

Copy
7-26-86

FOUR-BITS

(or "The Rail")

by

Edward de Grazia

CHARACTERS:

COWBOY

INDIAN

MISS AMERICA 195__

FIREMAN

VOICE OF AL

FOUR BITS

53-
54

SCENE: A fence-rail in the West. On it sit: COWBOY, preferably played by a Negro man; and INDIAN, preferably played by a white girl with a husky voice.

COWBOY: This country goin' to da dawgs. No place no where for rugged-type indivigantists.

INDIAN: No place no how for injuns.

COWBOY: I had me ten centimes, I'd expatriate to Mexico.

INDIAN: They lak injuns up there?

COWBOY: It not up there. It down there. (Pause) They lak injuns much as anyone lak injuns. (Pause) Not too much.

INDIAN: Remind me 'gain what makes us lak indivigantists. You know. Them words.

COWBOY: We hate wages. (Pause) Anythin's better'n wages.

INDIAN: Mnn. My head spins the way you say it. It lak our special slogan, ain' it?

COWBOY: It our life. We awemost throw-up when we think too much of wages (gags) an' what wages (gags) done to this country.

INDIAN: This country aweright. It them wages' bad medicine. They wuss than evil spirits. (Pause) Wuss them communixs.

COWBOY: I had a hoss I wouldn' e'en want ten centimes. I'd expatriate without ten centimes.

INDIAN: Remind me again what happened our hoss!

(Pause)

COWBOY: We neva had no hoss. We ain't entitled no hoss. It hard to get a hoss 'cept you 'cept wages (gags). Hafta steal a hoss to get one without wages (gags).

(Pause)

INDIAN: You promised you wouldn' eva steal nothing'. Not e'en a hoss. (Pause) I'd feel bad you went an' stole somethin'. E'en a hoss.

COWBOY: I gunna do somethin'. I gunna go sunstruck jus' standin' here ...

INDIAN: We sittin' Hooty. We both sittin'.

LINE MISSING →

COWBOY

INDIAN: ... doin' nothin'. An' without no hoss. (Pause) I had me a hoss, I wouldn' ha' ta go to Mexico 'cause I'd know I could if I wanted. (Pause) Wouldn' be so bad jus' standin' here doin' nuthin' and goin' sunstruck. With a hoss. (Pause) You understand? It a little difficult if you ain' gotta strong brain. It called a paradundrum. Somethin' injuns don' probably unnerstan' so well.

INDIAN: Aw, I unner ...

COWBOY: You injuns unnerpriv'leged too. Only you too unnerpriv'leged to e'en know how unnerpriv'leged you are. Tha's another paradundrum tha's probably difficult to unnerstan'. You lucky you got someun lak me 'roun' ta point out the ways you don' unnerstan' and is unnerpriv'leged and (Pause) this country goin' to de dawgs. Lak (gags) wages! (gags)

INDIAN: I don' need no hoss. I only need a fren'. I wun't care too much this country went to de dawgs. We dawgs. We prob'ly gonna own this country when it finally gone to de dawgs. (Pause) We good dawgs as any.

54 -
55

COWBOY: (snorts) Haw! You stoopid, man. You really ignorant. It comes from bein' so unnerpriv'leged lak I said. Wushipin' the moon an' things you don' unnerstan'. You still half a savage. How long ago it was ~~you~~ you quit wushipin' the moon? (Pause) Huh? (Pause) Say, you ain' still goin' 'roun wushipin' the moon? (Pause) You off that paganistic stuff, ain' you?

INDIAN: (averting eyes) Aw, shore I is, Hooty. I don' hardly wuship nuthin' no more.

COWBOY: Good! (Pause) That very good. Nothin' aroun' wuth wushipin' anymore. Ev'ryone goin' roun' wushipin' wages. (gags)

INDIAN: You shouldn' talk so much about it. It makes you sick.

COWBOY: (Blackly) Wages! Wages! Wages! Wages! Wages! (turns to vomit behind rail)

INDIAN: That bad medicine. That da fourth time you throwed up to-day. You better get somethin' ta stick ta yore belly 'fore you talks o wages (COWBOY gags) anymore.

COWBOY: You said a mouthful. (Pause) When our Welcorn Waggon comin' 'long?

INDIAN: (looking at sky) When de Great Chief climbed all the way ta his Throne. Maybe half hour. Maybe.

COWBOY: Hoo! I gettin' hot.

INDIAN: Whyn't you take your bandaner off.

COWBOY: You nuts? You think I'm nuts? You know us cowboys gotta wear bandaners. How anyone gonna tell I a indivigilantist I don' wear my bandaner?

INDIAN: I, don' wear no bandaner.

COWBOY: Aw, you ain' 'xactly no indivigilantist yet, Panto. You still a li'l paganistic. Tellin' time by when the Great Chief done climbed to his Throne. Makin' faces at the moon when you figger it oughta rain. Besides you still an injun. It hard for injuns to get to be full-blooded indivigilantists lak me.

INDIAN: I don' 'cept wages lak you.

COWBOY: (gags) You don' have the same problems 'bout wages. (gags) You used to a reservation-type existence. Wages (gags) ain' really non o yore affair. (Pause) 'Sides, you wun't look good with a bandaner.

INDIAN: Why wun't I?

COWBOY: 'Cause you don' wear no sh..rt.

INDIAN: I could wear a shirt. You could gimme you shirt.

COWBOY: Aw, you looks better without no shirt.

INDIAN: It make me feel unnerpriv'leged not havin' no bandaner lak you.

COWBOY: Aw, you got nice brown skin without no hair. You look good the way you are.

INDIAN: That why I shun't ha' no bandaner?

COWBOY: Shore. That all. It not a sign o unnerpriviligism, ha' in' no bandaner. It a sign o non-indivigilantism 'cept only with injuns. With injuns it *not* a sign o non-indivigilantism. Injuns is diff'runt.

INDIAN: We equal, ain' we?

(Pause)

COWBOY: Equal with what?

INDIAN: Equal with non-injuns.

(Pause)

COWBOY: Equal with cowboys?

INDIAN: (timidly) Ain' we?

(Pause)

COWBOY: (evasively) You diff'runt?

INDIAN: That jus' as good? Bein' diff'runt?

COWBOY: Sho' it jus' as good. You wanna be a indivigilantist most o all, don' you? Indivigilantists gotta be diff'runt, one from another, 'n plen' y o things.

INDIAN: Lak what? What things? Tell me some, Hooty.

COWBOY: (uneasily) I aweready tole you some. The bandaner. That aweready one thing.

INDIAN: I wisht it could be other things. (Pause) I lak bandaners. They makes you seem so . . .

COWBOY: Ne'er mind! You shun't wear no bandaner. You look good without' no bandaner. You feel good without no bandaner. (lays arm across INDIAN's shoulders) You a injun. Injuns shun't wear no bandaners nohow.

INDIAN: You make my head spin.

COWBOY: How come? (Pause) I didn' say it.

INDIAN: You didn't say what?

COWBOY: Them words. You know: We hates (gags) wages.

INDIAN: I di'nt mean wages. (COWBOY gags) I meant puttin' your arm aroun' my shoulders lak your doin'.

COWBOY: (withdrawing arm in embarrassment) Sometimes I forget.

INDIAN: What you forget, sometime?

COWBOY: I ain' got no hoss.

INDIAN: I know.

(Pause) (their hoss. Cowboys need a hoss to aweways put their arm aroun'.)

COWBOY: Cowboys aweways put their arm aroun' / It help 'em stand up when they feelin' tired.

upper case

INDIAN: Someday you gonna have a hoss, Hooty.

(Pause)

COWBOY: Not less'n I steals one. Or 'cepts (gags) wages.

(Pause)

INDIAN: I saw some wile hosses in a field one day.

COWBOY: You did?

INDIAN: Sure.

COWBOY: Was they alone?

INDIAN: Jus' hosses, was all.

COWBOY: In a field?

INDIAN: Ummmm.

COWBOY: All alone?

INDIAN: Umm.

(Pause)

COWBOY: They prob'ly had wages (gags) attached.

INDIAN: Aw, how could wile hosses ha' wages (COWBOY gags) attached. Ain' nothin' for them t'attach to on no wile hoss.

COWBOY: They was wile?

INDIAN: Shore.

(Pause)

COWBOY: It could be. Prob'bly was. (Pause) Wages (gags) can attach to anythin'. E'en wile hosses. I saw some, one day, attached to a tree.

INDIAN: A live tree?

COWBOY: Sho. They was stickin' up off a branch of a live sycamore tree.

INDIAN: Was anyone lookin'?

COWBOY: I tole you. They was (gags) wages. Wages (gags) are lak prison. I w'un't touch no wages (gags) with a ten foot pole cat.

INDIAN: Don't seem lak they could hurt you jus' stickin' down from a tree.

COWBOY: They was stickin' up. (Pause) You jus' provin' your ignorance with me. Bad things ain' good 'cause you went an' foun' 'em in a good place 'stead a bad place.

INDIAN: Why that?

COWBOY: Aw, Panto. It simple. It lak what happened t'ole Eve. She ate a purty apple jus' stickin' up offa tree. (Pause) When no one was lookin'. (Pause) She got poisoned. (Pause) Apples're lak (gags) wages.

INDIAN: It musta bin a bad apple. I eats apples an' I don' get poisoned.

COWBOY: You eat 'em offa tree?

INDIAN: Naw, jus' the ones the Welcorn Waggon give out.

57-
58

COWBOY: Me. I was lookin'. I looks an' looked. (Pause) I fget it was another paradundus.

INDIAN: Whyn't you grab 'em an' run

(Tison)

58-
60

COWBOY: That diff'runt. Eve's apple war stickin' up a tree. She thought it war free. (Pause) But it war a evil fruit. (Pause) Say, how come you didn't study the Bible lak you should?

INDIAN: What happened ta her, Hooty? She get a stomach ache? She throw-up bad?

COWBOY: Naw. She went an' tempted ole Adam. Tha's what. And de trouble all began. Next thing you know, ole Adam he was wukin' for (gags) wages. That practic'ly the story o de world, right there.

INDIAN: How, Hooty? How that all happen?

COWBOY: Say, whasamatta with you? Di'n't they teach you no religion in that reservation school?

(d'n't)

INDIAN: Aw, I di'n't listen too close, Hooty. My spirit was roamin' the prairies when de teacher was teachin' religion. (Pause) Hist'ry too. (Pause) I guess I laked roamin' the prairie and wood better'n learnin' religion and history.

COWBOY: You a lazy injun, awright. It's in yore blood.

INDIAN: I learned how to cook and sew and make moccasins good, Hooty. You know that, Hooty.

COWBOY: You cook awright.

INDIAN: I sewed your pants up good other day. You remember.

COWBOY: You sew up awright too.

INDIAN: If you'd jus' take off your boots, I could try one o . . .

COWBOY: No, you don't!

INDIAN: I made you another pair, Hooty. They bigger than the first pair an' smaller than the second pair. One of em's bound to fit you puffet, Hooty. They pretty, Hooty.

COWBOY: I tole you afore, You ain' puttin' none o them on ole Hooty's feet. You injuns is a wily breed. Us cowboys gotta watch you injuns allatime.

INDIAN: You wu'n't hafta give up your boots, Hooty. We could jus' put 'em aside, Jus' for a li'l while. (Pause) They purty, Hooty. They got blue beads an' li'l silver bullets attached to the sides.

COWBOY: Don' tell me! I don' wanna hear about 'em. Moccasins' fur injuns. Cowboys has boots.

INDIAN: (climbing down from rail) Please, Hooty! Jus' try 'em on. I wanna see how they fit. I'm worryin' which pair gonna fit you. I made 'em jus' lak they taught me in school. I was top moccasin-maker in school. I won a prize. (he is down by COWBOY's feet trying to slip off one boot) I made thirty-nine pair. I got A-plus on ev'ry pair. But these is even finer, Hooty. These is the best moccasins I ever made. I was inspired, Hooty. . . (he has succeeded in slipping off one boot and slipping a moccasin in its place) There! She look fine! She purty as a picture. Purtier. Gimme t'other one! Gonna get off your other boot, old Hooty, an' you gonna be lak a new . . . (COWBOY kicks INDIAN rolling in the dust with the other, still-booted foot)

COWBOY: Naw! That's nuff. Tha's too much! (*looking at his moccassined foot*) Look how that look! It look disgustin'. It make me look lak I oney half a cowboy. It feel awful, too. It makes me feel lak I oney half a cowboy. It makes me feel haf hard 'n haf soft! Take it off, Panto! Take it off 'fore it attaches to me. Lak you know (*gags*) wages!

60-
61

INDIAN: (*from the dust*) It look lovely. How it feel, Hooty? It feel too tight? Or too loose? To narrow? Too wide? It don' pinch? Or bulge? It don' sag? Do it slide?

COWBOY: Take it off. It killin' me!

INDIAN: (*hugging the moccassined foot to his cheek*) Keep it on! It makes me feel warm inside. It make my head spin 'roun' lak a top.

COWBOY: Off! Dang it! Off, I say! (*he shakes his foot loose from INDIAN's grip and jerking it, kicks the moccasin high into the air*) What a relief! (*wiggles his bare toes joyfully*)

INDIAN: (*having scampered around under and caught the moccasin before it hit the dust, is now examining it closely*) It war too loose. (*Pause*) It shu'n't ha' come off so easy . . .

COWBOY: Put my boot back on, Panto. I feels half undressed.

INDIAN: (*slipping boot back on*) Boots is so hard. Moccasins' so sof'.

COWBOY: I lak 'em hard. (*Pause*) 'Cause I hard mysel'. Us indigilantists is all hard. We should keep our boots on. Otherwise we get sof'.

INDIAN: You hard on me, sometimes, Hooty.

COWBOY: I not only hard right now, I hungry too. An' thirsty. This sun hot. It tryin' to make me feel sof. Lak I wanna melt. (*looking at INDIAN*) I need a hoss to gimme somethin' to put my arm aroun'. So I won't fall if I ever melt. I goin' to Mexico I don' get me a hoss pretty soon. (*Pause*) Soon's I get those ten centimes, I mentioned to you before.

INDIAN: Aw, you wun't really go up there. You wun't, Hooty, would you? (*Pause*) Aw, I know you wun't.

COWBOY: It down. It not up. (*Pause*) I should ha' a hoss to go down there.

INDIAN: You cain't get a hoss 'less you 'cepts wages (*COWBOY gags*) or stole yousel' a hoss. You ain' fit to 'cep' wages (*COWBOY gags*) and I wun't respect you, you stole a hoss.

COWBOY: If I stole wages (*gags*) an' bought a hoss . . . I wonder would that be the same?

INDIAN: Don' think o it no more, Hooty. You get sick thinkin' o it too much.

COWBOY: That might be a solution to my paradundrum.

INDIAN: Think o somethin' else.

(*Pause*)

COWBOY: They nothin' else to think about.

INDIAN: Shore they is. Think about all the free things in life: fresh water in the brook. Little fishes on your hook. Stars shinin' in the sky. Moonlight bathin' in yore eye. Birds warblin' in the air. Sof' wind rufflin' your hair.

COWBOY: You a ignorant savage. That why you talk in silly poems lak that. I ha' to talk straight 'n think of important things. Complicated things. Civilized things.

61-
63

INDIAN: Lak what, Hooty?

COWBOY: Lak what this country'd come to if oney it warn't goin' to de dawgs. (Pause) On account o . . . them! (gags)

INDIAN: You make yourself sick, thinkin' o them allatime.

COWBOY: (with increasing fervor) I goin' nuts, not bein' able to do nuthin', never. You don' 'cep' wages (gags) there nuthin' lef to do in this here country. That another reason I need to go to Mexico. I had a hoss I wun't need nuthin' else to do. I could jus' ride my hoss aroun' and think o all the ways how to throw 'em over (gags). I'd jus' ride down to Mexico and plot a revulsion. I could round up all them other expatriates what can't stand (gags) wages, in a common revulsion 'gainst them (gags) and this here country what goin' ta da dogs. They jus' waitin' fur someone lak me to come down an' round 'em up an' go an' throw 'em over. Wham! Blam! (Pause) Shazzam? (Pause) We wun't be finished 'til all the wage-makers in de land dead unnergroun'! Till all the wage-takers in de land dead unnergroun'! 'Cause the wage-takers is wuss than the wage-makers! Wusn't someone to take 'em wun't be no one to make 'em!

INDIAN: (nervously) I wisht somethin' would happen. I wisht our Welcorn Waggon would come along. I wisht . . . it would rain. (looks up at sky, then slyly at COWBOY)

COWBOY: (more and more agitatedly) I'd let you help me, Panto. I'd make you my first lieutenant. I'd give you charge o all the unnerpriv'leged, half-breed type indigilantists. We'd advance on 'em together. Side by side. (Pause) Maybe even you in front and me behind. As a symbol of our diff'runt brands of indigilantism. (INDIAN is making faces toward the sky and moving his throat as though straining to talk, unseen by COWBOY) We'll overthrow the ~~wagon~~ ^{wage}-makers and you'll overthrow the wagetakers. (Pause) We'll have to go in trainin' for the revulsion. Sneaky like. So none of 'em knows what's up. We'll hafta practice our old arts an' crafts. I'll brush up on pistol-shootin' and ropin' and you'll take a refresher course on tomahawkin' and scalpin' and burnin' at the stake. Together, we'll advance on 'em. From unnergroun' like snakes. (he has thrown his arm across INDIAN's shoulders, but INDIAN watching sky anxiously, slips from the embrace and edges slowly away from where COWBOY sits)

INDIAN: Shore, Hooty. Shore! (several feet away, and looking up)

COWBOY: (more and more wildly) . . . I'll shoot 'em an' rope 'em an' you'll tomahawk an' scalp 'em an' burn 'em at the stake. Jus' like the ole days when this country warn't goin' to be dawgs. We'll be fightin' together, side by side, you in front and me behind, and we'll be invincible. I'll be on my hoss and you on yore pony. The dust will get caked wi' sweat! The foam will fly from their lips! The blood will spout like a hunnert fountains! The hoofs will beat in their heads! Our legions will spread like wile-fire! Wages will go up in smoke . . . (there is a brief deluge of water from the sky which drenches COWBOY but doesn't touch INDIAN who is now a few paces removed) . . . (there is a long pause while COWBOY recovers from the shock)

INDIAN: Oh. It rainin'!

COWBOY: What the hell . . . ?

INDIAN: It jus' a short rain.

COWBOY: What in hell . . . ?

INDIAN: It shopped aweready.

COWBOY: (*looking at sky*) There isn't even a cloud. What the hell . . . ?

INDIAN: They was a little cloud a minute ago. It musta broke up.
(*climbs back on rail*)

COWBOY: I'm hungry. (*Pause*) I ain' hot or thirsty no more. But I still hungry. (*Pause*) When you think our Welcorn Waggon comin', Panto? It shoulda been here afore now, shouldn't it?

INDIAN: It comin'. The Great Chief ^{climbed} all the way to his Throne yet.

COWBOY: I tired. (*Pause*) I a little wet, too. I feel water in my boots.
(*Pause*) I awemost cold. (*Pause*) I wonder I gonna die

INDIAN: They a puff o dust comin' up de road.

COWBOY: It our Welcorn Waggon. Haw! That Great Chief o yourn cain't tell time no more.

INDIAN: It too li'l a puff o dust for the Welcorn Waggon. It the right size for a pussin. It prob'ly jus' a pussin. Lak that stranger came by the otha time. (*Pause*) Maybe a year ago.

COWBOY: Maybe he a little Welcorn Waggon. Maybe he a pussin Welcorn Waggon. Maybe the Waggon wheels broke and he comin' withou' no . . .

INDIAN: It a stranger aweright. (*Pause*) It the wuss kind of stranger. It a . . . gurl!

M.A.: (*enters slowly from right wing, without seeing COWBOY or INDIAN; She wears the classic white bathing suit and a diagonal red banner reading 195. She is talking to herself:*) Yes, I wanted to marry . . . Harry! Or any well-respected Tom and Dick. But not to lick a candy stick. But to have him bury. It. Down. Where the bluetail hies. And build me a magnolia cabin. And bring me home the bacon. And take me to the movie house. And give me children, one, two, three! Oh! (*seeing COWBOY and INDIAN*)

COWBOY: Holy hosses! Loogadat!

INDIAN: (*climbing down and taking position firmly between M.A. and COWBOY*) Who you, stranger? We don' take to strangers foolin' roun' our parts. It better you keep yourself' movin' along. . . .

63
64

(hant)
A

← | →

64-
65

COWBOY: (*trying to get a better view of M.A.*) Aw. . . .

M.A.: Ooooooh. Hi, Mr. Indiana. I was Miss Oklyhomy. Am I foolin' roun' your private parts? They looked like public parts to me. Course I could be wrong. Anyway, Mr. Indiana, I won't stay long. I'm a li'l hungry an' thirsty. But I can see you don't have any food or drink. I'm a little tired too. My tootsies is all sore. If you didn't mind, I might just rest my tootsies a while, here. . . .

INDIAN: Your tootsies so sore, why you wear those hard skinny shoes: They enough to make anyone's tootsies sore. E'en a injun's tootsies get sore he savage enough to wear hard skinny shoes lak you.

M.A.: Oh, Mr. Indiana. I have to wear these tall sleek shoes. They make me seem taller and more adorable. They accentuate my calf and thigh muscles. I wouldn't look like Miss America Nineteen-Fifty-Something or other if I wore anything else. I wouldn't feel like Miss America Nineteen-Fifty-Something or other if I wore anything else.

COWBOY: (*straining to view her around INDIAN*) I know what you mean, Miss. . . . Miss. . . .

M.A.: (*peering around INDIAN*) Miss America Nineteen-Fifty-Something, Mr. Cowboy.

COWBOY: (*as before*) Howdy and pleased ter meetcha, Miss America Nineteen-Fifty- . . . uh . . .

INDIAN: They mus' twist an' deform your feet somethin' awful. I wun't lak to look on yore feet. I bet they skinny and warped and ogly.

M.A.: (*as before*) I can't remember anymore what year it was Mr. Cowboy. The chief judge went and blurred the number so I couldn't read it thereafter, either. (*Pause*) He had very sweaty hands, Mr. Cowboy.

65-67

COWBOY: (as before) I can imagine, Miss America Nineteen-Fifty- . . . uh . . . say, you wouldn't mind, we just called you Miss America for short. I know you ain't really Miss America but it would be aweright if we called you that for short, wouldn't it?

M.A.: (as before) Oh yes, Mr. Cowboy. I'm sure that would be all right. In fact. . .

INDIAN: (chin to chin with M.A.) You had youself' enuf rest, stranger? There nothin' to eat or drink around our parts, so it better you move on to someone else's parts. (Pause) It maybe gonna rain here too, purty soon. You wun't want to get caught in no wet deluge. You gotten youself' so hot and sticky comin' 'roun' our parts, if it rained on you all of a sudden, you'd catch pneumonia or wuss an' even die. We'd hafta bury you back there on the lonesome prairie unnergroun' where I seen wile hosses sometimes come an' paw aroun'. An' wile hosses don' take friendly to white women strangers with hardly no clothes on an' you can't hardly be shore what they might do when they pawed up the groun' a little and saw you layin' thee without hardly no clothes on and that funny yellin' hair.

M.A.: (backing off) Mister Indiana! You're frightening me!

COWBOY: Aw, Panto. Why you wanta go an' scare her lak that? She just a li'l gurl don't know no better hardly e'en than a ignorant savage lak you. You gotta be more considerate o someone lak here. You gotta offer a chair and ask her if'n sh'd lak to take off those tight sexy shoes.

INDIAN: Her feet ogly unnerneath. (Pause) What chair?

M.A.: Thank you, Mr. Cowboy. I won't mind if I do. Actually I've walked a goodly way and my tootsies are rather sore. I wonder if you . . . well . . . tee hee . . . would you mind being such a gentleman as to help me take off my shoes. They're awfully tight and I feel as though I could hardly bend over to reach . . .

COWBOY: Shore, Ma'am I'd be delighted. It'd be a pleasure. I laks to take off my own shoes once'n a while. (Pause) 'Course I wear boots. Which is diff'runt. Ha' you noticed by boots? They a little dusty but they hard. Lak me. Ha ha.

M.A.: Oh, yes! I did notice! They are handsome. So strong and . . .

COWBOY: Hard, Ma'am. Real hard! (Pause) You could feel 'em if you lak?

M.A.: Perhaps I would . . . enjoy that . . . only they seem sort of muddy at the moment, Mr. Cowboy . . . (wiping hands on her bathing suit) They must have been rained on recently.

COWBOY: Yeah, they was. It was a funny thing: Here we was, sittin' here unner a sky as blue as yore eyes, when all of a sudden . . .

INDIAN: It look lak may be it gonna rain again, pretty soon, I afraid.

COWBOY: Panto! Whyn't you help Miss America off with her shoes. Come over here, M'am, by me. Hoist youself' up on this here fence rail an' Panto will be glad to take off yore shoes for you.

M.A.: Oh. Well . . . yes . . . I suppose (Pause) in the absence of a chair . . . (she walks over and hoists herself atop the rail where INDIAN had been sitting) There!

COWBOY: There you are!

Soon

shoes

67-
68

INDIAN: There she is!

COWBOY: Go ahead, Panto! What you waitin' for?

INDIAN: I ain' never took off no stranger's boots.

COWBOY: Aw, they ain' boots. They shoes.

INDIAN: They hard lak boots.

COWBOY: Maybe you could fit her some moccasins. Maybe she wun't object.

INDIAN: They are for you, not her. Here! Stick out yore foot!

M.A.: *(she holds both feet forward)* Thank you, Mr. Indiana. You are very kind.

COWBOY: You can thank me Ma'am. He's doin' it in my place.

M.A.: Yes. Thank you, too, Mr. Cowboy. You are very . . .

COWBOY: Naw- Not me too. Jus' me alone. It's not lak he's doin' it for you atall. It lak me doin' it for you alone. You unnderstan'?

M.A.: *(giggles)* This is so confusing! Ooooooh! That feels good! My, isn't it nice to feel your tootsies free again! You should try it, Mr. Cowboy. You can't imagine how . . . *(twiggling her toes excitedly)*

ogly

COWBOY: Aw, I knows aweright. *(he looks at her feet)* They don' look so bad. *(she poses them)* They ain' ogly atall. Why'd you say they was gonna be all ~~ugly~~ Panto? They ain't. They a li'l red and pinched, but they ain' ogly.

M.A.: Let me see yours, Mr. Cowboy. You seen mind. It would be fair to let me see yours.

COWBOY: Huh? Aw, naw, Miss America. I never took off my boots front of anyone but Panto. It wun't seem right. Aw naw!

M.A.: Please! I want you to. I took off mine. You should take off yours. I won't laugh. I'll just look.

COWBOY: Aw, naw, Miss America. I have . . .

M.A.: Please? *(Pause)* Pretty please, with sugar on?

COWBOY: Aw . . .

M.A.: Mr. Indiana? Help him, won't you?

INDIAN: *(approaching her, chin to chin)* He don't want 'em off. Can't you hear? Somethin' wrong with your ears . . .

COWBOY: That's all right, Panto. You can take 'em off, I guess. It can't do no harm. It isn't as I was a ignorant savage about keepin' my boots on all the time. *(INDIAN tugs at his boots)* Hey! Take it slow, Panto! You tryin' to pull my legs off? Why don't you rest after the first one? Gi' me a chance to get used to it. All that air. And sun. *(Pause)* It hot, ain' it? I beginnin' to melt again. I feelin' sof. I beginnin' to feel lak a pat o butta.

M.A.: There! My! Look how you look!

COWBOY: *(trying to hide each naked foot behind the other)* Aw, you said you wouldn' laf. An' I can see you smilin'. Not outside. Inside. They a smile inside your head looks like a hoss' laugh.

INDIAN: It be better you put on moccasins, Hooty. I stil got 'em, Hooty. One pair's bound to fit you puffed.

68-
70

M.A.: You let them stay free, Mr. Cowboy, like they were born. Feel the breezes? Between your toes? And the sun? Where it hardly ever went before?

COWBOY: I afraid to feel too much. I goin' sofer 'n sof'er. I can har'ly hole mysel' up. I need someone to lean on. In case I melt an' start to fall down. You mind I lay my arm . . . across your shoulders, Miss America? I . . .

M.A.: You not feeling faint, Mr. Cowboy?

COWBOY: (*dizzily*) . . . need somethin' to lean on . . . I need a hoss . . . or somethin' so I don't fall down.

INDIAN: Hooty! Here I am! Put your arm . . .

COWBOY: (*his arm across M.A.'s shoulders, his chin dropped on his chest*) Thanks, Panto. You a fren. You good to hole up on. I still feel sof' but I don't feel lak I gonna melt . . . all the way . . . not right away . . .

INDIAN: I here, Hooty. I ain't there . . . (*he works his sky magic*)

my

COWBOY: You shore nice to hang ^(my) arm aroun'. I neva been real shore you ain't better 'n a hoss would be. Ta hang on, when I feelin' sof'. You wouldn't be so good for ridin' down to Mexico but jus' to hang aroun' on, you'r okay. (*Pause*) The way yore skin feels so sof' an' brown and 'thout any hair. I glad you don't ha' a bandaner to spoil it all . . .

M.A.: (*cuddling closer*) Take it easy, Mr. Cowboy. Just let yourself go. Feel your tootsies all free and easy? Without those hard heavy boots?

COWBOY: I gi'in sleepy. I can har'ly hole up my head. I feelin' jus' lak a li'l baby, gi'in ready to have a piece o shut-eye. I feel jus' lak a pat o butta gi'in ready to melt.

INDIAN: (*backing up quickly and looking at the sky*) Ha! Here it comes! (*another deluge falls, on COWBOY and MISS AMERICA*)

M.A.: Eeeeeeeeeeeee! (*tumbling off the rail*)

COWBOY: (*grabbing the rail to keep from falling off*) Whoa! Whoa there, hoss!

INDIAN: I said maybe it was gonna rain. An' it did. (*Pause*) It lak a faucet the Great Chief turn on an' off.

M.A.: I'm soaked!

COWBOY: I shivverin'. I cold. I wan' my boots back on. I was feelin' sof' but I ain't feelin' sof' no more.

INDIAN: Here your boots, Hooty. I'll put 'em on. (*he does quickly*)

M.A.: That was the most peculiar rain storm I ever was exposed to. There we were nice and warm and the sky as blue as my eyes when all of a sudden . . .

INDIAN: It that way 'roun these here parts. It could give you pneumonia you stuck aroun' here very long. Probably you better move along . . .

M.A.: It didn't wet you at all, Mr. Indiana. Isn't that strange.

70-
71

COWBOY: That's not strange. Panto's a little paganistic. He got a savage sense what tell him when to move off a few paces. He got the Great Chief's ear. He knows when somethin' gonna happen from upstairs in the Throne room. He a useful person to have aroun'. That's why I gonna make him my first lieutenant when the revulsion begins.

M.A.: I'd be a li'l suspicious of Mr. Indiana if I didn't know better ...

COWBOY: Say! You wanna join up with us here indiviligantists? We're gonna form a legion You could maybe fall in step. I might put you at the head of the female-type corps. We gonna advance on 'em side by side. Panto in front an' me behin' ... You could maybe get in the middle. (Pause) They wouldn't attack a woman, I bet.

INDIAN: She shun't be between us, Hooty.

M.A.: I've come a long way. I'm so hungry and tired. I don't know what to do.

COWBOY: Aw, come back up here an' sit down a spell. The Welcorn Waggon due any minute. They'll give you so'thin' to eat. Meanwhile I can tell you 'bout my plan. *(she moves dejectedly over to rail and leans against it)* First thing we need is a hoss or else ten centimes. So's I can go down to Mexico and roun' up all the other expatriates lak me and Panto an' you. You a expatriate, ain' you?

plans

M.A.: I am very patriotic.

COWBOY: Shore. That's exactly what I mean. Only we is fed up havin' to wait for the Welcorn Waggon to come along an' feed an' water us. 'Cause a refusin' to touch *(gags)* wages. You the same way. I can tell. You neva took any wages, did you? Naw. A nice clean girl lak you neva woulda took no dirty wages *(gags)*.

M.A.: A man gimme a nickel once.

COWBOY: Not for wukkin', did he?

M.A.: It wasn't like work. (Pause) It was kinda more like play.

COWBOY: Shore. That was play. That wasn't wuk. An' so that wasn't wages *(gags)* neitha.

M.A.: Once my uncle gave me a quarter. (Pause) I asked for half-a-dollar (Pause) but he only gave me a quarter.

COWBOY: Aw, not for wukkin', was it? It wasn't *(gags)* wages, was it?

M.A.: It didn't ... take me long. Only ... a minute or two ...

COWBOY: Then it wasn't wuk. An' you one o us. I knew fust time I saw you but I wasn't sure. Wages *(gags)* is funny things. They can 'tach to anythin'. Prob'ly e'en to Miss America Nineteen-Fifty-Somethin' or other ...

M.A.: I received lots of prizes, but they shouldn't be considered wages, should they?

COWBOY: Naw. You pure. You aweright. You can join us, if you want.

M.A.: *(climbs up on rail)* Would I be equal? If I were to join you, I mean? (Pause) I'm sure I would, but you don't mind if I ask ...

COWBOY: Equal? Equal to what? Equal to Cowboys?

M.A.: Of course! And equal to Indians too!

71-
72.

COWBOY: (stiffening) We indigilantists, Ma'am. That mean we diff'runt. Ain' no question o bein' equal. We diff'runt. Tha's enuf. Lak this here bandaner an' boots what I aweys wear. And lak those moccasins what Panto wear. an' lak that purty ribbon what you wear. That tells a big diff'runce 'bout us. Ain' that right? Shore it right.

M.A.: I dunno, Mr. Cowboy . . .

COWBOY: Listen, Ma'am . . .

INDIAN: She wanna be equal, Hooty. You better let 'er go. She gonna be bad medicine. She lak a communix Eve. She li'ble to wander off an' pick some wages from a sycimore tree an' pison up us all. Start one o them counter-revulsions.

Communix
COWBOY: That could happen, couldn't it? Eve was lak a *Communix* ~~Miss America~~ in the Garden of Eden, wasn't she? Eve wan't no cowboy or in-jun, neither.

M.A.: Well, I wouldn't insist on being absolutely equal. (Pause) Just as long as I'm not . . . all unequal. (Pause) I'd settle for being an indigilantist, Mr. Cowboy, if you think that's more important . . .

revulsion
COWBOY: Shore. That's the right spirit, Miss America. We'll teach you all you need to know to help us win the revolution. How to rope an' shoot. How to scalp an' tomahawk. I might even take you down Mexico with me on a advance trip, ta help roun' up those other expatriates lak us. (Pause, looking lewdly at her) You could have some special use.

M.A.: I'm sure I could have some special use. (she tickles his ear with a thistle.)

COWBOY: Aw, hee hee! Cut it out! Aw, hee hee. You cut it out! Aw, hee hee, you cut it out, Miss America! Aw, hee hee, you cut it out, Miss America Nineteen-Fifty-Somethin' or other.

M.A.: There's something about rugged indigilantists, Mr. Cowboy, I just adore.

725
74

COWBOY: Aw, hee hee, let's not start that again. Aw, hee hee, let's not start that, aw, hee hee, let's not start. Aw, hee hee, let's not. Aw, hee hee, let's. Aw, hee hee. Aw.

INDIAN: I goin'! (*walks off in disgust*)

COWBOY: Whar Panto goin'? Miss America? Hee hee!

M.A.: I don't know, Mr. Cowboy. Where you going, Mr. Indiana?

INDIAN: Never min, Hooty! (*EXITS right*)

COWBOY: (*watching him go*) Sometimes he act funny fur a injun.

M.A.: Never mind about him, Mr. Cowboy. Let's mind about me! (*she sticks thistle into his ear again*)

COWBOY: Ow! (*Pause*) That sorta hurt, Miss America. (*Pause*) It didn't sorta tickle that time.

M.A.: I'm awf'ly sorry, Mr. Cowboy. Is this any better? (*more gently*)

COWBOY: Haw! Haw! Neva mind! It lost it's fascination fur me. (*Pause*) That's the way things are sometimes. (*Pause*) I been wonderin' 'bout you. (*Pause*) To mysel'.

M.A.: (*Pause*) Have you, Mr. Cowboy?

COWBOY: You a kind o spec-tacle fur me. (*Pause*)

M.A.: Am I, Mr. Cowboy?

COWBOY: You could call me Hooty, if you ain' ashamed.

M.A.: Hooty.

COWBOY: I ain' seen a spec-tacle like you since I was a li'l boy in Cal City.

M.A.: I'm glad.

COWBOY: I neva got ova that spec-tacle.

M.A.: I'm glad.

COWBOY: I been wonderin' wuther you di'n do a dance too. (*Pause*) Lak in that there Cal City spec-tacle.

M.A.: Dance, Hooty?

M.A.: Aw, you know! A hootchie kootchie.

M.A.: Mister Cowboy!

COWBOY: Whatsa matta!

insert line →
COWBOY:
X

74-
75

M.A.: You have me wrong! I'm an artiste, but I wouldn't dream of doing a hootchie kootchie.

COWBOY: Not e'en a li'l? Shure you would! A li'l?

M.A.: (Pause) I sometimes recite in a sing-song voice.

COWBOY: Tha's it! Sing a song! (Pause) You wiggle 'roun' some when you sing a song?

M.A.: Mister Cowboy!

COWBOY: Call me Hooty!

M.A.: I would die if you mistook me, Mr. . . . Hooty.

COWBOY: I won't mistook you. I been wonderin' a long time now how you mus' danced an' sung.

M.A.: Well. . . .

COWBOY: Shure! Go ahead! Do your stuff! I'll be proud.

M.A.: Just a short one.

COWBOY: Shure! Jus' a short one.

M.A.: I should have a stage.

COWBOY: Aw, you don't need no stage. Tha's lots o' room ain't tha?

M.A.: I should have a spot-light.

COWBOY: Aw, you got the Great Chief up tha sittin' on his Throne.

M.A.: Well . . . just a short one?

COWBOY: Shore! You said that already!

M.A.: (descending from rail, smoothing her suit) I'll do the one that won me my title.

COWBOY: Good! Fine!

M.A.: It's an original rendition.

COWBOY: Swell! Come on! Go on. (Pause) Afore Panto gets back!

M.A.: (she shuffles her feet around in the dust, hums a few bars aloud, then sings and moves her hips in a rumba rhythm)

I'm Miss America, the Wonder Girl,
My eyes and teeth shine like a pearl,
I pose 'n p'rade around the worl',
My name is Sandra, but you can call me Shirl. . . .

COWBOY: Hot dawg!

M.A.: I'm Miss America, the Beauty Queen,
My nails 'n navel are very clean,
My hair hangs down like shantung silk
My skin's as smooth as mama's milk.

COWBOY: Oh Man!

M.A.: My smile is like a sun-filled ray,
My thoughts are fresh as a day in May,
My body's built like a curvy high-da-way,
For men's looks like the Sebring ride-a-way.

COWBOY: You said it, Shirl.

thar?

(3)

75
76

M.A.: I'm Miss America, the Wonder Girl.
While others choose to knit an' purl.
You'll find me amusing some aged Earl.
Cause I'm Miss America, the Won-der Giiiiiiiiirrrll!

COWBOY: (*slapping thighs*) I lak it! E'en you did make it up yourself.
You an artiste, aweright!

M.A.: Thank you, Hooty, I thought you'd enjoy it.

COWBOY: Oney . . . whose that a-ged Earl?

M.A.: He was Chief Judge of the beauty contest, Hooty.

COWBOY: Haw! I see! That's pretty good!

M.A.: Mama said I was very clever to think of that.

COWBOY: She right, you mama.

M.A.: Thank you, Hooty.

COWBOY: It take me back to ole Cal City. It make me wanta go all sof'
agin'. It make me sad I got my boots on.

M.A.: Is there any thing else you'd like to have me do?

COWBOY: (*reflects, then smiles lewdly*) Wal, thar is, sorta, Ma'am. It
ain' no dance 'xactly, an' it ain' no song 'xactly . . . but I been
wonderin' . . . kin you pick up a half-a-dallar with yore you-
know-what?

M.A.: What?

COWBOY: Aw, you know what.

M.A.: What?

COWBOY: Lak with what other women can.

M.A.: What?

COWBOY: Aw, you know how they do.

M.A.: What?

(*Pause*)

COWBOY: Aw, neva mind.

M.A.: (*pause*) I know.

COWBOY: You do! Can you do it? Offa my rail, here? Withou' no
hands?

M.A.: I never tried, Hooty.

COWBOY: Whyn' you try now? I'd lak to see you try.

M.A.: It's not lady-like.

COWBOY: I lak it! Maybe it ^{not} ~~is~~ lady-lak, but I lak it! It better'n a talkin'
dawg! (*Pause*) Jus' fur me, Miss America?

M.A.: Do you have half-a-dollar, Mister Cowboy?

COWBOY: You mean you will? You really will? Sure I has? Course I
has! Oney a fool wouldn't ha' half-a-dollar aroun' for a spec-
tacle lak that . . . (*he is searching his shirt and pants pockets avidly*)

M.A.: I suppose I'd be entitled to save it . . .

not

COWBOY: It must be right here somewhere! I got loads o' 'em somewhere! Ev'ryone keeps half-a dozen half-a-dol . . . (stops the search) Aw! Naw! Aw!

M.A.: It's only money after all . . .

COWBOY: I don' have none. (Pause) 'Cause it wages! (gags) I cain' stand (gags) wages! That e'en include half-a dollar! At e'en include ten centimes. I had ten centimes I'd a gone to Mexico. I had half-a-dollar I'd ast you to pick it up with yore you know what an' I wouldn' a e'en gone to Mexico. I'd a maybe given' up the revulsion an' . . . aw . . .

76-
78



M.A.: That's too bad, Hooty, I'm sorry. (Pause) I was going to do it for you. (Pause) I never tried it before (pause) but I was going to try it for you. (Pause) I guess it's a good thing you didn't have no half-a-dollar. (Pause) I would a done it if you did and that would have been the beginning of the end. (Pause) Wouldn't be any telling where I'd end up once I started. (Pause) Picking up half-a-dollars . . .

COWBOY: You mighta moved up to silva dollars, Ma'am.

M.A.: I might have moved down to quarters (Pause) nickels (Pause) dimes (Pause) pennies (Pause) subway tokens (Pause) aspirins (Pause) poppy seeds . . .

COWBOY: Haw! That'd be the day!

M.A.: What would mama say when she saw what her daughter had moved down to? (Pause) She might never speak to me again . . .

COWBOY: Aw, I didn't want to cause you trouble to home, Ma'am. I jus' . . .

M.A.: Mam^d tell the priest and I could never hold up my head again. I couldn't even drop a nickel in the poor box without thinking of my shame . . .

COWBOY: Aw, I didn't want to cause you no trouble in your Church, Ma'am. I jus' . . .

M.A.: My brother Al would die! He'd curl up and die!

COWBOY: Aw, I didn't want to cause you no . . .

M.A.: But first he'd hunt down like a dawg and carve the heart out of the person who was responsible for my shame. (Pause) Al's like that.

COWBOY: Naw! Whyn't we change the subjec', Ma'am? Let's talk about happy things: fresh water in da brook, little fishes on yore hook, stars shinin' in de sky, moonlight bathin' in yore eye, birdies warbling in de air, sof' wind rustlin' your yeller hair . . .

M.A.: Al has a terrible temper . . .

(ok)

dollar

78-79

COWBOY: Naw, Ma'am! I didn't want to get us in no trouble with yore brother Al jus' ova a li'l half-a-dollar . . .

M.A.: He carved Chief Judge Earl's heart out for smiling lewdly at me . . . (Pause) I tried to make Al stop . . .

COWBOY: Aw, Ma'am! It jus' lak I aways said: wages (gags) is lak pison! Men go roun' cuttin' each otha's heart out ova wages. (gags) I wun't touch no half-a-dollar's wuth o wages. (gags) I wun't touch no half-a-dollar's wuth o wages (gags) with a ten foot pole cat! Not for no one. Not e'en Miss America Nineteen-Fifty-I don't know! (Pause) At's what I aways say to Panto. (Pause) I wonda when old Panto comin' back! He bin gone a long time . . .

M.A.: Al told me no to leave Oklahomy. He threatened to follow if I did.

COWBOY: (looking around) I aways feel a li'l safer with old Panto aroun'. He can smell trouble comin' from way off. He got a miraculous savage sense.

M.A.: But I can't believe he could have followed me here. Not across the desert. Only a lust-crazed brother could do something like that. (Pause) And where could he hide, for goodness sake?

COWBOY: They some tall sage brush way ova thar. (pointing to left wing) He could be hidin' behind thar.

M.A.: Even if he was, it's not as though I've done anything wrong. I just sang my contest-winning song for you, Hooty. There wasn't anything wrong in that.

COWBOY: You wiggled some, Ma'am. (Pause) Ole Al, he don't mind if you wiggle some, do he?

M.A.: Unh Unh. (Pause) Unless someone was smiling lewdly at me. (Pause) You weren't smiling lewdly at me, Hooty.

mean

COWBOY: Haw, naw! I don' e'en know what lewdly mean, so how could I a bin smilin' lewdly at you while you was wigglin' an' doin' yore dance. (pause) It wun't make sense.

(Pause)

M.A.: Yes.

(Pause)

COWBOY: You don' think ole Al could mix up my kind of natural happy innercent smilin' with that thar lewd smilin', do you, Ma'am?

M.A.: Why should he, Hooty? (Pause) Do you want to show me your natural happy innocent smile, Hooty?

COWBOY: Shore. Here it is! (grins lewdly)

(Pause)

M.A.: Well, that looks like a very natural and happy smile to me.

COWBOY: That good to hear, Ma'am. I was sure I can't wrustle up one o those no account lewd smiles. (Pause) It wasn't anythin' lak poor ole Chief Judge Earl's smile, was it?

(Pause)

M.A.: It's hard to tell about smiles.

COWBOY: (leaping from rail, running madly around, bent over toward the ground) Whar is it? Whar'd it go? Whar is it? Whar'd it go?

M.A.: What's wrong? What did you lose?

COWBOY: (as before) My gun. My nerve. My back-bone.

M.A. Shhh! Hooty? I believe I hear something over in the sagebrush. . .

COWBOY: (as before) Huh? Ma'am? Huh? Ma'am? I gotta fin' my gun!

M.A. It's rustling like from the wind. (Pause) Only there isn't any wind.

COWBOY: (on his knees, at her feet) Oh Ma'am! Save me! Don't let Al hurt me! I too young to die!

M.A. Al would do anything for his sister.

COWBOY: Ma'am, tell Al go 'way! Tell him I okay! Tell him I warn't grinnin' lewdly! It was jus' a li'l poppy seed caught 'tween my teeth! Tell him anythin', Ma'am! Save me, mama, Ma'am!

M.A. (Pause) I could tell him we're married. (Pause) Then he wouldn't mind.

COWBOY: Shure! That's it! Tell 'im we're married! It okay ta smile lewdly at yore wife, (Pause) Ain't it?

M.A. I never told a lie to Al. (Pause) We'd have to follow up.

COWBOY: Shure! Anythin', Ma'am! We'll get married right away! Panto's a kind o preacher. He could marry us.

M.A. (calling to left wing) Al! Oh Al! (Pause, while COWBOY trembles at her feet) Al! Oh Al!

COWBOY: (trembling and hiding his eyes behind spread fingers) They someone comin'! I hear 'em! It's Al! Tell him put away his knife. (Pause) Is it a huntin' knife? (Pause) Tell him put it away, Ma'am!

M.A.: (Long pause) It's not Al! For heaven's sake, it's Mr. Indiana! (descends rail and waves) Hello, Mr. Indiana! Who's that with you? He's bringing someone with him, Hooty.

COWBOY: Panto wun't do that. He wun't bring that crazy Al here to cut my heart out. He a savage. He not that savage.

M.A. Look! How funny! He's brought a fireman!

COWBOY: A Frierman?

(Enter from left wing INDIAN preceded by FIREMAN, dragging a short dirty length of hose with nozzle)

F.M.: I'm come. I'm done. I'm the Frierman. (Pause, sees M.A.) Loogadat one! (trots over to where Miss America stands and circles around her several times; M.A. instinctively moves into her bathing-beauty pose, with eyes directed to the horizon) Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! (as she hears his growing appreciation, she begins to smile and lowers her eyes to him, seeing his hose).

M.A. Eeeek! A freak! Hideous! Libidious! Horredious! Devine! I detest it! I abhor it! I contest it! It's min.!. (she breaks her pose and falls upon the fire hose; the FIREMAN jumps back, astonished, and tries to pull the hose away; M.A. succeeds in wrapping hands and arms about it) Mmm nnn! Mmm nnn! Mmmnnn! Mmm nnn!

F.M.: Hey, ieggio! What're you doin'? Dang it, leggo! It's mine! It only a hose! Don't you knows? Can't you see? Letter be!

M.A.: (as before) What a lot! It makes me hot!

79
81

Wind

Al!

It's

M.A.

COWBOY: (recovered, leaning on rail) It lak you said, Panto. She a modern version of old Eve! She think that dirty ole hose the snake that lived in de Garden of Eden.

INDIAN: She bad medicine.

COWBOY: Say! Whu for you bring that Frierman 'roun' our parts, Panto?

F.M.: (reaches down and pushes her over, releasing her hold on the hose) Damn nut! Little slut! Whadya hafta go an' act like that for?

M.A.: (recovering) Oh dear! What would mama think? Wouldn't she fear? Her babe's on the brink? Ready to sink? To unknown unheard of depths . . . to drink?

F.M.: Why didn't you stay the way you were? Like a purty picture. Hangin' on the door. Like a queen. So fresh, so pure? Now, you look like ⁴four-bit whole!

COWBOY: (to INDIAN) He talkin' harsh to her, Panto. I oughta stop 'im. We gonna get married. I shun't let him talk 'at way. (climbs rail and sits)

INDIAN: Aw, you sunstruck, Hooty! You been sittin' unnerneath the Great Chief's Throne too long. (Pause) You took off yore bandaner, you wun't act so dizzy, sometimes.

M.A.: (from the ground) I'm come. I'm done. I'm Miss Americum.

F.M.: Aw, giddy-up, Ma'am! An' do what you was doin' afore!

M.A.: (rises theatrically and takes her bathing beauty pose once more) Like this, Mr. Fireman?

F.M.: (he circles around her again, dragging his hose, stopping behind her, nozzle pointed at her rear) Yaas, yass! Yaas, yass! Yaas, yaas! Yaas, yes! Oh bless! Hoo boy! Hoo man! You ess! I wanna fess!

M.A.: (gazing toward the horizon) Uh . . . don't make a mess . . . Mr. Fireman . . .

COWBOY: (from rail) Say, you! What're you doin'? Don't ya know that's my wife? To be? Can't you see?

F.M.: (dropping hose) Huh? Whatcha say? Who're you? What'd I do? (goes over to COWBOY)

COWBOY: I think ^{you're}you're messin' 'roun' my parts. Hers too. I figger you go no business messin' 'roun' our parts. Ain' lak thar was a fire 'roun' here you hadda put out. (Pause) Whar you from, stranger, anyhow?

F.M.: Engine House No. 9.

COWBOY: Whyn't you go on back?

F.M.: I resigned.

COWBOY: Why'd you do that fur? This country need friermen. They more 'n more friers ev'ry day. The place bur^{ry} up. The country's burmin' down. They widows an' orphans roastin' alive cause you ain' on da job. I kin hear their screams. (Pause) They pity-full!

INDIAN: Aw, Hooty! He jus' lef' cause o . . .

3 noise

you're

barmin'

83-
84.

COWBOY: I see a ole man. Ninedy-nine years ole. An oney one leg plus bein' blind in both eyes. He on the thirteenth floor o a ole frame house what's ninedy-nine years ole too. They great tongues o flame lickin' out da windows . . . an' da doors. All da windows! All da doors! Ole man's blind eyes is pity-full! His mouth open 'cause it cryin' out. The flames is lickin' toward him, now. They ogly ornge an' yellow flames. Full o green smoke. He startin' ta choke on all that green smoke. He cain't har'ly cry out no more 'cause o all the smokin' an' chokin' goin' on. No one kin har'ly hear him. But I kin hear him har'ly. What he sayin' is: Whar't that brave frierman from Engine House Ninedy-nine? (Pause)

F.M.: Nine. Jus' nine.

COWBOY: You shouldn' a left. You should go back. No reason nowhar good 'nuf for any frierman ta resign . . .

F.M.: I could no longer take . . . wages.

COWBOY: (gags) What you say?

INDIAN: I was gonna tell you, Hooty.

F.M.: I resigned because I couldn't accept wages. (COWBOY gags) anymore. I don't know why I feel that way, but I do. I just do. It's a fact. An' you gotta face facts. (Pause) I can't take 'em any more. (Pause) Wages.

COWBOY: (gags) Whyn't you say so? You kin stay.

INDIAN: That ole man burnt to^a crisp now, anyhow.

F.M.: I'm sorry. (Pause) I didn't know . . .

COWBOY: At's aweright. Oney you stay, you gotta play. The rules o the game. Our rules. (Pause) 'Cause it's our gamey.

F.M.: I was only looking for a bite to eat an' something to drink.

COWBOY: An' the first rule o the ole game is no messin' 'roun' behin' other men's wives. (Pause) Spec'ly cowboy's wives what are gonne be.

F.M.: I don't think I would a made no mess.

nose

COWBOY: (approvingly) You got a dirty hofse, there.

F.M.: I like to keep it with me at all times. (walks over to retrieve it: M.A., who has been looking at it touching it, now puts her hand on it as FM. does) Oh!

M.A.: Oh! (looking at him with open admiration)

and
F.M.: I didn't know . . . he was . . . well . . .

M.A.: Oh, oh.

F.M.: Won't you let go?

M.A.: Oh! Must I?

left
F.M.: It's . . . all I have let^f . . . I guess I'd better go.

M.A.: Oh!

F.M.: My name's Dan.

M.A.: Dan! The Fireman!

F.M.: Yes.

and
M.A.: I admire men . . . who ply a . . . useful trade. (Pause) Self-respecting men . . . who carry hoses . . . and ply a useful trade.

F.M.: I see.

M.A.: Who are . . . unattached . . . (looking at INDIAN)

F.M.: (following her look) I see.

M.A.: I'm glad. (Pause) Hi!

F.M.: Hey! do it again! What you done before! Like a picture on the door!

M.A.: (starts to rise to resume her bathing-beauty pose, then abandons idea)
No I don' wanna. He'll get sore.

F.M.: (close to her) Your hair is red. Lak fahr! Makes me wanna putter out! (grabs hose with both hands)

M.A.: No. No. (Pause) I wanna be married, I wanna be loved. I wanna be hoist up high, to the sky, an' rub-a-dub-dubbed . . .

F.M.: I been awe-ready married. I bin awe-ready loved. I'm finished. Done. That's why I come. I brung my hose. You neva knows. Could be a fahr. Anywhere. E'en out here. Ova there! (at left wing) Or in your hair!

M.A.: Don't say that. You make me scared. (Pause) When you say it about my hair.

F.M.: It fahr-engine red! I love red! It fahr me! Makes me burn up!
Sometimes when I'm at a big fahr (Pause) I hafta turn the hose
on me!

M.A.: You do? On you? That great big hoser? (Pauses) Lemme feeler a bit, woncha, Mister Fireman? I won' hurter. I'll be your fren . . .

F.M.: Huh? Aw! (Pause) Okay! Feeler! You can use both han's. G'wan! Get a good holt! Here! Taker for a while! I'll let you . . . but not for keeps! Only for a li'l while, you hear? (returns to rail and COWBOY) Listen here, Mr. Cowboy? You think I could stick around, forawhile, in these here parts?

dear! M.A.: Mama, dear! I'm here! I'm here! Oh dear! (*Pauses*) (*rocking with hose*) Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm!
Mmm mmm! Mmm mmm! Whatawopper! Whippersnapper!
If oney I hadder, I woudn' wan' a ladder. I'd poke it 'roun'
town. All up an' down. Flit! Flut! Flit! Flut! Flit! Flutanflut!
Fibberiberutt! Wwhhhhhhhuuuusssssshhhhhhhhhhhhh.
(hosing all around)

COWBOY: You wanna join in our revulsion, Frierman? We a small group o indigilantists what got fed up. We gunna halt this country goin' to da dawgs. We goin' ta Mexico an' recruit one o those revulsions. (Pause) Soon's I get holt o ten centimes. (Pause) Or else a hoss. (Pause) Either one.

F.M.: I don't have ten centimes. I don't have no hoss. I have a half-a-dollar, though. That's more'n ten centimes even if it ain't more'n a hoss . . .

COWBOY: You have! Throw it away! Away away! It lak pison! It no good! It lak wages (gags). Al goin' come an' carve yore heart out!

INDIAN: Who AI?

F.M.: It's all right. I didn't work for it. I foun' it. It's not the same as wages (COWBOY gags) (Pause) Is it?

COWBOY: Shore it is! Wuss! Gi' it here! I goin' throw it away!

INDIAN: Hooty? You sunstruck still? He di'nt find it 'tached ta no tree!
How come it can be? Wages. (COWBOY gags)

COWBOY: It wuss, I tell you! It a long story why it ~~was~~ ^{wass}, but it a lot wuss! A turrible lot wuss! Gimme! (snatches it from FM and flings it off left wing)

M.A.: (still with hose) What was that?

INDIAN: (to M.A.) It money! Go fin' it!

M.A.: What was that?

COWBOY: Aw, nothin'. Jus' half-a-dollar.

M.A.: Half-a-dollar? Where?

F.M.: It was mine but he threw it away.

COWBOY: I threw it away where it won't do no one no harm no how.

F.M.: It was mine but he threw it away.

M.A.: What was that?

INDIAN: (to M.A.) It money. Go fin' it!

M.A.: Where? Where? (*rising*)

87-
87

INDIAN: Over there! (to left wing) You can fin' it! (she walks with hose to left wing upstage from rail, squats and searches for the coin)

M.A.: Where?

INDIAN: There!

M.A.: Here?

INDIAN: There!

COWBOY: You wanner ta get pisoned, Panto? Let 'er be!

INDIAN: She bad medicine. (he fades quietly upstage to right wing, in line with M.A., unsling his bow, and methodically draws and shoots arrows, one by one, at M.A.; they all go awry, however)

COWBOY: I beginnin' ta think he don' care too much fur her.

F.M.: Her hair lak fahr. (Pause) I loves fahr.

COWBOY: You gonna be a big help to our revulsion, Frierman. You gonna be my second lieutenant. After Panto. You gone be in charge o all the burnin' an' smokin' . . .

F.M.: When I sees fahr, I sees red . . .

COWBOY: You'll be side by side with me. The picture goes this way . . .

F.M.: When I sees her hair, I sees red . . .

COWBOY: Panto's in front; I'm behind. An' Miss America Nineteen-Fifty-somethin'-or-Other's right thar in between. That's where you come in. You gonne come right thar in fronta . . . er . . . in backa . . . er . . . in fronta . . . in backa . . .

F.M.: Ergo: when I sees red I sees fahr in her hair . . . (Pause) I'll be happy to come in backa here, Cowboy.

COWBOY: Good! That put you in fronta me too. Side by side, we'll advance together!

F.M.: I'll take ma hose along. (Pause) 'Case anythin' o ours catches fahr . . .

COWBOY: (looking back over shoulder) Hey, Panto! What you doin' thar?

F.M.: Lak her hair . . .

INDIAN: I jus' practicin' up, Hooty. For the comin' revulsion. I been gi'in' rusty . . .

F.M.: I neva saw no one with hair looked so much lak it oughta be on fahr.

COWBOY: You eva joined up a revulsion before, Frierman?

F.M.: Huh? Naw.

COWBOY: You oughta be informed. (Pause) They dangerous.

F.M.: Firemen are not afraid.

COWBOY: They also illegal.

F.M.: Firemen are not afraid.

COWBOY: You liable ^{ta} get killed.

F.M.: Who's afraid?

COWBOY: Or put in jail.

F.M.: There might be a policeman?

happy
ner

11'ble
-2

88-
89

COWBOY: Policemen'll hafta go first. You'll hafta fry the whole lot of 'em.

F.M.: Policemen are said to be less afriad even than firemen.

COWBOY: Whhushh! What a smell it'd be!

F.M.: Policemen have guns and I only have a hose.

COWBOY: Aw, I got a gun.

M.A.: I believe it's over there. *(she rises and walks off stage at left wing)*
(OFF:) This looks like a likely spot . . . (INDIAN now creeps across stage to left wing, retrieves arrows and recommences shooting them at M.A., off stage)

F.M.: I gettin' old, Cowboy. I wukked all my life for wages an' what I got to show for it? Nothin'! (Pause) Jus' my hose.

COWBOY: That's somethin'! (Pause) That a pretty good hunk o hose!

F.M.: It didn't make sense. (Pause) Someone'd start a fahr and I'd go put 'er out. It warn't right. I loved fahrs. Why should I go aroun' puttin' 'em out? Forty years an' four hunnert fahrs an' I went an' put all o 'em out? Just 'cause that's what they said a fireman was for. (Pause) I wanna change things. I wanna country where fahrmen are for fahrs. Stead o against 'em.

COWBOY: That good! That the way it'll be in our revulsion! (Pause) You're a true indivigilantist awe-right. You're the next-to-the-truest indivigilantist I knows.

for

F.M.: Thanks.

(Pause)

COWBOY: I notice you wear boots.

F.M.: Yeah. (Pause) Haw!

COWBOY: They ain' as fine as cowboy boots. (Pause) But they still boots. (Pause) They sho ain' moccasins . . .

F.M.: Firemen can't wear moccasins.

COWBOY: They higher than cowboy boots. (Pauses) But they ain' as fine.

F.M.: Moccasins on a Fireman would be revoltin'.

carvings

COWBOY: They blacker too. (Pause) But they ain' got such purty carvings . . .

F.M.: They'd catch on fahr . . .

might

COWBOY: They slicker too . . . (Pause) But they ain' so leathery . . .

F.M.: Still, that ^{we} might keep my feet warm . . .

COWBOY: Trouble is they taller.

(Pause)

F.M.: You don't have any moccasins around, do you, Cowboy?
(mounts rail in INDIAN's place)

COWBOY: That make 'em seem harder.

F.M.: I could try 'em on for size.

COWBOY: More indivilantic.

F.M.: Maybe your Indian girlfriend has an extra pair.

COWBOY: Huh?

89'
91

F.M.: I said I wouldn't mind trying on some moccasins. (Pause) Just for size.

COWBOY: You wouldn't?

F.M.: No.

COWBOY: No?

F.M.: No.

COWBOY: Wait here! (dismounts rail and rushes to INDIAN, tugs at his arm) Panto?

F.M.: Would they make me seem more individual^g?

COWBOY: Panto!

INDIAN: Yore spoilin' my aim, Hooty!

F.M.: Or less?

COWBOY: Gimme a moccasin, will ya?

F.M.: Would I appear braver?

INDIAN: You sunstruck.

F.M.: Or more cowardly?

COWBOY: Aw, it's not for me. It's for him. Frierman.

M.A.: (OFF:) Perhaps it's over here. That's another likely spot.

F.M.: Would they feel too soft? I wonder.

INDIAN: Take em, Hooty. In my belt.

COWBOY: I'll take two.

M.A.: (OFF:) You wouldn't think half-a-dallar'd be such a difficult thing to put your finger on . . .

INDIAN: Quit spoilin' my aim, Hooty!

F.M.: Or just right?

COWBOY: What you doin', anyway? You practice up too much, you'll get stale.

M.A.: (OFF:) Here half-a-dollar! Here, boy!

INDIAN: I ain' hit da target, onct.

COWBOY: Aw, see ya later . . . (returns to rail and sits to pull off FM's boots)

F.M.: That might depend on their size . . .

COWBOY: (drawing off one) They slick aweright.

F.M.: If they were too large they might feel too soft . . .

COWBOY: They hard all right. (drawing other boot off)

INDIAN: She'd oney stop wigglin' I could hitter better.

F.M.: If they was just right, they might feel just right . . .

COWBOY: (putting on a moccasin) This one is the lef' . . .

F.M.: If they were too small, would they feel too soft . . . also?

COWBOY: (putting on other) An' this one's the right.

F.M.: It'd be surprising if they felt too hard?

individualistic

91-
92

M.A.: (OFF:) Over there looks like an even more likely spot.

COWBOY: There! (Pause) Ugh! They make you look sof'. (Pause) Lak an injun.

F.M.: You could never be sure . . .

COWBOY: If I didn't know you was a Frierman, I'd say you was a injun.

F.M.: . . . until you tried them on.

COWBOY: (removing his own boots) They feel jus' right?

F.M.: Uh, say! Where'd you get those?

COWBOY: How they feel? Too tight? Too loose? Too narrow? Wide? They don' pinch? Or bulge? They don' sag? They slide?

F.M.: (holding his legs out stiff) Say, they're not bad!

COWBOY: (hastily slipping on Fireman's boots) They beautiful! (one is on)

F.M.: They have little red beads . . .

COWBOY: They slide^{ck} (grunts) an' hard (grunts) an' tall! (grunts) Best of all! (other boot is on)

F.M.: . . . and little silver bullets.

COWBOY: Panto's a purty moccasin-maker. (Pause) If you laks moccasins. (stands up)

F.M.: (still admiring his feet) I wonder what she'd think o me, now?

COWBOY: (walking around testily, then limping and carrying a pained expression) (one seems to pinch . . .)

F.M.: (walking around testily, then with assurance) She might forget about my hose.

COWBOY: (limping worse) Other seems to bulge.

F.M.: Then I could get it back.

COWBOY: Maybe if I stan' still, they won' hurt so much. (stands still)

F.M.: Or even throw it away.

COWBOY: Maybe I sit, they won' hurt so much. (limps to rail and mounts it)

F.M.: Say, what's your girlfriend doin' over there?

COWBOY: Ah! That feels better! (retains pained expression, nevertheless)

F.M.: She's shootin' arrows.

COWBOY: They still hurt purty bad . . . but not bad as when I walks . . . or stands.

F.M.: She gonna hurt herself. (starts to walk toward INDIAN)

COWBOY: (startled) Who? (slipping off rail) Ow! (climbing back on, hastily) Who?

F.M.: Her! The Indian!

COWBOY: Her? Who? You goin' sunstruck? Panto's no her. An' you shouldn' bother him when he's practicin'. Panto's gotten kinda rusty. He's practicin' for our revulsion.

F.M.: Course he's a her! (looks at COWBOY with incredulity)

51-2

✓

COWBOY: (*archly*) Panto's my fren'. That's enuf. He gonna be my first lieutenant, too. Besides, he's a injun. Injuns can't be no her. He a little paganistic maybe, but he's no her.

F.M.: I'm gonna stop him. (*starts off again*)

COWBOY: Aw, come're! Let's plot our revulsion a little more.

F.M.: He might hurt someone.

COWBOY: Who.

F.M.: Him. Her. The injun.

COWBOY: How do my feet look?

M.A.: (*OFF*;) I found it! I found it! I found a half-a . . . oh!

F.M.: Huh?

COWBOY: Don' they look slick.

M.A.: (*OFF*;) I lost it.

F.M.: (*returning*) Say!

COWBOY: Don' they look hard?

M.A.: (*OFF*;) I found it! I found it! I lost it but I found it!

F.M.: You have my boots on!

INDIAN: I lost my chance. (*Pause*) My time is up.

COWBOY: Haw! Sure! How I look?

INDIAN: An' I still had a arrow lef' . . .

F.M.: They're your feet. (*Pause*) Yet they're my boots.

COWBOY: Haw! Sure! What did you think?

INDIAN: What's she gonna do now?

F.M.: Where are *your* boots?

COWBOY: They there. (*Pause*) You figger they were your feet in my boots?

F.M.: I didn't know.

INDIAN: Loogadat! (*Pause*) She plenty bad medicine. (*squats to watch*)

COWBOY: Haw! My boots is over there.

F.M.: Here? Oh! Yes. (*Pause*) They are.

COWBOY: They finer than yore boots but I thought I'd try yours on for size.

F.M.: My boots don't seem the same. (*Pause*) Since they climbed into your feet.

COWBOY: Haw! You nuts? They din't clim' into my feet atall! Haw! You nuts?

F.M.: One seems smaller . . .

COWBOY: How could boots clim' into feet?

F.M.: While the other seems to bulge. . . .

INDIAN: Loogadat! (*Pause*) She gonna get pisoned bad.

COWBOY: Haw! You surely sunstruck!

92'
93

94
46

F.M.: I thought feet could climb into boots, alright.

COWBOY: It pleny hot! That ole Great Chief, he deep down in his Throne. (Pause) I awe-mose wish I could take off my bandaner.

F.M.: Perhaps I should sit down. (walks to rail and tries to mount it but can't)

COWBOY: You better lay down, Frierman.

F.M.: I'm not used to all this fresh air . . . (hangs across rail)

COWBOY: When I feels lak you look, I lak a hoss to lean on.

F.M.: (as before) I'm used to green smoke in my lungs.

COWBOY: So Panto, he sorta substitutes. (Pause) I neva tole him . . . but I'd ruther ha' a hoss.

F.M.: It's more . . . familiar . . . having that in my lungs.

COWBOY: Wonder why he quit his practicin' . . .

F.M.: And at the same time, I'm growing old . . .

COWBOY: I better take a look. (climbs down) Owutch! (limps off) Owutch! Owutch! Owutch! Etc.

F.M.: That can complicate matters . . .

COWBOY: He awful quiet for a injun. (limps to left wing) Owutch! Owutch! Owutch! Owutch!

F.M.: And on top of that, I've lost my hose. . . .

COWBOY: (at INDIAN's side) What's up? Owutch! (squats) Hey!

INDIAN: Loogat what she doin' to them wges, Hooty!

F.M.: That's a big loss. . . .

COWBOY: (beside himself) Wow! Hot dawg! Hot dawg!

M.A.: (OFF:) (Shrieking) Al! (Pause) What are you doing here!

F.M.: Dirty too.

COWBOY & INDIAN: Al? Al! (both start to run away but collide and fall off-stage)

AL: (OFF:) I saw you!

M.A.: (OFF:) Al! (Pause) No!

COWBOY & INDIAN: (OFF:) Al! (Pause) Naw! Naw!

F.M.: Maybe I will find it again.

AL: (OFF:) She's my sister!

M.A., COWBOY & INDIAN: (OFF:) Al! Al! No! Naw!

F.M.: I'd have to find her. (dismounts rail but pauses to admire his moc-casins)

AL: (OFF:) I'm her brother!

M.A., COWBOY & INDIAN: (OFF:) No! Naw! Al!

COWBOY: Aaaaieeeeeeeeeoooooooooooo.....

INDIAN: Naw! No!

M.A.: Eeeeeaaaaaaaiiiiiiooooooooooooo....

95
96

INDIAN: Naw! No!

M.A.: Mister Cowboy!

INDIAN: Iiiiow iiiiow iiiiow oooooo....

M.A.: Mister Indiana!

INDIAN: Ugh grrr hunnhh (Pause) hunnhh!

AL: Aaaaaooooohaaaiiiiiieeeeeaaaaaa.....

INDIAN: Haii eeeee unnhh (Pause) unnhhh (Pause) unnhhh....

M.A.: Al!

F.M.: I'll look. (walks toward left wing) They feel soft. (Pause) I like them.

M.A.: (bursting back on satge) Al! (Pause) That awful Al!

F.M.: There she is! (Pause) Hi!

M.A.: (walking backward from wing) I wanted him to stop! (Pause) He just can't stand an innocent grin!

F.M.: I was wondering about my hose

M.A.: (turning to face FM) Oh. (Pause) Al stabbed Mr. Cowboy.

F.M.: Did you lose it?

M.A.: (moving toward FM) He stabbed Mr. Indiana too.

F.M.: Maybe you just left it somewhere.

M.A.: But Mr. Indiana stabbed Al.

F.M.: I could look around.

M.A.: With a great big pointed arrow.

F.M.: But if you don't care . . . (Pause) Why should I?

M.A.: (coming into FM's arms) What oh what'll I do?

F.M.: (comforting her) Your hair seems more important.

M.A.: I think I'm going to throw up! (goes and leans across rail)

F.M.: (following her) There's something about its color. . . .

M.A.: All over a li'l half-a-dollar! (Pause) Maybe Mr. Cowboy was right about wages. (she recovers and hoists herself onto rail)

F.M.: (mounting rail also) The color makes me steam . . .

M.A.: If I buried it I wonder would it grow more li'l half-dollars?
(Pause) They wouldn't be wages, too, would they?

F.M.: Have you noticed my moccasins?

M.A.: Maybe they'd come up dimes and nickels . . . (laughs)

F.M.: They're quite soft.

M.A.: Long as they didn't come up aspirins, I wouldn't complain.
(laughs) I draw the line at aspirins . . . poppy seeds, too.
(laughs)

F.M.: And pretty, too.

M.A.: I woulda hada half-a-dollar . . . and a husbin' too. (Pause)
That'd been worth somethin', wouldn't it? (drops half-a-dollar in
bathing suit top)

F.M.: Those are red beads and real silver bullets. (Pause) At least I
think they're real . . . (Pause) Anyway, I'm sure the beads are
red . . .

M.A.: But ole Al had to come buttin' in!

F.M.: Almost as red as your hair.

M.A.: Messing up my marriage prospect and making me almost lose
my hard-earned half-a-dollar . . .

F.M.: Your hair sets me on fahr!

M.A.: I still have the half-a-dollar but I don't have anyone to marry
(Pause) and grow some more li'l half-dollars . . .

F.M.: But I don't want to put it out!

M.A.: (turns to FM) Unless . . .

F.M.: I'd like you to put it out!

M.A.: Kiss me, Mr. Fireman?

CURTAIN

96'
97