

The Reno Cure

A television pilot

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. MYRNA'S HALLWAY - DAY

MYRNA, 28, a beautiful, young housewife, the picture of 1950s suburban perfection, waits by the door with her husband's hat, coat, and briefcase. She checks her watch, preoccupied. She forces a smile as LES, 30, handsome, intimidating, enters from the kitchen, wiping his mouth on a napkin.

MYRNA

You'll miss your train, Les.

LES

I know, hon.

Les hands her the napkin and notices his hat in her hands.

LES (CONT'D)

Not by the brim, Myrn.

Len grabs the hat, gives her a condescending stare, and fixes the brim.

MYRNA

I'm sorry, Les.

LES

(putting on his coat
and hat)

Good thing you're pretty.

Myrna fakes a smile.

LES (CONT'D)

I want the big steak in the freezer
for dinner, the big one. 6:30.
Don't overcook it this time. You're
not *that* pretty.

Les expects a laugh but doesn't get it.

LES (CONT'D)

That was a joke. What's the matter
with you? You're so serious. Jesus.

MYRNA

I'm sorry.

LES

Yeah. You said that already.

He gives her a hard look.

LES (CONT'D)
You're acting weird this morning.
What's the story, Myrn?

MYRNA
Just not feeling well.

LES
Really? Not feeling well, huh?

Trying to be sexy, Les slowly backs her up against the door.

LES (CONT'D)
I made you feel pretty good last
night though, didn't I?

Les moves his hand slowly down Myrna's body. He begins to
lift her skirt.

MYRNA
Les, your train!

LES
I'll be late. You got me going.

MYRNA
Don't you have that meeting?

After a moment...

LES
Shit.

Les looks at his watch; He can't be late.

LES (CONT'D)
Shit. Myrna, why'd you go get me all
hot like that?

He grabs her face, like he's scolding a child. He thinks
he's being funny.

LES (CONT'D)
You're in trouble when I get home.
Big trouble.

No response from Myrna. After a beat...

LES (CONT'D)
Whatever is wrong with you today,
figure it out before I get home.

Myrna gets out of Les's way, as he charges out. Once the
door is closed, she gets on her tip-toes to look out the
small window in the top of the door.

ANGLE ON MYRNA'S POV THROUGH THE WINDOW.

Len rushes to the car, and pulls out into a sunny, Westchester street.

BACK TO SCENE

Myrna leans her head against the door and takes a deep breath, holding the tiny cross she wears around her neck.

She digs into the pocket of her apron and pulls out a well-worn, pink business card.

ANGLE ON THE BUSINESS CARD

Samantha Ranch: Reno, Nevada

EXT. SAMANTHA RANCH PORCH - DAY

GINA and BILLIE stand looking out at the desert. GINA, 40, in pants and a cowboy shirt, is pretty but practical. BILLIE, 32, zaftig and a little world-weary, brusque but gregarious, is wearing an expensive-looking dress.

Gina holds Billie's suitcase. Billie stares off into the distance, cigarette dangling from her lips.

GINA

So, what do you think?

BILLIE

I wasn't expecting this much... flat.

GINA

Beautiful, don't you think?

BILLIE

Always this hot?

GINA

Pretty much.

BILLIE

I need to buy some clothes like yours, cowgirl. I'm sweating like a pig.

GINA

Let's get inside. I'll get you a cold drink.

INT. SAMANTHA RANCH LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Gina enters and holds the door for Billie.

GINA
The first few days are always hard,
but the women here are wonderful,
and they'll help you.

Gina reached behind the counter for a bottle of Coke, which she opens and hands to Billie.

GINA (CONT'D)
And, *I'm* a good listener.

Billie looks around.

GINA (CONT'D)
Really, six weeks is a nice break.
You can think about what you really
want. Find yourself again, you know?

BILLIE
This lady is found, dear. Here I
am. In the desert.

GINA
Mr. Clarke will be here this afternoon
to handle the paperwork. He's our
lawyer, and friend of the ranch.

BILLIE
He cute?

Gina ignores the question and picks up the suitcase again.

GINA
You're in room #7.

INT. MYRNA'S HALLWAY - DAY

Myrna opens the closet door and pulls out two suitcases and a purse. Nervously she checks the window again: The coast is clear.

She pulls papers from the purse: plane ticket, birth certificate, passport, and an envelope of money - several hundred dollars - then stuffs it all back in.

She pulls her coat out of the closet, then changes her mind and hangs it back up. It falls. She leaves it.

She checks the window again, then pulls out a compact and fixes her makeup.

ANGLE ON MYRNA'S REFLECTION IN THE COMPACT.

Only now we realize: makeup covers up a nasty bruise around her eye.

A HONK scares Myrna.

ANGLE ON MYRNA'S POV THROUGH THE WINDOW

Myrna looks out the window and sees a taxi.

BACK TO SCENE

Myrna grits her teeth: This is her last chance to change her mind. She powders her bruise and closes the compact, resolved.

INT. BILLIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Billie is looking at herself in the mirror on the dresser, powdering her sweaty face with a compact, as Gina puts the suitcase on the bed. Billie closes the compact and sips her Coke.

BILLIE

There are more coming. Suitcases.

GINA

Okay.

BILLIE

Quiet here, huh? I thought there'd be... I don't know. Fun. Reno! Men.

GINA

No men allowed at Samantha Ranch, except the hands, Mrs. Ackerman. One of my rules. Think of it as a break from that sort of thing. And, if you must... you can go into town for... diversion.

BILLIE

Oh?

GINA

In six weeks, when you start your new life, you'll be so glad you took this time. I promise.

BILLIE

Well, I'm sure my boyfriend would disagree.

(taking the last swig
from her Coke)

Got anything stronger?

INT. TAXI - MORNING

Myrna sits in the back seat. There's a SLAM as the driver closes the trunk, startling Myrna. She watches the driver as he comes around to front and gets in.

TAXI DRIVER
Where to, Ma'am?

MYRNA
Idlewild, please.

TAXI DRIVER
(turning around to
look at her)
You flying alone? I wouldn't allow
me wife fly alone.

MYRNA
Neither would my husband. Please.

The driver turns front. Myrna looks out the window as the car starts to move.

INT. BILLIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Similarly, Billie is seated on her bed looking out the window. Gina lingers by the door.

GINA
This is the start of your new life,
Mrs. Ackerman. I'm just terribly
excited for you. Come down once
you're settled, and I'll introduce
you to the horses.

BILLIE
(pretending it's fun)
Fun!

GINA
Are you okay, Mrs. Ackerman?

BILLIE
You know what? I've never been better.
I'm sorry. I'm glad to be here.
Really, I've never been better.

Gina exits and closes the door. Billie takes a flask out of her bag, takes a swig, and looks out the window again. She's already bored.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Oh. God.

INT. TAXI - DAY

As Myrna watched the suburbs and her old life pass by, she can't keep it in. She starts to cry, trying to hide it from the driver.

MYRNA

Oh, god.

TITLE CARD: THE RENO CURE

ACT 1

EXT. SAMANTHA RANCH - DAY

It's 1953. Samantha Ranch is a run-down, but respectable dude ranch in Reno, Nevada. Mountains, Desert, Cacti, Dust. On the grounds there are a lodge, a stable and a covered-up pool, all behind a fence. A pink sign reads: Samantha Ranch, Since 1939.

INT. GINA AND SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Gina is tidying up the apartment, which is located behind the lobby. It's small, and messy. She calls out to an adjoining room.

GINA

Sam. Are you up? (Beat.) Sam? I don't mind that you missed breakfast, but come on. Sam!

Gina's 16 year-old daughter, SAM, enters from the bedroom. She's a tomboy, dressed in jeans and a work shirt. Pigtailed.

SAM

Mom.

GINA

Go grab some cereal. Maybe Mrs. P has some leftover pancakes. Hurry. Hurry.

SAM

Mom.

GINA

Honey, now.

SAM

Mom!

GINA

Sam, what?

SAM

I'm pregnant.

GINA

No, you're not. And, I hate the word. Go eat breakfast.

SAM

But, I have a point!

GINA

And what point is that?

SAM

I'm NOT pregnant...

(off Gina's look)

"with child"... that's the point.

I'm a responsible adult.

GINA

Honestly, Sam.

SAM

I could be... what?... "in the family way", but I'm not! I got up by myself. I'm on time! Let **me** show him around.

GINA

Honey, he's a cowboy. An actual cowboy. I need you on the desk.

SAM

He's not a cowboy, he's an employee at a dude ranch. I want to meet him!

GINA

I appreciate it, Sam, I do. We can talk about what an adult you are later. I promise, okay? Go eat, and get on the desk. He's probably here already.

Sam exits in a huff. A BELL rings.

GINA (CONT'D)

Shoot.

Gina exits.

INT. SAMANTHA RANCH LOBBY - DAY

CLARENCE, a lawyer, 45, handsome, slick, is ringing the desk bell, cowboy hat in hand. The lobby is well-decorated and inviting.

With Clarence is his gal friday CELIA, 30, meek, quiet.
Celia is carrying some luggage belonging to Myrna.

GINA
Welcome. Welcome. Hi Clarence.

CLARENCE
Good morning, Gina. Beautiful day.
(To Celia)
Bring in the rest of Mrs. Corvinus's
bags, please, sweetheart.

Celia does. Silently. Gina signs Myrna in.

GINA
Okay. Corvinus, V-I-N-U?-S?

MYRNA
Yes. Mrs. Leslie Corvinus.

GINA
One of the house rules: we prefer
not to use our husband's Christian
names.

MYRNA
Oh. Of course. Myrna. Sorry.

GINA
Oh, don't be. Okay, Mrs. Myrna
Corvinus. Welcome!

CLARENCE
Mrs. Corvinus has just flown in from
New York.

GINA
City?

MYRNA
Westchester.

CLARENCE
You have a vacancy, correct?

GINA
As it so happens... SAM!

Myrna jumps.

GINA.
Sorry. We've had quite a morning
already.

Sam enters from the kitchen, pancake in hand.

GINA
Well, girl, it's your lucky day.
Responsibility! Mrs. Corvinus, this
is my daughter Samantha.

CELIA
Like Samanatha Ranch.

They look at Celia, as if they'd forgotten she was there.

GINA
Sam, you get to show Mrs. Corvinus
to her room. Number 4.

She hands the key to Sam, as Sam bolts down the rest of her
pancake.

GINA (CONT'D)
Please show her around, and tell her
about the amenities.
(To Myrna.)
I recommend the 10am horseback rides.
The vistas are magnificent. They're
what sold me and my husband on Reno
years ago.

CLARENCE
Roy is no longer with us, but he's
here is spirit.

GINA
Yes, his debts live on.
(beat)
And so does Roy actually; he's not
dead, Clarence.

SAM
Mom, don't you need to be somewhere?

GINA
In fact, I do. Welcome. Welcome. I
look forward to getting to know you.

MYRNA
Thank you, Mrs...

GINA
Fischer. But it's Gina, please.

Gina quickly walks toward the front door.

CLARENCE
Well then, come to my office tomorrow.
Sam, you'll drive Mrs. Corvinus?

SAM

Sure.

CLARENCE

Wait, why are you not in school?
It's Wednesday.

SAM

Fall break. Earning some extra money.

CLARENCE

Good for you, kid.
(To Myrna)
Come by tomorrow, and we'll get the
paperwork started to apply for a
court date.

MYRNA

That simple?

CLARENCE

That simple. Gina will be your
witness, or I guess Sam can be now
that she's 16. Find out what she
charges.

Sam blushes.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Now, I'm sure you have questions,
and we will get to them all tomorrow.
Settle in. These girls are the
sweetest in town. Correct, Celia?

Celia silently nods.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

If you'll excuse us, we are due in
court.

They exit. SAM carries one of the bags with her. Myrna goes
to grab the other.

SAM

No, no. I'll come back and get it.
This way.

INT. LIVING ROOM — CONTINUOUS

The common living room is very comfortable. There are couches,
a television, a wall of books, and a card table with checkers.
In the corner, on an oversized chair, sits Billie, smoking a
cigarette as she looks up from her newspaper.

BILLIE
Finally.

MYRNA
Sorry?

SAM
Mrs. Corvinus, this is Mrs. Ackerman.

BILLIE
Soon to be Miss McGillicuty once again. And then, Mrs. Drutch in a few short weeks — God, I hate that name.

She puts out the cigarette.

SAM
Wilhelmina McGillicutty...

Sam strains to remember...

SAM (CONT'D)
Ackerman Drutch. Drutch?

BILLIE
God, I hate that name. Billie.

MYRNA
Myrna.

BILLIE
Now that's a cute name: Myrna! Anyway, I'm so glad to have fresh blood around. I've been bored to tears.

Billie gives Myrna the up-and-down.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
I need someone to get into trouble with. You got a dark side, honey?

SAM
Mrs. Ackerman, you're simply the worst. You'll frighten her.

BILLIE
It's true. I am THE WORST. I'll see you at lunch?

MYRNA
I expect so.

BILLIE

The food here is actually pretty good. The happy hour is lacking, but... we do what we can.

Billie pulls the flask out of her purse, shakes it, and drops in back in. This gets a small smile out of Myrna.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Sam, how about a trip into town later? I know Carole has to go in for a fitting.

(beat)

I'll buy you a malted, and we can talk about boys. Your mother doesn't have to know.

Sam is excited by the invitation.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Myrna, join us?

MYRNA

Thank you. Pleasure to have met you.

Sam and Myrna pass by the living room into the hallway.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE STABLES - DAY

The Samantha Ranch truck, with it's cracked, pink paint, pulls up beside the barn bringing a cloud of dust along with it.

GW, 40, handsome in a working-class way, steps out of the passenger-side door. He gingerly walks to the back of the truck to retrieve his duffel bag. There's pain in his left foot.

He is joined by JACK. He's 66, Tejano, strong, but over-the-hill--a weathered cowboy.

JACK

So? GW?

GW

(distracted)

What?

JACK

What do you think?

GW

Sorry. Well, you didn't lie -- it's beautiful.

(MORE)

GW (CONT'D)

(beat)

Jack, I know you told me to stop saying it, but I have to say *thank you* again.

JACK

You're welcome.

GW

It'd been so long, Jack. I can't believe you even thought of me for this job.

JACK

You leave an impression. What other cowboy brings a sack of books to camp out with the sheep? A comic book — fine. A dirty magazine. But real books...

GW

Ah, well.

JACK

You're good for this job. You're strong. You're good with the animals, yes. But, you're smart. You can talk to these women about the flora and fauna, the geology, local history. AND, you're smart enough to follow the rules.

GW

You don't have to worry about that.

Gina walks toward the cowboys. Before she's close enough to hear...

JACK

Here comes Gina. Mrs. Fischer. I love Gina like family. Como familia, son. Respect.

Gina extends her hand to shake.

GINA

So, nice to meet you. Jack speaks very highly of you.

GW

Yes, ma'am. Jack's a good man.

GINA

The best one I know.

Gina gives Jack a smile.

GINA (CONT'D)
How was that bus from Idaho, GW? May
I call you GW?

GW
Yes, ma'am. Just fine.

GINA
Coeur d'Alane?

GW
Yes, ma'am

GINA
Gorgeous, I hear. Well, I'll take
it from here, Jack. Thanks. It's
about time for the morning ride.

JACK
I'm on! Settle in, son. I'll see
you later.

Jack exits, as Gina leads GW around the back of the stable.

INT. GW'S APARTMENT — MOMENTS LATER

It's a shabby room with a desk and a single bed. They enter.
GW throws down his bag and walks to the window, immediately
drawn to the beautiful view.

GINA
You'll tend to the horses and the
stable. If we ever get the pool
working again... And, you'll teach the
women how to ride, and take them out
each morning after breakfast. You'll
need to learn the trails pretty well.
And you'll have some light handyman
work. Sound good?

GW
Ma'am, I'm much obliged. This is a
far cry from herding sheep.

GINA
Not that far, really.

GW and Gina share a small laugh.

GINA (CONT'D)
You'll get three squares a day.
(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

You'll eat out here mostly, with the exception of Sunday dinner, when all are welcome in the dining room.

GW

Okay.

GINA

We have some fragile women in there, and it's best the hands don't mix. I hope you'll understand.

GW

Of course.

GINA

Excellent.

A small silence.

GINA (CONT'D)

Oh, and, my daughter Sam is around here somewhere... Brace yourself for 20 questions.

GW

Okay.

GINA

I need to get inside, but get yourself settled! Jack'll be back in an hour or so. There's a fence needs some work.

GW

Yes, ma'am.

GINA

It's so nice to have you here.

Gina exits. GW follows her and stands in the doorway.

EXT. OUTSIDE GW'S APARTMENT — CONTINUOUS

Relief pours over GW, as he watched Gina go. He adjusts his weight off his injured left foot. He makes the sign of the cross.

GW

Thank God.

INT. GW'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

GW reenters and limps to the bed. He pulls off his boot, and examines his foot. He peels back a bandage, and reveals a foot with a missing pinkie toe. He roots through his bag for his tin of ointment.

INT. MYRNA'S ROOM - DAY

The door opens. Sam enters, followed by Myrna. The room is small, but pleasant. Just like GW, Myrna immediately goes to the window and looks out at the view.

MYRNA

Beautiful.

SAM

You think?

Myrna notices a second bed in the room, and looks at SAM.

SAM (CONT'D)

I don't expect you'll be having a roommate, Mrs. Corvinus. We haven't been doubling up in weeks. I guess divorce is out of season.

MYRNA

You can call me Myrna.

SAM

Can't actually. Mom's rules. Mom and me are first names; guests are last names.

Sam puts the beautiful suitcase on the bed.

SAM (CONT'D)

This suitcase is something. Did you get it in New York?

MYRNA

London actually.

SAM

London. Wow. I can't wait to see London. Foggy?

MYRNA

Sorry?

SAM

Is it foggy? I heard it's foggy.

MYRNA
It is, actually.

SAM
I pictured it foggy. I'll grab the
other one and you're all set. Be
right back.

Sam leaves, closing the door so it's slightly ajar. Myrna sits on the unoccupied bed. In a quiet moment, she begins to panic. *Is this my new life?* She hears SAM'S FOOTSTEPS and pulls it together as Sam enters with the other bag.

SAM (CONT'D)
That should do it. You okay, Mrs.
Corvinus? You look a little white.

MYRNA
I just need to rest.

Myrna goes through her purse to find a tip for Sam.

SAM
No, Mom won't let me take tips.

MYRNA
Take it. Please. It's the first dollar
toward your trip to London.

SAM
(Taking the money)
Thanks. Fog.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom is small and simple. JUDGE MARSHALL WALTERS, 70, sits on the bench like a lump in a black robe. There's a STENOGRAPHER, CLACKING away, and a severe-looking BAILIFF.

Behind a table, opposite the bench, are Clarence, and his beautiful, young client, ELEANORE MCKENNA. In the seats behind them sit only Celia, and RITA KIRKLAND, a matronly ranch owner.

JUDGE WALTERS
Mr. Clarke?

CLARENCE
Thank you, your honor. And may I
add what a pleasure it is to be in
your courtroom, as always.

JUDGE WALTERS
Mr. Clarke, let's get on with it. I
have lunch.

CLARENCE

Right. Mrs. Eleanore McKenna, a Nevada resident, is seeking a divorce from her husband, one Mr. Douglas McKenna, on the grounds of irreconcilable differences.

JUDGE WALTERS

And Mr. McKenna is where at the moment?

CLARENCE

Waltham, Massachusetts.

JUDGE WALTERS

Naturally. Mrs. Kirkland, will you attest to Mrs. McKenna's residency?

Rita stands.

RITA

Mrs. McKenna has been living in my house since September 1st, your honor.

JUDGE WALTERS

And you've seen her every day.

RITA

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE WALTERS

Children?

CLARENCE

In Needham, Mass with Mrs. McKenna's sister, Elizabeth. And they will be joining Mrs. McKenna shortly.

JUDGE WALTERS

So, you all intend to remain in Nevada?

Clarence gives Eleanore a look.

ELEANORE

(to Clarence)

Talk?

CLARENCE

Yes.

ELEANORE

Yes, sir.

JUDGE WALTERS

Naturally.

The judge rifles through some paperwork, and signs his name.

JUDGE WALTERS (CONT'D)

I hereby grant your divorce.

The judge smacks the gavel on the bench, and quickly disappears into his chambers. The bailiff and stenographer follow.

There's silence in the courtroom. Eleanore looks back to Rita.

ELEANORE

That it?

RITA

Congratulations, honey. Let's get back to the ranch, and get you packed up.

ELEANORE

I was hoping that... Mr. Clarke would drive me back. Maybe stop off for a drink on the way... to celebrate? What do you think, Clarence?

CLARENCE

A drink?

RITA

It's not noon yet, dear.

Clarence considers the implications.

CLARENCE

Well, a drink sounds delightful.

ELEANORE

Great.

Eleanore skips toward the exit.

CLARENCE

(to Celia)

Clear my schedule for this afternoon.

Celia gives him a knowing look.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Already cleared, huh? Good girl.

Clarence picks his cowboy hat off the table, and puts it on. He pulls a cigar out of his breast pocket, and holds it in his teeth, as he saunters out of the courtroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM — DAY

The next day, 11:30am. Sam and Myrna (looking a bit of a mess) enter in a hurry. Clarence, in a great mood, sits at the checkers table with CAROLE, 35, a rich East Coast woman, in a nice dress. Celia sits in a chair nearby. Clarence's cigar smokes in the ashtray on the table.

MYRNA

I'm so sorry, Mr. Clarke. I meant to come see you yesterday, but I wasn't well. I'm so sorry.

CLARENCE

No trouble. I was... out most of the day anyway. Either way, I'd forgotten to get Mrs. Quinn's signature on this. Just give me one moment.

(To Carole)

By this X here, sweetheart, and that's that.

CAROLE

Okay.

She signs.

CLARENCE

And when Judge Walters asks you if you intend to stay in Nevada?

CAROLE

I say: yes.

CLARENCE

And you say: yes. And we'll leave from there to go to the airport.

SAM

(to Myrna)

Mrs. Quinn's last day is Sunday. On Monday, she's done.

MYRNA

Congratulations.

CAROLE

I can hardly believe it. Mr. Clarke... what can I say? Thank you — you've been so kind.

CLARENCE
Happy. Happy to do it. Celia, take
this?

Celia takes the papers, and puts them in Clarence's briefcase.
Clarence puffs his cigar.

CAROLE
(To Clarence)
I hope to see you at Sunday dinner.

CLARENCE
If it's okay with Gina.

SAM
It's okay with Gina.

CLARENCE
I never know.

Carole can't help herself; she hugs her lawyer. She hugs
Celia too. Clarence admires her behind as she scampers away.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

SAM
I'll get you a Coke, Mrs. Corvinus.
It'll settle your stomach.

Sam exits. Clarence smokes his cigar through the next
exchange.

CLARENCE
Not feeling well?

MYRNA
I'm fine really. Thank you. Mr.
Clarke, may I speak to you in private.

Myrna nods her head toward Celia, who is a little creepy.

CLARENCE
Oh, she's fine.

Celia shrugs in agreement.

MYRNA
Okay. Well, I just feel terrible. I
have not been entirely forthright
about my situation. You see, my
husband, Les, is not a very nice
man...

CLARENCE
I'll stop you right there. Is your
name Myrna Ann Corvinus?

MYRNA
Yes.

CLARENCE
Are you seeking a divorce from...

He looks through his notes.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
...one Mr. Leslie Corvinus of Bedford,
New York.

MYRNA
Yes.

CLARENCE
That's all I need to know. Mrs.
Corvinus, I have been in this business
for 20 years. All sorts of women
come to Nevada... to Samantha Ranch,
and a dozen more like it, for all
sorts of reasons...

This is a speech he knows well.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
And I respect each and every one of
you! I know what kind of bravery it
takes to get on that plane, to say
goodbye to the life you had--the
life you thought you wanted. You've
chosen to start over, and I'm here
to help you negotiate the very liberal
laws of the great state of Nevada to
make that happen. It's as simple as
that. That's all I need to know.

MYRNA
That's... Thank you, Mr. Clarke.

CLARENCE
And if you need someone to talk to,
try the girls here. They all
understand. Gina understands. Hell,
talk to Celia - she's literally the
best listener in the state. Right,
Celia?

Celia almost speaks, but chooses not to.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

See what I mean?

MYRNA

I do.

CLARENCE

Now, let's get your John Hancock right here, and make you a single woman.

He begins filling out a form, as Myrna tries to hold back tears of relief. Gina enters with Myrna's Coke. Billie is with her, drinking her own Coke. Billie loudly plops into her usual comfy chair with a newspaper.

GINA

The Coke is from Sam.

CLARENCE

Gina, I need to talk with you. Do you have a moment? Hello Mrs. Ackerman.

Billie waves as she swigs Coke.

BILLIE

Do I smell like horse?

GINA

You smell fine. Sure, Clarence. Come back when you're done here.

CLARENCE

We are done. For today, anyway.

GINA

Okay.

Clarence exits, cigar in his mouth, with Gina. Celia follows. She turns back to speak to Myrna, but (again) decides against it, and exits. Myrna is alone with Billie.

BILLIE

Myrn, you can smell me from there, can't you?

MYRNA

I'm sorry.

Before Billie can continue, Clarence returns and drops his cigar in the ashtray.

CLARENCE

Gina hates the smell.

Laughing at himself, Clarence exits again.

BILLIE
You think they're an item?

MYRNA
Gina and Mr. Clarke?

BILLIE
Very perceptive! No, not anymore.

Billie smirks.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
No, I mean Clarence and that mute secretary!

MYRNA
Oh.

BILLIE
I think she takes care of his briefs.

She laughs. No reaction from Myrna.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Briefs?

She laughs again. Beat. Billie lights a cigarette.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Let's take a walk. I need to air out--get the Trigger smell off my dress.

MYRNA
I'd rather not, but thank you, Mrs. Ackerman.

BILLIE
Billie. Come on. I'm bored! And, it'll be good for you.

The cigarette dangles from her lips.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
The air out here, it's supposed to be special or some-such. Come. Come. Come.

Billie practically lifts Myrna out of her seat, puts down her empty Coke bottle next to Myrna's full one, and escorts her out of the room.

EXT. THE GROUNDS — DAY

Billie and Myrna stroll. Billie smokes a cigarette.

BILLIE

It's the nicest restaurant in Nevada.
Bonanza something. Doesn't a steak
sound good?

Myrna holds her upset stomach.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Cliff won't take me unless he's got
a date for his friend. He's showing
off.

MYRNA

I'm really not up to it.

BILLIE

You'll like him. I promise. And if
you don't, it'll be the best meal of
your life. Caviar, maybe.

(after a silence)

You've got to get right back up on
that horse, you know.

MYRNA

Sorry?

They spy GW 100 feet away, digging a hole for a fence post.
He's sweating, and down to his undershirt. They slowly walk
his way.

BILLIE

Speaking of stallions...

MYRNA

Billie!

BILLIE

Oh, that man is delicious. So
mysterious! I hounded him the entire
morning ride, but he's as tight as a
clam. I love that in a man.

Billie gets a mischievous look on her face.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

And you know what? I KNOW I've met
him before.

MYRNA

Really?

BILLIE
I have a brain for faces. Hey GW!

MYRNA
(embarrassed)
Billie!

As they approach him, he pulls his shirt off the fence and buttons up. He barely looks up.

GW
Good afternoon, ladies. Pardon.

BILLIE
Don't get dressed on our account.
It's warm for October. I have half a
mind to take off **my** shirt. GW, this
is Mrs. Corvinus, but she insists
you call her Myrna.

Myrna is embarrassed.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
You really missed out on the ride
today. GW is masterful with those
beasts. I've never been much for
riding, but I will be seeing him
every morning from now on. Myrna is
joining us all the way for New York.

When GW hears "New York" he quickly looks up at Myrna, then looks down at the dirt.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry GW, I never got where you
came from.

GW
Oh, here and there.

BILLIE
I love Here and There! They have the
finest restaurants.

No one laughs.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Well, I know I've met you before,
sir. Maybe you bought me a drink at
the cocktail bar at Here and There.

GW
More likely that I parked your car,
ma'am.

BILLIE

Oh, GW! GW!

MYRNA

I'd like to get back. I don't feel well.

BILLIE

Okay. Fine. See you around, cowboy.

GW

Ladies.

GW takes another look at Myrna, as the women walk away. He's intrigued. After a few steps, Billie abruptly stops to think.

MYRNA

What?

BILLIE

Oh. Hold on. I think... No. Nothing, I've lost it.

Billie grins, and takes one last look at GW.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Mmmmm... I love having a new toy.

INT. GINA'S APARTMENT — DAY

Clarence sits at a small table. Gina joins him, and places a basket of muffins in front of him.

CLARENCE

These safe?

GINA

I didn't make them, if that's what you mean.

CLARENCE

Good.

He begins eating a muffin.

GINA

So?

CLARENCE

I have to say you have many virtues: You're beautiful. You're smart. But you are no cook.

GINA

And no businesswoman, it seems.

CLARENCE
It's not all bad news.

GINA
Just mostly?

CLARENCE
There's no money to fix the pool--
not by a long shot. And I'd say you're
going to have to sell at least 2 of
the horses.

GINA
Shoot. Sam will be heartbroken.

CLARENCE
But! There are a lot of income sources
you are just not exploiting--ways to
attract rich women. Cocktail parties
for one, like those blow-outs at
Rita's Ranch? People love them.
Ava Gardner loved those parties.

GINA
Ava Garner?

CLARENCE
She stayed there before she married
Sinatra. You'd heard that.

GINA
That's true? I thought that was
idle gossip.

CLARENCE
Or even simpler: put a man at the
bus station with a car to bring
stragglers in.

GINA
We are referral only. Samantha Ranch
does not advertise. Who knows who'll
show up?

CLARENCE
You can't rely on word of mouth, and
the couple of lawyers you know out
East sending you clients.

GINA
I hate those ideas. I really do.

Clarence considers if he should continue...

CLARENCE

I know what you're going to say to this one, but I have to suggest one more time: For Christ's sake, build that chapel.

GINA

Clarence, that's the last thing in the world... I'm in the business of helping women, and that doesn't include helping them walk right out of one mistake and into another.

CLARENCE

I respect that you think of this place as a family establishment, and that's wonderful. But you have to "sex" this place up if you want to compete.

GINA

Ugh.

CLARENCE

How many women do you have staying here right now? Three?

(beat)

And, you know I love Jack...

GINA

Non-negotiable.

CLARENCE

You've had to hire another hand to pick up his slack!

GINA

Non-negotiable! I'll... I'll find a way to fill this place.

CLARENCE

You'd better. A couple more months like this... Hell, even one more month like this...

GINA

I've got it.

She tears into a muffin too.

GINA (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking a look at the books.

CLARENCE

You know... **my** offer still stands.

He grabs her hand across the table.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Marriage isn't always a mistake.

GINA
Oh Clarence, you would marry little old me? And give up all of your girlfriends?

CLARENCE
I'm serious, Gina. You know I love you and Sam.

GINA
I do know that. And, you're sweet. But, I won't be getting married again--to you or any man. Go figure, living in this house has done very little for my faith in the institution. Coffee?

CLARENCE
Yes, please. No sugar--I'm sweet enough. You can't afford it anyway.

Gina gets up and walks toward the kitchen. Clarence is left alone. He's knows his chance will come.

ACT 2

INT. SAMANTHA RANCH LOBBY - DAY

The next day, after breakfast. Gina and Sam are behind the counter. Gina has a list of chores for Sam.

GINA
After you clean up the dining room, and sweep the porch, don't forget to water the plants - they're near death.

SAM
I know. I know. Desert.

GINA
Don't be smart. You're the one who wanted to earn extra money.

SAM
I know that too.

GINA
Also, what do you think of cornflower?

SAM

I have no idea what that is.

Gina has a catalogue of paint colors.

GINA

Cornflower blue for #8? Or maybe
some kind of yellow?

SAM

Mom, I don't care.

GINA

When you take this place over, I
want you to like the color of #8.
Some day.

SAM

Mom.

GINA

You could do a lot worse. A woman
has got to look out for herself. You
can't depend on a man for everything.

SAM

But, I'm going to have impeccable
taste.

GINA

What was that, young lady?

SAM

It's just... I've learned a few things
living here. I know everything a man
can do wrong. I know everything a
man shouldn't be. So, when I choose
a husband, he'll be perfect. Simple.
And my perfect husband will sweep me
off my feet and carry me out of the
desert.

Gina can't think of a response to that.

GINA

Water the plants.

Sam exits. Gina looks at the paint choices.

GINA (CONT'D)

Cornflower...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE STABLES— DAY

Billie and Carole, in fashionable riding gear, are on horseback, so is GW. Jack stands nearby. Billie spies Myrna as she walks toward the group.

BILLIE
Here comes the dude.

CAROLE
Billie, that's not very nice.

BILLIE
Look at her. She's a dude.

Myrna, wearing pressed pants and a lacy blouse, is in a good mood for the first time since her arrival.

JACK
Don't take offense, ma'am. "Dude" as in "Dude Ranch". She means you look like city folk.

MYRNA
No offense taken. I've never ridden one of these creatures before. Billie, I love that outfit!

BILLIE
Nice, right? I got it yesterday at Parkers.

JACK
GW, why don't you jump down and get Mrs. Corvinus saddled up, and I'll bring these ladies out.

GW hesitates.

GW
Yes, sir.

GW jumps down, gingerly, to avoid his injured foot. Jack needs GW's help to get into his saddle.

GW (CONT'D)
Up you go.

JACK
Thanks, mijo.

Jack leads the ladies off. Billie turns back and yells:

BILLIE
Myrn. If you fall off, just GET BACK
UP on that stallion!

Myrna blushes. GW gestures toward the barn- "shall we?"

INT. STABLES — CONTINUOUS

GW
So, your first time riding?

MYRNA
I'm afraid so.

GW
Don't worry. I'll give you Rosa,
she's as gentle as they come.

GW opens a gate revealing a beautiful pony, Rosa.

MYRNA
Well, I feel safe already; Rose was
my mother's name.

GW
I had a sister named Rose.

MYRNA
Really?

GW
Rosalia.

MYRNA
Pretty name. I'm sorry: had?

GW
She died. When I was young.

MYRNA
Oh, I'm so sorry.

GW
No, I'm sorry, this is supposed to
be fun, and here I am...

MYRNA
No, I'm already having fun.

They have a moment.

MYRNA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm suddenly a little
sick to my stomach. Do you mind--
Can we try this again tomorrow?

GW

Sure. Just let me put Rosa up, and I'll walk you in.

MYRNA

No, I can make it. Thank you. And I promise to get some proper clothes. No more dude clothes.

GW

If you like.

GW turns Rosa around, and Myrna hurries back.

EXT. THE FRONT OF THE RANCH — CONTINUOUS

Myrna approaches the front steps and stops cold. She puts her hand over her mouth, as if she might vomit. She leans over the shrubs. Relief pours over her as the feeling passes.

INT. DINING ROOM — NIGHT

A non-Sunday dinner. Gina, and Sam sit at the table. Billie stands by the window. MRS. P, the cook, 50, black, rushes in with hot serving dishes and puts them on the sideboard.

BILLIE

Just soup for me, Mrs. P.

SAM

You going out?

BILLIE

Was that a car?

SAM

I don't think so.

BILLIE

My beau and his friend will be here any minute. He's always early. He's predictable that way.

GINA

Two dates for this evening?

BILLIE

Maybe. I'm a lot of woman, Gina.

Carole enters with a flourish, wearing a new dress.

CAROLE

What do you think?

BILLIE
I think Gunther is going to drool.

CAROLE
(Crestfallen)
Gunther?

BILLIE
He doesn't look like a Gunther.
He's more like a Paul or a Robert.
Relax. They're not here yet.

Carole sits at the table.

GINA
Well, more food for us then. Sam,
grace?

Gina and Sam grab hands, and bow their heads. Carole joins in happily; Billie joins in too. Gina's prayer is heard as we watch the action in the dining room and in GW's apartment.

GINA (CONT'D)
Dear Lord, we are
thankful for these thy
gifts, which we are
about to receive by
thy grace. May we use
them to nourish our
bodies and and thee to
nourish our souls.
Thank you, Lord, for
the fellowship that we
share at Samantha Ranch.
May this be a safe
place, where family is
healed and happiness
is created. We pray
for this in thy name.

INT. GW'S APARTMENT — SAME
MOMENT

GW sits at his table, facing
the open window, with a tray
of food: two sandwiches, a
bowl of soup and slice of cake.
Before he begins to eat, he
opens the small wooden box
which is set on the desk. He
pulls out a Catholic prayer
card, and bows his head to
pray. He mumbles to himself

GINA AND GW
Amen.

INT. DINING ROOM — MOMENTS LATER

As they begin to eat, Myrna enters the dining room, looking
weak.

BILLIE
Myrn, You're off the hook. Carole is
going with me.

Carole gets up and spins.

MYRNA

Lovely dress.

Carole squeals and checks out the window for the car.

CAROLE

This may technically be my first
date. Ever. Do you count the prom?

GINA

Have a seat, Mrs. Corvinus.

MYRNA

I'm actually ravenous. What's for
dinner?

Mrs. P enters with a basket of bread.

SAM

Parisian roasted chicken!
(to Mrs. P.)
Bon appetite.

MRS. P

My, my, you're so sophisticated.

SAM

Mrs. P. is short for Mrs. Paris.

MRS. P.

I went to Paris when I was young,
and Sam thinks I'm a world traveler.

SAM

I've been calling her Mrs. Paris
since I was little.

MRS. P.

It's sure nicer to the ear than
Agatha.

MYRNA

Really? You've been to Paris?

BILLIE

How did a colored women get up the
money to go to Europe?

They all let that slide.

GINA

Have you been to Paris, Mrs. Corvinus?

MYRNA

I have, as a matter of fact. Several times.

There's a HONK.

BILLIE

They're here. Oh, my handsome *spare*!

MYRNA

Spare?

CAROLE

Shouldn't they come in to greet us?
I was planning on making a grand entrance.

GINA

You've been married for a long time.
Men honk now.

Carole, looking skeptical, goes with Billie to the door.

MYRNA

Sorry, a "spare"?

GINA

It's an old Nevada term. It the man that a woman brings with her to town, so once she's done with her husband she can marry him.

SAM

So romantic! A handsome man, sitting in a sad, lonely room, just waiting. Waiting for his dream woman.

INT. GW'S APARTMENT — LATER

GW uses a piece of bread to soak up his soup. He opens the box to place the prayer card back in, and closes it. After a thoughtful moment, he's moved to re-open it.

He riffles through a few old pictures, and unfolds a newspaper article: ... STILL AT LARGE. He picks up a picture of himself and a handsome younger man, his brother. It's too painful. He SHUTS THE BOX again. SLAM.

INT. THE DINING ROOM — SAME MOMENT

The door SLAMS shut. Gina, Sam and Myrna sit at the table. Mrs. P lingers.

MRS. P.

How is your chicken?

MYRNA
Je n'ai jamais eu un repas plus
délicieux.

Dead silence.

MRS. P.
That mean you like it?

GINA
I think we may have a new Mrs. Paris.

Myrna smiles.

SAM
That was amazing.

MYRNA
I majored in French Literature.

SAM
Wow.

Myrna notices that Gina is annoyed with Sam.

MYRNA
Enough about me. Mrs. Fischer... I
mean, Gina, how did you come to own
this place?

MRS. P.
Oh shoot, the cookies.

MRS. P. Scampers out, glad to miss this conversation.

GINA
Well, my husband Leonard and I came
out her for a vacation shortly after
we were married. And we fell in
love with the landscape. We sold our
house in Lexington, Len sold his
business, and we bought this place.

MYRNA
So bold!

GINA
It felt like it at the time. I liked
the idea of raising children out
here. So we fixed it up, and it was
good.

SAM
For a while.

GINA
For a while. This is a dangerous
place to bring a man.

MYRNA
Oh.

GINA
Long story short, Len left me for a
guest of ours – a wealthy woman from
a wealthy family.

SAM
An heiress, actually.

GINA
She was waiting out a divorce, right
here. Room 2. When her six weeks was
done, so was my marriage.

MYRNA
Oh my.

SAM
And he left us stranded in the desert.

GINA
Len was never suited for family life.
He's...a man. Simple. He felt
terrible.

SAM
As he should.

GINA
Sam.
(beat)
But he left us the ranch, and that
was that.

MYRNA
I'm so sorry. That sounds terrible.

GINA
Not really. I am a living testament,
Mrs. Corvinus. Women can start over.
I have Samantha and Samantha Ranch,
and what I consider a very good life.

SAM
Stranded in the desert.

GINA
Is it so bad here, Sam?

SAM
Compared to Dad's mansion?

MYRNA
I'm sorry to bring up such a painful
memory.

GINA
It's not painful.

SAM
Nope. Not even a little.

Mrs. P sweeps in.

MRS. P
Cookies! Fresh from the oven. Your
favorite, Sam.

SAM
Peanut butter?! Thank you, Agatha.
(beat)
I mean, Mrs. P. Sorry.

They all laugh. A little.

INT. STABLES — DAY

The next day. GW is putting a saddle on Rosa. She's fussy.

GW
Easy now. Easy.

GW is gentle with Rosa, and she quickly calms. They share a
moment. Myrna enters, dressed in a frontier shirt and riding
pants, looking beautiful.

MYRNA
What do you think? Do I look
"cowgirl"?

GW
You look...right out of a movie, Mrs
Corvinus.

MYRNA
If I get to call you GW, you can
call me Myrna.

GW
That's against the rules actually.

MYRNA

Gina has a lot of rules, doesn't she? Okay though. I don't want to "put a spoke in your wheel".

GW

Looky here: cowboy clothes and cowboy talk.

MYRNA

I'm teaching Sam to speak French and she's teaching me Cowboy.

They both smile, and suddenly notice they're alone.

GW

Just us today?

MYRNA

Oh shoot. You know what? I bet the girls are hungover from last night.

GW

Last night?

MYRNA

Long story. But, yes. My guess is it's just us.

GW is concerned. Myrna's not.

MYRNA (CONT'D)

(trying not to sound
excited.)

Too bad.

EXT. THE TRAIL — DAY

GW, on his horse, rides alongside Myrna and Rosa. They trot along past beautiful Nevada scenery in content silence.

MYRNA

I reckon one could still get a sunburn in October, in these parts.

She laughs at her own Cowboy-speak.

GW

You're a regular Dale Evans.

Myrna blushes.

MYRNA

GW?

GW

Yes, ma'am.

MYRNA

No. GW — what does that stand for?
Gerard? No, you're not a Gerard. I
can get this.

GW

I'll wager you can't.

MYRNA

Okay. Well, I know you have a sister
named Rosalia. Had. Sorry. And you
do look a bit Mediterranean. Italian,
maybe. Can Rosalia be Greek?

GW

I'm not saying a word.

MYRNA

I think Gus would work for either.
How about Gaetano? I had a tailor
named Gaetano.

Nothing.

MYRNA (CONT'D)

Oh, I give up.

GW

I prefer GW, in any event.

Myrna is having fun for the first time since arriving. She
screws up her face trying to think.

MYRNA

Giuseppe?!

GW smiles. Myrna kicks her legs with delight — she thinks
she's got him. At that very moment a snake crawls by in
front of Rosa. The horse is spooked, and Myrna's not holding
on. Rosa bolts.

CHASE SCENE

GW chases after Rosa. Myrna can't manage to grab hold of the
reigns, and she's terrified. This is her first time riding a
horse.

GW

Shit. Shit.

MYRNA screams. GW rides up to her, grabbing the reins. He
manages to slow them down to a stop.

Myrna hugs Rosa's neck as if glued on.

GW (CONT'D)
Are you okay, Mrs. Corvinus? Ma'am?
Myrna?

MYRNA
That was... thrilling.

She begins to laugh.

MYRNA (CONT'D)
And you called me Myrna! Oh, Giovanni,
you're my hero.

GW
Oh thank God. I didn't want to lose
a guest in my first week.

MYRNA
Such a gentlemen, Gregorio!

GW
Gino.

Myrna smiles.

MYRNA
Gino.

GW
Don't tell no one, okay?

MYRNA
My lips are sealed. Let's see what
Rosa can do.

GW
Okay. Please don't tell. Even Jack.

MYRNA
Yes, sir.

GW
I'm serious.

He is.

INT. LOBBY — DAY

Sam and Gina are behind the desk. Billie enters, beautifully
dressed, but a little hungover.

GINA
She is risen!

BILLIE
Hardy har.

SAM
So, how was it?

GINA
That's none of your business, young lady.

SAM
Sorry.

BILLIE
That is right, young lady. It's none of your business. And I'll tell you everything later.

GINA
Try not to corrupt my little girl, Mrs. Ackerman.

BILLIE
I more worried about her corrupting me, frankly.

GINA exits to the apartment with paperwork.

SAM
So?

BILLIE
Oh, it's a good story. Ever had a martini, Sam?

SAM
No ma'am.

BILLIE
So, you've never had...

Billie holds up 5 fingers.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
5 martinis, then?
(beat)
Wait. Wait. Shit. I missed the ride! It's almost 11:30. Is GW still out there?

Sam looks out the front window.

SAM
They're heading in right now.

BILLIE
To be continued.

Billie heads toward the kitchen, but turns back for a moment.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Be a doll, and check on Carole, will
you?

She holds up 7 fingers over her head as she exits through
the door. Sam grins.

EXT. OUTSIDE GW'S ROOM — MOMENTS LATER

GW walks toward his door. Billie shuffles up behind him.

BILLIE
GW, how was your ride?

GW
Fine. Ma'am. We missed you this
morning.

BILLIE
Honey, you've been missing me your
whole life!

GW
Ma'am.

BILLIE
Why don't you invite me in for a
moment? I have a story to tell you.

GW
Ma'am? Oh. I heard you had a big
night.

BILLIE
Not that, cowboy. I read a great
story recently. About Flagstaff.
You've been there; it's beautiful.
Not quite as beautiful as Reno.

GW freezes.

GW
I never been to Flagstaff.

BILLIE
Of course you have. I've seen the
picture. In the paper. I've had so
much time to read the paper these
last few weeks. How's you foot?

GW looks down at his feet. He'd been leaning on his good foot this whole time.

GW
I reckon you're mistaken, ma'am.

BILLIE
I thought I might be, but cowboy,
you just gave yourself away.

GW
That was not me, ma'am. I never
been to Flagstaff.

BILLIE
You know, GW, I am almost willing to
believe that. You have such an honest
face. A handsome and honest face.

She formulates an idea.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
A face I'd like to see more of...

GW
What?

BILLIE
Why don't you come see me tonight?
You can explain how this is all a
mix up. And if you're convincing
enough, I'm willing to believe you.

GW stares at her, quizically. Billie leans in, to whisper in his ear.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
I'm in room #7. Come around midnight.
Convince me I'm wrong.

Billie saunters away.

ACT 3

EXT. JACK'S OFFICE - DAY

There's a tiny office off the stable with a desk and 2 chairs. Jack is having trouble reading his notes, and begrudgingly grabs his glasses out of the desk. He quickly hides them again as Gina enter. She is carrying two glasses of lemonade.

She stands there, waiting for an answer.

JACK
Willy and...

He looks at his notes – but can't quite read them.

JACK (CONT'D)
Oh hell, Horace.

GINA
You have earned yourself a lemonade.

Gina sits and places the two glasses on the desk.

JACK
I'm going to miss Horace, but he'll
fetch a nice price.

GINA
He will.

JACK
No sense having so many horses with
so few guests. No hangers-on.

Jack realizes he may be a "hanger-on" himself.

JACK (CONT'D)
Yessir. No hangers-on.

GINA
We can buy them back when business
picks up.

JACK
Yeah.

GINA
How are you doing, Jack?

JACK
(abruptly changing
the subject)
You know, Luisa's offer still stands.
I can go stay with her and that
pendejo she married.

GINA
Jack.

JACK
It's only fair, Gina.

GINA
I promised you: you have a home here
for as long as you want. You're a
fixture. This isn't Samantha Ranch
without you. (Beat.) And that man is
a *pendejo*. Pardon my Spanish.

They laugh.

JACK
And the kids are worse. Forgive me
for speaking ill of my family, but...

GINA
You belong here. Como familia.

Jack is touched, but changes the subject.

JACK
GW seems to be doing well. The women
like him.

Gina gives him the eye.

JACK (CONT'D)
Not too much. And he's handy. I
think he's a good fit.
(slyly)
He's skilled too, carpentry, if you
ever decide to add on...

GINA
Jack?

JACK
All the big ranches have chapels.

GINA
Clarence got to you too?

JACK
It's a good idea. It could bring in
new business, make you some extra
money... And now I'm done.

GINA
Yes. You are.

JACK
Forgive me, *querida*, but I got hungry
horses to feed.

GINA
Send GW in when you can. I've got
some painting for him to do.

JACK
Yes ma'am.

Gina reaches across the table and gives Jack a kiss on the
cheek. She exits.

INT. DINING ROOM — DAY

Sam is eating lunch with Billie.

SAM
So, what's he like?

BILLIE
Cliff? Boring.

SAM
Boring?

BILLIE
Well, he knows positively everything.

SAM
Oh!

BILLIE
About lumber.

SAM
Oh.

BILLIE
But he's rich and thinks I'm super:
That's what a girl really needs.

SAM
Romantic?

BILLIE
He's about as romantic as a housecat.

SAM
And you're really going to marry
him?

Gina enters.

GINA
SAM!

BILLIE
(joking)
SAM! How dare you?

Sam laughs. Myrna merrily enters and sits.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Gina, may I borrow Miss Samantha
this afternoon to drive me to the
hairstresser?

GINA

Another fancy dinner tonight, Mrs.
Ackerman?

BILLIE

No. A woman... just likes to look her
best. You never know what could
happen.

MYRNA

May I join you?

BILLIE

Yes! I'd love that. Hot date?

MYRNA

(Embarrassed)

A woman does like to look her best.

GINA

Of course. Sam, please take these
ladies after lunch.

Gina exits toward the kitchen. Billie has an idea.

BILLIE

Let's get Sam's hair done too.
That'll be so much fun. What do you
say, Sam? It's on me; I've got lumber
money.

This is going to get Sam in trouble, but...

SAM

A woman likes to look her best.

BILLIE

(With a mouth full of
food)

She certainly does.

Billie smiles comically with food in her teeth. She laughs
raucously. Sam giggles. Despite herself, Myrna joins in
too.

INT. ROOM #8 — MOMENTS LATER

Room #8 is nearly identical to all the other rooms. GW is
painting the walls cornflower. He steps down from a chair
with his bad foot and winces. He hops for a second, and sits,
wiping the sweat off his brow.

Hearing the sound of LAUGHTER, he looks out the window and
sees the truck, with Sam and Myrna inside. Billie runs to
the truck yelling something unintelligible, and gets in.

GW is disgusted with the sight of her. He sits on the tarp-covered bed and thinks.

INT. DINING ROOM — NIGHT

Sunday dinner. When fully-placed the seating is:

CLARENCE JACK GW BILLIE

GINA

SAM CELIA MYRNA CAROLE

The men: Clarence, Jack and GW are seated. So, is Celia. Clarence looks like he owns the place. Jack and GW are in their nicest clothes—still not that nice. GW appears nervous and out of place.

Gina and Carole enter together. Carole is in a new, yellow dress.

CLARENCE

Well, if it isn't the belle of the ball!

GINA

Doesn't she look beautiful tonight?
Another new dress.

Carole twirls. She's glowing. Gina looks toward Clarence, confused.

GINA (CONT'D)

Clarence, I thought you were bringing
in a new guest tonight? Is she
delayed?

CLARENCE

She had a change of heart.

GINA

(Lying)
Well, isn't that wonderful.

CLARENCE

(Lying too)
Yes, wonderful. Gina, we need to
talk.

GINA

Later.
(changing subjects)
Yellow is really your color Mrs.
Quinn. It's a happy color.

CLARENCE
(Going with it)
It's a happy occasion. Tomorrow
around...
(To Celia)
...what time, sweetheart?

CELIA
10:05

CLARENCE
10:05! You'll be a single woman.

CAROLE
I guess that's true.

Gina sits at her regular seat: the head of the table. Carole looks around.

CAROLE (CONT'D)
Where should I sit? Celia's in my
place.

Celia looks tortured. At that moment, Billie and Myrna enter, looking beautifully coifed and manicured.

BILLIE
Sit wherever you like. It's your
night! But, I'm sitting next to GW.

She does. Myrna looks slightly deflated; she was going to sit next to GW. She settles for sitting directly across from him. As she sits, Myrna and GW make eye contact. Chemistry.

GINA
And where is Sam?

CAROLE
We told her to wait a minute. She's
making an entrance.

GINA
Sorry?

Sam enters through the living room; she'd been getting ready in Billie's room. She wears a beautiful white dress and her pigtails are gone. She's got a proper woman's short haircut. She beams, looking 10 years older.

JACK
Sam? You look beautiful.

CLARENCE
More like her mother every day.

SAM
Thank you, gentlemen. Uh. Merci beau
coup!

Sam looks to Myrna who smiles approval.

SAM (CONT'D)
What do you think, Mom?

GINA
I... I... Where did you get the money
for...? Is that a new dress?

CAROLE
It's an old one of mine. I'm letting
Sam have it.

BILLIE
And don't fret Gina, I offered to
pay for Sam's hairdo, but she paid
for it all by herself.

SAM
It cost a bit, but I just love it.
Don't you just love it, Mom?

Gina is speechless for a moment.

GINA
It's fine. Let's just remember tonight
is a celebration for Mrs. Quinn.

Sam, hurt, takes her seat. Mrs. P pokes her head in.

MRS. P.
Dinner will be out in a moment.

Celia leans over to Sam.

CELIA
(quietly)
You look positively gorgeous.

Sam blushes and nods *thank you*.

GINA
So, Mrs. Quinn – what are your big
plans?

CAROLE
I'm going to move back home, with
Mom and Daddy, and who knows? Maybe
I'll go to school. I have no husband,
no children, I could do anything,
really. Maybe I'll go abroad.

SAM

Send postcards.

CAROLE

I will. Anything could happen, and I
can't wait to find out.

Myrna makes a strange noise. They all look at her.

MYRNA

Sorry. I'm just so happy for you.
And maybe a little jealous.

CLARENCE

Well, that'll be you in 5-and-a-half
week.

MYRNA

It's not always so simple.

CAROLE

What do you mean, honey?

GINA

No, it isn't simple. Is it? It's
definitely not simple. And it's
definitely none of our business.

Clarence rises, breaking the tension.

CLARENCE

I'd like to propose a toast.

They all grab a glass. Gina looks annoyed — she's the host,
not Clarence.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Things change pretty quickly around
here. Sam, here, is the best example
of that. When I met her, she came up
to about -here-, and was always
covered in dirt. Now look at her: a
budding young beauty.

JACK

Yes, she is.

CLARENCE

People come and people go, but Gina
has made this a place where change
is not only supported, but championed.
Look at Mrs. Quinn.

GINA

Yes. Congratulations to you Mrs.--

CLARENCE

---BUT, change has to happen **here** as well. The ranch has to change... to meet the times. A business that isn't growing, is dying. One day--

GINA

(rising)

Clarence, thank you. I've got it from here.

Gina's tone forces Clarence into his seat.

GINA (CONT'D)

Here's to you, Mrs. Quinn. You have all our best wishes. Cheers.

ALL

Cheers.

They clink glasses and drink. Gina sits.

GINA

Now, GW, how are you enjoying your first week?

GW

Everyone has been kind. Thank you, ma'am.

BILLIE

Well, I think your Mr. GW is a find! He has made my stay here even lovelier.

GINA

High praise.

JACK

(concerned)

Indeed.

BILLIE

I'm so glad he left Arizona to join us.

GW

Idaho.

BILLIE

Oh, right. Idaho. I'm sure the potatoes miss you terribly.

GINA

Coeur d'Alene, right? Jack?

GW
Yes, ma'am. I come to... from Idaho.

GINA
Okay. Well, we're sure lucky to have you.

Clarence sees his way back into the previous conversation.

CLARENCE
(slyly)
Even if you can't afford him.

GINA
Clarence!

The conversation picks up speed.

JACK
He's right, Gina. You can't afford two hands.

BILLIE
Well, don't fire GW. He's the cat's pajamas.

SAM
Wait, Mom. Is something wrong? Are we in trouble?

BILLIE
You need money? I've got lumber money.

GINA
We're not in trouble. I wonder what's keeping dinner...

SAM
Mom? What's happening? Is that why you sold Horace?

CLARENCE
There are solutions. You're down to two guests. There are solutions.

JACK
There are.

GINA
Gentlemen--

CLARENCE
(forcefully)
There are.
(MORE)

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Well, How about this for a solution?:
You could marry me, let me run the
place.

SAM / JACK

What?

CELIA

(vehemently)

WHAT?

They all stare at her for a moment. The conversation starts
to get out of control.

SAM

Mom, you're not going to...? You
don't believe in marriage!

GINA

Clarence, look what you've started.

CLARENCE

Let me help you, Gina. You know I
love you.

SAM

You do?

BILLIE

(with evil laughter)

Ooo. Dinner AND a show.

GINA

This is not the time or place!

CLARENCE

This may not be the time or place,
but you are going to lose this place
unless you make big changes.

BILLIE

What kind of changes, Clarence?

CLARENCE

You've got to loosen your damned
rules, Gina. I've given you a half-
dozen suggestions, but you're too
stubborn to take them. This is the
50s, Gina - get with the times.

BILLIE

Yeah, get with the times, Gina!

CAROLE
No, I like this place exactly as it
is!

People start talking over each other.

CLARENCE
Build a chapel!

BILLIE
That would be convenient.

SAM
Mom, why didn't you tell me we were
in trouble?

GINA
(growing angry)
We're not in trouble.

CLARENCE
You most certainly are! Advertise a
little!

JACK
You could put up a billboard.

BILLIE
A billboard: That sounds like a good
idea.

GINA
(angrier)
Absolutely not! Clarence, please--

CLARENCE
Why don't you throw some parties?
Allow some goddamn men around here,
for Christ's sake.

BILLIE
Here-here! Some goddamn men!

GINA
(losing control)
Oh Billie, would you just shut the
hell up!

Stunned silence - broken by Billie's laughter.

BILLIE
Gina, you're making GW very
uncomfortable. Look at him.

GW is quite uncomfortable.

GINA
I'm so sorry, Mrs. Ackerman.

BILLIE
Don't worry about it. This reminds
me of Sunday dinners back home.

GINA
I'm mortified.

BILLIE
Eh. It's nothing. Now about these
parties... have you ever been to a
Tiki bars?

CLARENCE
Now we're talking.

GINA
Everybody, slow down. Let me think
for a minute.

She slowly stands, commanding the room.

GINA (CONT'D)
You know what Clarence, you win.

Did she just accept Clarence's proposal?

CLARENCE
Wait. What did I win?

GINA
I've come to a decision. GW, do you
plan on staying?

GW
Me? Uh. Yes ma'am.

GINA
Well, we need you. You're going to
build a chapel.

CLARENCE
(a little crestfallen)
Oh. A chapel. Great.

SAM
A chapel?

GINA
If my time here has taught me
anything, it's that marriage is a
mistake.

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

A woman needs to work hard, and take care of herself — not be some object of beauty, for a man to tire of.

She looks at beautiful Sam.

GINA (CONT'D)

But, who am I to stand in a woman's way? If she wants to get divorced and married on the same day, she's going to have a safe place to do it. Right damn here.

BILLIE

I'll be your first damn customer.

GINA

Are you sure you want to do that, Mrs. Ackerman?

BILLIE

Sounds like a hoot.

GINA

Then GW, you've got a lot of work to do. Mrs. Quinn, I'm sorry for this... outburst on your big night...

BILLIE

Aw, and here I was thinking tonight was my big night.

Billie winks at GW. Myrna notices.

GINA

Is everyone satisfied? Can we get on with dinner?

(in an uncharacteristic
loud voice)

Mrs. P!?

Just then, they all hear the sound of the FRONT DOOR OPENING. In walks BETSY, 28, in a modest dress, covered in dust and dirt.

BILLIE

The plot thickens.

BETSY

(responding to stares;
in a thick country
accent)

Hi. Do you have a room? I walked all the way from the bus station.

BILLIE

This night just keeps getting better
and better.

(to GW)

And it's still early. Right, cowboy?

Billie grabs GW's leg under the table, making him recoil.
Tonight's the night!

ACT 4

INT. LOBBY — NEXT DAY

The next morning, Gina is working at the front desk. She hears a RUCKUS behind her in the apartment. Two moments later, Sam storms out, wearing a hat. She blazes right by Gina, out the front door. SLAM. Gina drops her work and follows her out.

EXT. PORCH — CONTINUOUS

GINA

Sam.

SAM

Mom, what?

GINA

I just wanted to check on you. How
are you doing?

SAM

I don't understand how it works.

GINA

Oh, honey, we're going to be fine.

SAM

I know that, Mom. I meant...

She breaks down.

SAM (CONT'D)

...this haircut. I can't go back to
school looking like...

Sam pulls off the hat, and we see that Sam has no idea how to fix her shorter haircut. No more pigtails. Gina laughs. Sam cries.

GINA

Being a woman is hard.

SAM

Oh my goodness, is it.

GINA
 You look beautiful. I'll help you
 fix it.

They hug. Over Gina's shoulder, Sam sees GW walking by. She
 smooshes her hat back on her head.

GINA (CONT'D)
 Good morning, GW.

GW
 Ma'am. Sam.

GINA
 You heading inside?

GW
 (After a beat)
 I was gonna grab some breakfast,
 then touch up the paint in 7.

SAM
 You go into Room 7 and you'll give
 Mrs. Ackerman quite a scare.

GW
 Right! Room 8.

GINA
 Room 8.

GW
 Right. Sorry ma'am.

GINA
 This afternoon, let's sit down and
 talk about building plans.

GW
 Ma'am.

He walks past them. It registers on his face — *I can't afford
 a slip like that.*

A fancy towncar pulls up— Clarence and Celia. Clarence waves,
 through a cloud of cigar smoke. Only Sam waves back.

SAM
 Daddy's home.

GINA
 Let's get this hair fixed.

They walk in together.

INT. LOBBY — DAY

Clarence, cigar in his mouth, enters through the front door, followed by Celia. Sam goes into the apartment, but before she closes the door...

SAM

Hi Celia. Hi Clarence.

Sam exits. Gina looks him dead in the eye. Clarence pretends she's referring to the cigar. He hands it to Celia.

CLARENCE

If you insist on smoking these smelly things, you're going to have to go finish out on the porch.

Celia is embarrassed, not sure what to do.

GINA

There's an ashtray out there, honey.

Celia takes the cigar outside.

CLARENCE

Disgusting habit, if you ask me.

GINA

You're not my favorite person right now.

CLARENCE

I just want what's best for you; believe it or not. I love you girls...

GINA

Then treat us with respect every now and then.

CLARENCE

Loud and clear.

Celia re-enters, still embarrassed. Clarence reaches in to his pocket, and pulls out a box.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

Breath mint, sweetheart?

CAROLE'S VOICE is heard in the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM — CONTINUOUS

Carole sets down two suitcases, and Myrna follows with two more.

Gina, Clarence and Celia enter.

CLARENCE
Ready to go? Judge is waiting.

CAROLE
I guess I am. I need to take a last
look around. This has been my home,
you know?

Celia grabs the two bags from Myrna, and Clarence takes the
two from Carole.

GINA
And I hope you've enjoyed it.
Clarence, would you mind driving
Myrna into town, too?
(to Myrna)
You have an early errand, right? A
dress fitting.

MYRNA
(sheepishly)
If it's not too much trouble.

CLARENCE
Of course not.

Carole gives Gina a big hug.

CAROLE
I'll write. Is Sam around?

GINA
She's... in disposed.

CAROLE
Oh shoot, tell her I'll send her a
postcard from any exciting places I
go.

GINA
She'd find Tacoma exciting. You have
all our best wishes.

Billie runs in.

BILLIE
Oh thank goodness. You're still here.

Billie hugs Carole too.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
I'll miss you, doll. Give 'em hell
in Michigan.

CAROLE
You know, I just might.

CLARENCE
You ready?

They all go toward the door.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Billie sees Myrna heading toward Clarence's car.

BILLIE
Where are you going?

MYRNA
I have an errand.

BILLIE
Okay, buddy. See you at lunch.

MYRNA
Yes.

Gina and Billie remain on the porch, in the same positions we first encountered them in. Billie lights a cigarette. As the car pulls away, GW exits the stable with a can of paint. He sees the women, and stops dead. Billie yells:

BILLIE
Good morning, cowboy. Sleep well?

GW tentatively waves and turns back into the barn, pretending he'd forgotten something.

GINA
That man's a mystery.

BILLIE
Eh. He's just a man.

GINA
Oh, right. Simple.

INT. STABLE - CONTINUOUS

GW freezes, frustrated. His frustration crescendos into fury, and he violently throws the can of paint against the wall. SMASH-cornflower paint splatters everywhere. In the opposite corner of the barn, behind one of the horses, stands Jack.

GW
Shit.

GW heads toward the splatter to clean it up. Confused and worried, Jack hides behind the horse and watches.

EXT. MAIN STREET — DAY

Clarence's car drops Myrna off in front of the dress shop. Once the car has gone, she pulls out a piece of paper. It's a hand-drawn map on Samantha Ranch stationary. She looks at it, then looks at the number of the dress shop. She walks down the street, away from the shop.

EXT. PEACH STREET — DAY

Myrna walks and checks her map. A YOUNG COUPLE passes her, holding hands. Myrna steps aside to let them pass, watching them with envy. Myrna reaches the corner, and the address on her map, though she can't quite muster the courage to go in. At that moment, the pink Samantha Ranch truck pulls up along the curb. Gina gets out.

GINA
Perfect timing.

Myrna and Gina enter together.

ANGLE ON THE SIGN NEXT TO THE DOOR

CLYDE KELLY, MD. FAMILY MEDICINE.

TAG

INT. GINA'S APARTMENT — DAY

Gina is taking curlers out of Sam's hair. It's a nice moment. Gina accidentally catches some of Sam's hair in a curler.

SAM
Ow.

GINA
Sorry. Beauty is pain, honey.

The PHONE RINGS out in the lobby. Gina puts down the curlers and exits.

GINA (CONT'D)
Be right back.

Sam looks in the mirror, admiring her new look. She smiles.

INT. CLARENCE'S OFFICE — DAY

Clarence sits behind a large desk; he's just arrived at work. He grabs a cigar out of an ornate wooden box on his desk. Celia enters with a cup of coffee.

CLARENCE
Thanks, sweetheart.

Celia sits down across the desk.

CELIA
You're right.

CLARENCE
I usually am. About what exactly?

Clarence lights the cigar.

CELIA
About Samantha Ranch, and the chapel.

CLARENCE
I **am** right.

CELIA
But you didn't go about it the right way.

CLARENCE
No. I guess I didn't. Anything else?

CELIA
No. I'm sorry. I had to say something.

CLARENCE
You keep me in line, you hear?

Celia silently agrees.

EXT. THE TRAILS — DAY

The morning ride is nearly finished. Jack waits by the barn for the to approaching riders.

GW is in front. Myrna (on Rosa) and Betsy follow. Billie is in the rear.

BETSY
We gotta do this every day?

MYRNA
It's meant to be enjoyable. Helps pass the time. I think. You're pretty good.

BETSY
Ain't my first time on a horse.

MYRNA
Well, you can tell.

BETSY
This is the nicest place I ever been.

MYRNA
Is it?

BETSY
All we got in Kansas is corn. Miles
of corn. And then, when you least
expect it: corn.

Billie trots up beside the women, and blows right past them
to join GW. Myrna and Betsy are not close enough to hear
their conversation.

BETSY (CONT'D)
I'm not sure I like that woman. Sorry.

MYRNA
She's... one-of-a-kind.

Up ahead.

BILLIE
(to GW)
How about we up the pace tomorrow?
You know I like to go fast.

GW nervously looks back.

GW
Please.

BILLIE
Aw. Don't look cross, cowboy. Our
deal stands. You have nothing to
worry about from me.

GW glares at her. They slow as they approach the stable.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Not for a while anyway.

Gina runs up to the women, as they near the stable.

GINA
Mrs. Corvinus. You have a phone call.
Jack, could you... do you mind?

JACK
Sure. I've got her.

Gina helps Myrna down off Rosa, then Myrna and Gina hurriedly
walks toward the ranch.

GINA
It's Clyde.

INT. LOBBY — DAY

Gina grabs the desk phone and hands it to Myrna.

MYRNA
Hello.

DR. KELLY (V.O.)
Good morning, Mrs. Corvinus. Well,
your suspicions were correct. You
are, in fact, expecting.

All of the color drains out of Myrna's face. Gina instantly
knows why.

DR. KELLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Congratulation. I'd like to see you
again, next week. And we'll talk
about what happens next.

As Dr. Kelly is speaking, Myrna lowers the phone, in shock.

DR. KELLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Could you give me the name of your
doctor in New York? I'd like to get
your records.

Myrna begins to tear up. Gina grabs Myrna's hand.

GINA
You're going to be okay.

DR. KELLY (V.O.)
Mrs. Corvinus? Mrs. Corvinus? Hello?

FADE TO BLACK