face. Instead of being asleep, as he seems to be, his eyes are open, and he is calculating.

Dissolve on Gay's face to a long shot of both vehicles moving along the highway. Now the truck turns off and climbs a narrow, rock-strewn trail into the side hills.

We now see Roslyn and Isabelle in the station wagon, bouncing up the steep path. Roslyn is wide-eyed as the hills envelop them. There is even a suggestion of trepidation in her, but above all she seems to be moving into a newness.

The truck pulls up before Guido's former home. The building, a rather modern, ranch-style affair, is still without some of its sheathing boards, which lie in a pile on the ground with weeds twisting around and through them. Beside the house is a concrete slab for a garage; weeds are sprouting through its cracks. The house is at the head of the trail. All get out. The men come to Roslyn, who gets out of

her car and looks at the house with a certain excitement. Guido is taking a key packet out of his pocket.

ROSLYN

Why isn't it finished?

GUIDO

(Cryptically)

It's weathertight. Come on in.

They follow him to the front door. He reaches up and unlocks — there is no step yet. He hops up the two-and-a-half-foot rise and reaches down and pulls her up, then Isabelle, then Gay hops up.

We scan the interior. The place is strangely somber. There is a motley assortment of living-room furniture, a finished stone fireplace going through the roof; Indian blankets are spread over some chairs and the couch. Bare studs mark where the kitchen wall should be, and the appliances seem to stand in the living room. Nevertheless, Roslyn is somehow excited. Gay pulls coverings off the chairs to show her how nice it all is, and looks in the kerosene can and reports that it's almost full and she can start cooking right off. Roslyn asks where the bedroom is, and Guido takes her to the door of the only room with finished partitions, and with a heightened intensity which she notices in him but cannot interpret, he opens the door and they go in.

The bedroom is finished but rather bare, and over the double bed is a photograph of Guido and his wife.

ROSLYN

Oh, it's nice! Who's that woman?

GUIDO

My wife. She died here.

ROSLYN

(With shock)

Oh! . . .

GUIDO

She was due to have a baby. I was up setting the top stones into the chimney, and . . . she screamed, and that was that.

ROSLYN

You don't live here, huh?

GUIDO

I stay at my sister's a couple miles away. It's a nice house, just needs a little finishing. There's a view from every window. Look.

He takes her to a window. The trail descends to the highway, beyond which is the endless, hill-gocked range and the horizon.

ROSLYN

Couldn't you call the doctor?

GUIDO

She didn't seem to be that sick. Then I got a flat and didn't have a spare. . . . Everything just happened wrong. It does that sometimes.

ROSLYN

Oh, I know. Couldn't you live here again?

GUIDO

I could no more live here than I could in a grave.

(He senses her sympathy, and to a certain degree, he cultivates it now)

We knew each other since we were seven years old, see.

(He smiles at himself)

We got engaged when we were ten.

ROSLYN

Really? You should find another girl — you'll make somebody a good husband.

GUIDO

(Calling on her evident sympathy)

I don't know. Being with anybody else, it just seems . . . wrong you know? She wasn't like other women. Stood behind me hundred percent; uncomplaining as a tree.

ROSLYN

(She senses an invidious comparison; she laughs lightly, and still in sympathy)

Maybe if you understood tree language you'd have got the doctor sooner.

(Quickly adding — in view of his surprise)

I mean it's possible, y'know? I mean you shouldn't look for somebody so perfect, because nobody really is. They'll maybe seem so but . . . I mean no woman's like a tree, Guido . . . I mean, not really, you know?

ROSLYN (Cont.)

(Suddenly striving for a gayety — and pardon, she takes his arm, starting him out of the room)

Come! Show me the rest of it! — it's beautiful!

(THEY emerge into the living room area. GAY is sprawled on the couch, ISABELLE is holding up an Indian blanket to examine it)

Isn't it beautiful here, Iz?

ISABELLE

It'd be perfect if somebody'd go out in the car and get the bottle of whiskey I bought with my own money.

GUIDO

Hey, that's right!

(Glad for the reprieve, he hops down, out the front door. ROSLYN wanders about the room, touching things)

GAY

Glasses are in the kitchen, Isabelle — I'm real tired.

ISABELLE

No, darling, you're just a cowboy; — you fellas won't get up unless it's rainin' down your neck.

(GAY laughs as SHE goes into the kitchen area. HE turns and watches ROSLYN, who has halted at a window to look out. HE runs his eyes over her back, her legs)

GAY

Too rough for you, Roslyn?

ROSLYN

Oh, I don't mind that. But it could've been fixed up beautifully.

GAY

Why'n't you go ahead and do it?

ROSLYN

(Looking about; sniggering)

Gay's interest is heightened; Isabelle feels a little ashamed and ineffectual; Guido is slightly frightened and drawn to her. And because there is no one here to receive her meaning as she intends it, she suddenly . . .

ROSLYN

Is there a phonograph or a radio?! Let's get some music!

GUIDO

There's no electricity.

ROSLYN

How about the car radio!

GAY

(Surprised)

Now who'd've thought of that! Turn it on, Guido!

Guido excitedly rushes out, hopping down to the ground.

GAY

How about another drink, Roslyn . . . it'll keep the first one warm.

ROSLYN

I'd love it!

(The car engine is heard starting outside)

ISABELLE

Think I'll make a sandwich! How about you people!

(ISABELLE goes into the kitchen area.
GAY, alone with ROSLYN, pours a drink into her glass, and quietly)

ROSLYN

Okay!

GAY

I hope you're going to stay here. Any chance?

ROSLYN

(Her face filling with a sadness that approaches a self-abandonment — thus,

ROSLYN (Cont.)

(she smiles)

Why? What difference would it make?

GAY

Might make all the difference in the world as time goes by.

ROSLYN

(With the inner intensity of a searcher)

Why? You don't care about anything, do you?

(Music is heard from out the door.
The engine is shut off outside)

GAY

Sure do. Some things. But that don't mean it has to make a difference to anybody else. Like to dance?

ROSLYN

Okay. .

Gay takes her in his arms. He is a fair dancer. Guido enters, and is rather caught in midair by this progress.

ROSLYN

(Calling over Gay's shoulder to Guido)

Thanks, Guido! — Iz, give Guido another drink! It's a very nice house!

Isabelle comes out of the kitchen area. Guido goes around them and forces an interest in stoking up the fire. In his face, seen in the firelight, there is rapid, planning thought.

ISABELLE

(Making sandwiches with one hand)

That's pretty good dancing, Cowboy!

GAY

(To Roslyn)

I never danced this good in my life! — What're you makin' my feet do?

ROSLYN

(She is getting quite high; her body is moving more freely)

ROSLYN (Cont.)

Just what you're going to do next. Relax. Join your partner, don't fight her.

GAY

(Drawing her closer)

I ain't fightin' her.

(SHE breaks and tries to move him into a Lindy. HE does it awkwardly, but amazed at himself)

GUIDO

(Excitedly)

What are you doing!

Guido and Isabelle are watching with intrigued smiles. Guido drinks deeply now, a competitive tension rising in him.

ISABELLE

(Aside, to Guido)

She taught dancing, y'know, before she was married.

GUIDO

No kiddin'! In a dance hall?

ISABELLE

Something like that, I guess.

The information tends to "place" Roslyn for Guido now. From his viewpoint we see her now — abandoned, her body suggestive. Guido suddenly breaks in between her and Gay.

GUIDO

How about the landlord?

(Lightly, to Jay)

Move over, boy, huh?

GAY

Just watch out for those pretty little feet there!

GUIDO

(Looking at Roslyn, his eyes firing, his teeth set and glistening)

Oh, she knows how to get out of the way! Let's go!

ROSLYN (Cont.)

I'd love to, but I don't know what for. I always loved houses. I never had one, but I love them.

GAY

Should've seen his wife — she helped pour the cement, knocked in nails. She was a real good sport.

ROSLYN

(Looking around)

And now she's dead. . . . Because he didn't have a spare tire.

GAY

Well, that's the way it goes.

(Their eyes meet; HERS are vaguely hostile)

Often goes the other way, though; don't forget that.

(He smiles at her kindly)

ROSLYN

(She smiles back, closing her eyes for an instant as though to shake off her mood)

I know; I'm going to try to remember.

Guido jumps up into the room with a small bag of groceries and a bottle. He looks at them and at Isabelle drying glasses on her sling.

GUIDO

Nice to see people in here! Come on, folks, let's get a drink!

(Going to Isabelle)

I'll start the refrigerator — it makes ice quick.

ISABELLE

Ice! —

(Calling through the open studs to Roslyn)

We stayin' that long, Roslyn?

ROSLYN

I don't know . . .

GAY

(He meets her eyes — and he is referring
to her resolve of a moment ago)

Sure! — come on, there's no better place to be! And you couldn't
find better company either!

ROSLYN

(She laughs)

All right!

GAY

That's it, sport!

(Calling to the kitchen)

Turn on that ice, Guido-boy!

(ISABELLE comes in balancing a tray
and glasses, which GAY leaps up to
take — and the bottle out of her
sling. He pours)

Let's get this stuff a-flowin' and make the desert bloom.

ISABELLE

Flow it slow — we only got the one bottle.

GAY

(Handing ROSLYN a drink)

There you are, now! Put that in your thoughts and see how you come
out.

(SHE laughs. GUIDO enters and takes
a glass)

GUIDO

Come on, sit down, everybody!

(ROSLYN sits on the couch, and
ISABELLE sits with her. THE TWO MEN
take chairs. GUIDO addresses Roslyn,
his sense of hope flying)

Say, I'm really glad you like this place!

ISABELLE

(Raising her glass)

Well, here's to Nevada, the state of mind.

ROSLYN

(As THEY chuckle)

State of mind?

ISABELLE

That's what they say, y'know. There's nothin' in this state — the whole thing is practically unnecessary. All they've got is an attitude.

GAY

What attitude?

ISABELLE

"Anything goes but don't complain if it went."

(She laughs with them)

GAY

(Laughs)

That's no lie! — God!

ISABELLE

You want to lose your money, gamble it here; divorce? — get it here; extra atom bomb you don't need? — just blow it up here and nobody will mind in the slightest.

GUIDO

How come you never went back home, Isabelle? You came here for your divorce, didn't you?

ISABELLE

(She drinks, glances diffidently at Roslyn)

Tell you the truth, I wasn't beautiful enough to go home.

ROSLYN

Oh, Isabelle . . .

ISABELLE

It's true, darling. Beauty helps anywhere, but in Virginia it's a necessity. You practically need it for a driver's license. I love Nevada — it's the state of confusion. Why, they don't even have mealtimes here. Just eat any time. I never met so many people didn't own a watch. Might have two wives at the same time, but no watch.

(ROSLYN, relaxing, is leaning her head back on the couch as THEY all chuckle. Their rhythm has become relaxed)

ROSLYN

How quiet it is here!

GAY

(Sprawled out, sipping)
Sweetest sound there is.

(Pause. Quiet. THEY sip their drinks)

GUIDO

There's an Indian store about five miles, —

(ROSLYN looks at him quizzically)

— if you wanted to shop. Groceries, everything.

GAY

(Without any insinuation)
We'd be glad to come by and do your chores. If you liked.

ROSLYN

(She drinks again, gets up. THEY watch as, in a closed world of her own, SHE wanders to the fireplace, then turns to the men, asking)
Could we have a fire?

GUIDO

Sure! It's a good fireplace!

Guido has sprung up and goes and piles wood into the fireplace. He looks up at her, dares to smile, thankful for her command. She smiles back.

Gay catches this silent exchange; and Roslyn looks up from Guido and sees that Gay has been watching her. She smiles at him and he replies with a certain new intensity in his gaze at her. She drops her gaze and says to Isabelle . . .

ROSLYN

Maybe they know your friend.
(To the Men)
You ever know a fellow named Andy?

GAY

Andy who?

ISABELLE

Stop it, darling, you can't go lookin' for a man.

GAY

What'd he, take off?

ISABELLE

Not exactly — he just didn't come back.

(She laughs at herself)

Andy Powell? You ever . . .

GAY

Sure! Fella with one arm. Call him Andy Gump sometimes?

ISABELLE

(A little excitedly, she laughs)

That's him!

ROSLYN

(Hopefully for Isabelle)

Where is he?

GAY

Saw him at the rodeo last month.

ROSLYN

(To Gay)

Could you find him if you . . . ?

ISABELLE

Now, stop, honey! You know a man that wants a woman's going to come and get her. And if he don't want her . . .

ROSLYN

But Isabelle, maybe he's just waiting and hoping you'll come and see him! Maybe you don't have to be alone any more!

ISABELLE

Dear girl, you got to stop thinkin' you can change things . . .

ROSLYN

(Driven on by a wider vision . . .)

But if you know what to do . . . I mean I don't know what to do, but if I knew, I'd do it!

She suddenly finds the three of them looking at her in silence; looking at her as though she had challenged them in some secret way.

Guido, with a clap of his hands, astounds them all by breaking into a boogie Lindy. Roslyn immediately, and happily, accepts the challenge. They come together, part, dance back to back, and he puts her to her nattle.

GAY

Where in hell you learn that, Pilot!

(To Isabelle)

I never knew him to dance at all!

(Calling)

Where you been hiding, Pilot!

The number ends, and on the last beat Guido has her pressed close, and in the silence she deftly, but definitely — however smiling — breaks his grip on her body, her expression striving to deny the easy and slightly over-familiar victory in his eyes.

GAY

You two oughta put on a show! That's some goin', Roslyn!

ROSLYN

Wheww!

Panting, getting high, she laughingly staggers to the door. Another number starts from the radio. Guido goes to her, clasps her waist and turns her around to him familiarly.

GUIDO

Come on, Honey, this is a good one.

ROSLYN

No, I had enough right now.

GUIDO

(Thinking to press an advantage)

Come on, I haven't danced in years.

ROSLYN

Didn't your wife dance?

GUIDO

(Unknowingly but definitely turning his back on the memory and the hallowed mourning)

GUIDO (Cont.)

Not like you. She had no . . . gracefulness.

ROSLYN

(She lets him lead her from the door
with his arm around her -- and through
a faint haze of alcohol, almost laughing)

And anyway she's dead.

Guido, struck with guilt and wounded by some aspersion on his fidelity to a previously hallowed wife, tries to keep his grin and the gay mood, but his eyes are resentful, and he halts. On the couch, Gay and Isabelle are observing, eating sandwiches and drinking, sensing something serious now.

GUIDO

(Trying to laugh at her)

What do you mean by that?

ROSLYN

(She stays close to him looking up
into his face)

Why'n't you teach her to be graceful?

GUIDO

You can't teach that.

ROSLYN

How do you know? I mean how do you know? I mean did you ever dance that way with your wife?

GUIDO

Well she just couldn't make that kind of . . .

ROSLYN

You see? She died, and she never knew how you could dance! I mean it's nobody's fault, but to a certain extent --

(She holds thumb and index finger a
half inch apart)

-- I mean just to a certain extent maybe you were strangers.

GUIDO

(Defensively; hardening)

I don't feel like discussing my wife.

ROSLYN

(She takes his arm -- the jazz is going, she is high now)

Oh! I didn't mean to make you mad. I just meant that if you loved her you could have taught her anything. Because we have to die, we're really dying right now, aren't we? All the husbands and all the wives are dying every minute, and they are not teaching one another what they really know!

(Genuinely trying to plead with him)

You're such a nice man, Guido -- why are you so afraid?!

(She wipes her hair out of her eyes to blot out the sight of his resentful face, and suddenly . . .)

I want air!

(She goes quickly to the door and starts to step out. GAY rushes from the couch and catches her before she goes down where the step is missing. ISABELLE rushes right behind him. GAY, holding her . . .)

GAY

You better lie down, girl.

ISABELLE

Come on, let's get back home. Heist her down, Cowboy.

ROSLYN

No, I'm all right, I'm all . . . !

(She starts once again to walk out the door. GAY leaps down to the ground and SHE falls into his arms standing up. She looks into his face, laughing in surprise at her sudden drop)

How'd you get out here?

ISABELLE

(Calling from the threshold)

Get me down, Cowboy! Get in the car, Roslyn! -- we're goin' home!

Gay leaves Roslyn and goes and helps Isabelle down to the ground, while Guido helps from within the house -- his eyes on Roslyn. Roslyn, momentarily alone, looks about her. The radio jazz is still playing. She flies into a warm, longing, solo dance among the

weeds, and coming to a great tree she halts, and then embraces it, pressing her face against its trunk.

Guido, Isabelle, and Gay are watching in a group at the doorway of the house, mystification on their faces. Gay breaks and strides across the weeds to the tree, and gently tries to turn Roslyn's shoulder, for her face is hidden under her arm. As soon as he touches her she quickly turns and faces him and, astonishingly, her face is bright and laughing. Gay starts to smile, but he is mystified.

ROSLYN

You were worried about me!

GAY

Well, I . . .

ROSLYN

Oh, that's so sweet!

GAY

How about we get you back now, huh?

(He puts his arm around her and SHE lets herself be led to her station wagon, which is parked beside Gay's beat-up pickup truck. At the car's open door, GAY turns to Guido, and with some hesitation . . .)

I guess I'll drive them back to town, okay? Whyn't you take my truck and I'll come by for it later tonight.

Guido glances at Roslyn, rebuffed, left out.

ROSLYN

No, don't leave Guido all alone. Isabelle, ride with him. He's lonely. Go ahead, dear . . . ride with poor Guido.

She has gone to press Isabelle toward the truck, and with an apologetic, even shamed smile at Guido, she gets into the station wagon.

In a long shot we see both vehicles descending the rocky trail to the highway below, the truck ahead.

Inside the station wagon, Roslyn is sitting beside Gay, one leg tucked under, the other on the seat, her foot almost touching Gay's hip. She is in the momentary calm after a quick storm, staring out at the passing hills that rise from the roadside. She turns to look at Gay's profile; a calm seems to exude from him, an absence of uncertainty which has the quality of kindness.

ROSLYN

Where we going?

GAY

Take you home, I guess. Reno.

ROSLYN

I didn't mean to hurt his feelings. Did I hurt his feelings?

GAY

That's what feelings are for, I guess.

(Grins)

You sure brought out the little devil in him -- surprised me. Takes a lot of woman to do that to Guido.

(He laughs)

He sure looked comical doin' that dance!

(He laughs deeply)

They have arrived at the foot of the trail. The truck has entered the highway, turned, and moved off. Now Gay stops the car, looks left and right for traffic, and his eyes fall on Roslyn's, and she is looking at him searchingly, a residual smile lingering on her face.

GAY

You don't have a friend in the world, do you?

ROSLYN

(Quietly)

No.

GAY

(He runs his eyes along her leg up to her face)

Don't seem possible.

ROSLYN

Why?

GAY

(Straightforwardly, with a genuine wonder)

You the most beautiful woman I ever looked at.

(He grins)

I've said that before, but I never meant it. I mean it now. You're . . . you're a real beautiful woman. It's . . . almost kind of an honor sittin' next to you. You just shine in my eyes.

(SHE laughs, surprised, soundlessly but for a child's high tinkle)

That's my true feelin', Roslyn.

(He pulls up the brake and shifts around to face her, but not touching her)

I could be a good friend to you.

(SHE is silent, watching him)

Nobody I ever met, and nobody I ever said goodbye to, ever owed me anything. There's no better friend than that.

(He takes her hand and is made happy by it)

You're even beautiful down into your hands.

(He looks at her directly again)

I think a person's got to stop goin', Roslyn. You ever watch a horse out grazing? Every once in a while he raises up his head and just stands still. You won't find a better place for that. I'm stayin' at Guido's. I could come every day and do your chores. Get us a couple of horses and ride through the country. Won't cost you hardly nothin', either . . . I'd like to kiss you.

(He draws her to him, he kisses her)

Like pressin' my face into a barrel of cream.

ROSLYN

(HE tries to embrace her and SHE gently stops him)

I don't feel that way about you, Gay.

GAY

(Pleased, somehow, he holds up her chin)

Well don't be discouraged, girl -- you might!

(THEY both laugh. HE quickly puts the car in gear)

Suppose I take you back and you get your things, okay?

(He drives onto the highway. Now urgently . . .)

GAY (Cont.)

Try it a week. See what happens! You got nowhere to go to, do you?

ROSLYN

No.

GAY

Well, then there's nothin' better than standin' still.

ROSLYN

Don't you have a home?

GAY

Sure. Never was a better one either.

ROSLYN

Where is it?

GAY

Right here.

(With his head he indicates the open country. SHE looks out for a house, but seeing only the vast land, she turns back to his profile, his self-containment — and she turns back, facing the desert and the hills, trying to understand and to connect)

The camera holds on the panorama of the hills, but the light fails rapidly and we dissolve on a darkening scene.

We open on another area; not the former valley where the highway runs, but up in the hills, and the sun is newly risen, the light brightening as we watch. At first the scene is pastoral, all beauty. Now we tilt down to discover the conflict and rapacity beneath; we come closeup upon a rabbit emerging from under a sage bush. A shadow passes over it and tilting up we catch a hawk floating in the air above. Cut to a butterfly lighting on a branch; then to a chameleon near it. The chameleon's tongue flicks, the butterfly is taken. Even now birds nearby are making a racket. We cut to a nest full of fledglings, the parent bird agitated. It suddenly takes off. We shoot up. Three or four birds are diving at the scaring hawk, bothering him to drive him off.

The screaming of these birds accompanies the camera, at first it cuts back to the fledglings, then pans across bushes and discovers Guido's house close by. An open window faces us — this is the side of the

house. We cut to the window and look in, the screaming of the birds continuing.

Over the window sill we discover Roslyn asleep alone in the bed. The screaming seems to be tensing her sleeping face; her fists are closing. The shot widens as the door opens and Gay, fully dressed, stands in the doorway looking down at her. From his viewpoint now, the camera runs its fingers along the outlines of her body under the sheet. Beside her head is his pillow, still dented. The picture of Guido and his wife is gone from over the bed, only the book remaining.

His face is almost inspired with lust and desire. He happens to catch his image in the mirror over the bureau. He smooths back his rumpled hair, but the gesture is transformed — he tautens the skin of his neck, as though for a moment he felt the ending of his youth. But as though to dispel this dark thought he quickly goes from the mirror to her bedside and sits on his heels, his face a foot away from hers. Now, again, his eyes glide over her, and he shows the feeling of one who is both happy and troubled by the question of his possessing a wonder.

While outside, the racket of the birds rises to a crescendo, he moves his face in and kisses her. She instantly draws away, awakening. And then she stares at him.

GAY

Welcome to the country.

ROSLYN

(Softly)

Hi! — I almost forgot where I was for a minute.

GAY

Well I didn't! I never knew a woman to look better in the morning than she does at night.

(ROSLYN softly laughs. HE kisses her gently, then . . .)

How in the world did any man ever let you go?

ROSLYN

(Shrugs. And with a certain faint guilt . . .)

Not all of them exactly let me. . . . I'm a pretty good runner if I have to. Boy, I'm hungry!

GAY

Come on out, I got a surprise.

He walks out of the room. She sits up, her face showing a pleasurable anticipation, and she starts out of bed.

We cut to Gay at the stove turning over some eggs in a pan. Near him is a kitchen table set for two. He turns and sees . . .

Roslyn in a terry cloth robe emerging from the bedroom doorway. She looks about in surprise.

ROSLYN

You been cleaning?

(HE smiles in reply)

She moves, sees the table set, the breakfast sizzling on the stove; in a vase a few wild flowers. Something outside the door catches her eye. She looks and sees the mop standing in the empty pail among the weeds. Now she turns to him. She is moved by his need for her. She hurries toward him at the stove.

ROSLYN

Here, let me cook!

GAY

Just sit down, it's all done.

He dishes out eggs for both of them, sits opposite her. She stares at him. He starts eating.

ROSLYN

You always do this?

GAY

(Denying)

Uh-uh. First time for me.

ROSLYN

Really and truly?

Gay nods; his having gone out of himself is enough. She starts eating.

ROSLYN

Oooo! It's delicious!

She eats ravenously. He watches with enjoyment.

GAY

You really go all out in everything, don't you. Even the way you eat. I like that. Women generally pick.

In reply she smiles and almost nods. She returns to eating. Their mutual satisfaction in the food is important; we dwell on it for a moment. With a full mouth . . .

ROSLYN

The air makes you hungry, doesn't it!

He laughs softly. Now he is sipping his coffee. He lights a cigarette, always trying to sound her. She eats like one who has starved. Now she stops for a breath.

ROSLYN

I love to eat!

(Happily she looks around at the room)

I'd never know it was the same house. It even smells different!

Suddenly she goes around the table and kisses his cheek.

ROSLYN

You like me, huh.

He draws her down to his lap, kisses her on the mouth, holds her with his head buried in her. She pats his neck, but we see an uneasiness on her face mixed with her happiness. He relaxes his hold. She gets up, walks to the doorway, looks out at the endless hills, the horizon.

ROSLYN

I can see what you mean — there is something here. It feels like a new start . . . maybe it's because it's so bare.

(Slight pause)

Birds must be brave, y'know? — to live alone. And when it gets dark? Whereas they're so small, y'know?

(She smiles to him from the doorway)

You think I'm crazy?

GAY

(Denying)
Uh-uh. I'm glad to see you like it here.

ROSLYN

Don't most women?

GAY

It never bothered me if they didn't.

ROSLYN

You're a kind man.

GAY

I ain't kiddin' you.

She respects his seriousness, and turns back to look out again. For a moment we see her from his viewpoint, golden in the sunlight. We see the mixture of yearning and mystification in his eyes as he sips his coffee and smokes.

GAY

You seen a lot, haven't you?

ROSLYN

Yes.

GAY

So've I. I never see anybody like you, though.

ROSLYN

Why?

GAY

I don't know — you got respect for a man.

ROSLYN

(She turns to him in the doorway)
Don't most women?

GAY

Uh-uh. You the first woman hasn't told me her husband wasn't much of a man.

ROSLYN

And what do you say?

GAY

Nothin' much. Cowboy's supposed to be dumb, y'know. They come out here from all the states — all kinds — stenographers, social register women with chauffeurs and maids, college teachers, all kinds. And they find a cowboy, and if they think he's stupid enough, they'll say and do all the things they didn't dare in New York and Chicago and St. Louis. And it's pitiful.

ROSLYN

Why is it pitiful?

GAY

Because they don't amount to nothin'. Try to remember them and all that comes to mind is . . . a hairbrush and a suitcase. They got no respect for themselves, y'know? Or for anybody else. You have. And I appreciate it. I ain't kiddin' you either.

ROSLYN

(Slight pause)

Thanks. I mean thanks for not laughing at us.

(HE looks at her mystified)

ROSLYN (Cont'd)

People do, you know. I don't know why.

GAY

I could guess why.

ROSLYN

Why?

GAY

Well . . . people are mostly kiddin' — even when they ain't kiddin'. But you — even when you're kiddin' you ain't kiddin'. What you got to do is put it on a little bit, and you could go places. It's only a game, y'know — and you takin' it like it's serious. People always laugh at that.

ROSLYN

Is it a game to you?

GAY

Well, I don't mix much — and when I do, I just let 'em talk. I mean I'm friendly, but I ain't with them.

(He gets up)

Let's go outside — sun is warm by now.

He helps her to hop down to the ground, and he takes her hand and they walk through the weeds, reflecting. They come to the lumber pile and sit on it.

GAY

Y'know, Roslyn, I don't think I've known a woman I'd grieve about if she left. I've always enjoyed sayin' goodbye. But there's somethin' about you — I don't know what — I'd be lonesome. For a long time.

ROSLYN

I'm glad.

(She kisses his cheek)

Where do you usually live out here?

GAY

I got a sleepin' bag in my truck. I stay over Guido's house, sometimes. I don't need much.

ROSLYN

You ever see your children?

GAY

Couple times a year. They come to the roads when they know I'm gonna be in them. I'm a pretty good roper, y'know.

ROSLYN

My mother had a son by her first husband, but I never met him. And you know? —

(Laughs)

I feel lonesome for him sometimes.

GAY

My daughter's about your size now.

(He sighs)

Time sure flies.

(With a quickened urgency)

. . . I hope you stay a good long time. Will ya?

ROSLYN

(Sensing his tightening grasp on her)

I don't know. I . . .

(Her eye falls on something in the grass)

Say! Could we use that for a step?

Gay walks over and picks up a cinder block.

GAY

Just right at that.

He goes the few yards to the front door and sets the block under it.

GAY

There now!

ROSLYN

Let me try it!

She hurries and runs up the step into the house, then turns and hops down.

ROSLYN

It's perfect! I can come in and I can go out!

Suddenly, her simple enthusiasm moves him, and he laughs and lifts her, cradling her in his arms.

GAY

Sometimes, you're like a little baby girl!

She laughs, his feeling warming her.

ROSLYN

You're a dear man!

She kisses his neck as he walks up the step, carrying her into the house, both of them laughing with joy. Dissolve.

We open on a vast shot of Pyramid Lake, an endless water surrounded by abrupt lava-like hills, bare of vegetation or sign of human interference, the sky cloudless, featureless. Now, panning we discover Roslyn's car parked at the shore, and beside it, Gay, sitting on a blanket, trying his arms and chest with a towel. He is looking toward the water.

We shoot the water and out of it Roslyn surfaces, laughing. She stands now, rising out of the water, glistening in the sun, breathing deeply, looking at the almost astounded admiration in Gay's face.

GAY

(Of her beauty)

I just never saw anything like it!

She bursts out laughing as he comes onto the beach, bends and kisses his head.

ROSLYN

Let's run! I love to run!

GAY

Lemme catch my breath!

She dashes away, trotting along the beach. We hold on him for a moment; he almost shakes his head with wonder. His dog is sitting beside him, watching her too.

We track with her as she runs. Now she throws out her arms as though embracing an invisible world, and then as she is slowing, Gay runs into the shot and devours her lips, and she laughs. And now they stroll along the shore, back toward the car, catching their breaths.

They come to the blanket. She sprawls onto it, still wet. She looks up at him, smiling in knowledge of his need for her. He slowly comes down beside her. Lays his head in the pit of her arm. Silence.

ROSLYN

(Softly, her face to the sky)

There's no sound at all!

He doesn't move. She turns her head.

We shoot the mute, barren hills along the opposite shore, the bare lake.

ROSLYN

In Chicago, everybody's busy.

(Pause)

Those hills are funny — you keep waiting for them to do something.

(She laughs)

I hope Guido isn't mad — I mean he doesn't come around.

GAY

(He sits up now)
He's probably just sleepin'.

ROSLYN

For two weeks?!

GAY

That's what he mostly does — sleep and read comic books. Why would he be mad?

ROSLYN

Well, it's his house. And I think he kind of liked me.

GAY

Women don't mean much to Guido.

ROSLYN

Really? Why?

GAY

I don't know. He never got over that wife dyin'. That's what he says, anyway.

ROSLYN

I don't know. You can never tell about people. I've known men . . . so-called happily married, y'know? And the night before their wedding they were calling me up. I mean calling me up.

GAY

Well . . . I could understand that.

ROSLYN

But what were they getting married for?

GAY

(Looks at her for a moment — a
little incredulously)

You think there's got to be a reason for everything, don't you?

ROSLYN

I don't know. Maybe I do.

GAY

Let me tell you something. I never heard a complaint out of my wife. Come home one night, find her in a car with a fella. Turned out to be one of my real old friends. Cousin of mine, matter of fact.

ROSLYN

Oh, poor Gay!

GAY

Nobody can figure that out. And I've give up tryin'.

ROSLYN

Then what do you do?

GAY

Only thing you can do -- roll with it. 'Cause there's nothin' you can change, Honey.

ROSLYN

(From out of her own vision)

But what if it's so terrible you have to change it?

GAY

Then you get out. Like you got out.

ROSLYN

But when you get out enough times, Gay, it isn't enough. I mean there's got to be more to it than just getting out all the time. Although . . . I used to go to restaurants, y'know? -- and I danced in places -- you ever see the husbands and wives sitting there? -- not talking to each other, looking around? -- I mean looking.

GAY

I guess you believe in true love, don't you?

ROSLYN

I don't know . . . I never saw it, but . . . what good is it if nobody really cares? You know what I mean? -- I mean, I'm not curious any more. And once you're not curious, what is there to go on? You know what I mean? It's kind of sad, and boring.

GAY

I'll swear to that.

(He sits up, facing the lake)

I tell you something. I never told it to anybody.

ROSLYN

I won't tell! . . . Gee, it's nice to talk to you, Gay!

(She sits up beside him)

GAY

It's a funny thing. I've hated every woman I ever been with. Afterwards.

GAY (Cont.)

(He turns to her, a little shy grin)
And I'm known for just the opposite. Now that's a funny thing,
ain't it?

ROSLYN

Why is that?

GAY

I don't know! That's why you keep surprisin' me. I can't get
enough of you, and I think I never will. . . . And I don't know
just what to do about it.

ROSLYN

Why must you do something?

GAY

(For the first time he appears afraid
and humorless)
'Cause I can't stand the idea of losing you.
(Pause)
What would I have to do for you to marry me?

ROSLYN

Oh, Gay . . . you wouldn't want to marry anybody! But I'm glad you
feel that way.
(She laughs, kisses him)
You'll get tired of me!

She gets up suddenly with a stone in her hand and now she winds up
and throws it high into the water. It falls with a little splash.
She looks around across the long borders of the lake. Suddenly she
yells . . .

ROSLYN

Hello!!
(She turns back to him where he sits)
You want to do something? Let's yell!

GAY

(With a strained laugh)
What for!

ROSLYN

I don't know, I just thought of it!
(She rushes to him and pulls him to
his feet)

ROSLYN (Cont.)

Come on, it'll relax you! Nobody can hear us! In the whole world!
Come on, one, two, three . . . !

She yells, and he, abashed, joins her but not with full voice.

ROSLYN

Louder! Come on, Gay, let go!

Once more they both yell. He joins now with fuller voice. And he laughs with her. And they yell again across the empty lake, and we come in close on their faces, calling into the emptiness. Dissolve.

We open on a new view of Guido's house. Some simple but rather dramatic changes have changed its atmosphere. The weeds have been scythed, creating a nearly lawn-like surrounding. Gay's truck and her car are neatly parked together on the concrete garage slab beside the house. Laundry is hanging from a line. Flowers have been planted in a bed near the doorway. The pile of weathered clapboards is still where it was, but near it are two outdoor chairs waiting for people to sit and enjoy the view, and a beach umbrella shades them. The outside walls of the house still are only partially sheathed, the remainder showing the black composition board panels. It is as though the house, too, were trying to locate itself, trying to complete its function.

Now, panning over the scene, we discover a vegetable garden near the house. Gay is hoeing. The plants are still immature. He is sweating in the hot morning sun.

Roslyn appears in the doorway with a pitcher. She observes him with a happy expression, and calls.

ROSLYN

Want some lemonade?

He turns, and starts to answer when they both hear an engine in the sky and turn.

We shoot Guido's plane as it starts a dive, its wing tents flashing in the sun, its worn tires visible.

We shoot Gay, calling to her in the doorway.

GAY

(Excitedly)

That's Guido!

She, too, is happy to see the plane. They both wave, and the plane now swoops down. The cockpit door is folded down on the side of the fuselage, revealing Guido to his boot tops. He is goggled, and as he sweeps over their heads he waves. Behind him, also goggled, sits another person — also waving. The plane climbs just over the roof of the house and away.

Roslyn comes over to Gay with the lemonade pitcher. Gay is still staring into the sky at the vanishing plane, the hoe in his hand.

ROSLYN

Who was that with him?

GAY

Hush!

(He listens)

He might be landing out back.

ROSLYN

(Listens)

I can't hear anything.

(HE listens a moment, then takes the pitcher)

What does he — just fly around?

GAY

(Drinks)

Boy, that's good.

(He hands her the pitcher)

He might be goin' after mustangs.

ROSLYN

Oh. What's mustangs?

GAY

Wild horses. There's some left up in the mountains about eighty miles back. We go after them now and then.

ROSLYN

(In her stillness)

What do you mean?

GAY

We round them up and sell 'em in town. I been thinkin' of going down to see Guido about it one of these days. I guess he got the same idea himself. Let me finish this and we go see him tonight. Sit down, keep me company.

She sits on a stone nearby, watches him as he proceeds down the row, hoeing.

ROSLYN

Who owns the mustangs?

GAY

Nobody; they're up there wild. Nothin' but chickenfeed horses, not good for much. Ever see that canned dogfood?

ROSLYN

Oh!

GAY

Lotta that is wild horse. . . . Well now . . . what have we here!

He has come upon a nibbled lettuce. Now on further inspection he sees several more eaten away to the stem. She has got up and is standing with him, looking at the destroyed plants.

Gay looks around into the bushes which surround the garden.

ROSLYN

What is it?

GAY

It's plain old rabbit, and I'm gonna get him!

He drops his hoe and starts toward his truck beside the house, calling, "Margaret! Come here now!"

The dog appears around a corner, alert and eager. Gay goes to his truck and takes a shotgun out from behind the seat, and a handful of shells. He is loading the gun when Roslyn comes into the shot with the lemonade pitcher. She is trying to appear smiling, but her tension is clear.

ROSLYN

Maybe they won't eat any more.

GAY

(Busy with his gun, eager for the kill)

No, ma'm; once they zeroed in on that garden it's them or us — there won't be a thing left by the end of the week.

He starts past her with his gun. She touches his arm. She is trying to suppress her anxiety.

ROSLYN

Couldn't we wait another day and see? — I can't stand to kill anything, Gay.

GAY

(Still unaware . . .)

Honey, it's only a rabbit.

ROSLYN

But it's alive, and . . . it doesn't know it's not supposed to eat our garden. I mean . . . it doesn't know any better, does it?

GAY

Now you just go in the house and let me . . .

ROSLYN

(Gripping his arm)

Please, Gay! I know how hard you worked . . .

GAY

Damn right I worked hard!

(Pointing angrily at the garden)

I never done that in my life for anybody! And I didn't do it for some bug-eyed rabbit!

He takes off toward the garden, the eager dog at his heel. She tries to turn back to the house, but she is driven to follow him. A little breathless now, with the lemonade still clinking in her hand . . .

ROSLYN

Gay, please listen . . . !

GAY

(Turning on her now, his eyes full of anger)

You go in the house now and stop bein' silly!

ROSLYN

(Affronted)

I am not silly!

(HE starts off again, and SHE calls)

You have no respect for me!

(HE turns, astounded, and furious.
SHE pleads)

Gay, I don't care about the lettuce!

GAY

Well, I care about it! How about some respect for me?

They are both turned toward a sound from behind the house. Gay walks a few steps toward one corner when, from a trail that climbs the hill behind the house, Guido appears, helping Isabelle along. She is no longer wearing a sling but her arm is still bandaged.

ROSLYN

(With great relief and joy)

Isabelle! Guido, how are you!

Roslyn rushes to her friend and embraces her.

ISABELLE

Oh, dear girl!

Gay walks into the shot; he is also happy at this visit.

GAY

(To Guido)

I thought I saw a passenger.

(Shaking hands with GUIDO)

How you been, fella? We never heard you land!

GUIDO

She stopped by my house for directions to get here . . .

ISABELLE

And he socked me into that horrible airplane!

(To Roslyn)

My, you look thrivin'!

GUIDO

(He has been glancing at the place,
and now walks to get a better vantage)

What's been goin' on here? Am I in the right place?

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Roslyn is extraordinarily attentive to him, with great sympathy. And Guido, despite the conventionality of his remarks, is being moved by what he sees.

ROSLYN

Did you see the vegetable garden?

(She turns to Gay)

Gay did it! Took him a whole week just to get the soil turned over!

GAY

(He walks up beside her and now that her feeling for him has returned, he puts an arm around her waist, and with very pride . . .)

Moved the grass and put in them flowers, too. Even got your windows unstuck, and your fireplace don't smoke any more.

GUIDO

(He turns from Gay to Roslyn. There is a subtle resentment toward both of them, but at the same time a self-pity which makes Roslyn guilty)

Roslyn, you must be a magician. The only thing this boy ever did for a woman was to get out the icecubes.

(THEY all laugh)

ROSLYN

(Pointing to the outdoor furniture)

We got chairs! Come, sit down!

GAY

(Taking GUIDO's arm)

Let's show him the inside! Wait'll you see this, Guido! I've moved that furniture so many times, I'm gettin' calluses on my back.

He and Guido move together toward the doorway. Roslyn and Isabelle follow behind, but we separate them by a close shot.

ISABELLE

Darling, you look so lovely! — you found yourself, haven't you?

ROSLYN

Tell, I . . .

(To dispel her hesitation, she hugs

ISABELLE)

I'm so glad you came! Lock! — we have a step now!

She helps Isabelle into the house — Isabelle giving a marveling look at the flower bed beside the step as she mounts up.

ROSLYN

Watch your arm — how is it?

They are entering the living room and we shoot them from within.

ISABELLE

It's still weak as a bird's wing, but . . .

(She breaks off, looking around the room. GAY and GUIDO are standing, looking. GAY is quite proud)

Well I never in my life . . .

A silence. They look around the room. Indian blankets cover the formerly bare studs; wild flowers brighten the tables and window sills; the furniture is rearranged, cleaned; the newly curtained windows are no longer smeared with dust and cobwebs. There is a feeling here of a shelter.

ISABELLE

Well! Huh! My! — it's magical.

(Tears flow into her eyes. She looks at Roslyn, then she addresses Gay)

I just hope you know that you have finally come in contact with a real woman!

(She suddenly throws her arms around ROSLYN)

Oh, my darling girl!

ROSLYN

Come, see the bedroom! Come, Guido!

She pulls them both to the bedroom . . .

ROSLYN

I hope you don't mind we changed things around . . .

Gay, with an excitement previously unknown to him, goes in the opposite direction to the refrigerator, takes out cubes.

The three — Roslyn, Guido, Isabelle — enter the bedroom. It too is transformed, repainted, brightly curtained, a carpet on the floor, a few botanical pictures on the walls, a dressing table, a bright spread on the bed.

Guido — on whom we concentrate — looks about and his eyes fall on the place above the bed where formerly hung the picture of himself and his dead wife. A print of Western landscape hangs there now. Roslyn sees the direction of his gaze.

ROSLYN

Oh! — I put your picture in the living room!

GUIDO

Uh-huh . . . Put in a closet too!

ROSLYN

Oh yeah, Gay did it!

She swings the door of the closet open to show him. Inside the door half a dozen photos of her are tacked up. They are girlie photos for the doorway of a second-class nightclub, herself in net tights, on her back, etc. . . . She only realizes now — partly by the flush on his face as he sees the photos, that she has shown them to him.

ROSLYN

Oh, they're stupid, don't look at them!

(She closes the door. HE looks at her half embarrassed for her, half perplexed)

Gay put them up for a joke! Come! Let's have a lot of drinks!

GUIDO

(He turns to Roslyn)

Can you make her out?

ISABELLE

All I know is, this was the dreeziest-lockin' house till she got into it.

GUIDO

I tell you the truth, I look at her sometimes I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

ISABELLE

(Directly at him)

You ain't laughin', boy.

They emerge into the living room where Gay is coming toward them with two drinks. In the background, Roslyn in the kitchen is spreading crackers around a piece of cheese on a platter.

GUIDO

(With envy, at least)

Man, what'd you ever do to deserve this? You sure got it made this time.

ROSLYN

(Calling to them from the kitchen area)

Sit down, everybody! I got wonderful cheese!

(With a great joy)

It's so nice to have company!

They are dispersing to the couch and chairs, but she rushes to Guido, who is about to sit on the couch.

ROSLYN

No! Sit in the big chair.

(Leading him — HE embarrassed — to the most imposing chair in the room)

This must have been your chair, wasn't it?

GUIDO

Matter of fact it was — I did all my studying in this chair. — when I was still ambitious.

(He sits — but in a certain way.

SHE rushes back to the kitchen area)

ROSLYN

Maybe you'll get ambitious again, you can't tell! I'll get you some cheese!

GAY

(Sprawling on the couch)

You been flyin' much since I saw you?

GUIDO

I took a fast look this morning — up back in the mountains . . .

GAY

Spot anything up there?

GUIDO

Well . . .

Roslyn intervenes, offering Guido the cheese and crackers.

GUIDO

Thanks, Roslyn.

ROSLYN

(As she goes on to serve Isabelle,
she points to the photograph of
Guido and his wife on a table)

I put your picture there — is that all right?

GUIDO

You don't have to keep it out, Roslyn — I wouldn't mind if you put it away.

ROSLYN

(Serving Gay)

Why?! It's part of the house, Guido. Y'know?

(She sets the cheese platter down and
sits beside Gay on the couch, taking
a drink from the table where he sat
it for her. Now THEY are settled)

I mean it's still your house.

GUIDO

You must've had a real family, Roslyn — didn't you?

ROSLYN

Oh, no! I never had anybody — we never lived in the same place more than a couple months. I just . . . I don't know, I just make it how I think it should be. I mean in my imagination . . . Here, Isabelle — rest your arm on this!

She leaps up with a cushion from the couch and sets it under Isabelle's bandaged arm.

ISABELLE

Oh, don't bother with me, dear!

ROSLYN

Why? Might as well be comfortable!

She goes back to the couch, sits beside Gay, as . . .

GUIDO

I'm going to tell you something, Roslyn.

(With a strained, self-deprecating grin)

I hope you don't mind, Gay — because I love this girl, and you might as well know it.

GAY

(Putting a proprietary arm around ROSLYN's shoulders)

Well you'd be out of your head if you didn't.

GUIDO

(To Roslyn — he is under a driving strain, and THEY are all uncomfortably aware of it)

I spent four years in the war; bombed nearly every city in Europe. And every time I came back to base, I started to design this house.

ROSLYN

Really.

GUIDO

I changed it a hundred times. And then I got home, married, and I built it. And with all that planning I could never get it to look like my idea of it. . . . And now it almost does.

ROSLYN

Well you didn't have much time, Guido. If she'd . . . lived, y'know? — maybe you'd . . .

GUIDO

That's what I've always told myself. But here you are, a stranger out of nowhere — you just walk in, and it all lights up. And I'm sure you know why, too.

ROSLYN

(Her voice faint, in the face of his great feeling)

Why?

GUIDO

(With a simplicity which is not belied by the seeming pedantry of his sentence)

Because you have the gift of life, Roslyn. You really want to live, don't you?

ROSLYN

Well . . . doesn't everybody?

GUIDO

(With a glance at the picture)

No, I think most of us . . . are just looking for a place to hide and watch it all go by.

ISABELLE

Amen!

GUIDO

(Raising his glass)

Here's to your life — I hope it goes on forever!

ROSLYN

(Raising her glass)

And yours. And yours, Isabelle!

(With the faintest sense of
afterthought)

. . . And yours, Gay!

We must notice the slightest flicker in Gay, an awareness that he has been placed slightly to one side. They drink.

ROSLYN

Gay did all the work, you know!

GAY

(With a certain condescension toward
her)

Yeah, and the rabbits are really enjoyin' it too! What'd you spot up back? — anything?

GUIDO

(We must note Guido's awareness, now,
of conflict between them)

There's a small herd. About fifteen horses, I'd say.

ISABELLE

(To Roslyn)

I will never understand cowboys! They're all crazy about animals and they think nothin' of grinding up those poor wild horses for dog food.

GAY

What else they good for, Isabelle?

ISABELLE

No more than what I'm good for, but I'd sure hate to be canned.

(THEY laugh)

I will admit, though, I've had myself some real swell times, mustangin' up there.

GAY

(Laughing suggestively)

I bet you have!

ISABELLE

Oh, I was young once — miserable as I appear right now. I've been up there with fellas that took out two thousand horses in three days.

GAY

I've took as many as three thousand in one day.

ROSLYN

(Her fascinated eyes trying to place him now)

You did, Gay?

ISABELLE

Honey, I couldn't get the vision of it out of my mind for weeks. Hour after hour, just pourin' those beautiful horses out of the mountains . . . But it's better than three rodeos. Oh, they're real mean when they get up there!

ROSLYN

(To Guido)

But would you make anything out of just fifteen?

GUIDO

Not too much. I guess it's just somethin' you like to do, or you don't. I do.

GAY

There's always the chance we might come on a hundred all of a sudden. That'd be some real money.

GUIDO

Not likely any more, Gay; we've got them pretty well cleaned out.

(Laughs)

Don't try to make it sound too sensible, boy.

GAY

Hell, I don't care how it sounds, I just want to get my two hands on a rope again, that's all I want.

GUIDO

All right . . . if you're hot on it. Whyn't you come along, Roslyn? — you watch this man in action you'll really see something. He's about the best roper I think ever lived.

GAY

(With a quickening of comradeship)

You watch him work that plane, too. You'll never see flyin' like that in your life. This man's a bird!

(To Guido)

We'll have to pick up another fella.

GUIDO

I was going to say — remember that kid from California? Buckin' horse rider you were in the rodeo with last year? I see him in town last night . . . if he's still there.

GAY

Oh! he's a good boy. What say we get hold of him?

(Gets up)

I'll meet you in town. Better not let him get away.

GUIDO

Good enough.

(He gets up)

Be a lot of fun, Roslyn, think about it.

ROSLYN

(Rising. Trying to down her sense of incomprehension)

I guess I don't understand why you do it.

GUIDO

(He grins at her)

Well, maybe if you come along you can explain it to us. Gay, whyn't you pick me up at the house?

(To Isabelle)

How are you for flyin' back to my place?

ISABELLE

I'd love it, but I'm too old to die.

ROSLYN

Sure, you come with us!

GUIDO

See you later!

(At the door, his eye falls on the photo of himself and his wife; then he glances at the room, then to Roslyn)

Well, wherever she is she knows what I had in mind now. Come on, Gay, spin that propellor for me, will ya?

Guido goes out the door, and Gay, following, turns to Roslyn in the doorway. We must feel an uneasiness under his smile.

GAY

Whyn't you get into a dress, Honey? Maybe we'll have a couple drinks in town.

ROSLYN

Okay!

GAY

(He draws her to him)

Now that's the way to be — you smile like the sun comin' up. . . . Be right back.

He goes out and joins Guido and both of them walk across the grass. Roslyn — and we — watch them as they go with the energy peculiar to men excited by a mission. She calls from the doorway.

ROSLYN

Be careful, Guido! Flying, I mean!

Guido turns without halting and waves, and with Gay disappears around the corner of the house. She turns to Isabelle.

ROSLYN

Poor Guido! Now that she's dead he knows just how to live with her.

ISABELLE

That's always the way, darling.

ROSLYN

But why?! I mean, why can't we ever live now?

We dissolve on the intense questioning look on her face.

274 The Misfits

We open inside Roslyn's car on an empty highway; Gay driving, Roslyn in the center, Isabelle at the window. They are all chuckling.

GAY

Isabelle, they oughta put you on the television.

ROSLYN

(As though they had discussed this earlier)

Why don't you stay with us? We could have some fun!

ISABELLE

No, I'll pick up my car at Guido's and get on home . . .

(A little shyly)

. . . Tell you the truth, Honey, my husband popped up.

ROSLYN

Where!

ISABELLE

I got him in your old room.

ROSLYN

Well that's wonderful, Is! . . . Will he . . . stay?

ISABELLE

Few days more. They're on vacation.

ROSLYN

Oh. His wife too.

ISABELLE

(She is quite nervous, but humorous too)

Oh sure. Clara — you remember my talkin' about Clara. She was my best friend . . . and she's sweeter than ever.

The mystery of it is in Roslyn's eyes now.

GAY

She sure must be to make you so glad to see her.

ISABELLE

Oh, Charles could never've stayed married to me!

ROSLYN

But why, Is!

ISABELLE

(She starts to chuckle)
I even lost the vacuum cleaner once!

(Gay laughs, but Roslyn is smiling
with a certain painfulness)

They still haven't found it! — He said such a sweet thing to me last night. "Isabelle," he said, "I always knew how to find my way home in the dark when we were married — I just followed the smell of something burning!"

Gay bursts out laughing; Isabelle laughs until she sees the pained smile on Roslyn's face — and then tears show in Isabelle's face as she suddenly pulls Roslyn to her and kisses her.

ISABELLE

Darlin', why do you worry so about people?!

We dissolve.

We open on a glass-enclosed phone booth on the sidewalk of a very small Nevada town. It is outside a bar. Perce Howland is inside it with the phone to his ear. He is in his late twenties, looks like he has slept in his clothes. There is a seeking quality in his face, a powerful naivete which is itself a force.

He opens the door of the booth for some air, and his eye follows a car whose engine we hear drawing up. A great glad smile opens on his face.

PERCE

Gay Langland! Why you old buzzard you!

We shoot Gay getting out of the car and coming toward him — Roslyn and Guido are getting out behind him. He and Perce shake hands.

GAY

You callin' up your mama again?!

PERCE

Tryin' to, but they keep pustin' me into Wyoming! Hey, Pilot, how you doin'!

Perce's eye falls on Roslyn.

GAY

This is Roslyn, Perce.
(To Roslyn)
Perce Howland, Roslyn.

ROSLYN and PERCE

Hi.

Perce cannot help eyeing her as one of Gay's divorcees.

GAY

Like to talk to you, Perce; we . . .

PERCE

(Alerted by a voice in the phone)
'Scuse me, Gay! Hello, Ma? Perce, Ma.

Roslyn, Gay, and Guido move away to the car at the curb. Gay takes out a knife, cleans his nails. Guido, who now is dressed in good slacks and a sport shirt and black-and-white shoes, puts one foot on the bumper and re-ties his laces, brushes dust off the shoes. Roslyn's glances are darting to Perce, as . . .

PERCE

(Tenderly)

Perce, Ma. I'm okay. No, I'm in Nevada now — I was in Colorado. Won another first prize, Ma. Hundred dollars. Yeah, real good rodeo — I was gonna send you a birthday present but I had to buy some boots. . . . No, Ma, I haven't been in no hospital, I only bought some boots. Married! What I want to get married for? — I just bought some boots, that's all, Ma!

(Deeply affected, he tries to laugh)

Whyn't you try believin' me, Mom, make everybody feel better.

(She is obviously berating him)

Okay . . . okay, Ma . . . yeah, okay.

(Trying to bring back brightness)

That good about first prize, though? They give me a silver buckle for my belt, too.

(Holds up the buckle toward the phone)

Got a buckin' horse on it and my name written out underneath.

(Now, moved)

I knew you'd be; first thing I thought was how proud you'd be. No, I don't show a mark on me — I haven't broke anything since I told you. I swear! Maybe I'll call you Christmas! Okay, operator! No, Ma, I can't come home — now please don't ask me that again. Say hello to Frieda and Uncle George and Victoria . . .

PERCE (Cont.)

(His expression becomes stiffer)

Well, tell him thanks and . . .

(Almost curtly)

Okay, tell him I said hello! Bye now! I . . . Hello? Hello!

(He is cut off, but . . .)

God bless you too.

He has been opening and closing the door for air throughout the call. At the end it is open. His somber look disappears as he steps out on the sidewalk.

Perce comes out of the booth onto the sidewalk, greatly relieved.

GAY

Seems to me every time I run into you you're telephoning your Mama.

PERCE

Well, she been kind of touchy since my old man died.

(Suddenly)

Look out!

Without warning Perce suddenly yanks Gay's shirt out of his pants. In what is obviously an old game, Gay then grabs Perce's wrist, tries an arm lock but has to turn his back to do it. Perce snatches Gay's wallet out of his back pocket and yanks his arm free and stands away, holding up the wallet triumphantly.

PERCE

Every time!

GAY

Just didn't want to break your arm, boy.

PERCE

(Tossing the wallet back to Gay)

Poor old Gay, can't hold his pay!

With which he laughs and wraps his arm around Gay's neck and they return to where Guido and Roslyn are standing.

PERCE

(To Roslyn)

I've had the best times with these two scoundrels! You wouldn't be goin' down to the rodeo, would you?

GUIDO

Why? You entered?

PERCE

I aim to if I can get me a ride down there. . . . And if I can raise ten bucks for the entrance fee. . . . And if I can get a loan of a buckin' horse when I get down there.

(He laughs)

I'm real equipped!

GAY

How'd you like to do some mustangin' with us? We need a third man.

PERCE

(Surprised)

Why, Pilot, you still flyin' that five-dollar airplane?

GUIDO

Lot safer than a buckin' horse.

PERCE

Lot higher, too, comin' down!

ROSLYN

(To Guido)

Your plane that old?

GAY

Now don't start worryin' about him, Honey.

(To Perce and Guido)

'Cause if she starts worryin', she can worry.

ROSLYN

(Laughs)

Well, I just asked!

PERCE

(He is drawn toward her intensity — turns to Gay)

You got a right to if you ever see that 3-6 and seven-eighths he flies. I didn't know they still had mustangs around here.

GAY

Up back in the mountains about eighty-five miles. It's a good two days' work if you're interested. Lot of fun, Perce, you'll like it.

PERCE

(He thinks, glances at Roslyn)

How many you figure to take out?

GUIDO

I spotted fifteen this morning.

GAY

(Quickly)

Well there might be more though.

PERCE

Is that all? Fifteen? What're you gonna get outa that?

GAY

Well . . . fifteen's fifteen. Six cents a pound, comes to somethin'. You're with us, okay?

PERCE

Well wait a minute now, Gay . . .

(Embarrassed at opposing Gay)

I . . . I've broke mustangs up home, but takin' them for meat . . .

(He laughs, not knowing why)

Like if there was a thousand or somethin' it'd make some sense. But just to go up there and take fifteen horses . . . I mean the idea of it, y'know? I don't know why, but it just kinda hits me sideways, that's all.

As his sensitivity to it is revealed, we concentrate on Roslyn's face — she is moved by him, happy he is there. There is no pause . . .

GAY

Doin' it for twenty years, Perce — tell you what. We'll drive you down to the rodeo; put up the ten for the entrance fee, and I'll get a loan of some good stock for you down there. You come along with us tomorrow morning and get us some mustang.

PERCE

(Slight pause)

And you buy a bottle of good whiskey right in there so I'm primed up for that rodeo!

GAY

Just wait right there!

(He starts into the bar putting his hand in his pocket)

PERCE

I ain't waitin' anywhere!

Gay having turned to go into the bar, Perce tackles him from behind, lifts him on his shoulder and runs into the bar with him as Roslyn and Guido laugh.

We open inside Roslyn's car. It is traveling through a new kind of territory. Here there is not even sage, only a sterile white alkali waste. It is midday.

Gay is at the wheel, Roslyn beside him; Guido and Perce in the rear seat. As we open Guido has a whiskey bottle tilted to his lips. They are all a little high. Guido passes the bottle to Roslyn over her shoulder, and she silently drinks, then hands it over to Gay, who takes a short one and hands it back. Guido never takes his brooding eyes from Roslyn. She makes a half-turn in her seat and gives the bottle to Perce, who drinks, and holds the bottle on his knee, staring out at the white waste going by.

Their eyes are narrowed against the harsh light. They have been driving a long time. Now Gay overtakes a horse van trailer hitched to a new car, and as we pass it Perce leans out his window and waves at the Stetson-hatted cowboy driver.

PERCE

I hope you get me a good horse, Gay. I'm primed today, gonna get me a first price.

ROSLYN

(Turns in her seat to him)

I hope you do! — You mean a horse that's not too wild, huh?

PERCE

Oh, no — I like to show what I can do. I want somethin' I can fight, that's what I want.

ROSLYN

(She sees into him)

But isn't the idea to stay on longer than anybody?

PERCE

Well, you want to show what you can do, though. I've broke this arm twice in the same place. You don't do that fakin' a fall, y'know. I don't fake anything. Some of these riders'll drop off and lay there like they're stone dead. Just putting on a show, y'know. I don't fake it, do I, Gay?

GAY

That's right. You're just a natural-born damn fool.

ROSLYN

Why! That's wonderful . . . to be that way, I mean.

(To Perce)

I know what you mean. I used to dance in places . . . and everybody said I was crazy. I mean I really tried, you know? Whereas people don't know the difference.

GUIDO

(He has been looking at her feverishly)

What kind of dancing you do?

ROSLYN

(With embarrassment)

Oh . . . just what they call interpretive dancing. Nightclubs. You know.

She starts to turn forward, then turns back.

ROSLYN

I was good, though. . . . I could've been!

Again she starts to turn forward, then turns back to Perce.

ROSLYN

I'm glad you don't fake it, Perce!

GUIDO

(With a suddenness)

Why? What's the difference?

ROSLYN

I don't know . . . The real thing is always better, isn't it?

GUIDO

(With an over-meaning. A resentment too)

But would you know it if you saw the real thing?

We shoot Gay glancing up at the mirror at Guido behind him.

ROSLYN

(She receives his challenge)

Oh, you know it, Guido. Be surprised.

(Then suddenly, to make up for even this conflict with him she grabs the bottle from Perce)

ROSALYN (Cont.)

Here, have a drink, Guido! Buck up, come on, have a good time!

Guido is forced to smile and Perce erupts. Guido drinks.

PERCE

Gay, I want this girl to go along mustangin' tomorrow, you hear?!

(He holds onto ROSALYN's arm, she laughs)

'Cause I'd get awful tired lookin' at your ugly face for two whole days up there!

GAY

(Into the mirror)

She can't even bear to see a rabbit shot.

ROSALYN

(With a sudden resolve)

I'd like to come along! Let me? I mean . . . it's happening, and if a thing is happening a person ought to be able to stand it! Let me come with you, Gay? I promise, I won't say a word!

GAY

Oh, that'd be the day!

(Nodding ahead)

Here we come!

They all look ahead, and we shoot the first sight of the town — a giant borax plant covered with white dust. Just visible beyond it is the single street of the town. We are approaching the place along a wide curve of highway. Now we see the main street — a mob has filled it.

Back in the car.

PERCE

(With great, and sudden excitement)

Hey! — look at that crowd! Man! — this is gonna be a real go!

The car is now slowing to nudge its way into the packed street. Perce sees somebody he knows and sticks his head out the window.

PERCE

There's old Rube! Hey, Rube! Whatcha say!

"Rube" waves back.

PERCE

Hey, there's old Bernie! Watcha say, Bernie!

Bernie waves back.

PERCE

(To Gay)

Hey, they got some real riders here today! You get me a good horse now, will ya?

GAY

(He glances at Perce, whose face is now between him and Roslyn)

Just come out in one piece, now, 'cause you gotta go mustangin' tomorrow.

Roslyn is looking at Perce's face a few inches from her eyes — she sees the pure lust for glory in him — and we see the new emotion flowing from her toward him — a kind of pity, a personal involvement in his coming trial.

Perce jerks away to call out the window.

PERCE

There's Franklin! Hey, Franklin-boy!

Now we cut to view of the town and the crowd through which the car is crawling.

The entire town consists of a block-long row of bars, one jammed next to the other, their neon lights on in daylight. The side of the street opposite the bars is simply a double railroad track where a line of freights is now parked.

From the barfronts to the railroad track, down the whole length of the town, the street is jammed with cars, trucks, horse vans and a mob of people moving in and out of the nearly stalled traffic.

There are cowboys in working clothes, and many in the tight shirts and jeans they saw in movies. There are many kids, dressed like their elders. There are farmers in overalls, women in Sunday best. Here is a cowboy trying to back a horse out of a little trailer-van right into the stream of traffic; three girls not yet sixteen walking in front of a gang of cowboys who are making them; a mother holding onto her

teen-age daughter's wrist as she pushes through the crowd. Here are two deputies, 45's hanging from their hips, bouncing a Cadillac up and down to unhook its bumper from that of a battered pickup truck behind it. In the pickup is a gang of kids with a farmer driving. In the Cadillac, its convertible top down, are three betting types and a show-girl, all bouncing up and down and striving to retain their dignity.

TRUCKING SHOT: MAIN STREET. AFTERNOON.

Now the camera moves above the people and the cars. We hear a cacophony of jazz — each bar's jukebox is pouring its music into the street, one number changing to another as we pass the screened doorways. Now there is an enormously loud voice from a nearby public address system, announcing something we can't make out, and then a crowd roaring as in a stadium — the rodeo arena is in action but we cannot see it yet.

We come upon an Indian standing perfectly still while the crowd pours around him. He is staring off at something — or at nothing — a bundle of clothes under his arm.

Before the bars are parked cars, their bumpers only a yard or two from the barfronts. We move toward one car. In its front seat behind the steering wheel sits Gay's dog, Margaret, all alone.

We move past this — Roslyn's car to the bar toward which it is pointed. The jazz coming out of this bar is deafening. As we approach the screen door a sweet little old lady appears on the street, carrying a collection can which she endlessly shakes. She wears a lacey hat and a polka-dot dress and she is sweating. She opens the screen door and enters the bar and we follow her inside.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE BAR. INTERIOR.

There is a bar perhaps fifty feet long and just about as many people in the place as we could get in. The Old Lady pushes up to a cowboy and his girl who are drinking at the bar and shakes the can under the cowboy's face.

OLD LADY

Church Ladies' Auxiliary, Tom.

COWBOY

Sure.

(He drops a coin in the collection can)

OLD LADY

(To the Cowboy's Girl, shaking the
can)

How about you, sinner?

GIRL

(Laughs)

Oh, Ma! I got no money!

OLD LADY

(To Another Man, nearby)

Come on, Frank. Church Ladies' Auxiliary.

FRANK

You just got me in the bar next door.

OLD LADY

Well, that'll learn you to stay put. Come on.

He groans and puts in money. A shout goes up. The Old Lady turns toward the noise.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE BACKS OF A CROWD OF MEN, A FEW GIRLS, FORMING A CIRCLE NEAR THE BAR.

Old Lady enters the shot, pushing through into the clear.

MEDIUM SHOT: OVER THE HEADS OF THE CROWD, INTO THE CENTER OF THE CIRCLE.

Roslyn is hitting a little white ball attached by a rubber band to a ping-pong paddle. Near her is an amazed, goggle-eyed little boy who owns the paddle, and Perce, who has a drink in one hand and a lot of money in the other. Roslyn also has a drink in her free hand.

PERCE

Forty-two, forty-three, forty-four . . . (and on)

Now a young cowboy steps up to Perce and hands him a bill.

FIRST COWBOY

Ten bucks she don't do seventy!

PERCE

(He nods, takes the money, without
losing his count)

Fifty-four, fifty-five, (etc.)

A Second Cowboy suddenly steps out and pats Roslyn low on the back.

SECOND COWBOY

Go it, Roz!

We instantly shoot Gay's face — he is in the clear at the bar, and he has seen the Second Cowboy feeling Roslyn. Guido, standing beside Gay, looks and sees that Gay is getting irritated. Gay now scans the faces in the crowd.

We shoot the crowd — the men eyeing Roslyn's body.

We shoot Gay: he sees Guido's expression as he watches Roz — and it has the same near-lewdness of some of the crowd. A new shout goes up, and Gay turns to . . .

We shoot Roslyn and Perce in the clearing. Now she is hitting the ball on the bounce, and taking a drink at the same time. Perce is continuing his count at her side. Perce is absorbed, young, somehow at one with Roslyn as he urges her on with his counting.

Around them betting is going on in the crowd. And we concentrate on the Second Cowboy who is now inflamed by Roslyn; he is only a few feet behind her and she is backing toward him.

The Old Lady steps up close to Roslyn, calling into her ear as she shakes the collection can.

OLD LADY

Play for the Lord! Steady, Sinner!

ROSLYN

(Unnerved)

Please!

OLD LADY

(To Perce, demanding the money in his hand)

Help the good work, boy, do it while the spirit's in ya.

PERCE

Seventy-one, seventy-two, SHUT UP, four, SEVENTY-FIVE, (and on)

A shout goes up at this new victory. Roslyn is now a foot from the Second Cowboy with her back to him, and he grabs her from behind and starts to kiss her. Gay is on him and is about to hit him when he is pulled away by others. Guido appears next to Gay and draws on

his arm, grabbing Roslyn with his other hand, and he pulls both of them toward the door. Perce is close behind and they emerge into the mobbed street.

Roslyn turns Gay to her; she is moved by his suddenly evident protective passion which she feels great gratitude for. (In the background Perce is counting the money, Guido looking on)

ROSLYN

I'm sorry, Gay, I didn't mean to do it that long! But thanks for helping me!

(She clasps his face)

I embarrass you?

He takes her arm and walks in between two parked cars. The threat of losing her in the moments earlier, the lust of others for her, has wiped out his reserve.

GAY

I'd marry you.

ROSLYN

(With a sad and joyous mixture)

Oh, no, Gay, you don't have to! But thanks for saying that!

GAY

I'm not just sayin' anything. I'd get a divorce tomorrow. I'm a resident; I could get it in a day.

Perce bursts into the scene, Guido behind him. They are squeezed in between cars.

PERCE

Hundred and forty-five dollars! Ain't she great, Gay? She is the greatest yet!

With which Perce throws an arm around her as he puts the money in her hand. Instantly the Old Lady appears under Perce's arm, shaking the can under Roslyn's face, her eyes avid for the money.

OLD LADY

(To Roslyn)

Sinner! I can tell you want to make a big donation! You got it in your eyes. Some do, some don't -- you got the fear of the Lord in

OLD LADY (Cont.)

the middle of your pretty eyes! You're lookin' for the light, Sinner, I know you and I love you for your life of pain and sin! Give it to the one that understands, the only one that loves you in your lonely desert!

At first amused, then drawn-and-repelled, then . . . half frightened and yet somehow contacted by this woman's mad desire to bless her, she starts to hand the Old Lady the whole wad of money. But Gay intercepts.

GAY

She ain't sinned that much.

(Hands the OLD LADY one bill)

Here's ten . . .

(Gives her another)

And here's ten more to settle for the twenty.

OLD LADY

Lord be praised! We're gonna buy a fence around the graveyard, keep these cowboys from pasturing their horses on the graves. Sweetheart, you've gone and helped our dead to rest in peace! Go reborn!

She ducks out of sight and instantly a cowboy appears in the shot.

COWBOY

You Perce Howland, ain't you?

PERCE

That's me.

COWBOY

(Indicating across the street)

You better get on your horse!

PERCE

(To the others)

Hey, come on! You watch me now, Roslyn!

(To Gay)

Can I kiss her for good luck?

GAY

(Grinning)

Once.

Perce kisses her. When their lips part — they both seem surprised. Perce turns with a glance at Gay — turning from his own emotion to suddenly displayed, and goes into the crowd. Gay starts after him . . . Roslyn stops him.

ROSLYN

(Half to reassure Gay)

Take care of him, huh? — I mean he's like a little boy!

Gay, despite his resistance to her feeling for Perce, hugs her quickly and follows Perce into the crowd.

CLOSE SHOT: RODEO ARENA. THE GATE OF A CHUTE OPENING.

Rider on a bucking horse charges out. Beyond him we see makeshift bleachers and the crowd: It is a small-town, home-made arena.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE HORSE AND RIDER IN THE ARENA.

He is staying on.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE TIMING JUDGE.

With a stop-watch in his hand he is glancing from the rider back to his watch.

MEDIUM SHOT: HORSE AND RIDER.

The rider is still on.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE INDIAN.

He stands just inside the barrier which protects the audience, his bundle under his arm, watching impassively, a swath of blue sky behind and above his head.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE BLEACHERS.

Roslyn and Guido are sitting together. She is avidly watching. Guido is interested, but that's all. He turns now to look at her profile. His heated eyes rove her face, her neck and body. She is absorbed in the spectacle. Quickly she turns to him.

ROSLYN

How does he ever get off?

As she says this, the crowd roars suddenly, and people around them half-stand in their seats. Alarm shows in her face as she turns to the Arena.

GUIDO

(Nodding toward the arena)

That's how.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE RIDER, SCOTTING TO HIS FEET AND RUNNING FROM THE HORSE'S FLYING HOOVES.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN AND GUIDO.

ROSLYN

(Startled)

Gee, I didn't know it was so dangerous!

GUIDO

(As though declaring his determination toward her)

Same as everything else worth doing.

She looks at him with surprise.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE OUT-RIDER COMING ALONGSIDE THE BUCKING HORSE AND UNDOING ITS BUCKING STRAP.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN AND GUIDO. THE STANDS.

ROSLYN

What'd he just take off?

GUIDO

Oh, that's the bucking strap. It's got nails to dig into the horse's belly and makes him buck.

ROSLYN

Well that's not fair!

He starts to laugh, but her intensity stops him.

ROSLYN

Do you think that's fair? Drill his belly with nails?

GUIDO

You couldn't have a rodeo otherwise.

ROSLYN

Well then you shouldn't have a rodeo!

The crowd suddenly roars and stands, and she and Guido rise, but he is staring at her with deep puzzlement as she turns toward the arena . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: A CHUTE. PERCE AND GAY.

They are straddling a closed chute, their legs slung over the top, watching the bucking horse rider in the arena.

PERCE

That's a good horse. Hope I get one.

GAY

(His eyes roving the stands)

I hope you're sober.

PERCE

(Following Gay's eyes)

Well, I've won prizes where I couldn't remember the name of the town.

(He sees Roslyn in the stands, waves)

There she is!

(Now GAY waves to her)

LONG SHOT: ROSLYN AND GUIDO IN STANDS.

She and Guido wave back. She waves with energy, encouragingly.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE AND GAY ON SHUTE.

PERCE

(Both of them looking at her in the distance. — With a barely repressed inner excitement)

You sure got a good sport there, boy. — What does she, just float around?

GAY

(Looks at Perce not wanting to admit his feeling for her, not to appear naive)

Seems that way, don't she?

PERCE

She's hard to tell about. I don't know.
(Looks off into the stands at her)
Although you gotta respect her, don't you?

GAY

Sure do. . . . Listen now . . . don't encourage her to go up with us tomorrow. She won't like mustangin'.

PERCE

First time I heard you care what a woman liked or didn't like.

GAY

(Looking off at stands)
Well . . . I do.

PERCE

(With an attempt at a laugh)
I wouldn't try to move in on you, Gay — unless you wouldn't mind.

GAY

(Looks at him with a grin — and somehow unwillingly)
Boy — I'd mind.

They both laugh to destroy the tension, and this unwitting avowal of their conflict brings them closer, and Gay slaps Perce on the back with a warmth, as a horse is led into the chute at their feet.

GAY

(Wryly, but somehow wanting to reach out to Perce, despite their conflict)
I'm supposed to take care of boy, boy, so watch it now.

Perce glances toward the stands with pleasure at this news.

PERCE

Well, here I go!

He descends from the fence onto the horse with Gay lending a hand, and he looks up at Jay.

PERCE

My address is Black River . . .

He is cut off by the public address system.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

On a bucking horse, PERCE HOWLAND out of Black River, Wyoming!

PERCE

(On the restive horse)

California, not Wyoming!

A cowboy pulls the bucking belt tight. The horse kicks the chute planks.

GAY

You ready boy!?

PERCE

Go! -Go!

GAY

(Calling down to the waiting attendant
outside the chute gate)

Open up!

The gate opens, the horse charges out. The crowd roars.

LONG SHOT: PERCE IS HOLDING ON AS THE HORSE BUCKS UNDER HIM, HIGH AND WILD.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN AND GUIDO.

GUIDO

(Calling)

Go it, boy!

Roslyn is looking on, torn between the hope of Perce's victory and terror — she holds her hands to her ears as she watches.

MEDIUM SHOT: TIMING JUDGE WITH HIS STOPWATCH IN HIS HAND.

CLOSE SHOT: CHUTE FENCE. GAY'S FACE.

He is watching tensely from the chute fence, then turns to look quickly at ROSLYN IN THE STANDS.

CLOSE SHOT: BLEACHERS. ROSLYN'S FACE.

She is watching with tears in her eyes.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE'S FACE.

His teeth are bared with the tension of his fight as he is flung up and down, the sky over his head.

CLOSE SHOT: THE BLEACHERS. THE INDIAN.

He is watching impassively at the foot of the bleachers.

CLOSE SHOT: BLEACHERS. ROSLYN AND GUIDO.

Now she shouts as though to rescue Perce.

ROSLYN

Perce! Perce!

She turns, as though for help to Guido, but, as he roots for Perce, he has a look of near-rage on his face, a flow of animal joy that disconcerts her, and more alone than before with her terror, she turns back to the field.

CLOSE SHOT: CHUTE FENCE. GAY.

As a sudden roar goes up from the crowd, Gay raises up on the fence with a look of what almost seems like joy on his face, but his rising movement is to help . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE ON THE HORSE.

He is being thrown. He lands on his face and lies still.

CLOSE SHOT: STOPWATCH IN JUDGE'S HAND, THE SECOND HAND BEING HALTED.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY. JUMPING ONTO THE FIELD FROM THE FENCE, HE RUNS TOWARD PERCE.

MEDIUM SHOT: GUIDO.

Pushing down the bleacher rows to the field, Roslyn standing in her crouch behind him.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN'S FACE.

She is stretching to see over the crowd, staring and weeping, blank horror on her face. Now she starts down the bleachers toward the field.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE FIELD. GAY.

He is arriving over the inert Perce. He turns him over. Guido comes into the shot, lifts Perce's head, feeling his neck.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE OPENS HIS EYES.

His face is bloody, covered with dirt.

PERCE

California.

GUIDO

Move your head, Perce.

PERCE

(PERCE, dazed, sits up. He speaks to the air) -

Who? You all right, Pa?

GUIDO

Let's get him over to the ambulance.

They try to lift him, but he pushes their hands away, struggling to his feet, saying:

PERCE

Who? Who said . . . ?

He staggers about into the arriving Roslyn. She is very frightened and weeping. She tries to brush the dirt off his face.

ROSLYN

Get a doctor! Where's the doctor!

PERCE

(Beginning to focus)

Who took my hat!

Gay goes and gets his hat from the ground as he is moved along by Roslyn and Guido. He resists them, looking over his shoulder for his hat.

PERCE

Wait now, I want my hat!

GAY

Here's your hat.

PERCE

(Putting it on and resisting them
distrustfully, but moving along)

Wait now!

They are passing through a gate in the arena fence into an area of parked cars. An ambulance in the background in a clearing.

ROSLYN

(Supporting him, and holding onto
his flailing arms)

Where's the doctor?

PERCE

Where's my hat, Pa?

GAY

You got it on, Perce.

Perce suddenly pulls away and yells at Roslyn . . .

PERCE

Lemme go, Frieda!

GAY

Take it easy, boy, she ain't your sister.

Gay comes up to him, holding out his hand to calm him. Perce is staring, perplexed, at Roslyn. She is feeling a terror.

Gay again takes hold of his arm.

GAY

You're just a little dizzy, Perce. Come on now.

Perce moves with Roslyn holding his arm, Gay helping. He stares, perplexed, at Gay. They arrive at the ambulance. An attendant is waiting. But he is not in white. He wears an ordinary shirt and pants. His hands are hairy.

ATTENDANT

Let's take a look, now.

The attendant holds Perce's face.

ROSLYN

Let him sit down!

She sits him on the edge of the ambulance floor, the door being open.

ROSLYN

(Disctrustfully)

Are you a doctor?

PERCE

(He starts to rise)

I don't want a doctor.

ATTENDANT

(Pressing him back)

Sit down, boy. I'm no doctor. I'll just clean you up a little.

The attendant reaches into the ambulance for something.

ROSLYN

(With a growing feeling of helplessness)

Well, isn't there a doctor?

ATTENDANT

(Reappearing with a bottle of alcohol
and a swab)

Not for thirty miles, ma'm. Now hold still, boy.

The attendant swabs the dirt off Perce's face. Perce involuntarily
grimaces.

PERCE

My nose!

ATTENDANT

Yeah, that looks busted, might be.

ROSLYN

(Urgently, with a jagged edge of anger)

Gay, come on, let's take him to a doctor.

PERCE

I ain't havin' a doctor!

ROSLYN

Gay, don't stand there!

Gay bends and looks closely at Perce's face as the attendant swabs it; then he straightens up.

GAY

(To Roslyn, resentment flaring in his face at her)

He ain't bad hurt.

ROSLYN

(Now openly furious at Gay)

How do you know? Let's take him!

She reaches down to lift Perce.

ROSLYN

Come with me, I'll take you in my car!

GAY

(He forcefully, but not too covertly, takes her from Perce)

Now don't start runnin' things, Roslyn!

ROSLYN

(With an over-meaning — into his eyes)

He's your friend, isn't he?! I don't understand anything . . . !

A loud yelp of pain from Perce turns them to him — the attendant is pressing an adhesive tape across the bridge of his nose. Perce delicately touches his nose as Gay bends down to him where he sits on the edge of the ambulance floor.

GAY

You all right, ain't you Perce?

Attendant presses a band-aid across the bridge of Perce's nose.

Perce exhales a breath of pain, then feels his nose.

GAY

Perce, you all right?

He blinks, looks up at them, still dazed.

PERCE

Did I win?

GAY

Almost, boy. You done good, though.

PERCE

That was a good tough horse. Wasn't it?

GAY

Oh, that was a killer. You done good.

Perce tries to stand, but falls forward onto his hands and knees. Roslyn quickly bends to lift him up.

GAY

Leave him alone, Roz, he'll get up.

Gay separates her from Perce who remains for a moment on all fours, catching his breath. In horror, in a sea of helpless non-understanding, she looks down at him. Now he raises himself with great difficulty to his feet. Guido hands him his hat which has again fallen off. The public address system erupts, incomprehensibly.

PERCE

(Referring to the public address announcement)

What sa?

GAY

Not yet. You still got a coupla minutes.

ROSLYN

What for!

GAY

He's got a bull to ride. Come on Perce, walk yourself around a little bit.

Jay, putting Perce's arm over his shoulder, walks down an aisle of parked cars with him. Perce is not sure-footed yet, but is getting steadier. They walk slowly, in the sea of cars.

ROSLYN

(To Guido, who is standing near)

Guido, he's not going in there again?!

GUIDO

(With a certain celebration of life's facts)

I guess he wants to ride that bull!

ROSLYN

But . . . !

Frustrated, she runs to Gay and Perce and stands before them speechless in fury and horror. They halt, momentarily.

GAY

Just let him walk it off, Roz, come on now.

Gay presses her aside and with Perce continues walking down the aisle of cars. She has to squeeze in beside them, sometimes forced behind them by an obstructing fender.

ROSLYN

What are you doing it for, Perce? Here, whyn'cha take what we won in the bar!

Struggling with her purse to get money out, she tries to keep up with them.

ROSLYN

You helped me win it, Perce, come on, take it. Look, it's over a hundred dollars. You don't have to go back in there!

She is holding the money over his shoulder from behind him. He halts, turns. She presses up to him. He is staring at her. She feels encouraged now. She gently touches his cheek, smiling pleadingly.

PERCE

(His face brightening)

After I'm done, let's go get us some good whiskey, huh?

Gay laughs with a certain pride — as though this proved the foolishness of her concern. And Guido smiles.

ROSLYN

Let's do it now. Come on. Please!

PERCE

You're a good sport, Roslyn. I like you to watch me now. I'm pretty good ridin' bulls.

ROSLYN

But why're you doing it?

PERCE

Why — I put in for it, Roslyn. I'm entered.

The public address system erupts again, incomprehensibly.

PERCE

Get me up there, Gay, I'm just warmin' up!

They start for the door in the fence leading into the arena. She hurries along with them. Guido is following, still smiling at her concern. He is progressively drunker.

ROSLYN

Gay, please!

But they go on through the doorway into the arena. Perce turns to her over his shoulder.

PERCE

I like ya to watch me, Roslyn! Don't you be scared now!

They disappear into the arena doorway. She turns to Guido beside her, as though for help. She sees he is blandly accepting the situation. "I told you so" is on his face. She turns quickly, scanning the world for help.

LONG SHOT: FROM HER VIEWPOINT THE CAMERA SHOOTS ALL THE PARKED CARS.

No human being is in sight — only row after row of cars.

MEDIUM SHOT: SHE TURNS TO GUIDO.

ROSLYN

(She is weeping)

You just don't care! — I'm sorry I pitied you!

Instantly from the arena comes back the roar of the crowd, mixed with the babble of the public address system. She runs at top speed toward the doorway into the arena. Guido runs after her, alarmed, with a sudden sense of great loss.

GUIDO

Roslyu!

CLOSE SHOT: BRAHMA BULL.

The face of an immense, white Brahma bull.

MEDIUM SHOT: PASSAGEWAY. THE BULL.

Its handlers are leading it through a passageway toward a chute.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY HELPING PERCE TO CLIMB UP THE OUTSIDE OF THE CHUTE WALL.

They mount the wall and look down into the chute and then up the passageway leading into it and see . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: A NEW VIEW — THE BULL AND HANDLERS FROM ABOVE, AS THEY ENTER THE CHUTE.

A man is looping the bucking belt around the bull's hind quarters, but letting it hang loose for the moment.

CLOSE SHOT: GAY AND PERCE ON THE CHUTE WALL.

Perce is wide-eyed with fear and calculation. He is blinking hard to clear his head and softly working a wad of tobacco in his cheek. Gay turns to him from the bull which is now directly under them. In Gay's eyes is both a look of pride in Perce and a brutality.

GAY

You okay, boy? You want it?

PERCE

(He hesitates, looking down at the bull; he has the excitement of one already injured)

Hell, yes.

He instantly makes to descend and straddle the bull.

ROSLYN'S VOICE

Perce!

He looks up and Gay does. Gay smiles pridefully, almost tauntingly at . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: FROM THEIR VIEWPOINT. ROSLYN ABOVE THEM IN THE STANDS.

She is a few yards away. She is holding the money. She looks pleadingly.

ROSLYN

Gay, don't let him! Perce, here's your prize! Why . . . ?

She holds out the money toward him. Now Guido, no longer smiling, appears beside her, having caught up with her. She is cut off by the public address system.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

Now, folks, who do you think is back with us! We still got some real men in the West! On a Brahma bull, again, out of Black Hills, Colorado, PERCE HOWLAND!

The crowd roars. Roslyn is strick dumb by the inexorable march of it all. She looks down, calling defeatedly:

ROSLYN

Gay!

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND PERCE ON CHUTE WALL.

Gay helps as Perce descends and straddles the bull. Mounted, he turns up to Roslyn.

PERCE

You watch me now, sport!

A handler yanks the bucking belt up tight. The bull shoots its head up, the gate opens, and Perce goes charging out into the arena.

LONG SHOT: THE BULL BUCKING PERCE.

CLOSE SHOT: THE BULL'S HOOVES POUNDING THE EARTH.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE.

Holding on as he heaves and twists upward against the sky, almost bending in half.

SHOTS OF THE CROWD'S LUST.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE FLUNG VIOLENTLY ABOUT ON THE BULL'S BACK.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN AND GUIDO, IN THE BLEACHERS.

Horror is growing on her. Guido, tensely watching, is not cheering now, but turns to her as though to comfort her. As he does so, she turns from the arena and hurries off, past spectators. Guido starts after her, when the spectators around them suddenly stand up with a roar.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN IN CROWD.

She turns her head to look at the field, stretching to see — and shock bursts onto her face.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE LYING STILL IN THE DIRT.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY LEAPING OFF CHUTE WALL ONTO THE FIELD AND RUNNING.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE JUDGE, STOPWATCH IN HIS HAND, LOOKING DOWN AT THE FIELD WITH ALARM. THE CROWD IS QUIET.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE BRAHMA BULL IN ARENA.

Bare-backed now, he is lunging and kicking as the mounted out-rider tries to corner him and keep him away from Perce's inert body.

CLOSE SHOT: THE OUT-RIDER'S ALARMED FACE.

LONG SHOT: THE CROWD, STANDING, WATCHING IN SILENCE.

DISSOLVE:

LONG SHOT: MAIN STREET OF THE TOWN. TWILIGHT.

The bar fronts. The jazz cacophony coming from each bar. Cars parked tight, up to the screen doors of the bars. Traffic, thinner now, is moving along the street. People leaving and entering bars. The armed troopers, in pairs, standing in the neon glare.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN IN THE CAR. TWILIGHT.

Through the side window she is seen in the front seat, stroking the dog's head in her lap. She is staring ahead; her face, tired with having wept, reflects the red and blue neons blinking on and off. She is still breathing deeply in the aftermath of a sobbing spell. Gay appears at the window beyond her. He puts his head in. He has a wry expression on his face, knowing she is displeased with him; and amused at her displeasure . . .

GAY

Come on, we're gonna have some drinks.

Roslyn turns to him blankly. He opens the door, and sits beside her in the front seat.

ROSLYN

Is he still unconscious?

GAY

Probably, but it ain't noticeable.

He turns around in the seat. She follows his gaze through the rear window.

LONG SHOT: PERCE. THROUGH THE REAR WINDOW. TWILIGHT.

Perce is heatedly arguing with the Rodeo Judge behind the car. Perce's head is enormously wrapped in yards of white bandage. Guido is standing between him and the Judge, blinking sleepily. We can't hear their words.

MEDIUM SHOT: CAR INTERIOR. ROSLYN AND GAY.

GAY

(She is still watching Perce)

He got up to argue with the judge about who won the bullride. You still mad at me?

She turns to Gay, her feelings in turmoil.

ROSLYN

(She speaks into his eyes)

Do I mean anything to you, Gay? — It could have been anybody, couldn't it?

GAY

I'm half out of my mind for you, don't you know that?

(He grips her face, almost angrily)

Why don't you know that!

ROSLYN

(Her heart gladdening)

It's just sometimes . . . nobody seems to really care about anything, or anybody . . . in particular, I mean. A particular person. You know? I mean . . . like we're all . . . going to stand there and watch the other die. You know?

GAY

What're you talkin' about! I want in for him with a wild bull runnin' loose!

ROSLYN

Yes! Oh, Gay — you are a sweet man! Let me go to the mustangs with you tomorrow!

GAY

I don't think you'd like it, Honey, I . . .

ROSLYN

No, I want to go! I'm going.

(With a resolution)

I don't want to be different than anybody else. I mean, it's happening, and if a thing is happening . . . It's just that I've seen some things in my life, Gay, that . . .

Perce sticks his head into the car. The tape is still on his nose, the bandage like a turban on his head. He is slightly high from the shock. Guido sticks his head in on the other side of the car.

PERCE

Hey, Roslyn! — Did you see me?

ROSLYN

(Wiping the tears from her eyes and smiling)

Oh, you were wonderful, Perce! Wyna'cha get in and we'll take you back to . . .

PERCE

Oh, no, we got to have some fun now!

GAY

Sure, come on!

ROSLYN

(She hesitates, then . . .)
Okay! — How do you feel?

PERCE

Like a bull kicked me!

Guido opens the door for her as Gay gets out on Perce's side of the car.

CLOSE SHOT: GUIDO AND ROSLYN.

As she emerges from the car she quietly asks Guido . . .

ROSLYN

Is he really all right?

GUIDO

In two weeks he won't remember this — or you either. Why don't you give your sympathy where it's appreciated?

ROSLYN

(Pointedly, but with a warm laugh)
Where's that?

She walks past him; he follows. They meet Gay and Perce in front of the car.

PERCE

(He opens the screen door of the bar for her)

Let's go!

Gay has her arm as her escort; Perce is on her other side, his arm wavering over her back but not touching her: He is recognizing Gay's proprietary rights. Guido walks behind them. They enter the bar.

MEDIUM SHOT: BAR INTERIOR. GAY, GUIDO, PERCE, ROSLYN.

As they press through the crowd, she calls through the racket into Perce's ear.

ROSLYN

Why don't you let me take you to a doctor?

PERCE

I ain't bad hurt! If you are bad hurt, doctor can't help you, and if you ain't you don't need a doctor.

They spread out around a table and take seats. There is a feverish intensity in Perce's speech and in his eyes. As they sit, he calls over to the bartender.

PERCE

Hey, whiskey! For eight people!

He gets into his chair.

PERCE

Boy, I feel funny!

(He laughs)

That man give me some kind of injection? Whooo! I see the prettiest stars, Roslyn.

He reaches for her hand and holds it. Gay, whose arm is over the back of Roslyn's chair, grins uncomfortably. Roslyn pats Perce's hand and then removes her own. Perce does not notice this, and again takes her hand. All this occurs as he continues talking without a break.

PERCE (continuing)

I never see stars before. You ever see stars, Gay? Damn bull had the whole milky way in that hoof!

Gay laughs. Guido smiles. Roslyn is torn between concern for his condition and a desire to celebrate her relief that he is alive.

PERCE

(Goes right on)

Say, was that you cryin' in the ambulance? Was that her, Gay?

GAY

Sure was.

PERCE

(He fervently shakes her hand)

Well, I want to thank you, Roslyn!

A waiter puts two glasses of whiskey before each of them.

PERCE

Now!

(Raising two glasses, one in each hand)

Here's to my buddy, old elderly Gay!

ROSLYN

(As she clicks glasses with him)

Gay's not old!

PERCE

And here's to old, elderly pilot! And his five-dollar elderly airplane!

They all have glasses raised.

PERCE

And my friend, Roslyn! We're all buddies, ain't we Gay?

GAY

(Grinning)

That's right.

PERCE

Then what're you gettin' mad at me for, buddy!

He swallows his drinks. The jukebox explodes with "Charlie My Boy." The others drink. Suddenly Perce reaches over and lightly slaps Gay's cheeks with both his hands.

PERCE

Get a smile on, Gay! — I ain't dead yet!

Gay, straining to ignore the underlying taunt he senses here, grasps Perce's wrists to get his face free. Perce suddenly gets up and with a whoop gets a headlock on Gay. Gay stands, lifting Perce off the floor over his back — and now Gay is laughing as the tension is released in a quick wrestling contest which lasts only a moment and ends with . . .

CLOSE SHOT: GAY AND PERCE.

PERCE

(Intimately; with great need)

Just lemme dance with her, will ya? Just a dance?

GAY

(Liberally)

Sure! Roslyn, whyn't you dance with Perce?

ROSLYN

Okay!

She gets up and Perce walks the few feet to the dance area with her. We remain at the table with Gay and Guido, who is getting more and more morose. Gay sits.

GAY

(With a more open intensity)

I'd like you to tell her not to come tomorrow. Guido? I want you to back me up. Tell her there's rattlers up there.

(He drinks his second drink)

Hear?

GUIDO

(He is staring at her off screen)

She'll be there, Gay.

Gay looks at him with suspicion, then turns to . . .

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN AND PERCE DANCING.

PERCE

My father had this exact same record. This is old-fashioned music. Know how he used to dance?

ROSLYN

How?

He goes into a flat-footed, hicky step. She falls into it with him. They laugh. People around them watch as he clomps about with her. Suddenly he looks into her laughing face . . .

PERCE

You're ready for anything, ain't you? You're a real good sport!

He draws her warmly into his arms, and dances seriously for a moment. But he is unsteady and she is trying unobtrusively to help him stay on his feet.

PERCE

Whoa! I still got two stars left in my head.

(Directly to her eyes)

Don't tell Gay, but I hope you're comin' with us tomorrow.

ROSLYN

I am!

PERCE

(The news brightens his face)

I want to tell you something . . . Come on — let's see the world!

They have danced up to a doorway and he pulls her through it. They emerge behind the saloon. The moonlit desert stretches out beyond them but close by are trash cans, empty liquor cartons, and a glistening mound of empty bottles. Still holding onto her hand he looks up at the moon, then around at her, and suddenly he is shy, as though he had already gone beyond a certain mark with her.

PERCE

We'll go right in — I just like to get my head to stop spinnin'.

ROSLYN

That's all right — sit down, why don't you?

He turns about and faces her.

PERCE

How come you got so much trust in your eyes?

ROSLYN

(As though she feels otherwise)

Do I?

PERCE

You . . . Don't laugh at a fella.

ROSLYN

Why would a girl laugh at you?

He winces in pain and holding his head, sits on the ground, she coming down beside him to prevent him from toppling over. He peers at her face as though through darkness.

ROSLYN

Let me take you to a doctor!

PERCE

Old Gay. He's a great fella. I learned a lot from Gay. About horses and about women.

ROSLYN

What about women?

PERCE

(Shrugs)

He says I do wrong — I'm all the time tryin' to save them.

ROSLYN

From what?

PERCE

Just seems to me they waste women out here. Everywhere. Just grind 'em up. I guess you know about that, don't you?

ROSLYN

Yes.

PERCE

You got a face . . . pleases me. . . . What're you floatin' around out here for?

(SHE doesn't reply, not knowing if he is criticizing or sympathizing)

You got feelin's. I can see that.

ROSLYN

Doesn't everybody?

PERCE

Nobody ever cried for me before. Not since I left home. No stranger.

He rolls over and lays his head on her lap.

PERCE

Your face . . . just pleases me! Let me stay here, just a minute.

ROSLYN

Sure! It's okay.

(She presses his knee so that he stretches his legs out)

There!

PERCE

You . . . belong to Gay, don't you?

ROSALYN

(With a certain tension)

I don't know where I belong.

PERCE

Me neither.

(He reaches up, touches her face)

Roslyn?

ROSALYN

Yes.

PERCE

I'm a little dizzy but I know what I'm sayin'. I don't know why, but I like to tell you something. . . . I know a lot of people but I can't . . . tell 'em anything, you know?

ROSALYN

Oh, I know! You can tell me.

PERCE

(Now, his body relaxes)

What're you supposed to do, when . . . ?

(He breaks off, starts again)

See . . . I have a good home. I mean I'm not like Gay or Guido. I never floated around. Till last year. My father . . . he got shot, see . . .

ROSALYN

Oh, my!

PERCE

It was an accident. Some hunters. Didn't see him through the trees. And . . . my mother . . .

(With a tortured, questing look)

Wasn't three months, she got married, see? — That's okay, but . . . See, I'm the oldest, and I told her, I says, "You better get a paper from this fella, or he's gonna have the whole ranch in his pocket, see?" 'Cause I was supposed to get it, see. And sure enough, he come to me and offer me wages — on my own father's place!

ROSALYN

What does she say?

PERCE

That's what I can't figure out. She . . . changed, y'know? She always was so . . . dignified, walked like a saint when he was alive. And all of a sudden — she don't hear me, any more. I mean . . .

PERCE (Cont.)

(A new tack)

I took off. But I've seen the big towns now, and the crowds, and I've won first prize lots of times. But — it don't go anywhere.

(With an increasing agitation of quest)

I mean . . . there ain't nothin' I can grab at. It's like those stars there — you see 'em, but . . . you can't touch 'em. It's short arms in a tall place. . . . You know what I mean?

Quite suddenly, she kisses him.

PERCE

(Surprised)

You . . . Like me?

ROSLYN

I wish . . . I could help you! But I can't reach it either!

He starts to raise himself to kiss her, and his face is suddenly pain-wracked, and he grips his head . . .

PERCE

(Almost crying out)

Damn that bull!

The back door suddenly swings open throwing the raw light of the saloon on them. Gay comes out, walking unsteadily, sees them with some surprise on the ground.

ROSLYN

He's sick, Gay!

GAY

Why, he's doin' pretty good for a sick man!

He comes over and pulls both of them to their feet.

GAY

Come on now, I want you to meet my kids!

ROSLYN

Your kids here!

GAY

They come for the rodeo! I ain't seen them in a year. You oughta see the welcome they give me, Roslyn! Nearly knocked me over.

He pulls Perce along. They go through the door, Gay in effect embracing both of them.

GAY

(To Roslyn)

She's gonna be nineteen! She got so pretty! — just happen to be here for the rodeo, the both of them! That great?

ROSLYN

(Her pity for him redoubled)

Oh, that's wonderful! I'm so glad for you, Gay!

They go into the bar.

CUT TO:

MEDIUM SHOT: BAR. GAY, PERCE, ROSLYN AND GUIDO.

Gay, now drawing Roslyn by the hand, and she holding onto Perce's hand, come up to the crowded bar where Guido is standing in a drunken swirl of his own. The air is muddy with smoke and jazz. Perce is blinking hard, trying to see. Roslyn is watching him even as she attends to Gay. Gay reaches Guido first.

GAY

Where are they?

GUIDO

Where are who?

GAY

My kids! I told them I'd be back in a minute! You heard me tell them!

GUIDO

Went out there.

Guido points to the door to the street, then looks appraisingly at Roslyn and Perce. Gay looks hurt and angered, then pushes through to the door and goes out.

MEDIUM SHOT: STREET OUTSIDE BAR. GAY.

He comes out into the street. He looks about at the parked cars and the moving groups of people and the armed deputies . . . and yells.

GAY

Gaylord! Gaylord?

Now Roslyn comes out of the bar, helping Perce. Guido is with them carrying a bottle. Their attention is instantly on Gay — excepting for Perce who immediately lays his cheek on the car fender.

GAY

Rose-May! Gaylord! Gaylordrrrd?

Guido comes up beside Gay. Roslyn remains, holding onto Perce who threatens to slide off the fender, but her anxious attention is on Gay.

GUIDO

Gaylord! Here's your father!

People are beginning to congest around them, some seriously curious, some giggling, some drunk . . . Roslyn remains with Perce just behind Gay and Guido, watching Gay, tears threatening her eyes.

GAY

(He never stops calling)

Gaylord, where you gone to! I told you I was comin' right back. You come here now!

A woman, middle-aged, dressed like a farmer's wife, comes up to Gay.

WOMAN

Don't you worry, Mister, you'll probably find them home.

Gay looks at her — at the security emanating from her sympathetic smile. He turns and climbs up onto the hood of the car; he is very drunk, and shaken. He looks over the crowded street from this new elevation. Just below him Roslyn and Guido are looking up into his face. Drunks mill around below, the bar lights blink crazily behind him, the armed deputies loom on from the doorways, and the jazz ceremony is flying around his ears like lightning.

He shoot him from below, his hat askew, his eyes perplexed and his head blazing on his face. He roars out . . .

GAY

Gaylord! I know you hear me!

We shoot the by now large crowd around the car, the faces of alien strangers.

GAY

(He bangs his fist on the roof of
the car)

I know you hear me! Rose-May — you come out now!

He suddenly slips, falls on the car hood, and tumbles on top of Perce and both end piled on the ground. The crowd roars with laughter. Roslyn quickly lifts up his head and kisses him, weeping. He stares dumbly at her, as . . .

ROSLYN

I'm sure they're looking for you, Gay! They must've thought you'd left!

But he knows they have left. And she hugs his head and rocks him.

ROSLYN

Oh, poor Gay, poor Gay!

Dissolve.

We open inside the car. It is speeding on the dark highway. Guido is driving, the dog asleep beside him. In the back seat Roslyn sits, one arm around the unconscious Perce, whose legs hang out a window, the other arm around Gay, asleep against her breast. Her eyes are closed.

Suddenly the car bumps up and down, and Guido is trying to bring it back on the highway.

From outside we shoot the car as it is swerving back onto the highway. A figure rises from the roadside, brushes himself off, picks up his bundle, and walks impassively on. It is the Indian.

Inside the car, the ride smooth again, Roslyn has opened her eyes. She is drunk and exhausted, a feeling of powerlessness is on her. Guido has a vague look of joy on his face as he drives. This dialogue starts as the bumping of the car gives way to smooth driving on the highway again.

ROSLYN

(Helplessly, as in a dream)

Aren't you going too fast? Please, huh?

GUIDO

(Glazed)

Don't worry, kid, I never kill anybody I know.

We shoot the speedometer climbing toward eighty.

ROSLYN

A fellow smashed up my best girlfriend. All they found was her gloves. Please, Guido. She was beautiful, with black hair . . .

GUIDO

Say hello to me, Roslyn.

ROSLYN

. . . Hello, Guido. Please, huh?

GUIDO

We're all blind bombardiers, Roslyn — we kill people we never even saw. I bombed nine cities. I sure must've broken a lot of dishes but I never saw them. Think of all the puppy dogs must've gone up, and mail carriers, eyeglasses . . . Boy! Y'know, droppin' a bomb is like tellin' a lie — makes everything go quiet. Pretty soon you don't hear anything, don't see anything. Not even your wife. — The difference is that I see you. How do you do that to people? You're the first one I ever really saw.

ROSLYN

Please, Guido, don't kill us . . .

GUIDO

How do you get to know somebody, kid? I can't make a landing. And I can't get up to God, either. Help me. I never said help me in my life. I don't know anybody. How do I land, Honey? Will you give me a little time? Say yes. At least say hello Guido.

ROSLYN

(Terrified)

Yes. Hello Guido.

We shoot the speedometer. From over ninety it begins to descend. We shoot Guido.

GUIDO

ello, Roslyn.

Dissolve.

LONG SHOT: EXTERIOR. NIGHT. THE CAR.

This is a different section of road running along the foot of the hillside. The headlights weave back and forth across the white line. Now the car comes to a halt. It remains still for a moment, as though, within, the driver is getting his bearings. Now it turns sharply left and climbs up a trail.

LONG SHOT: EXTERIOR: NIGHT. ROSLYN'S HOUSE.

Gradually her house is being illuminated by oncoming headlights. Now the car comes into camera view and halts a few yards from the house, facing it. Lights remain on, illuminating the unfinished outside wall and the lumber and building materials lying around on the ground. Now the motor is shut off.

CLOSE SHOT: FROM THE RIGHT WINDOW GUIDO IS SEEN AT THE WHEEL.

He is very drunk. The dog is asleep beside him. Guido opens the door and lumbers out of the car. He opens the rear door and blearily looks in.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN.

She is sleeping, sitting upright. Perce is asleep on her lap, his feet out the window; Gay is still on the floor.

CLOSE SHOT: GUIDO'S FACE.

It is full of longing and sorrow for himself. He looks down at Perce, then at Gay, and as though they were unbearably interfering, he steps back from the car and walks into the darkness.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY, PERCE AND ROSLYN, IN BACK SEAT.

Loud hammer blows are heard. Roslyn opens her eyes; Gay sits up.

GAY

Okay, I'll drive, I'll drive.

ROSLYN

(Still looking through the windshield
for the source of the sound)

We're here, Gay.

GAY

(Looking dumbly around)

Where?

She sees something in the headlights through the windshield. She carefully slides out from under Perce's head.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT: SHE WALKS UNSTEADILY FROM THE CAR TOWARD THE HOUSE.

CLOSE SHOT: HER FACE.

As she walks into the headlight beams, first curious, then incredulous at what she sees. Now she stands still; the hammer-blows are a few feet away. A kind of awe shows on her face as she looks upward.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT: FROM ROSLYN'S VIEWPOINT.

Guido is drunkenly hammering nails into a sheathing board, attaching it to the unfinished wall of the house. It is on crooked, but he gives it a final pat of satisfaction, then goes to the lumber pile and takes off another board, nearly falling with that, and goes and lays it up against the wall, trying to butt it up against the previously nailed board.

CLOSE SHOT: GUIDO'S FACE.

He hammers. As in a dream, the kind of pleasure and pain that comes of being freed of earthly logic, yet being driven toward some always receding center. Roslyn comes up to him. She is about to weep, it seems.

ROSLYN

Oh, I'm sorry Guido. Guido? I'm so sorry.

He continues, dumbly hammering.

ROSLYN

Won't you hit your hand, it's so dark? It's dark, Guido, look how dark it is!

He hammers on. She almost turns, spreading her arms and looking skyward.

ROSLYN

Look, it's all dark!

A sob breaks from her.

ROSLYN

Please stop! — How can I help you? — I can't do anything right myself!

GAY'S VOICE

(Nearby. He calls angrily:)

What the hell you stompin' the flowers for?!

Roslyn turns quickly.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT: GUIDO CONTINUES TO HAMMER WHILE ROSLYN TURNS TO GAY WHO COMES UP TO GUIDO AND SWINGS HIM AROUND BY THE SHOULDER AND BENDS TO THE GROUND.

GAY

You busted all the damn' heliotropes!

Gay is on his hands and knees now, trying to stand up the fallen flowers. Guido is looking down dumbly, the hammer in his hand.

GAY

Look at that! Look at that now!

He holds up a torn stem.

GAY

What in hell good is that now!

ROSLYN

He was trying to fix the house!

GAY

(Rising unsteadily to his feet, menacingly)

What call he got to fix the house!

ROSLYN

(Trying to restrain him as he stumbles to his feet)

Don't! Don't, Gay! Please! He . . . He's just trying to say hello! It's no crime to say hello!

PERCE'S VOICE

(Offscreen, crying out)

Who's doin' that!

They turn to look.

MEDIUM SHOT FROM THEIR VIEWPOINT: PERCE.

He is staggering into the headlight beams, trying to free his head and arms from yards of unraveling bandage flowing off his head. He is fighting it off as one would a clinging spider-web, turning around and around to find its source.

PERCE

Who's doin' that!

Roslyn hurries toward him.

ROSLYN

Don't! Don't take it off!

She reaches him and tries to unwind his arms.

PERCE

Get it off. What's on me!

ROSLYN

You need it. Stop tangling it. It's your bandage.

PERCE

(Perturbed, he stops struggling and looks now at the bandage, as though for the first time)

What for a bandage?

Roslyn is starting to laugh despite her concern.

CLOSE SHOT: GUIDO AND GAY, LOOKING ON. GUIDO IS QUIETLY, BUT DEEPLY LAUGHING, GLASSY-EYED. GAY IS BEGINNING TO FEEL THE LAUGHTER'S INFECTIOUSNESS.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROZ AND PERCE, GUIDO AND GAY IN THE BACKGROUND.

ROSLYN

(Feeling an hysteria of laughing coming on)

For your head!

PERCE

My . . . ?

He breaks off as he raises his hands and feels the bandage wrapped around his head.

PERCE

I have this on all night?

He looks angrily at Guido and Gay, who are roaring now, and to them he says:

PERCE

Who tied this on me!

He is trying to pull it off his head.

ROSLYN

The ambulance did it. Don't take it off.

PERCE

(Unwinding and unwinding the bandage)

You leave me at a disadvantage all night? Who put it on! Gay, you . . .

He lunges toward Gay and trips on a board, and the whole pile of lumber begins to topple with a great crash.

Guido and Gay fall about, dying with hysteria.

Roslyn is between laughter and tears, while extricating Perce from the lumber.

ROSLYN

Get him up. Gay, come here! Guido! Carry him. Please. He can't help himself!

The men come to help her, and still laughing crazily they lift Perce and almost carry him to the door of the house. Now she goes inside ahead of them.

PERCE

Who put it on? — Leave me at a disadvantage all night?

As they get him through the door of the house:

PERCE

Where's this? Let me alone. Where is this place!

The lights of the living room come on. Gay and Guido sprawl on furniture, catching their breath.

ROSLYN

This is my house. . . . Or Guido's.

(Laughs)

Well it's a house, anyway!

Perce glances dizzily around the living room, says:

PERCE

Oh.

He collapses on the floor; Gay and Guido erupt once more in laughter. She catches Perce as he falls, letting his head down easily.

ROSLYN

Get me a pillow.

No one replies, so she turns and sees

MEDIUM SHOT: FROM HER VIEWPOINT, GAY ON COUCH.

He is sprawled out. He opens his eyes, looking up at her, the broken flower on his chest under a relaxing hand.

GAY

Sure wish you'd met Gaylord. Looks just like me — only young.

(With a look of reproach at her)

Like I was, young.

He breaks off, closing his eyes.

MEDIUM SHOT: GUIDO ON FLOOR.

He is asleep, breathing hard, the hammer in his hand resting on his thigh. He is propped up against a chair-leg. Roslyn comes and lays him down on a cushion. The hammer slips onto the floor with a thump; she takes it out of his hand. Now she goes to Gay, covers him with an Indian blanket from across the back of the couch. She takes the flower gently from him. She looks over at Perce on the floor and goes to a nearby daybed, pulls the blanket off, and covers Perce. The contact of the blanket puts him in motion; he immediately starts to sit up.

PERCE

(Resentfully)

No, Ma, don't, don't.

He turns his face away from her hand in a dream of pain.

ROSLYN

Oh, you poor baby boy.

She stands, a little unsteadily, goes and turns off the light, and finding herself at the door to the outside, walks out of the house.

LONG SHOT: THE CAR WITH THE LIGHTS ON, FROM HER VIEWPOINT.

She walks unsteadily to the car, reaches in and pushes the switch. The lights go off.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN EMERGING FROM THE CAR.

Straightening up, she finds the flower in her hand. She looks up at the sky.

LONG SHOT: THE MOON, RACING ACROSS THE STARRY SKY.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN'S FACE.

She is looking at the moon, tired, her eyes far-seeing, absorbed in wonder.

ROSLYN

Hello!

She raises her hand, as though to draw down attention from the sky, then softly . . .

ROSLYN

Help!

LONG SHOT: THE MOON.

Clouds racing over the stars. Now, gradually the stars grow dimmer. The sky turns a paler blue, gradually turning pink. The CAMERA tilts down now, across the heavens to a new, much more grand horizon. An immense sage-dotted desert with towering mountains in the far distance.

ANOTHER SHOT:

The sun is high, an eagle swoops and picks a rabbit off the desert, and takes off again.

ANOTHER SHOT:

Afternoon. A rattler, emerging from rocks, a rabbit hopping away from it. The CAMERA pans, past the rattler over the vast expanse, until in the distance a cloud of dust is seen moving across the desert.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY'S TRUCK.

The dust cloud is following it — an old but still serviceable truck with a flat bed behind the cab. On the bed, lashed to the back of the cab, is a drum of gasoline, with a hand-cranking pump protruding from its top. It is bumping along over the sage and here and there over whitened skeletons of cattle.

As the truck passes us, Perce spits out the window.

MEDIUM SHOT: CAB INTERIOR.

Gay is driving. Roslyn, beside him, has the dog in her lap, its muzzle on her shoulder. Perce is just drawing his head in from the right window. The sun narrows their eyes. They bump along facing the desert before them.

MEDIUM SHOT: CAB INTERIOR. GAY, ROSLYN, PERCE

Gay is driving, Roslyn in the middle, Perce beside her. The dog is on her lap, its muzzle on her shoulder. She turns from the windshield, looks at Gay, then at Perce whose nose is still bandaged. She suddenly remembers, and reaches down to the floor, takes up a bag of apples, gives one to each man. They eat thankfully. She looks on with satisfaction. To Gay . . .

ROSLYN

Not bad having a woman along, is it?

GAY

Nothin' I like better . . . if they behave.

Pause. She looks ahead, the smile going from her face.

ROSLYN

I won't bother you! I just didn't understand, yesterday . . .

(Now with almost a laugh, but the
tension puffs her eyes)

I mean a person can't change things, y'know? — if they're happening?
I promise not to be a pest again!

Gay and Perce laugh. The truck suddenly mounts a little rise and ahead they see the massive face of the mountains a distance away. The reality of the hunt darts into her and her eyes widen, her voice faltering.

ROSLYN

Is that where they are? — up there?

GAY

(Nods)

Honey, now you goin' to see what livin' is.

ROSLYN

(Trying, despite a sense of imminence)

Okay!

Suddenly Guido's plane zooms down over the roof of the cab and they see it flying straight ahead of them a few feet off the ground toward the mountains, its wings wiggling a greeting. They laugh in surprise. And Gay speeds up the truck now — and his face and Perce's gain excitement, the knitting-together of action as . . .

Dissolve.

We open on a wide shot of the mountains; it is the end of twilight, when the purple light is turning blue. Incredible masses of stars are coming out. The mountains, secretive and massive, wait. At their foot the campfire shimmers — the only moving thing in the world.

Now, closer, we see the four around the fire. Nearby stands the truck, and a little further away the lashed plane, both flickered by moon and firelight like intruding monsters resting before an onslaught.

We open from a distance sufficient to muffle the dialogue, so that we are aware now that we are close enough in to hear distinctly, that we have come upon a hiatus in the talk. Guido is sipping coffee, unable to keep his eyes from Roslyn across the fire from him. She is putting away the last of the dried dishes into the tote box. Gay is idly going through the dog's fur for fleas, and Perce is carefully knotting a broken shoelace. Gay now glances at Guido.

GAY

Well, if that's the end of the story, I vote we hit the sack.

ROSLYN

Let's talk a while! — It's so beautiful here! —
(To Guido)
Is your father still alive?

GUIDO

No, he died down there in Brazil. That's a story too. They're supposed to have eaten him.

GAY

Who?

GUIDO

The natives down there. The last clinic he had was someplace up the Amazon. And they turned on him.

ROSLYN

Gee.

PERCE

What made him wander around down there like that, you suppose. Pilot?

GUIDO

I don't think he'd be able to tell you that himself, Perce. I suppose the same thing that makes anybody do anything.

ROSLYN

What's that?

GUIDO

Oh . . .
(Directly to her, but with a certain diffidence, as though he must hold down his full feeling)
. . . Loneliness. And tryin' to break out of it. Some people go to play golf, some people turn on the television — some go out to save humanity.

GUIDO (Cont.)

(Glancing toward the stars)

It's like there was a big turbine somewhere out there, and we're all tryin' to get hooked into the wires somehow, and feel that warm juice goin' through. . . . But you know that better than I do.

ROSLYN

(Surprised)

Me?

GUIDO

You don't know it. You got it. That's even better.

We shoot Gay's growing alertness to Guido's pursuit of her.

ROSLYN

Got what?

GUIDO

That big connection. I never saw anybody was hooked into it the way you are. What happens to anybody, it happens to you. That's a blessing.

ROSLYN

(From an expression of dead earnestness she suddenly laughs)

People tell me I'm just nervous!

GUIDO

Oh, sure, they have to find some way to laugh at it. But . . . some won't laugh. A few.

GAY

(He suddenly claps his hands to get the dust off, and rising to his feet . . .)

Well, I don't know about you educated people, but us ignorant folks gotta go to sleep!

As Roslyn starts to get up her eyes fall on the dog. It is huddled on the ground, visibly sniveling, an odd attention in its eyes, its head watchfully set between its paws.

ROSLYN

Jay?

He turns to her.

ROSLYN

Why is the dog shivering?

GAY

(He looks at the dog)

Oh, she'll do that up here.

(He glances toward the mountains)

She gets a whiff of those horses, I guess. They must be close by, Guido . . .

Roslyn has gone to stroke the dog. Suddenly it bares its teeth and nearly snaps her hand. She leaps away, terrified. Gay is instantly furious.

GAY

Hey, you damn fool! Come here!

The dog crawls to him on her belly.

ROSLYN

Oh don't hurt her, she didn't mean it! — The horses ever kick her or something?

GUIDO

(He is pitched high; daring)

It's not the horses she's afraid of.

They all look at Guido.

GUIDO

It's us.

GAY

(He is angered in a wider sense)

What're you talkin' about now, Guido? I never mistreated this dog.

GUIDO

Just common sense, Gay. She's been up here enough times to know what we're gonna do. We're goin' to kill animals, and she's an animal. How's she know she's not next? They're not as stupid as people, y'know.

GAY

(Smiles and glances to Roslyn as though to force her attention on his meaning)

This is big news to me, Guido — I never heard you feel so much pain about animals.

GUIDO

Well, I wouldn't exactly call it pain, it . . .

GAY

I don't guess you would,

(With a glance at Roslyn)

seein's how you helped me take better'n four thousand horses out of these hills. . . . And seein's how I never heard you mention a word about animals till tonight.

GUIDO

I'm not complainin', Gay.

GAY

Glad to hear it — I just didn't want this girl to get the wrong idea, y'know?

(He unrolls a bedroll near the fire)

Here now, Roslyn, you can keep yourself nice and warm by the fire.

He smiles at her, then starts unrolling his own roll — Perce and Guido are unrolling theirs nearby.

We shoot Roslyn staring down at the quivering dog. Then she looks up and we shoot the dark, secret mountains looming up beyond the fire. Now she looks at Gay who is smoothing out his bedroll.

ROSLYN

(Her voice tight and nervous)

Maybe I could sleep on the truck, okay? Just in case something comes creeping around?

GAY

Suit yourself. Just thought it'd be warmer near the fire.

He picks up her bedroll and starts past her to the truck.

We shoot Perce absorbing the situation . . . and Guido.

ROSLYN

Gay?

(HE halts)

Maybe tomorrow . . .

(Involuntarily her stomach is shaking. She is struggling against a flood of fear)

I could stay back here while you go. Would you mind?

(Brightly)

I could have dinner ready when you get back!

GAY

Now look, Honey, it ain't gonna be as bad as all that up there.

ROSLYN

I know, but I just . . . suddenly I don't think I could stand it.

GAY

And what you gonna do if a snake shows up here tomorrow and you're all alone?

GUIDO

(Reasonably)

I could fly her home in the morning before we start work. I'd be back in twenty minutes.

Gay turns to Guido, his jaw hardening. Then he turns to Roslyn.

GAY

You want to do that?

ROSLYN

(Tears are in her eyes — trying to placate him)

It's just that they're alive, you know? And if a thing is alive, I Gay, I'm not criticizing you, but I . . .

GAY

(He is furious, but restrains it)

Suit yourself, Honey, Guido be happy to fly you back.

ROSLYN

(She almost stutters at being unable to communicate to him. She raises a hand wanly . . . and to all . . .)

Well . . . goodnight.

GUIDO and PERCE

'Night!

Jay walks ahead of her carrying the bedroll to the truck. He spreads it out. She climbs up on the truck bed watching him. His face is puffed with resentment. The bedroll prepared, he turns to her. They are out of the others' hearing.

GAY

'Night now.

ROSLYN

(She grasps his sleeve as HE starts to turn)

Please don't be mad at me.

(HE is silent)

You see? — I told you — I can't get along with people. Now you know.

Suddenly, almost harshly, he pulls her to him and kisses her.

GAY

You gonna come along with me tomorrow. And when I'm finished, you're gonna tell em, "Gay, I want to stay with you the rest of my life."

ROSLYN

Gay, you don't understand. I . . .

GAY

Honey, I understand a lot more than I look like. You can't live lest you kill — that goes for the shoeleather on your feet to the steak in your belly right now. You might have bought it in the store, but you're made of what you killed, or somebody killed for you. It's been that way since the first day of the world.

(He glances offscreen to Guido)

and no lie is gonna change it.

(He pats her)

You get some sleep now. . . .

(He smiles)

I'll show you what livin' is, tomorrow.

He goes from her and ve with him. Arriving at the diminishing fire, he finds Guido and Perce with eyes closed in their bedrolls. He takes off his shoes, slips into his bedroll. The dog comes and lies down beside him.

GAY

Shame on you, you damn fool. . . . Everybody's showin' off!

He turns on his side, and closes his eyes.

The Camera now moves in close until the whole screen is filled with the alert eyes of the dog, the firelight flickering on them. We must feel the instinct, the sense of coming death — the communication between these eyes and the still unseen animals that are soon to die.

The Misfits

move to Perce, over his back and around to his face. His eyes are
open, he stares at what he has seen and heard. Slowly he turns
his head toward . . .

a truck. We cut to it now. Roslyn is in her sleeping bag, seemingly
asleep. Close in, we see her opening her eyes. She is confused,
struggling to understand her feelings. She turns her head now,
looking off toward . . .

the dark, immovable mountains beyond whose crests the animals graze.

She looks back to her, to her eyes. Suddenly she starts.

Perce has appeared beside the truck — shielded by it from possible
light of Gay and Guido at the fire.

PERCE

(Whispering)

I just wanted to tell you . . . I've been up and down this world and
it nearly killed me couple a times, and you the first one ever cried
for me. That's the only thing there is, and don't let anybody tell
you you're wrong.

ROSLYN

I don't know . . . anything.

PERCE

(He at first timidly, then with
conviction, cups her face in his hand)

I know.

(He looks deeply into her eyes.
Suddenly he kisses her hand)

'Night, now.

He looks offscreen as though for Gay, then back to her.

PERCE

I love you . . . Roslyn.

He goes out of sight. She turns in the opposite direction — toward
the fire. She sees him making his way back to his bedroll, getting
into it. On her face is the intensified question of the validity of
her feelings.

We cut to Gay. He opens his eyes, sees Perce getting into his bedroll. Guido is snoring. Gay stares, the dog open-eyed beside him. On these two pairs of eyes . . .

Dissolve.

We open on a long shot of the mountain ridges from the vantage of the camp location. The first rays of dawn are brightening the sky.

The Camera descends on the camp now, and discovers great, business-like activity. Perce is on the truck bed cranking gas from the drum into the plane. Guido is on top of the wing holding the hose and peering into the tank.

Gay is walking over to a kind of mound, partially covered with drift sand. He reaches down, grasps something and pulls — a tarpaulin is peeled off revealing a dozen truck tires.

On the wing Guido raises his hand, peering into the tank, and calls . . .

GUIDO

Okay, hold it!

Gay calls to them from the pile of tires.

GAY

Let's go, Perce, gimme a hand here!

Perce hops off the truck, gets in and backs it to the tires. Guido clambers down off the wing, reaches into the open-sided cockpit and draws out a shotgun pistol which he proceeds to load from a box of shells.

Now we discover Roslyn, who is rolling up the bedrolls and tying them. She happens to look and see the pistol in Guido's hand, hesitates, then returns to her job. The dog comes up to her. She smiles down at the animal, then with some initial fear, reaches out and pats it. Happily she calls to Gay . . .

ROSLYN

She's not snapping any more, Gay!

Gay is just heaving a truck tire onto the bed of the truck with Perce's help. He turns to her, smiles.

GAY

ings generally look a little different in the morning!

GUIDO

(Calling from the plane)

guess I'm ready, Gay!

Guido is drawing out of the plane a shredded air force jacket whose lambswool lining is visible through the outside leather. He and Gay go to each wingtip and unlatch the plane. Perce goes to the tail, unlatches it. Roslyn comes near and watches now. Perce now comes alongside her and watches. Gay walks back to the cockpit with Guido.

GAY

How you want her?

Guido looks up at the sky, holding a palm up to feel the breeze. He points.

GUIDO

That way.

Gay goes to the tail, lifts it and swings the plane to face the direction of take-off. Then he walks along the plane to the propeller and waits. Guido is about to get into the cockpit.

Roslyn, as though to relieve the weirdly changed atmosphere, calls rather gaily to Guido.

ROSLYN

Boy, that's some jacket! Little breezy, isn't it?

GUIDO

Went on a lot of missions in this thing. Wouldn't take a hundred dollars for it . . . bullet proof.

They chuckle as he climbs in, sits. And to Roslyn . . .

GUIDO

Glad you decided to stay with us. Probably never see this again in history, y'know.

ROSLYN

Take care, now!

Guido registers his thanks for her solicitude.

GUIDO

(To Gay)

Okay, boy, turn your partner and doe-see-doe!

Gay glances behind him to see if there is any obstruction to his back-step, reaches up, pulls the prop, steps back.

GUIDO

And again. With feeling now!

They laugh. Gay once more turns the prop.

GUIDO

(Throwing the ignition switch)

Contact now! — and let us pray.

Gay with special care grasps the prop, pulls down. The engine huffs and dies.

GUIDO

That's that damn car gas for ya — okay, let's try her again.

Gay pulls the prop. The engine smokes, huffs, and with a sudden resolution, clatters up to a roar. Guido straps himself in, lays the pistol on his lap, pulls down his goggles, and with a wave to them, guns the engine. The plane moves away from them, gains speed and takes the air. Now it wheels in air and comes back, roaring over their heads and away toward the mountains. They turn with it.

He fasten on the three faces squinting against the prop blast. Gay is the first to move — he looks for an instant at Perce and Roslyn. They feel his glance and both turn to him — a tinge of guilt is on both of them. Gay smiles.

GAY

Here we go.

He turns toward the truck and starts to walk, they behind him. We cut to . . .

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A shot, from the plane, of the mountain wall. It is quickly approaching, bare rock.

Inside the plane. Guido lifts his goggles. He looks up at the clear blue sky. His lips moves as though in prayer. He lowers his goggles, looks down.

LONG SHOT: FROM PLANE. THE MOUNTAINS.

The barrier face of the mountains suddenly passes under the plane. Music strikes a mixed mood of the pastoral and a new weird quality. Now the sharp interior walls and steep valleys show, uninhabited, half in shadow, with patches of grass here and there. A hidden secret world is opened.

LONG SHOT: THE PLANE IN VALLEYS.

The plane is flying just above the crests of the mountains, turning with the valleys.

CLOSE SHOT: PLANE INTERIOR.

Guido is looking down through the open-sided cockpit. Suddenly his head moves sharply.

LONG SHOT: HORSES FROM PLANE VIEWPOINT.

Suddenly, a herd of six horses — five and a colt — are seen in sunlight far below, grazing close to the upthrust wall of a valley.

CLOSE SHOT: PLANE INTERIOR.

Guido instantly pulls the stick back; the plane climbs sharply. Now he banks and turns. Now he checks his instruments, and reaches under the seat and takes out the pistol which he holds in his right hand. Now, after checking below with a glance, he presses the stick forward and abruptly dives.

LONG SHOT: HORSES FROM PLANE.

The herd is coming in to the Camera, fast. Now it starts to move in a gallop along the wall of the valley.

LONG SHOT: PLANE DIVING ON THE HORSES.

The plane is zooming in over the horses, its wingtips only yards from the valley walls; the horses are galloping ahead of it.

CLOSE SHOT: PLANE INTERIOR.

uido pulls the stick back and the plane noses upward; he points his pistol down as he passes over the herd, and fires.

LONG SHOT: HORSES FROM PLANE.

With the shot the horses surge ahead even faster, and as we climb away from them,

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT: INTERIOR OF TRUCK CAB: GAY, ROSLYN, FERCE, DOG.

They are bumping along over the sage. The dog is on the floor now with its muzzle on the seat between Gay and Roslyn. They are sitting differently now than earlier — there is a certain half-conscious fear of touching one another. Ferce has his arms folded across his chest; Roslyn's hands are in her lap. Now Gay takes one hand off the wheel and lays it on her knee.

GAY

(Happily)

How you doin'?

ROSLYN

Okay.

Ferce glances at his hand on her knee. She does not see his glance, but, in effect, makes Gay remove his hand by reaching to the dog's head and patting it.

ROSLYN

She's starting to shiver again.

GAY

She'll get over it. Just let her be now.

We sense that he feels a vague rebuff.

LONG SHOT: TRUCK MOVING INTO LAKEBED.

The truck bumps along on the sage desert, but now it crosses a border where the sage and soil abruptly end and a prehistoric lakebed begins. It is entirely bare, glaringly white, and hard as concrete. Now the truck halts. It is close to a little hummock bordering the lakebed.

MEDIUM SHOT: TRUCK.

Perce emerges as the engine is turned off. He looks around as Roslyn comes down out of the cab. Gay is emerging from the other side of the truck, and walks around to them where they stand scanning the lakebed. The silence is absolute. There is no wind.

ROSLYN

It's . . . like a dream!

LONG SHOT: LAKEBED.

Set between mountain ranges the lakebed stretches about twenty-five miles wide and as long as the eye can see. Not a blade of grass or stone mars its absolutely flat surface from which heatwaves rise.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE.

They are scanning the lakebed.

PERCE

I seen a picture of the moon once. Looked like this.

ROSLYN

Where are the horses?

GAY

(Pointing)

He'll be drivin' them out through that pass.

She and Perce look.

LONG SHOT: THE PASS.

It is perhaps a mile away, an opening in the mountain face.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE.

ROSLYN

Does anybody own this land?

GAY

I don't know. Government, probably. Just call it God's country. Perce? — let's get that drum off.

Gay goes to the truck and hops onto the bed and proceeds to unlash the gasoline drum. Perce stands on the ground and helps Jimmy the drum to the edge of the truck. Now Gay hops down and both men let it down to the ground and roll it off to one side, away from the truck. Roslyn watches for a moment, then goes to the cab and leans in.

CLOSE SHOT: THE DOG.

Over her shoulder, we see the dog quivering on the floor of the cab. She reaches toward it.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND PERCE.

Gay goes to one of the tires and draws a rope from inside it and experimentally circles it over his head and throws it.

Perce, seeing him occupied, walks over to the cab and looks in from the side opposite to that of Roslyn.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN AND DOG.

Over Perce's shoulder we see Roslyn pressing her face against the dog's. Then she reaches up to the rear-view mirror, and turns it to look at herself and sees Perce and smiles.

ROSLYN

(Almost a whisper)

Thanks . . . for telling me that last night. I always think I'm wrong, you know?

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE'S FACE, ROSLYN'S VIEWPOINT.

He is looking at her longingly, and deeply troubled.

PERCE

(In a hushed voice)

I'd be careful what I said to Gay. For a while out here.

Gay's face appears beside Perce's.

GAY

Letta get the glasses.

Perce steps aside. Gay moves into the truck doorway, hardly looking at Roslyn who now fixes her hair in the rear-view mirror. Gay reaches

behind the seat and draws out a large binocular case. He looks at her now, grinning, a hurt in his eyes. Then he takes the binoculars out of the case.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE.

From the rear of the truck we see Gay and Perce on one side, and Roslyn coming toward us on the other side. Gay is putting the glasses to his eyes, Perce watching him. He holds the glasses up to his eyes for a long moment, looking toward the pass.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN'S FACE.

A beginning of real fright is in her eyes. She is looking at . . .

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE, WITH GAY IN THE SHOT LOOKING THROUGH GLASSES.

Perce glances at her from Gay, and winks encouragement, but without smiling.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE.

ROSLYN

(Forcing a bright tone)

See anything?

GAY

(Putting the glasses on a tire on the truck-bed)

Not yet. Climb up, make yourself comfortable. He'll be a while yet.

Gay comes over and gives her a boost. She mounts the truckbed. He climbs up, and sits inside a pile of two tires, his legs hanging over the edge at the knees, his armpits supporting his trunk.

GAY

Go ahead. It's comfortable.

She does as he did; Perce mounts onto the truck.

ROSLYN

It is comfortable! Try it, Perce.

Perce does the same. The three sit in silence as Gay again raises the glasses and looks through them.

PERCE

I hear something.

GAY

(Putting down the glasses)

What?

PERCE

Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick.

GAY

It's my watch.

ROSLYN

Boy, it's quiet here!

(She tries to laugh)

GAY

(Exhaling, relaxing in the tire)

Ayah!

He leans his head back, closing his eyes. Perce and Roslyn are, in effect, joined by a viewpoint toward Gay, a consciousness which feeds dangerously upon itself. They look at one another, forced, as it were, to betray themselves or to keep their eyes on neutral objects. Now with his eyes still closed Gay smiles. Roslyn and Perce look at him. Now he begins to chuckle, opening his eyes and shaking his head.

GAY

Guido sure tickles me sometimes. He really put on a show for you last night. I thought for a minute there he'd bust out cryin' for the poor mustangs.

ROSLYN

You can't tell, Gay. Maybe he always felt bad about them, but he never said anything. People do a lot of things they don't want to.

GAY

(He turns with a certain arch look to Perce)

You joinin' the mourners' brigade too?

PERCE

(Caught between Gay's view and Roslyn, he locks off into the distance)

Well . . . long as I'm here I'll do what I said I'd do.

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Gay's face loses its humor, and he turns toward the distance. After a moment, he turns to Roslyn . . .

GAY

They're nothin' but misfit horses — you know that don't you? They're too small for ridin', and all they do is eat out good grassland. Cow outfits shoot them on sight and let 'em rot.

(SHE doesn't answer, not wanting to rile him. HE turns to Perce)

Perce? You know that, don't you?

PERCE

Yeah, I know.

GAY

Well? — why don't you say so?

He picks up the glasses and looks at the pass. He puts down the glasses. There is not a sound in the world. He lights a cigarette.

GAY

Human nature's a funny thing — man'll drop a bomb, kill a hundred thousand people, he's a hero. Same man kills a horse — all hell breaks loose. Or you take these pet-lovers — raise a stink about the mustangs and go right out to the store and buy a can of horse meat for little Fido. . . . You understand that, Perce?

PERCE

I guess the right hand don't want to know what the left hand is doin'.

GAY

Yeah — but some man's gotta be the left hand, don't he?

He looks at Roslyn — he is somehow riding a wave of inner assurance that takes a taunting tone; he reaches over and shakes her knee.

GAY

You lookin' real good today, Honey!

She can't help but smile to him.

GAY

What you say -- when we get through here we go into Reno, and dance, and have us a time, hun?

ROSLYN

Okay!

GAY

Maybe you can get yourself a girl, Perce.

PERCE

(Preoccupied)

I hear something.

Gay listens. He raises the glasses, sees nothing, puts them down.

GAY

What?

PERCE

Engine, sounds like.

They listen.

GAY

Where?

PERCE

(Indicating with an open hand the
general direction of the pass)

Out that way.

GAY

(Listens)

Too soon. He wouldn't be in the pass yet.

ROSLYN

Wait.

(She listens)

I hear it.

GAY

(He listens. Now a certain pique is
noticeable in him because he can't
hear it)

You don't hear nothin'; I ain't that old. Just your blood pumpin'
in your head, is all.

ROSLYN

Ssh.

(GAY watches her. PERCE is also
tensed to listen)

GAY

I always had the best ears of anybody, so don't tell me you . . .

PERCE

(Suddenly pointing, and screwing up
out of the tire to sit on its rim)

Isn't that him?

The three look off; Roslyn and Gay trying to locate a point in the sky far away. They too wriggle out of the tires and sit on the rims.

ROSLYN

I see it! There! Look, Gay!

Almost insulted he scans the sky -- then unwillingly raises the glasses.

LONG SHOT: THROUGH BINOCULARS.

The mountain pass is brought up close; and flying out of it is the plane, tiny even in the glasses.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE.

GAY

(He puts down the glasses. He blinks
his eyes hard. He is angered)

He never worked this fast before. I . . . I'd've seen him but I didn't expect him so soon.

PERCE

(To assuage Gay)

I could see him glinting in the sun. It was the glint. That's why.

Now, very distantly, an explosion is heard.

ROSLYN

What's that?

GAY

He fired.

She watches the pass with growing apprehension and fascination. Perce glances at her in concern, then back to the pass. They are all perspiring now in the warming sun.

GAY

I've sat here waitin' two-three hours before he come out. That's why I didn't see him.

(Now, however, glances at Perce, and as though he can afford the compliment)

You got good eyes, though, boy.

Gay raises the glasses again. Silence. All three watch.

GAY

There they come. One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . six. I guess he'll go back for the others now.

PERCE

Give me a look, neh?

Gay gives him the binoculars. Perce looks.

GAY

See the others yet?

PERCE

No. There's . . . six. And a colt.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN'S FACE.

There is a deepening of tension; almost a wincing.

GAY'S VOICE

You sure?

PERCE'S VOICE

Ya. It's a little colt.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE'S FACE IN PROFILE, WITH BINOCULARS RAISED.

PERCE

It's a spring colt.

He lowers the glasses, faces into camera.

PERCE

(With finality; not quite accusing, but nevertheless with an inference of question as to what will be done

PERCE (Cont.)

with it)
It's a colt, Gay.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE.

Gay, concerned, but with barely a look at Perce, takes the glasses. Perce turns to watch the pass again. Roslyn turns and watches Gay's profile for a moment. Now, Gay lowers the glasses, faces her fully. He will not be condemned.

GAY

Want a look?

He gives her the glasses. She hesitates, but then tensely raises them to her eyes.

LONG SHOT: THROUGH BINOCULARS. HORSES AND PLANE.

The herd is galloping in file; the colt bringing up the rear with its nose nearly touching its mare's tail. Now the plane dives down on them and they lift their heads and gallop faster. The screen image shakes — as though the hands holding the binoculars had lost their steadiness. Then the image flows out crazily as the lenses are being lowered.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE.

Roslyn is lowering the glasses, a high tension in her eyes.

GAY

(He will bull it through with her until
she moves to him)

See them clear?

Roslyn nods, and hands him back the glasses. Gay stands, glancing down at her with a smile that has in it a certain gratification. He raises the glasses again. She quickly wipes her fingers over her eyes. Another shot is heard. She opens her eyes to look. Perce and Gay are fixed on the distant spectacle. She gets to her feet and hops down off the truck. Perce looks to her.

ROSLYN

(Faintly)

... Maybe it's cooler in the truck.

She walks to the cab and climbs in. Gay and Perce remain on the truck bed, sitting again on the edges of the tires. Perce seems affected by her emotion. Gay, with a glance, notes this.

GAY

Take it slow, boy, take it slow. I'll take care of her.

A pause. Perce wants very much to go down to Reslyn. Gay holds him with his authority. Now Perce turns to Gay . . .

PERCE

I thought you said there was fifteen. There's only six.

GAY

Probably lost a few. That'll happen.

PERCE

Don't make much sense for six, does it?

GAY

Six is six. Better'n wages, ain't it?

(PERCE doesn't answer)

I said it's better than wages, ain't it?

PERCE

(With damaged conviction)

I guess anything's better'n wages.

GAY

(After a moment)

Perce? We've just about cleaned 'em out up here, but if you're interested in some real money, there's a place about a hundred miles northeast — Thighbone Mountain. I never bothered up there 'cause it's awful tough to get 'em out. Gotta get 'em on horseback up there. But there's five hundred on Thighbone Mountain. Maybe more.

(PERCE is silent, staring at the pass)

That'd be real money — you could buy yourself some good stock, maybe even a little van — hit those rodeos in style.

PERCE

(Deeply troubled)

I don't know, Gay — tell you the truth, I don't even know about rodeos any more.

GAY

I'm beginnin' to smell wages all over you, boy.

PERCE

I don't know, Gay — I've seen it all and there's nothin' to it, there's nothin' to any of it. I sure wish my old man hadn't of died. You never saw a prettier ranch.

GAY

Fella, when you get through wishin', all there is, is doin' a man's work. And there ain't much of that left in this country. Everything else is vages. I'd sooner be dead in the hot place.

Suddenly they are bolted upright by a ferocious snarling of the dog and Roslyn's screaming. Both of them leap off the truck bed as Roslyn jumps out of the cab, going backwards. Gay rushes to the cab and sees the dog on the seat, its teeth bared, snarling.

GAY

What're you botherin' that dog for!

ROSLYN

She was shaking so I . . .

GAY

(To the dog)

Get down here!

The dog, tail between its legs, slides down to the ground. Gay reaches in behind the seat, takes out a length of cord, ties it to the dog's collar, and leashes the dog to the bumper. The dog crawls under the truck in the shade, and lies down. Gay now goes to Roslyn who is quivering; he starts to put his arm around her . . . Roslyn halts and looks up into his face.

ROSLYN

(As though he must immediately do something for the dog)

She's scared to death, Gay!

GAY

(Almost an outburst)

Well, that's what she's supposed to be, I guess! Sometimes we're scared, sometimes we're glad . . . that's life, ain't it? You can't change that . . .

A shot is heard, very close now — it turns him toward the sky, and he immediately starts toward the truck, walking sideways as he talks to

her behind him . . . Perce is in the background turning toward the source of the shot.

GAY

Just roll with it, Honey, and see how you make out!

He gets to the truck and immediately reaches in behind the seat and draws out two iron spikes and a short-handled sledgehammer. Now he turns for an instant and looks toward.

The plane is just completing a dive — much closer now. The horses are now clearly visible. They are galloping straight toward the bare white lakebed but they are still on the sage-dotted desert.

Back to Gay — he turns quickly and walks past Perce who is staring at Roslyn now. She, in turn, is looking toward the horses.

GAY

Give us a hand here, Perce.

Perce follows Gay who hands him a spike which Perce props up as Gay drives it into the ground, ties a rope to it, and then pacing off several yards, does the same with the second spike and ties a rope to that.

Now Gay leaves Perce and walks to the truck, tosses the hammer in behind the cab, and for an instant halts to look at . . .

Roslyn. She is wide-eyed, staring at the horses.

Gay, with businesslike pace, unleashes the dog, walks it to one of the spikes and ties her.

Now Gay comes and puts an arm around Perce's shoulders, and in effect makes Perce walk with him away from where Roslyn is standing. Gay is calm-faced, but his eyes are quick and they are hurt. We truck with their stroll.

GAY

Maybe we better make that a farewell party for you tonight. Okay?

PERCE

Gay, you're the one man in the world I never wanted any trouble with. You the best friend I think I ever had. But you can't treat her like she . . . She's got feelin's, Gay . . .

GAY

(He smiles)

Boy, you're savin' women again. But this one don't need savin', hear? I'm takin' a little trouble with this one, straighten her out. A little bit — 'cause this is the one I'm gonna keep.

From offscreen, Roslyn calls.

ROSLYN

Gay?

(GAY and PERCE turn and start back to her. SHE is pointing toward the horses and is very excited, full of hope)

They won't go any further! See? They want to go back!

From their viewpoint we shoot the horses and the plane. They have reached the border of the white lakebed and have broken file, scattering right and left in order to remain on the familiar sage desert, frightened of crossing over onto the strange, superheated air of the lakebed.

Gay and Perce have come up beside Roslyn now, all looking toward the horses.

ROSLYN

(She turns to Gay and suddenly grasps his shirt, pleadingly)

They want to go home! Please, Gay . . . !

Gay looks past her, and she turns . . .

We shoot the plane diving down on the horses within a yard of their heads — and now they break out onto the lakebed, re-forming their grouping as earlier, and the plane now flies above the lakebed itself and is not climbing for another dive.

Back to the three and the truck . . . Gay takes Roslyn's arm and walks her quickly to the truck cab, but she resists entering. They stop.

GAY

If it's happening, you said you want to see it. Well, here's your chance to give it a good look.

He heists her into the cab, slams the door, quickly puts his head in, turns her face to him and kisses her lips.

GAY

We're gonna have a big time tonight!

With great joy he steps away and leaps up onto the truck bed. Perce is still on the ground, indecisively standing there.

GAY

Git up here, Perce, let's see what you can do now!

Perce feels the force of Gay's command, and also sees what is evidently Gay's victory — for Roslyn is sitting motionless in the cab and is not obstructing. He leaps aboard the truck bed.

We shoot the plane now — it is just touching down on the lakebed and is taxiing toward the truck. The horses are now trotting only, but far away.

Back to the truck — Gay hands Perce the end of a webbing strap whose other end is buckled to the post at Gay's corner. Perce passes the strap across his back and buckles the end to the post at his corner, so that both men are held, if rather precariously, to the cab and cannot fall backward. Gay now turns to the pile of tires behind him and takes out a coil of rope from the top tire. This Perce does too from the pile behind him. Both men heft their ropes, grasping them just behind the nooses, limbering them, adjusting them. . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: FROM MEN'S VIEWPOINT. THE PLANE AND GUIDO

The plane taxis up fast and the motor stops as it comes between the two spikes driven into the ground. Guido jumps out of the cockpit and runs to one spike, then the other, lashing the ropes to the plane struts. The dog, leashed to one of the spikes, snarls at him but he brushes her off and lashes the rope. With his goggles on his forehead, his face puffed with preoccupation, he trots over to the cab and jumps in.

CLOSE SHOT: CAB INTERIOR: GUIDO AND ROSLYN.

Without a glance at Roslyn, he turns the key, starts the engine, puts the truck in gear, and roars off at top speed across the lakebed. He is peering ahead through the windshield.

GUIDO

Grab hold now, we're gonna do a lot of fast turning.

Roslyn holds onto the dashboard, excitement pumping into her face. The faded air force insignia on his shoulder is next to her face.

LONG SHOT: THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD. THE HORSES ON LAKEBED.

Through the windshield the open lakebed spreads before us. A mile off two black dots are seen, rapidly enlarging. Now their forms become clear; two horses standing, watching the oncoming truck, their ears stiffly raised in curiosity.

CLOSE SHOT: CAB INTERIOR. ROSLYN AND GUIDO.

She looks from the horses to Guido. His goggles are still on his forehead; a look of calculation, of action, of zeal is coming into his face. She is feeling the first heat of terror, and turns to look forward, her hands grasping the dashboard.

LONG SHOT: THE HORSES.

The same two horses, a hundred yards off now and rapidly coming into the camera. Their rib cages are expanding and contracting, their nostrils spread. Now one of them turns and gallops, then the other, both keeping close together.

LONG SHOT: TWO HORSES, SEEN THROUGH WINDSHIELD, INCLUDING GUIDO AND ROSLYN IN CAB.

From behind their heads the Camera shoots, taking in the hood of the truck, Guido driving, and Roslyn beside him. He steers right up to the flying rear hooves of the horses. Now they wheel, and Guido turns sharply with them — the truck sways dangerously — and he works brake and gas pedal simultaneously. Now the horses straighten, and in doing so they separate from one another by a foot or two and Guido presses the truck into this space which quickly widens, and he speeds even faster and now there is one horse on each side of the truck, running abreast of the cab windows.

Roslyn, her eyes fascinated and frightened, looks at the horse running only a yard to one side of her.

CLOSE SHOT: THE HORSE, FROM ROSLYN'S VIEWPOINT.

It is a medium-size stallion, glistening with sweat. We can hear the roaring wheeze of its breathing, and the strangely gentle tacking of its unsod hooves on the hard lakebed. It is stretching its body to the utmost.

CLOSE SHOT: STALLION'S HEAD.

The eyes are blind with terror.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN'S EYES.

She is staring with rising horror at its eyes.

CLOSE SHOT: STALLION'S HEAD.

From behind, a noose falls over the stallion's ears and hangs there. It won't fall over his head.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE ATOP TRUCK.

He is trying to whip his rope to make its noose fall over the stallion's ears.

CLOSE SHOT: GUIDO.

He calls past Roslyn to Perce, whom he can't see. He almost seems angry.

GUIDO

Go on, get him! Throw again, Perce!

At this instant we see the other horse beyond Guido's head as a noose falls cleanly over its head and down over its neck. Guido calls out the window on his side — the left:

GUIDO

Attaboy, Gay!

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND PERCE ON TRUCK BED.

Seen from the front, Gay and Perce are squinting against the wind, which wips their hat-brims and their shirts. Gay, having just lasso'd his horse, is now letting go of the rope; his horse is veering off to the left, away from the truck. It pulls out the rope to its limit, then suddenly yanks the heavy truck tire off the top of the pile behind him.

The horse is left behind by the truck; as it feels the pull of the rope it rears in air and comes to a halt.

Now Perce, who has looped up his rope, is circling it over his head, and throws it. The noose falls over the horse's head (this horse — the stallion, is on the truck's right, on Perce's side). Perce's horse veers right, away from the truck and pulls a tire off from behind Perce.

GAY

(Shouting with joy)

That's the way!

Perce returns an excited look. Gay stretches and claps him on the shoulder, laughing. They are suddenly joined.

LONG SHOT: FROM CAB INTERIOR: GUIDO AND ROSLYN.

The Camera shoots past Guido, who is steering sharply to reverse the truck's direction; Roslyn is looking out the window at the horse just lasso'd by Perce.

LONG SHOT: PERCE'S HORSE PAST ROSLYN'S FACE.

Over her shoulder, shooting through her window, we see in the middle distance the stallion being forced to a halt by the dragging tire. The truck is slowing as it nears the stallion, which now has turned with lowered head to face the tire. Now it rises up in the air, its forefeet flailing at the air. Suddenly the truck speeds up again, changing direction. Roslyn turns to Guido.

ROSLYN

They'll choke, won't they?

GUIDO

We're comin' back in a minute!

LONG SHOT: THROUGH WINDSHIELD: THREE DISTANT HORSES ON LAKEBED.

We are moving fast toward three rapidly enlarging specks; their forms quickly emerge; they turn and run. Now a fourth, that of the colt, emerges from the screening body of the mare. The colt runs with its nose nearly in the mare's long, full tail.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE AND GAY ATOP THE TRUCK: SEEN FROM FRONT

Both men are twisting their lassoes over their heads, their bodies leaning outward over the truck's sides. The sound of clattering hooves grows louder and louder.

CLOSE SHOT: GAY'S FACE.

He is living.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE'S FACE.

A look of confusion, sympathy, rising in his eyes as he twirls his noose.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE'S VIEWPOINT OF MARE AND COLT RUNNING.

Perce is now above and a length behind the big mare and her colt. He is readying his noose, getting set. Suddenly Roslyn's head sticks out of the window of the cab, looking up at him pleadingly. She is almost within arm's length of the colt, which is galloping beside her.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE'S FACE.

He has seen her, the fright and pain in her face.

CLOSE SHOT: GAY'S FACE.

GAY

Get that horse!

Now Gay throws his noose at the horse on his side.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE ON TRUCK.

With a sudden surge of resolution Perce throws his rope. It lands over the mare's head and she veers to the right, the colt veering with her.

LONG SHOT: ROSLYN IN FOREGROUND SEEING LASSO'D MARE AND COLT.

Past Roslyn's cheek, shooting through the right window, we see the mare being halted by the dragging tire and the colt running almost rib to rib with her.

LONG SHOT: THE TRUCK.

We see the truck swerving to follow the one remaining horse which it quickly overtakes. Gay throws and lasso's this horse which pulls a tire off the truck and is coming to a halt, bucking and flinging its heavily maned neck against the tightening pressure of the remorseless noose. Now the truck turns back and slows as it approaches the mare and colt, and finally halts. A door of the truck opens and Roslyn hops out. Gay and Perce come down off the truck bed. Roslyn does not emerge.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY, GUIDO, PERCE, WITH MARE AND COLT. TRUCK IN BACKGROUND.

The three men come over to the mare. She circles to keep them in front of her, and the colt keeps nuzzling up against her. The mare is a full-sized horse, covered with sweat, her rib cage barreling out and in, her legs slim and quivering, her nostrils distended. Her eyes are terrorized. The men halt a few yards from her.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN IN CAB FROM PERCE'S VIEWPOINT.

She is facing the windshield, not able to look at the mare. It is unknown whether her oddly deadened expression means anger, acceptance or fear.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE MEN AND MARE AND COLT. TRUCK IN BACKGROUND.

PERCE

She's too big for a mustang, ain't she? I bet she's branded.

GAY

I don't see any brand.

GUIDO

Get your ropes, Gay.

Gay turns and goes to the truck and opens the door. Roslyn turns to him, but slowly, as though her soul were elsewhere.

CLOSER SHOT: GAY AND ROSLYN. TRUCK INTERIOR.

She merely stares at him, blankly. He hardly pauses; reaches in behind the back of the seat and takes out two coiled ropes. Gay glances again at her as he turns away — His face shows a mystification. He walks toward the mare.

CLOSE SHOT: PERCE'S FACE.

He is perplexed by her evident attitude.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE MEN AND MARE AND COLT: TRUCK IN BACKGROUND.

Facing the mare, Jay is twirling his rope over his head; Guido stands beside him, a second rope in his hands. Gay throws. The noose falls open just behind the forefeet of the mare. Now Guido walks toward her; now he counts. The mare backs.

CLOSE SHOT: MARE'S FEET STEPPING INTO NOOSE.

She has stepped into the noose which quickly is pulled, binding her two forefeet together.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE MEN AND MARE AND COLT.

Gay stands holding his rope taut. Now Guido throws his rope; and the noose falls behind the mare's hind hooves. Gay makes a sudden movement and a shout, and she backs, and Guido pulls his rope and binds her hind feet together. Now both men are on the same side of the horse. They jerk their ropes. The mare's feet are pulled from under her and she falls to the ground on her side. The colt dances away and comes back, standing close to her. She lies there gasping for breath. The men approach her. She raises up her head menacingly. Gay hurries to the tire and pulls it so her head is held flat to the earth.

GAY

(To Perce)

Hold this down, boy.

Perce comes and sits on the tire.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN IN TRUCK FROM PERCE'S VIEWPOINT.

She is turning to look at the mare -- an inward stare of incomprehension on her face.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND GUIDO WITH MARE AND COLT.

Guido is slipping the noose along the mare's neck until it reaches just under her jaws.

GAY

She's an old one.

GUIDO

Probably.

GAY

Take a look. I want to tell Roslyn.

Guido parts her lips and looks into her mouth.

GUIDO

About fifteen, sixteen.

JAY

If she's a day.

Perce comes over and the two men stand up. Gay unbinds the mare's hooves and they all step away. The horse clambers to her feet. She inspects her colt, which presses against her. The men return to the truck. Roslyn's door is still open.

GAY

She's fifteen years old if she's a day, Roslyn.

Roslyn looks past him at the mare. She does not speak.

GAY

She's not a real mustang. Probably ran off sometime and went wild up there. She's old, though, Roslyn, wouldn't last another winter.

Guido has gotten behind the wheel beside her. Gay turns from her and climbs up on the truck. Perce stands looking at the mare. Gay calls down to him:

GAY

Let's go, Perce!

Perce turns toward the truck, glancing at . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN FROM PERCE'S POINT OF VIEW.

She is still staring at the mare. She does not look at Perce.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE.

He swings up onto the truck. The truck moves off.

LONG SHOT: TRUCK MOVING OFF, MARE AND COLT IN FOREGROUND.

The mare, with the colt sunning her, stares after the vanishing truck. The breeze blows her long tail and her mane. She is still breathing with difficulty. The terror is still in her eyes.

CLOSE SHOT: CAB INTERIOR: GUIDO AND ROSLYN.

The inwardness of her look remains. Guido, driving, glances at her, and defensively . . .

GUIDO

We'll shift the nooses on all of them now, so they won't suffocate themselves.

She turns to him, eyes wide, as though facing a wonder, an astonishment too great to utter. Her strangeness unhinging his composure because he is uncertain whether she is in the act of learning something new, or condemning him beyond belief. He clings to the first idea for a moment . . .

GUIDO

. . . What I tried to tell you last night is that . . . I think I understand what you're after. You want to shake hands with life, you want to put your arms around it all, don't you? Well, that's what I want, too.

Her stare, incredulous now, remains fixed on him. She should seem as though her whole history were alive in her, seeking voice. Her silence remains.

GUIDO

I wish we could talk someplace. Seriously, I mean. There's something about you I feel I could . . .

She suddenly claps her hands over her ears. Alarm flares in his face . . . but he has to drive, and we cut as he is glancing back and forth from her to the forward direction.

We shoot Perce and Gay sitting side by side on the tail of the truck.

GAY

That mare was a lucky break — she's good and heavy, she'll bring a lot.

A curious expression is on Perce's face — if possible, we must relate it to the intense aura previously seen on Roslyn's face; an incommunicable vision that is larger than consciousness, wider than what is seen. He turns to Gay with this look . . .

PERCE

Jay, I didn't know there'd be only six. It's kind of crazy for only six.

GAY

(We must see that he notes an oddness.
He almost laughs, but not with humor)

It sure sounds crazy, to look at you.

PERCE

I mean it, Gay, there's hardly beer money in it . . .

GAY

You jettin' to sound like Guido last night —
(He laughs now, reaches over and
pats Perce)

Now stop flappin' your wings — you gonna take off.

PERCE

(The force of the ordinary, known world
which Gay's clear eyes represent draws
him back, and now faltering again . . .)

It's just when you think of it, y'know? — it kinda . . .

GAY

Well think yourself back down, Perce — all they are is a bunch of
half-dead motheaten old mustangs, same as you've seen a hundred
times before. Don't you go nutty on me now.

The truck is slowing to a halt and Gay hops off, and with a rope in
his hand starts for a horse near which they have stopped. This
becomes . . .

MONTEAGE: They rope another horse and trip it over. The impression
of the horses' hooves being tied, the horses being tripped, the
nooses being slipped up their necks; meantime a purplish hue is
staining the light. Quick shots of Gay, all business, as he throws
a rope; of Guido jerking a rope to trip a horse; of Perce looking
at Roslyn and trying to help with the work at the same time. Until,
finally.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE THREE MEN APPROACHING THE STALLION; TRUCK IN
BACKGROUND.

This one is different. As soon as the men approach, the stallion's
rear feet fly up at them. He bares his teeth. He rears, and then
runs at them and scatters them. Roslyn, as though from a dream,
comes out of the truck and watches the horse. Perce happens to be
close to her at this moment. Gay throws a rope behind the stallion's
forefeet.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE AND ROSLYN.

ROSLYN

This the stallion?

PERCE

Ya.

ROSLYN

Those were his cares.

PERCE

Probably.

ROSLYN

The colt . . . was his.

A dreadful, nearly insane look of pain on her face stops his reply.

MEDIUM SHOT: STALLION'S FOREFEET ROPED.

The stallion has walked into the noose and Gay pulls his forefeet together and holds the rope taut. Guido throws a noose behind his hindfeet. The stallion pulls furiously on the neck-noose, even dragging the tire a few feet.

GAY

Get that tire, Perce, dammit!

With a start Perce automatically obeys, runs and sits on the tire.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN'S FACE.

She speaks in a normal tone, which Gay couldn't possibly hear now. But she is not talking to herself.

ROSLYN

Gay? Why are you killing him?

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND THE OTHERS WITH STALLION.

Gay is struggling to hold the rope taut which holds the stallion's forefeet. Now Guido pulls up on the noose around the hindfeet. Bound, the stallion stands with pinioned feet and sways but does not fall.

Suddenly Roslyn laughs. Separated from the context, she would seem to be free of pain, and with her laughter she runs on light feet to a point between Gay and the horse.

Gay sees her laughing face and even in his tension his expression relaxes happily, in surprise.

ROSLYN

Let's make it a game!

GAY

Just stand aside, honey . . .

He reaches to move her but she dances out of reach and laughs, a torture in her eyes.

ROSLYN

You won — you won, Gay!

She leaps to the rope and tries to pull it from Gay.

ROSLYN

Come on, Gay, you won — now let him go! — it's not fair!

GAY

Let go that rope!

ROSLYN

(Starting to weep, but holding onto
the rope)

Oh, Gay, darling . . .

GAY

(Yanks the rope, and she is flung back
out of his way; and angrily to Guido . . .)

Pull him!

Both he and Guido yank hard on their ropes to trip the stallion. The stallion keeps on his feet.

GAY

One, two, go!

They pull together. The stallion's forefeet are pulled back and he comes down on his knees and his nose thuds against the lakebed staining its whiteness with blood from his nostrils. He remains with his hind hooves on the ground, however, swaying but still upright, in part supported by his nose on the ground, as though he were doing an obeisance. His ribs are heaving, and little clouds of dust blow up from around his nostrils on the clay. Guido again pulls on the rear legs. The stallion remains upright, his every muscle tensed against his fall. Farce has been struggling to keep the wire from slipping under him with each pull of the stallion's neck. What was a technique has now become a personal conflict.

GAY

(Angrily; implying Guido is not
fully trying)

Trip the damn horse, Guido! Come on now — one, two, go!

Just as he says "go!" Roslyn runs at him, pounding his back with her fists.

ROSLYN

Stop it! That's not fair!

GAY

(Trying to fend her off and still hold his rope taut)

Get off me! Roslyn!

He suddenly lets one hand go and swings it around, facing her, and hits her across the neck and sends her flying back. Perce jumps up yelling:

PERCE

Hey!

Then rushes to stand between Roslyn who is raising herself off the ground, and Gay.

GAY

Get on that tire, Perce! Don't say anything to me, just get on that tire and hold this horse!

PERCE

Don't have to hit her, Gay.

GAY

You get on that tire. We'll settle this in a minute.

Perce goes back to the tire and sits, holding it down.

GUIDO

(Still holding his rope taut)

Let's take it easy, Gay.

GAY

(Exploding at Guido)

Who you tellin' to take it easy?!

He walks to Guido, keeping his rope taut, and hands it to him.

GAY

Hold onto that tight now.

Guido holds both ropes. Gay, his hands free now, faces the stallion. He walks up to the stallion approaching it from the side. He lays both hands against the stallion's neck. From behind him . . .

ROSLYN

You liar!

The power of her contempt turns them all to her in surprise.

ROSLYN

All of you!

(Clenching her fists she screams into
their faces)

Liars!

Unnerved, Gay starts toward her from the stallion. Afraid, she calls at him . . .

ROSLYN

I don't care what you do to me, you're a liar! — teaching me "how to live"! — what a laugh! — all you want is to kill everything! You don't fool me any more! — None of you! Nobody in this world will ever fool me!!

Furious, Gay steels himself and turns back to the stallion, and pushes hard on its neck. It sways on hobbled feet, sucking in the air, blood trickling from its nostrils.

ROSLYN

Man! Big man!

(To all)

Why don't you kill yourselves and be happy!

The horse topples onto its side. A great sob escapes her at the sight. Gay kneebends, and taking care to keep his hands clear of the stallion's teeth, he loosens the noose and slides it up the neck under its jaws. Now he stands and faces her. She is sobbing, looking directly at him.

ROSLYN

"Roll with it," heh?

(She points into his face)

You roll with it. You, with your "God's country," — roll with it. But find somebody else to do it with. There's a million of them!

ROSLYN (Cont.)

But you're not going to kill me; none of you, nobody is big enough to kill me! I hate you!

GAY

We've had it now, Roslyn.

ROSLYN

Oh you sure have — all I could give, you had. And a couple others before you, Gay Langland, and now you can sneer like they sneer, but I'll tell you a secret — I'll never be ashamed of myself again. Because none of you ever got near me — I am alive! — and you never got near it, Gay. I pity you — you missed it all. You're three, dear, sweet, dead men.

Desperately striving to keep her dignity in the face of Gay's clear hatred and contempt, she walks past the three of them and gets into the truck.

In silence, driven deep into himself, Gay now breaks the motionless after-moment, and going toward Guido . . .

GAY

Let's reckon it up.

(Turns)

Perce?

Perce hesitates, then joins Gay and Guido alongside the truck bed. Roslyn remains in the truck, her body visibly shaken with suppressed sobbing. The three do not look at her, but we see her in the background. Now, all their voices are very dry.

GAY

What you reckon, Guido?

In Guido's eyes the emptiness is like a lake. He is coiling a rope. After a moment . . .

GUIDO

Well, . . . that mare might be six hundred pounds.

GAY

That brown's about four hundred, I'd say.

GUIDO

Just about, ya.

GAY

(Nodding toward the stallion)

Must be five hundred on him anyway.

GUIDO

A little lighter, I'd say. Call it nineteen hundred, two thousand pounds altogether.

GAY

How's that come out now?

GUIDO

(Looks up in the air, figuring)

Well, six cents a pound — that's . . .

(He figures with silent moving lips)

In the momentary silence the stallion paws the ground. Perce looks toward it. Now from the cab we hear her sobs fully pouring out of her. Gay and Guido keep their eyes on each other against these sounds.

GUIDO

Be about hundred and ten, hundred and twenty dollars.

GAY

Okay, how you want to cut it?

GUIDO

(As though he had lost a certain interest)

Anyway you like . . . I'll take fifty for myself and the plane.

GAY

Okay. I guess I oughta have about forty for the truck and me.

That'd give you twenty-five, Perce — that all right?

(PERCE, staring at the stallion,
seems not to have heard)

Perce?

PERCE

. . . You fellas take it — I just . . . went along for the ride anyway.

Perce turns at once and mounts the truck and lies down on it; Gay is affronted by this total absence of interest, and by Perce's evident allegiance to Roslyn's mood. Perce has his hands clasped under his head, his face toward the sky, his eyes remote. Guido goes around

the front of the truck to get into the driver's seat. Roslyn is still in the cab.

GAY

I'll drive, Guido.

GUIDO

(Halts in front of the truck)

Oh. Okay.

Guido starts back to the rear of the truck. Gay comes around to get into the driver's seat. Roslyn, without a word, starts to get out. Gay reaches across the seat and grasps her arm.

GAY

Where you going?

ROSLYN

I'll sit on the back . . . I don't want to ride with you.

GAY

(He pulls her into the seat with great force)

You damn well goin' to ride with me. Close the door.

He keeps his grip on her arm. She pulls the door shut. He lets go of her arm and, shutting his door with his left hand, turns the key with his right, starts the engine, shifts gears, and she suddenly opens her door as the truck starts to move and jumps out. He slams on the brakes, leaps out, runs around the front of the truck. She is running aimlessly across the lakebed, he after her.

Perce, as though sensing Gay's violence, jumps off the truck and Guido after him.

Just as Gay catches up with her and seems about to hit her, Perce reaches them. Perce pushes Gay in the chest to part him from Roslyn. Gay starts back for Perce with his fist raised. Guido arrives and butts his whole body up against Gay whom he holds back. Gay turns on Guido who shouts crazily into his face . . .

GUIDO

She's crazy!

The emergent conviction in Guido's manner stops Gay. Roslyn quickly looks at him, and Perce. Now Guido, out of his life, turns to

Roslyn, a bitter curl on his mouth. He is almost shivering — as though this were coming out as a surprise to him too.

GUIDO

They're all crazy. You try not to believe it because you need them; she's crazy. You struggle, you plan, you build, but it's never enough, it's never a deal; because we gave them the spurs and they're going to use them. I got the marks, I know this racket. They don't even know what they're doing themselves. They're crazy.

(Directly to her, as above)

It comes from being asked too much and being told too little; I know this racket. I just forgot what I knew for a little while.

He goes to Gay and puts his arm over his shoulder, a buddy, with a warm grin.

GUIDO

Let's go, boy — forget it, before somebody gets hurt and never knows why.

Gay, not so much opposing him but, so to speak, including Guido's vision with his own, does not move along with Guido.

GAY

(To Roslyn)

Let's get aboard now.

She doesn't move at first, so Gay walks to the truck, Guido just behind him. Guido hops onto the truck bed. Gay turns at the cab door, waiting for her to get into the truck. Perce is near her, watching her every nuance. With her eyes on the ground she walks toward the truck. But when she arrives there . . . Perce behind her . . . she starts to climb onto the truck bed. Gay reaches and takes her arm to draw her into the cab. She strikes out to free her arm . . .

ROSLYN

No!

(She looks at him)

No.

GAY

(He is beyond anger. His need is overt. He grips her by both arms and moves her to the cab)

You damn well goin' to ride with me.

He forces her into the cab, swings her knees around, and slams the door. Then he walks around the front of the cab and gets in beside her. He starts the engine. Perce starts to board the truck bed, but halfway on he drops back to the ground. The truck starts moving and he runs to the cab and walking alongside . . .

PERCE

Gay? Just hold it a minute, will ya?

Gay stops the truck. Perce is on Roslyn's side of the cab, talking past her face.

PERCE

Roslyn? You won all that money in the bar — maybe Gay'll sell you the horses.

(SHE quickly looks up at him, his
feeling reaching into her)

How about that, Gay?

GAY

I wouldn't want to leave you here, Perce, get on the truck.

Gay abruptly starts the truck moving. Perce leaps aboard as the bed passes before him. Alone with Guido . . .

GUIDO

You'd better not fool with him, boy. This is none of your business.

PERCE

I never "fooled" with anybody, Pilot. And I've had all kinds of people tell me what my business was and it never did seem to do any good.

We quickly dissolve on the tension between them.

We open on a shot of Guido on top of the plane wing, holding the gas hose and peering into the tank, while Gay is pumping gas from the drum which is now on the truck bed again. In the background stand the mare and colt. Roslyn is in the cab and Perce has his head almost inside — they are evidently talking it over quietly. We have hardly opened the shot when Perce draws away from the window and walks up to Gay on the truck bed. Perce has his thumbs in his pockets; he knows he is holding a lighted match near powder.

PERCE

She says she wants to buy them, Gay.

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Gay, making to ignore him, goes on pumping the gas. Guido glances warily at Gay's stoney face.

PERCE

What's the difference she pays you or the dealer pays you?

GUIDO

(On the wing)

Okay, hold it!

Guido comes down off the wing with the hose, and goes with it to Gay, who coils it around the drum.

GUIDO

I got room for one if anybody wants to fly back.

Gay hops down off the truck, wiping his hands, his sense of humiliation mounting in his silence.

GUIDO

Why'n't you come along with me, Perce?

PERCE

I believe I'll go back the way I came.

(To Gay)

How about it, Gay? — you'll get your same money.

GAY

That's right, Perce — the same money she stuck in front of your face yesterday so you wouldn't go back in after that bull. But I seem to recall you went back in there anyway, didn't you?

A confusion shows in Perce's face.

PERCE

I . . . I guess maybe that didn't have any more sense than this does, Gay . . . seein' I nearly got myself killed, for nothin'.

GAY

Oh, not for nothin', Perce — you were a man then . . .

(The insult registers on Perce's face)

and that's the only way a real man goes. — For nothin', for what they just don't have the numbers to count. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars a head for these particular animals. Nobody's

the M...
Come on, Guido, I'll
past Roslyn in the cab and goes to the plane.
I think you'd better come with me.

GUIDO
(Quietly, with fear for the next moments)

ROSLYN
(Between pity and despair)
Who are you? Do you know?

Guido, as though stabbed, walks on, gets into the cockpit. Gay is already gripping the propellor.
We cut to Perce who comes to the cab and sticks his head in. There is a holding-of-breath quality in him now.
PERCE
You want me to, I'll cut 'em loose.

She looks past him and we shoot the mare and the colt beyond. The colt has faded itself underneath the mare whose long tail is blowing in the breeze. The light is falling fast.
We shoot her face, absorbed in the sight of the animals.
ROSLYN
Look -- already they're so peaceful! How easy everything agrees to die. . . I guess it's no more stupid than everything else I ever saw.

Off-screen we hear the plane engine turning over, and it sputters out.
PERCE
is what you want, I'll do it.
(He quickly turns her face to him)
ever saw the sense in this anyway, but I didn't have nerve enough to say so.

ROSLYN

(Hopelessly)

No, don't, don't fight about it. I never knew whether or not to pass something by . . . whereas I always stopped, y'know; and it always ends like this, where I'm the one they hate, and I'm the one they laugh at. They must be right, Perce — like you said yourself — there's just nothing to anything.

(She looks past him at the mare and colt)

. . . How peaceful they are! — maybe even dying isn't real.

The plane engine suddenly roars up.

They turn and see Gay coming toward the truck. The plane is moving away across the lakebed, taking off. Gay is coming in at a stride, his mind made up. Perce comes around to the front of the truck to intercept him.

PERCE

Gay? I . . .

Gay walks right past him, opens the cab door. Perce comes at a quickened pace around to the other door and opens it as the engine starts and the gears grind angrily. Now Gay spits out his words.

GAY

I'm comin' back in the dealer's truck to pick up these animals — you want to help me you get your share. Get on the back.

Perce suddenly reaches in and pulls out the ignition key, which stops the engine, but Gay knocks it out of his hand and holds it. Roslyn sits terrified between them.

PERCE

She's offerin' you your money. You don't take it, it's nothin' but butcherin' horses. And if that's a man, then I don't want to be one.

GAY

(He puts the key into the lock,
starts the engine)

What she's lookin' to buy ain't horses, and it ain't for sale and never will be.

(To Roslyn directly, with a hurt grin)

I'm gonna teach you that . . . startin' right now.

He suddenly, desperately, pulls her to him and kisses her. Now Perce pulls at his hand, and when he lets her go she starts to weep in fright.

GAY

Boy, hop on back there and don't give me any more troubles, 'cause I ain't old enough to take it.

Gay reaches across and grips the door handle to close it. Surprisingly, Perce steps away, Gay slams the door. But Perce turns and starts at a trot toward the mare.

GAY

Where you goin'?

Roslyn looks off toward Perce, astonished, frightened.

CLOSE SHOT: GAY'S FACE.

A sudden realization strikes him. Horror and anger show.

GAY

Perce!

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND ROSLYN AND TRUCK.

Gay comes at a half-trot around the front of the truck. He pauses not far from Roslyn, who now turns to look at his angering and astounded face. He starts off at run.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE.

He is now breaking into a run. He glances behind now and whatever there was of a dazed expression is gone; he shows determination now and even anger. As he runs he reaches into his pocket and draws out a clasp pocket knife and opens the biggest blade.

MEDIUM SHOT: ROSLYN RUNNING.

She has gotten out and is just started away from the truck to follow them, terrified.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY RUNNING.

GAY

Perce, you can't do that!

MEDIUM SHOT: MARE AND COLT AND PERCE.

Perce reaches the tire and falls on it and saws at the rope. In the background, coming up fast, Gay is running and yelling. The mare is restively dancing about, the colt scrambling to its feet.

CLOSE SHOT: KNIFE AND ROPE.

The rope is nearly cut.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND PERCE.

Gay, on the run, leaps onto Perce's back and pulls at his arm, to free the rope from it . . . and the rope flies out, cut. Roslyn reaches them and starts to try to pull Gay off Perce. Gay sees the mare starting to trot away. He jumps up and runs toward it, trying to grab the rope which is trailing behind from her neck. The colt may interfere with his running. He lunges now for the rope and falls, and gets up and runs on after the mare which, now that the colt is beside her, picks up speed.

Perce grabs Roslyn's hand and starts her running with him back toward the truck. He lets go of her and runs at his top speed, she following behind. She turns as she runs and sees . . .

LONG SHOT: GAY AND MARE AND COLT.

Gay is slowing to a halt as the mare and the colt gallop away. He turns and . . .

CLOSE SHOT: GAY'S FACE.

Fury bursts into his panting face at what he sees . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: TRUCK WITH ROSLYN GETTING IN.

The truck is already starting to move. Roslyn jumps in, as frightened of being left with Gay as of joining Perce.

CLOSE SHOT: CAB INTERIOR. PERCE AND ROSLYN.

He is speeding the truck away. He switches on the headlights; it is dusk. With growing pity and terror she looks out the window and sees . . .

MEDIUM LONG SHOT: GAY ON LAKESIDE.

He is roaring at them as they pass, waving his fists and starting to run after the truck.

CLOSE SHOT: ROSLYN'S FACE.

A wave of guilt passes onto her face. In her uncertainty she turns to Perce. He is like one inspired by rebellion, a wild determination on his face. Glancing at her he reaches over and draws her closer to him — a gesture like Gay's earlier.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE AND ROSLYN, CAB INTERIOR.

He suddenly swerves the wheel, jamming on the brakes. She looks out ahead and sees . . .

MEDIUM SHOT: MARE AND COLT CROSSING TRUCK.

He has swerved to avoid the mare and colt. They are running in a madness now, hearing the truck. The mare's tail flies straight out as she rapidly gallops away at an angle from the truck, the colt right behind her.

MEDIUM SHOT: PERCE AND ROSLYN.

She turns from watching the disappearing mare and colt, and cries out . . .

ROSLYN

Oh, Perce! I don't know!

He glances at her surprised, perplexed, drives on.

MEDIUM SHOT: STALLION.

The stallion is watching what we can hear — the oncoming sound of the truck. He lowers his head. The truck enters the shot, stops short. Perce jumps out, runs to the tire. The stallion rears. Perce sits on the tire to hold it still as he saws at the rope. Roslyn runs out of the cab, glancing guiltily toward the camera for a sign of Gay. Suddenly the rope parts. The stallion, free, kicks up his rear legs and starts to run them. Perce pulls her out of the way and yells wordlessly to scare off the stallion. Before the reality of the freed stallion Roslyn feels her first conviction.

ROSLYN

(In an ecstasy and terror)

Go! Go home! Go home!

Perce runs toward the stallion which turns and gallops away. Breathless, they watch him for a moment, then run to the truck. Roslyn gets into the cab. Perce halts for a moment, seeing . . .

LONG SHOT: TWO HORSES.

They are distant, but clearly seen. They are still tied to tires. We hear the sound of the truck taking off, the whine of the transmission.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT: DISTANT HEADLIGHTS. GAY IN FOREGROUND.

He is running tiredly toward the headlights which are impossibly distant but have come to a halt out there.

CLOSE SHOT: GAY'S FACE.

He is insane with fury and frustration. His breath is wheezing out of his lungs like the horses' before. Now he turns his head at a sound and halts. It is nearly dark. The moon is shining. We now hear galloping. It stops quickly. Gay listens to the silence. A horse is out there, he knows, but where? Now a hoof beat is heard, a trotting, now a galloping come in fast.

MEDIUM SHOT: GAY AND STALLION.

He sees the stallion coming out of the darkness, gets himself set -- but he is exhausted and unsteady. The stallion is running directly toward him. Gay sidesteps, the stallion passes him, and he heels into the clay. The stallion drags him but slows, then turns. Gay keeps the rope taut, and dodges and dances to keep himself always in front of the animal which is now facing him, rearing in fury. Gay is fighting to hold him as though to let him go were to lose his very existence. He is laughing in exhaustion. Now the horse charges at him, flailing its forefeet close to his head, and he dodges, and again the charge. The hoofs fly and Gay goes down on his face, sprawled on the clay lakebed. The horse gallops away. Gay does not move.

CLOSE SHOT: GAY'S FACE.

He is breathing into the clay. Blood is flowing out of his nose. Little spouts of white dust puff up under the breath spurting from his nostrils. His eyes are shut; the skin on one upturned palm is rubbed raw and bloody by the rope.

We hold on him. The sound of the truck is heard. It increases. Gay's form is illuminated by the headlights which quickly become bright, and the sound of the truck stopping, its brakes squealing, is heard.

Roslyn comes out of the truck and quickly goes to him. She bends over him, turns him on his back as Perce arrives beside her. She sees his face and tears come to her eyes. She sweeps his head into her arms, crying . . .

ROSLYN

Gay! Oh, Gay!

Now she looks at his face, frantically tries to wipe it clean of dirt and blood . . . and he opens his eyes. She is weeping, watching for the meaning of his look as gradually his eyes see and the daze moves aside. And he sees her. Expression flows into his face, the eyes take life. And she sees the fathomless hurt, the depth of despair looking at her.

We shoot Perce from the ground level. He turns his face away.

She is sobbing, and now she strives to raise Gay. Perce bends to him and starts to lift him to his feet, but Gay brushes him away and Roslyn, too, with the same gesture, and falls back helplessly on the earth. Now he turns on his side, raises up on his elbow, then pitches forward, and rests for a moment on his hands and knees, his head hanging between his shoulders. She is sobbing over him, not daring to speak.

With a gigantic effort, Gay stands. Both of them want to help him, for he sways dangerously, but they dare not. He faces around to the truck and walks toward it. They follow like a cortege in the moonlight, she weeping into her hands, Perce face to face with an odd disaster he cannot grasp excepting that something very large has been knocked askew.

Gay arrives at the open door of the truck, raises the tonnage of his body and gets himself onto the edge of the seat. They come up near the door and halt. The only sound in the world is their winded breathing and Roslyn's sobs. Gay is facing out of the truck for he cannot yet turn himself in, and is staring out between the two of them, sucking air.

Roslyn raises her eyes to him. The pity and guilt on her face strike Perce, and he suddenly feels like an intruder. She dares now to slowly reach out, and when Gay does not react, she gently lays her hand on his wrist. He still makes no move to dismiss her, and she closes her grip on his arm. Suddenly she falls to her knees before him and kisses his hand many times.

ROSALYN

Oh, Gay. Gay! I swear . . . I never meant to harm you!

Slowly he lowers his eyes to her, a look as old as his life.

GAY

Should've listened to me. Kept tryin' to tell you.

(Like a farewell)

Tryin' and tryin'.

ROSALYN

Tell me. Tell me! Teach me! I don't know anything!

Perce moves away into the darkness.

GAY

Can't nothin' live, unless somethin' dies.

ROSALYN

(As much to reject the guilt as to
deny his disaster)

Why? Don't say that, Gay!

GAY

I ain't sayin' it. That's the way it's made.

ROSALYN

(With a cry)

I didn't kill you, Gay! You told me yourself it was finished here.
I didn't clean them out, you did. You couldn't have lived on them
any more . . . even if you'd never seen me!

We see that his eyes concede, however unwillingly, and the bitterness
in them alters a little as he must look out at what he knows.

ROSALYN

What were you going to do? Die when there were no more left to
take?

(She lovingly touches his face)

Oh, Gay — I know how you loved it here. To know you always had
them, waiting to feed you, keeping you free, how you are — and
still be a friend to everything? There must be. I see it. I
believe it. I know it . . . Don't lose me, Gay!

He pulls her to him, but he has not risen enough within to kiss her; he buries his face in her neck, his loss and his gain forcing a kind of moan from him. She separates enough to hold his face and kiss his lips, and looking at him . . .

ROSLYN

How brave you are! I know!

Now, as though he once again felt his dignity, and more — a thankful throwing-in of his lot with her, he kisses her. They separate, and there is a great wonder in his eyes. She lets him gently back into the seat, and pulls his legs up into the truck. With his head thrown back he never takes his eyes off her, seeing her like a new thing. She closes the door and goes alongside the truck to come around the other side.

She comes on Perce, seeing him standing with his back to her a few yards beyond the headlight beams. She hesitates for an instant, then goes up behind him.

ROSLYN

Perce?

He turns to her. His eyes are filled with tears. We sense she must steel herself a little against a flood of pity for him.

ROSLYN

Would you drive us home?

He is hurt, and his hurt holds him an instant. But he walks ahead of her and holds the door open for her to enter, and stands there, waiting, out of his native gentility, for her to enter.

ROSLYN

Thank you, Perce.

She gets in. He gets in beside her and starts the engine. Gay leans forward to see Perce past Roslyn.

GAY

We gotta pick up the dog.

PERCE

(Without turning to him)

Okay.

He lets in the clutch and the truck moves along.

GAY

Perce?

PERCE

Ya?

GAY

It's a long way before we hit the highway. You see that great big star, off on the left there?

PERCE

Yeah.

GAY

Just stay on that. It'll take us right home.

Perce turns the wheel, staring ahead at the star. Gay rests back in the seat, and leans his head on Roslyn's shoulder. She takes up his hand and holds it.

We shoot the three of them watching that star, their heads turned with the turning of the car until they are all facing straight ahead in its path.

We shoot the star through the windshield, and now, never losing it, we move through the windshield. The truck comes into the shot, the headlight beams going away into the darkness, moving off out of sight with the sound of the engine as the camera imperceptibly tilts up until it is filled entirely with stars and absolute silence.

THE END