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The Strange Love of Martha Ivers

By Robert Rossen

Shut the door, quick.
Scared of thunder?
No, I like it.
That's good,
'cause there's gonna be more of it.
- I brought you food. For the kitten, too.
- Did you steal it?
No, I bought it.
And if we get caught, don't go making up
any stories that I did.
I'm in enough trouble as it is.
You and your kitten.
- Do you want me to go back, Sam?
- Shut up and eat.
They looking for me?
Your aunt's got every cop in Iverstown
peeping through keyholes.
- You won't let them find me?
- You always come running to me.
Got nobody else to run to, Sam.
The circus is leaving town tonight.
Their train will go right through here.
When it does, you just follow me.
You run with all your might,
and when you grab on, grab tight.
Don't you worry about me, Sam.
Quiet!
There they are.
All right, kids.
Unless you got wings, you're caught.
All right, Martha. Let's go.
You'll never catch him!
You'll never catch him!
Don't rough her, you chump.
All right, miss.
We'll take you on home to your aunt.
- Mr. O'Neil to see you, ma'am.
- Show him in.
Mrs. Ivers will see you now.
- Good evening, Mrs. Ivers.
- Good evening.
- Good evening, Mrs. Ivers.
- I have good news. Martha...
- What about her?

- Martha has been found.

I know.

Well, it was Walter who was really responsible for Martha being found.

He told the police where she and that boy, Sam Masterson, usually go.

- Isn't that so, Walter?

- Yes, Father.

The boy will be rewarded.

Well, he's a good boy, and he's bright.

- If I could afford it, I'd send him...

- Send him to a school like Harvard.

- I guess I've mentioned it before.

- Many times.

Yes, madam?

Take the boy to the kitchen, Lynch.

Give him some ice cream.

You may give him a piece of cake, too.

Go along.

- You must thank Mrs. Ivers, Walter.

- Thank you, Mrs. Ivers.

You've lost your pupil, Mr. O'Neil.

I'm sending her away.

I know why you offered to tutor Martha.

I know why you've made Walter

do his daily lessons with her.

I know why you want him to live here.

A scholarship for Walter, that's why.

But I'm not a foundation, Mr. O'Neil.

I don't care whether Walter drives a truck or goes to Harvard.

Probably be a lot happier driving a truck.

You are expected, miss.

Just a minute, miss.

The name is Lundeen.

You'll tell Mrs. Ivers, the name

of the detective who caught her is Lundeen.

I'll tell her.

I'll take your furs, miss.

- No.

- You'd better, miss.

You know how she feels about that cat.

I'll bring it up to your room.

Your aunt is waiting for you.

Come closer, Martha.

Closer, Martha.

Look at me.

You don't seem very sorry.

I am. I'm sorry I was caught.

No matter what you do, I won't cry.

This is the fourth time
you've tried to run away.

Each time you were brought back here.

No matter how far you got...

- you were brought back here.

- You don't own the whole world.

Enough of it to make sure
that you'll always be brought back here.

Do you understand that?

You understand that?

Your aunt doesn't deserve
such an attitude, Martha.

There are not very many women
who would be as patient and as kind.

And there aren't very many little girls
who would be as ungrateful.

When will you understand
that I'm doing all this for you?

That I'm trying to wash the dirt
and grime off you.

- Make an Ivers out of you again.

- My name is Smith.

The same as my father's was.

Your name is Ivers.

I've had it changed legally.

- I don't care what you've done.

- Your name is Ivers...

the same as your mother's was,
before she was stupid enough to marry...

Shut up! Shut up!

- How dare you?

- Shut up!

You've still got his foul mouth.

I won't let you talk that way
about my father.

Your father was a nobody, a mill hand.

The best thing he ever did for you
was to die.

- I'll kill you! I'll kill you! I'll kill you!

- Martha, stop! Stop!

That's all right, Mr. O'Neil.

Go up to your room

and get into some dry clothes.

After you've had dinner,

I want to have a talk with you.

It's late. I'll go get my son. Good night.

Stay. I'm upset.

- I want someone to talk to.

- Yes, Mrs. Ivers.

Lynch told me to sneak Bundles to you.

I thought she'd be hungry,

so I sneaked the milk, too.

She hates cats. She hates everything I like.

A policeman came to my house

this morning.

He asked me if I had any idea

of where you could have gone.

- My father said it was my duty to tell them.

- Your father.

I didn't say a thing.

No matter what my father told your aunt.

I didn't say a thing.

I'm cold. I've got to change my clothes.

I'll leave the door open, so I can hear you.

My father says you're foolish.

My father says that some day

you'll have everything in the world.

My father said that if we only had

one little part of what you'll have...

- I could go to Harvard.

- You're what?

I could go to Harvard!

- The lights! What happened to the lights?

- They went out.

I think they went out all over the house.

There's a candle and matches on the table

near the wall.

You stand still. I'll do it.

Don't you think I'd better go up

and see if Martha's all right?

Martha will be all right anywhere. Your play.

I'm afraid of the thunder and lightning.

Draw the curtains! I'll go in to change.

Martha!

One peep out of you,
and I'll break your nose.

I won't say anything. Martha!

Martha will tell you I won't say anything.

Sam.

See, Walter, I told you
they'd never catch him. Sam, button me up.

I came to say good-bye.

I thought it over, Martha.

It's better for you here.

- I won't stay here. I hate her!

- All you gotta do is play smart with her.

- I'm going with you.

- Now, you listen to me!

- I don't want to listen.

- It's late. I gotta go.

Let him go, Martha.

If he's caught here he'll be sent
to reform school. Mrs. Ivers said so.

They gotta catch me first.

All right, Sam, if you won't take me,
I'll go without you.

I'll go off by myself.

Okay. Then, let's go.

I want to run up to the attic.

I want to get a couple of things.

Sam. Quick, Sam.

Sam, Bundles. She's going downstairs.

- Sam, my aunt.

- I'll get her.

Here, kitty, kitty, kitty.

Sam, have you got him?

Have you got him, Sam?

Hurry, Sam, or that old witch will catch us.

She's dead.

We were upstairs.

We heard a noise and we came down.

We saw a man, a big man.

He was leaving. Out of that front door,
he left. See, it's open.

She was lying there.

And this... This was lying there, too.

I picked it up.
Isn't that true, Walter? Isn't it?
Is it, Walter?
Yes, Father, it is.
Put it down.
Put it exactly where you found it.
Both of you better go upstairs.
I'll phone the police.
- You'll never get away with it. Never.
- Your father believes me.
- I don't know. I'm not sure.
- You keep your mouth shut.
But Sam. What about Sam?
He was in the house. He saw it.
- Sam will never tell.
- Yes, he will. He's scared.
- That's why he ran away after it happened.
- Sam will never tell.
Sam's scared. He ran away.
I didn't. I stayed.
No, he won't. Not Sam. Not Sam!
I want to talk to you both.
Sit down.
Now, when the police come,
you will tell them...
exactly what you told me.
- Do you understand, Martha?
- Yes, Mr. O'Neil.
- And you, too, Walter?
- Yes, Father.
You poor child.
You'll be all alone in the world now.
Except for Walter and myself.
But you needn't be afraid.
We'll always be with you, Walter and I.
We'll never leave you.
Thank you, Mr. O'Neil.
... competition at the Fair Grounds last week.
In a handicap,
Chestnut King looks like an odds-on favorite.
That guy doesn't know what he's talking
about. Chestnut King's a dog.
He was losing races to cow ponies
years ago in Tijuana.

Well, what do you know?

What do you know about that?

How do you like that, sailor?

Leave a place when you're a kid, maybe 17,
18 years ago, and you forget all about it.

Then, all of a sudden, you're driving along...

and smacko, your own hometown

up and hits you...

right in the face.

End of the line, sailor. Come on, wake up.

- Where are we?

- In a small accident.

- What happened?

- The road curved, but I didn't.

Come on, I've got to put into Iverstown
for repairs.

Next time, I pick me a guy
that don't fall asleep.

Welcome to Iverstown.

Well, maybe this time they mean it.

You got anybody here
to fix this wreck, mister?

Roll her in.

- \$10 more, you don't make it.

- Bet.

- \$5 more, you don't.

- Bet.

- \$5 to you.

- Shoot.

- How long will it take, pop?

- Can't tell till we look her over.

- Come back tomorrow.

- Open game?

Nope.

- Four.

- Right back, little Joe.

- 20-10 no four.

- You got a bet.

Come on, Harry, make four.

- Seven. You shoot, Joe.

- Thanks.

Shooting 20.

- \$10 more, you don't make it.

- \$10, I do.

- \$10 more, you don't make it.
- \$10, I do.
- How much will it cost, pop?
- Won't know till it's done.
- Hey, now, look, I want to know now.
- Take it someplace else.

Welcome to Iverstown.

We interrupt this program of dinner music to bring you a special broadcast...

in the interest of the re-election of District Attorney Walter P. O'Neil.

- Leave that on, will you?
- Ladies and gentlemen...

it is with deep regret that we are forced to announce that...

Mr. O'Neil will not be able to address this citizens' forum tonight.

Mr. O'Neil was suddenly taken ill.

But we are fortunate to have the best loved civic figure of Iverstown... the gracious Mrs. O'Neil, here in the studio tonight to speak for him.

Citizens of Iverstown, the issues in this election are simple.

- That's enough of that malarkey.
- This Walter P. O'Neil...

isn't that the kid that used to live on Sycamore Street?

- His father used to be a school teacher?
- Yeah, that's him.
- You know him?
- Yeah, I used to.

A little, scared kid on Sycamore Street. Now he's running for the district attorney.

- What's the odds?
- On what?
- The election.
- No odds. No takers.

This is a sure bet, mister. Gonna be re-elected. Gonna be governor. And I'm making book right now that some day he'll run for president. Gonna be whatever his wife wants him to be.

- Some gal. Who'd he marry?

- You from this town?

- Used to be.

- You ought to know her then.

Old lady Ivers' niece.

- Martha Ivers?

- Yep.

Came into the whole works

after the old lady died.

Well, what do you know?

What do you know about that? Martha Ivers.

I don't know. You still look like

a scared, little kid, to me.

- Hello, Gallagher.

- Hey, wait a minute!

- Do I know you?

- Sure.

I'm the guy who tossed a rock

through that window once.

- And you're the guy who chased me.

- If I chased you, I'll bet I caught you.

Come to think of it, I believe he did.

- Hello.

- Hello.

- You live here?

- Used to.

- Who runs this place?

- Lady, the name of Mrs. Burke.

- She's not home.

- You waiting for her?

Just came back to get my things.

I've been away for awhile.

- I'm waiting for a taxi.

- I used to live here, in this house.

Seventeen, eighteen years ago.

I was born here.

Don't kid me. You're older than that.

Well, I didn't move right after I was born.

Got one to spare?

- Got some more matches?

- You can have these.

Got the time?

- **It's 11:**

- Now, ain't that just dandy?
- And I've got an 11:30 bus to catch.
- You can still make it.
Not if the taxi doesn't show up fast.
Know anybody who lives around here,
name of Masterson?
No.
- Know anybody in town at all, by that name?
- No, I'm from Ridgeville.
- Is your name Masterson?
- Yeah.
You mean, you're just getting home
after 18 years?
Well, 17 or 18.
You're just getting around
to looking up your people?
No, not exactly.
I just happened to be driving through
on my way West...
and got more or less curious, that's all.
Well, good luck.
- What you going to do?
- What do you mean?
I mean about your people.
I don't know. Maybe nothing.
Maybe tomorrow I'll go down to the
courthouse and look up the deaths...
- in the last 18 years.
- Can you do that?
Yeah, I think so.
Good night.
Bus terminal, please hurry.

I've got an 11:

Mr. Masterson.
- I thought it was you, Mr. Masterson.
- I'm glad to see you again.
I gave you my last match.
Want a lift any place on the way
to the bus station?
You talked me into it.
You've got my matches. Got a name?
Toni. Antonia. Antonia Marachek.
Ain't that a dilly, Mr. Masterson?

Sam.

Please hurry.

The depot's just across the tracks.

You still got four minutes.

We would have made it,

if you didn't stop to pick up your gent.

We might be able to chase it.

I can get a bus back to Ridgeville tomorrow.

Maybe I won't get a bus back to Ridgeville.

Maybe I'll go someplace else.

Maybe in another direction.

Chicago or further west, maybe.

- Have you ever been out West before?

- Yeah.

I've never.

But maybe I will.

What's it like?

Big.

- Well, do you want to go back?

- I can't go back there.

I'll have to go someplace else.

Do you drink, Sam?

- Yes, I drink.

- I'll buy you one.

Okay.

Too bad, you want me to check your bag
in the station here?

Too bad, you want me to check your bag
in the station here?

I don't know. I guess I'll want it at a hotel.

- You don't want me to take you there?

- Do you happen to be at the Gable Hotel?

- Yeah.

- Can I go there?

It's a public place.

Here, tell the clerk that Sam Masterson
wants a room for a young lady.

- She'll register when she gets there.

- Yes, sir.

- Thanks.

- Keep it.

Classy. Blue lights, music...

- everything.

- A cafe.

When I lived in this town,
there were nothing but saloons.
My father used to live in them.
- Mine, too.
- We're related.
I'll have the same thing you have,
if you don't mind.
Scotch. I take a plain water chaser
with that...
when the Scotch isn't so good.
Two water chasers.
Did you drive far?
About 600 miles since this morning.
You weren't driving anything tonight?
No, my Stanley Steamer's in the garage,
having her face lifted.
You'd better bring us a couple more
before curfew.
That'll be \$2.
- On me.
- Thanks.
Maybe you'd like to drink to
finding your people?
No, my mother wouldn't approve of that.
How would you know after all this time?
After all this time you probably
wouldn't care, one way or the other.
You talk awful cold-blooded about them,
don't you?
- That's life.
- Is it a big family?
No, it wasn't.
Besides me, there were just the usual two
people necessary to increase the population.
Mother left when I was a baby,
and my father...
probably drank himself to death by now.
Another man I know talks cold
like that's my Dad.
He's the most cold-blooded man
in Ridgeville.
Once he kicked me.
Gee, it made me sick.
I can guess why you didn't break your neck

to catch that bus back to Ridgeville tonight.

I probably would have got on
and got off before it started out.

Or I would have got the jitters
the minute I got on.

Anyway, it's gone now, for tonight anyhow.

There won't be another one
until tomorrow night.

And now I know for sure,
I'm not going to make that one either.

Not the one to Ridgeville, at least.

But I'm so glad you came
to have a drink with me tonight.

I was so lonesome, I like to have died.

- Have you ever been that lonesome?

- How lonesome is that?

About as much as you can hold
without busting open.

Wanna know how I got that way?

Curfew. Shall we go home?

The reason I picked the hotel,
your hotel, it's really very...

You read the hotel advertising
on that when you had it.

You're smart.

Maybe you think I've been trying too hard
to get acquainted.

- Maybe you have.

- Maybe you think that's wrong.

Maybe it's too soon to tell.

I wonder what you're thinking.

I don't think you'll take up too much room
in my Stanley Steamer.

Maybe you're all right.

You think you can hold that thought
all the way to the Coast?

We better wait here for a minute.

Hey, I wanna ask you something.

Does that guy look like
a scared, little boy to you?

He looks like he's going to cry any minute.

Let's get away from him.

- Is Mr. O'Neil in?

- No, madam, not to my knowledge.

Walter.

Hello.

No words?

Can I have a cigarette?

- My lady's lips.

- I'll ring for some coffee for you.

- No, thank you. I'll have another drink.

- Walter!

If there's to be a discussion,

I'll need another drink.

Otherwise, I shall neither hear,

nor be coherent...

when, and if, I reply to whatever

it is you're about to say.

Did you forget

that you were supposed to speak tonight?

I didn't forget, I...

It's nice. Your room, I mean.

It's been a long time since I've been here.

- Where were you?

- Getting drunk.

- Where?

- I'm still the people's choice, honey.

I did not make a public display

of myself anywhere.

You realize, of course,

that you will one day, inevitably.

- Inevitably.

- It's your career, not mine.

What's mine is yours.

Don't you think

I'm entitled to an explanation?

What do you want me to say?

- I don't want to put words in your mouth.

- I'd prefer that you would.

All right. When did you get drunk?

Where did you get drunk?

Why did you get drunk?

Don't stand over me like that.

I'm a sentimental man, Martha.

I started to get dressed...

then I realized it was the fourth
anniversary of my father's death.

I thought it would be nice

if I went to the cemetery and...
laid a wreath of flowers on his grave.
However, I never got there.
Sentiment overwhelmed me.
I stopped off to have a drink
to his sainted memory.
As I drank, I thought to myself,
it's such a pity that my father isn't alive...
to be able to see for himself
all his dreams come true.
The dreams he worked so hard for.
His son, a famous man.
Married to a beautiful and wealthy woman.
All right.
Now tell me why you got drunk?
Because I couldn't get up
and speak before people.
Walter, listen to me, what's done is done.
- The deed's done, not the thought.
- You've got a life to live.
- I don't know, I'm not sure.
- A brilliant career.
- My father always said that.
- Your father was right.
He was never right about anything.
From the day he walked in
and found your aunt on the floor...
I told you I never want that mentioned.
To the day he sat beside you in
the courtroom, as I, the public prosecutor...
demanded that the state take the life
of a man...
for the brutal murder of Mrs. Ivers.
My father said nothing.
I looked at him, but he said nothing.
Your father was a realistic man.
My father, may he rest in peace,
was a greedy man.
The man they executed was a criminal.
If he hadn't hanged for that,
he would have hanged for something else.
The man was a man. Justice is justice.
That's the way it is. I...
I can't get up and speak before people.

The words stick in my throat.
I'd rather get drunk. I do get drunk.
I did get drunk.
Walter, dear, listen to me.
If you carry a thing in your mind,
it makes you sick.
- I want you well. Tomorrow...
- Will be like today.
You will leave on a trip
for your health for a few weeks.
- Will you go with me?
- No.
I'll stay here.
Then, I'll stay here, too.
What do you want to do? Give everything
up, is that what you want to do?
What do you want to do? Give everything
up, is that what you want to do?
You wouldn't let me do that,
would you, Martha?
- Do you want to?
- I don't know, Martha.
I ask myself that question all the time.
If my father were alive I could ask him.
Only I know what his answer would be.
He'd say to me, "Keep what you have...
"and make her live up to it."
"Make her live up to her bargain."
That's what he'd say.
I am living up to it, Walter.
There's another drink left,
might as well have it.
The bottle's empty now.
Goodnight, Martha.
Tell me, Martha, what shall I do
about my love for you?
Tell me, Martha,
why I don't abandon all this?
- Why I don't just throw it back in your face?
- You tell me, Walter.
- Well, this is it. Not good. Not bad.
- With bath?
With bath. And come out, come out,
wherever you are.

With bath, hey? There's half as many baths as there is rooms.

Half the rooms has baths, and half hasn't.

That's one way of looking at it.

Another is, for each two rooms one has

a bath in the middle and the other hasn't.

Or, you might say, there's a half a bath to each of two rooms.

How was that again, now?

There's half as many baths

as there is rooms...

- and if, and if the two...

- That's all right.

I've already sent the boy with those bags up to your room, Mr. Masterson.

Well, they belong to Miss Marachek, here.

They came in my name

because she wasn't registered yet.

- I missed my bus to Ridgeville.

- That's too bad.

The boy went off at 12:00.

You'll have to manage yourselves.

- I can't leave the board.

- Thanks.

Good night.

- Sweet dreams.

- Good night, Cupid.

Twenty-five. Your room number's 25, I'm 23.

Makes us neighbors.

Why did you buy a ticket to Ridgeville, if you didn't want to go back home?

I didn't.

I didn't buy the ticket.

I got it, but I didn't buy it.

You all right?

- I'm a little cold, maybe.

- Better get out of those wet clothes.

I've started your bath for you.

Hurry up, now. I'm next.

Thanks.

Okay?

I'll loan you a book

for a couple of cigarettes.

If you don't mind what kind of a book it is.

That pine soap makes you tingle all over.
There's something very personal about soap.
- It's almost as personal as a toothbrush.
- I won't use your toothbrush.
- Where's your book now?
- You don't care what kind of a book it is?
- The suspense is killing me.
- It isn't my book.
Somebody here before forgot and left it.
I warned you.
There's one in every room of the hotel.
One in practically every room
of every hotel in the world.
It tells all about it there
in the first page or so.
- Well, what do you know?
- No, no, no, don't get up.
I want to look at you a minute.
That's really a picture.
Throw me a match.
- So you're leaving tomorrow?
- Yeah, we're leaving tomorrow.
- That is, if the car is fixed.
- Sure you won't mind me being a passenger?
No.
- Glad of the company.
- Are you gonna stay in the West?
Maybe, maybe not.
You might get lonesome again.
I've been lonesome before. I was
so lonesome tonight, I like to have died.
I know. You mentioned that.
I tried to tell you why.
- Look, I'm going to take a shower.
- I just got out of jail.
I just got out tonight.
Like I said, we leave tomorrow.
I think you'll like that one.
Open up, sonny.
Try that door.
Good morning, Mr. Masterson.
You don't have to show me who you are,
I can tell by the smell.
My nose isn't that big. I want to see.

The chief sent us up here
to ask you a couple of questions.

Sergeant Masterson.

The suspense is killing me.

What do you want to know?

You've been around. Look at that.

Africa, Anzio and Normandy.

Why don't you wear that button
in your coat?

For the same reason you don't wear
your badge. I like it incognito.

- Now what else do you want to know?

- What we wanted to know...

this layout told us.

There ain't nothing you can add to it.

- She didn't get in an accident, did she?

- She's in the can for a nice long stretch.

- What's the charge?

- Violation of probation.

- Probation? For what?

- Theft.

Terms of her probation when she was
released yesterday was that she return...
to her home in Ridgeville.

An hour ago we picked her up at the
depot when she tried to cash the ticket.

Well, maybe she wanted to go by train.

Maybe she wanted to walk.

There's no law that says she...

That's not the reason she gave, wise guy.

- No?

- No.

The reason she gave
was that she'd got a job.

Said you were her employer.

Well, what's wrong with that?

Nothing, if you can prove it.

But take a tip from me, bud, don't try it.

Jake and me don't like to waste our time
testifying in court.

But we will.

So long.

Exhibit "A", bud, in case you get stubborn.

Hey, now wait a minute, copper.

- All right, leave her things alone.
- You want to come along, soldier?
The little, scared boy.
You're just about to do your old pal
a great big favor.
How do you like the way the election
is going this beautiful morning?
The election's going good every morning.
Look, honey...
- Miss...
- St. John.
- St. John.
- Bobbie.
- Better still.
- What can I do for you?
- In?
- In, but not yet ready to face the world.
- Won't you sit down?
- Look, honey, I'm in kind of a hurry.
- Would you take a note in for me?
- When he buzzes.
Here.
I'll take calls now.
Come in.
There's a gentleman to see you,
he says it's very important.
Tell him I don't want to... Wait a minute.
Never mind. I'll tell him myself.
Sammy!
- Sammy Masterson.
- Little Walter O'Neil.
We were kids together, Miss St. John.
- I wouldn't have known you, Sam.
- I wouldn't have known you, either, Walter.
- Only I saw your picture.
- My picture? Yes, of course.
I don't want to be disturbed
unless it's very important.
Yes, Mr. O'Neil.
How long has it been?
Seventeen, eighteen years,
something like that.
- That long?
- We were just kids, you remember?

The three of us?

The three of us.

Thanks. What's she like, Walter?

- Beautiful. I married her.

- I know.

- You've done all right.

- I guess so.

- And you, what have you done?

- Knocked around. Seen a lot, I guess.

- You know, had some fun, maybe.

- What have you done mostly?

- Lately or mostly?

- Mostly.

Gambled.

- You mean, gambled?

- Sure, that's my business.

Perhaps this is where I should remark
that all life is a gamble.

You don't need to bother. I know it.

Some win, some don't.

You needn't have made that point.

I'm sorry, Sam.

This has been a stuffy conversation. I...

Would you like a drink?

Isn't it a little early in the morning?

I haven't even stopped for breakfast yet.

- The occasion.

- You talked me into it.

Fine. Fine.

Nice of you to look me up, Sam.

Well, I wouldn't have bothered you,
Walter, only...

I met a girl and you can help.

You don't look like you need help
with any girl.

This trip out, I do. This kid's in jail.

- What's the charge?

- Violation of probation.

- Name is Toni Marachek.

- That's not easy to square, Sam.

You can do it. And you will.

For old time's sake.

- For old time's sake.

- Thanks.

Excuse me.

- Mrs. O'Neil is here to see you.

- Please have her wait.

She usually drops in on her way downtown.

I'd like to see her.

- Have Mrs. O'Neil come in.

- Yes, sir.

I'm sorry. I didn't know you were busy.

I'll wait.

- Hello.

- Hello.

The name is Masterson, Sam Masterson.

I'm sorry, I...

Sammy Masterson.

Hello!

Well, I'll do that again. Hello!

- You should have called me.

- He just came in.

Well, you've grown to be a big boy, Sam.

I always was big for my age,
you remember?

- Yes, I remember.

- Anything else you remember?

Well, there are lots of things.

I never figured that a skinny little mutt
would grow up so beautiful.

- I thank you, for my wife.

- Sounds funny.

- What does?

- Your saying, "my wife."

Does it?

Now, don't get sore, Walter. I mean...

Well, I've always thought of Martha as...

You know how it is.

You keep something in your mind, since...

the time you were a kid.

- How long are you staying, Sam?

- That all depends on our district attorney.

- I may have to pull out in a couple of hours.

- Why, that's too bad.

That's the way things are, you know.

- I don't want to be disturbed.

- That's all right, Walter.

You're a busy man, so I'll blow.

And thanks. Thanks for everything.

So long, Martha.

Aren't you glad now

you missed that circus train?

- I don't know.

- Where can I reach you, Sam?

The Gable Hotel. And, you will do that

for me, won't you, Walter?

- I'll try my best.

- You do that.

- And here's hoping you win that election.

- Thanks.

- I will.

- What? Sure thing?

- Ask Martha.

- Sure. Sure thing.

What odds are you giving him?

- A sure thing is never a gamble.

- No?

What odds will you give that that's a fact?

- Breezy character, Sam.

- Thank you.

- Very sure of himself.

- He always was.

This is the first time

I've ever seen you off balance.

- I wasn't aware of it.

- I was.

- It came as a shock.

- Yes, it did. To me, too.

"Sam will never tell."

I'll never forget you saying that.

- What makes you think he will?

- What makes you think he won't?

- How long has he been here?

- He came in last night.

Did he tell you much about himself:

Where he's been? What he's been doing?

I thought you'd ask what he wanted.

- What does he want?

- He's playing it smart.

Sam was always a smart boy.

All he wanted was for me to get his girl
out of jail.

- His girl?
- That's what he said he wanted.
- What do you think he wants?
- What he can get.
He's a gambler, a sharp shooter,
an angle boy.
They come through my office
by the hundreds.
Couldn't you see blackmail in his eyes?
- I haven't your experience with criminals.
- You will...
- when Sammy starts to shake you down.
- Release the girl.
- Maybe he'll just pick her up and leave.
- Leave?
Do you think he'll leave
a touch worth millions?
There's only one way you'll find out.
Release the girl.
Good-bye, Miss St. John.
Yes, Mr. O'Neil?
I want a routine check
on a Samuel Masterson, non-resident...
registered Gable Hotel.
Miss St. John, close the door!
I want a routine check of all garages.
One of them has his car. Stay here, please.
I want a check up on all local banks.
Get that private detective McCarthy,
and tell him to come right over.
I thought I might improve my mind,
while I waited.
I thought I might improve my mind,
while I waited.
Boswell's Life of Johnson.
- Surely you didn't expect to wait that long?
- I was just going to look at the pictures.
I found your message
when I got back to the hotel.
I asked you to phone.
I figured you wouldn't mind
if I came in person.
- I figured you would.
- Why?

You impressed me this morning as a man who would bet on anything. Almost anything, depending on the odds. I'll bet you'd like to hear the story of my life.

- What do you bet?

- My story against yours.

You got a bet.

Let's see, you left here September 27, 1928. We'll start from there.

The exact date.

How come that's so clear in your mind? Why shouldn't it be?

You know, I used to think this was the swellest spot in the world. But you've really made it just that. It used to be so dark and ugly when she... I hate it.

Come on, I'll show you what I've done with the rest of the house.

Okay, fine. I haven't been on a rubber-neck tour in years.

Soon after my aunt died the executors of the estate wanted to close the house... - and send me to school, but Mr. O'Neil... - Mister?

You're kind of formal about your husband, aren't you?

No, I was speaking about his father.

- Mr. O'Neil was my tutor, you remember?

- Oh, yeah.

After my aunt died, he and Walter lived here.

- That was cozy.

- This is Walter's room.

Rich.

Very rich.

Well, you lived here all the time, then? Except for the few years I went to college.

Mr. O'Neil...

Walter's father. Walter's father thought it would be... good for me to get away for awhile.

Mr. O'Neil, Walter's father, he sort of

took care of everything didn't he?

- Yes. Yes, he took care of everything.

- You didn't like that?

- Let's talk about something else.

- What do you want to talk about?

Pick a subject.

This is the dining room.

Isn't it kind of crowded?

All right. I pick Walter as my subject.

When did you marry him?

- When or why?

- I asked when.

- When I finished school.

- All right.

Now, why did you marry him?

- Pick another subject.

- It's your turn.

You.

An open book.

I went out of this town with the circus,
the one you were supposed to go with.

Made friends with the animals

and lived happily ever after. Almost.

- Almost?

- Yeah.

I got ambitious and that tore it, but good.

I got so I wasn't satisfied just
being friendly with the animals.

I got so I wanted to own the animals.

So I bought some animals.

Well, my lion got the mange

and gave it to the monkeys.

The animals became a responsibility
and a liability.

I lost my hard-earned cash

and ran like a thief out of there...

with a great yen

to become friendly with people.

Now in that I had some success...

me being a gambler,

and people being what they are.

Well, that brings us up to my 21st year...

when I became a man officially.

How did it feel to become a man officially?

I felt I'd been there before.
How did you feel
about becoming a woman officially?
I felt I'd been there, too.
Why, this is the room that you...
Do you remember, Sam?
- Do I.
- It's the only room I didn't change.
It seems that only yesterday
I came through that window.
We were going to run away together
that night.
You do remember.
Yeah.
And it was Walter who let me in.
I come here often, Sam.
Little girls grow up.
But they never get through
playing with dolls.
There was a storm that night,
thunder and lightning.
I was afraid of the thunder.
Why, in the freight car that night,
you told me you weren't.
I didn't want you to know.
I wanted to be like you,
never afraid of anything.
You remember that, too, don't you, Sam?
- Things come back to you.
- Don't say it like that, Sam.
Not to make me feel good,
but because it's true.
All right, it's true.
We were just a couple of kids.
- We're not kids now.
- No, Martha, we're not kids.
No time for dreams.
Only one dream, Sam,
and it came true. You're here.
So is Walter.
- About Walter and myself...
- Don't tell me...
- I want you to understand.
- I understand, Martha.

I understood when I saw
both of you together in the office.
I watched the way he looked at you.
I never saw a guy so nuts
about anybody in my life.

- Sam, if you stay in Iverstown...

- Well, I'm not staying in Iverstown.

All right, Sam. What do you want?

- What do I want?

- Yes, why did you come back here?

- The road curved, but I didn't.

- Answer me!

Hey, now, wait a minute.

You sound like I have to.

As a matter of fact,

you sounded just like your aunt used to.

- Don't say that to me. Don't ever...

- Look, baby...

I won't be around long enough to repeat it.

As soon as a certain young lady
is out of your husband's clink...

and my car's out of

Dempsey's alleged garage...

I'm headed west.

- I think you really mean that.

- Any objections?

No. No objections.

- I should have known if I remembered.

- You should have known what?

You. That you'd be like this.

I'm sorry.

Sorry that you ever left here.

Sam, for old time's sake?

Yeah. Sure. For old time's sake.

Bye, Martha.

Dempsey's garage.

Yes, Mrs. O'Neil.

- Mrs. Walter O'Neil?

- Yes, ma'am.

Well, it was a rush job anyway,
and I'm rushed enough as it is.

Don't mention it.

Glad to be of service, Mrs. O'Neil.

You can add this to your report.

Mrs. O'Neil, don't like this guy to go.

- Not yet.

- All right, Dempsey. Thanks.

- Drink?

- Thanks.

There's not much to report on him, locally.
The out-of-town reports are still coming in.
You'll have a complete file on him
in a couple of hours.

- What's he look like so far?

- He's a big shot gambler.

Broke many times,
but always turns up with a new bankroll.
The police in every state have tried to find
the source of his money, but no dice.

Many arrests, no convictions.

Beat a murder rap in Frisco.

Self-defense.

Has a war record few can equal.

- The car in Dempsey's garage?

- The ownership certificate says he owns it.

- What's wrong with it?

- Smashed radiator.

How long will it take to fix it?

Well?

Who did Dempsey get this call from?

Didn't you check that?

- Yes, I checked it.

- Then who was it?

Mrs. O'Neil.

That's all.

Yes, Mr. O'Neil?

Get me the county jail. I want the
Superintendent of the Women's Division.

- Yes?

- I have the county jail for you, Mr. O'Neil.

Deputy Elizabeth Baker is on.

Hello. That girl,
the one I called you about before.

Yes. Bring her out here at 8:00.

I want to talk to her.

You got the time, bud?

- Yeah. It's five after eight.

- Thanks.

I'm expecting my friend out
in a few minutes.
Say, I ain't seen your face
around here before.
No. I'm a stranger here.
Then you ain't waiting for anybody, huh?
She's a stranger, too.
Yeah, she was due out
a couple of hours ago.
You're in a lot of trouble, Miss Marachek.
The law is very specific
on violation of probation.
It's specific about everything.
You're serving a five-year sentence.
- So I was told once before.
- You lied when you were picked up.
You told the police,
you were employed by Sam Masterson.
You think they would've believed me,
if I'd told the truth?
- Did you cook up that story between you?
- He had nothing to do with it.
You're very fond of him, aren't you?
You wouldn't want anything
to happen to him.
Does he feel the same about you?
You wouldn't want to serve out
that five-year sentence, would you?
- What are you getting at?
- Remember, five years.
And this time you'll have to serve
every day of it.
You don't have to.
All right. Get down to it.
What do I have to do?
Toni!
Toni.
Toni.
Hello, Sam.
O'Neil phoned me,
told me you'd be out at 6:00.
- O'Neil?
- Yeah. Sure. The district attorney.
He's an old friend of mine. I asked him

to do me a favor and here you are.
You're late, but free.
There was a mix-up. They lost some papers.
I got worried about you.
What's the matter, kid?
Toni.
Look at me.
I'd like a drink.
You're a cinch.
I'll buy you a dozen. Hey, taxi!
I'm going to toss you
a real coming-out party. Hey, taxi!
Thanks.
Spaghetti.
- That looks wonderful!
- I think you'll like it.
Go ahead. Eat.
I guess I'm not hungry.
My stomach's in a knot.
Here, this ought to help.
I'd have died, if I had to stay on in jail.
Forget it now. You're out.
If you'd ever been in,
you'd know what I mean.
I know what you mean.
A couple of times last night
I tried to tell you why I did time.
- You wouldn't listen.
- I don't want to now.
Now you've got to. Please?
All right, if it'll make you feel any better.
I want to be sure you understand.
One to five, they gave me.
One to five years, that is.
- That's a long jolt.
- It's forever.
I did three months before I came to trial.
It can happen to the best of people.
I'm not the best of people.
I'm just Toni Marachek.
"Where'd you get the fur coat, Toni?"
the judge asked me.
"I met a guy," I told him.
"He said he was in love with me.

He gave me the coat."
"A likely story," he said.
I said, "But it's true, every word of it."
"I tried to pawn it because I needed
the money." "Where's the man?" he asks.
"I don't know," I said.
"He took a powder. He blew.
He flew to the moon."
"You don't fly, Toni," the judge says.
"The charge is theft. You do one to five."
How come they gave you probation?
First offense.
You know what probation is?
Yeah, sure. A knife sticking in your back.
Still looking out for the cops?
Relax, now you're free.
I don't feel so good.
Do you want me to take you
back to the hotel?
No, no, please.
Let me sit here awhile.
Yeah?
- Get your coat on.
- What's the gag?
- Get your coat.
- All right, Joe.
What's the gag?
I was up to your hotel.
Nice layout you got there.
Double rooms, connecting doors
and tall glasses.
What did this guy tell you
he'd give you when he picked you up?
All right. There don't have to be
any trouble. Forget it.
She's my wife.
Well, brother, you can have her.
In spades.
Now beat it. You, too.
I just want to make sure.
- Joe, there don't have to be no trouble.
- No, there don't have to be no trouble.
There's got to be. Certain wise guys
have to be taught a lesson.

- Certain wise guys have to be...
- Where do you want it, here or outside?
Outside will do me fine.
There's an alley through the kitchen door.
- Sam!
- Shut up.
Stay here.
Okay, sister. You did a swell job.
Now blow.
Yes, sir.
What happened to you?
Not a thing.
I'm just made up for Halloween.
Go ahead, bud. She'll catch the next one.
Cut that.
Crying is not going to get you anywhere.
I'll stop.
I ought to beat it out of you.
- I think maybe I got it coming.
- Why? Why? Why?
Last night in that restaurant,
I kept trying to tell...
Come on! Get down to it.
Before they let me out
they took me to the D.A.'s office.
- O'Neil? His name's Walter O'Neil.
- That's right. That's his name.
- They took you to his office.
- He asked me a lot of questions.
Mostly about you.
- About me?
- About you and me.
- Yeah?
- He kept asking me...
if I knew why you came here.
He asked me that a couple of times.
- What else?
- A lot of questions. I forget.
- Remember!
- My head's mixed-up.
Well, the goons,
the ones who worked me over?
They just wanted to scare you.
O'Neil doesn't want you in town.

They said if I didn't play with them
I'd go back to jail.
Who said that, O'Neil?
No, no, the other man.
Mr. O'Neil wasn't there by then.
Cute kid.
They said they wouldn't hurt you.
Much.
"No more parole," they said, if I went for it.
I'd "do the whole five," they said, if I didn't.
I went for it.
Go ahead and hit me, Sam.
I've got it coming.
The only thing you've got coming, kid,
is a break.
- I'm going back to town.
- They don't want you here, Sam.
- I don't know what it is...
- They got me.
Whether they like it or not, they got me.
- Next time it'll be worse.
- Look!
I don't like to get pushed around. I don't
like people that like to be pushed around.
I don't like anybody to get pushed around.
Kid, I'll tell you what you do.
You grab the next bus out.
I'll meet you, wherever you say.
I'll go back with you.
Good. I wanted you to say that.
Just a moment, sir.
Take me to Mr. O'Neil
and you won't get hurt.
Yes, Mr. Masterson.
I hardly recognized you, sir.
Tell your man to ask Martha
to come down here.
Tell Mrs. O'Neil that, John.
I thought we ought to have a little talk.
Who'll kick off first? Your team or mine?
You look terrible, Sam. Have a drink.
Thanks.
My hand!
"The report on Sam Masterson."

Here, take this. I'm two up on you.

Thanks.

You're out of shape, Walter.

For a minute there I thought you were dead.

I was.

- I wasn't going to shoot.

- I wasn't going to wait and see.

Come on.

I took a gander at this while you were out.

I could have given you a much more

detailed picture on Sam Masterson.

I didn't know you cared.

You know it now.

- Now I'll let Martha give it to you.

- Give him what, Sam?

The facts concerning a guy

called Sam Masterson...

and his attitudes towards life and love.

Walter's got the wrong ideas.

- Sam, you're hurt.

- You ought to see the other guy.

- What happened?

- This.

It fell out of a guy's pocket

and hit me in the face.

Private dicks.

What's the trouble, Walter?

Don't you trust your own cops?

You're right, Sam.

I hired the man who worked you over.

The idea was mine.

I thought it might scare you

into not coming back. It hasn't.

We're ready to listen to the

current quotation on blackmail.

- Walter!

- Blackmail?

I said blackmail. Now, what is the price?

Remember you are dealing

with two old friends.

- Which one of you do I deal with?

- With me.

Be at my office at the plant at 3:00.

Okay.

May the deal be profitable, to all of us.
Whatever the price is, that's it, Sam.
Don't try this again.
What happened last night
can happen again, and worse.
Don't try it, sweetheart.
I'll make this a flat statement.
I'll kill you.
Hold your hand under the water.
Now dry your hand.
This will hurt.
- Even pain at your hands.
- You were lucky.
- Yes, I'm a very lucky man.
- And a stupid one.
Yesterday afternoon he told me he didn't
want anything. That he was going away.
- If you had let me handle it...
- I didn't like what you had in mind.
It's quite a thing, in a small city like this,
to be a district attorney.
You get to feel like God.
You know everything.
Down to the smallest detail.
Even a call to Dempsey's garage.
Sam's leaving Iverstown today.
- That's what he said.
- I want to hear you say it.
- It's up to him.
- No, it's up to you.
I know you, Martha. You are my life's work.
I've studied you all these years.
A little girl in a cage,
waiting for someone to let her out.
And along comes Sam.
Do you know what's on my mind, Martha.
About Sam, I mean?
I think I do. And that's where it will stay.
On your mind.
Unless, of course, I tell you differently.
What did O'Neil say?
Do you think he'll make trouble?
No, no, I had him figured out right.
He's still just a scared, little kid.

Coffee, please. Black.

You know,

Martha's the one I can't dope out.

- Martha?

- Mrs. O'Neil.

The three of us grew up together.

I told you about it, remember?

Thanks.

- What's she like now?

- What do you mean?

- Is she pretty?

- She's beautiful.

That's why I can't figure it out.

Why should a beautiful, rich girl stay married to a guy she's not in love with?

- How do you know that?

- I know.

You sound like you're in love with her.

You sound like you're in love with her.

You sound like you're jealous.

Could be.

- When are we leaving?

- This evening, if the car is ready.

What do we do until then?

I know, why don't we find out what happened to your people?

Yeah. That ought to be simple...

now I know I left town September 27, 1928.

The exact day. How come you remember it?

Wouldn't you remember a date, the exact date...

about something

that happened that long ago?

No. Not unless something terrific happened that day.

Yeah.

Come on, let's finish our coffee.

We'll go down to the newspaper morgue.

The morgue?

Yeah. I think I can find out about my people down there.

Afterwards, take you shopping.

That was a strange case.

It went unsolved for years.

Then one day they picked up a guy
who stuck up a garage or something.
Someone who used to work
at old lady Ivers' house.
It came out at the trial that he was
the one that knocked the old lady off.
It's my favorite case.
Here's a picture of the guy.
He doesn't look like very much, does he?
Yeah. Kind of a scared, little rabbit.
I watched him all through the trial.
Never had a chance.
O'Neil really did a job on him.
- Is that Walter O'Neil?
- Yep. Same guy.
It was kind of dramatic, though.
Him being engaged to the niece
of the murdered woman.
Sure did a job.
- The jury was unanimous.
- What happened to him?
They hung him. Interesting, eh?
Solving a murder after all those years.
It's all in the files there,
go ahead and read it.
Thanks, I will.
- Yes?
- Mr. Masterson. By appointment.
Send him in, please.

- 3:

- On the nose. Come in, Sam.
You should have kept me waiting.
Big executives always keep people
waiting, didn't you know that?
- Good executives don't.
- I'll bet you're good.
I am.
It catches it, doesn't it?
The feeling of a factory?
When your aunt owned this place,
I couldn't get past the gate.
Now I'm a guest. Or am I?
I invited you here.

Martha, did your aunt leave you everything?

I was her only heir.

I'll never forget the way she looked
that night standing in the doorway...

- leaning on her cane.

- I don't want to talk about her.

Okay. Okay.

You look different than you did
this morning. Clean and fresh.

Yeah. Well, it's the perfume

I use that makes me smell so nice.

I bet I smell as nice as you
and Walter put together.

What do you want?

I think I've got what I want.

I think I've got a gimmick.

A gimmick is an angle that works for you...

to keep you from working too hard
for yourself.

Simple.

- Specifically, what is your angle?

- Specifically?

Half.

- Half of what?

- You tell me.

All right, Sam.

Come here.

My father used to work here as a mill hand.

So did my father, when he was sober.

- Now I own it.

- Now you're even.

Now I'm even.

I was 21 when I took it over.

It had 3,000 workers then.

It's got 30,000 now.

Ran as far as that gate.

Now it goes down to the edge of the river.

And I did it all by myself.

Without Walter, without his father.

All by myself.

Half of this should make quite a score.

Half would make you my partner.

That's what I had in mind.

You went out of here a dirty little kid

once before. That can happen again.
I don't have to give you anything,
if I don't want to.
But you do want to.
Hey, Toni! Come in here, quick!
Yes, Sam?
- Make a wish.
- I went shopping.
Any wish. You make it. You got it.
- You feel good.
- Yeah, I'm high. I had a drink.
- What was in it?
- A bucket of gold. The dice came up seven.
Toni, you bring me luck.
I'm gonna wear you like a charm.
You really think so, Sam?
You really think I bring you luck?
I know so, and that's an asset
for a guy in my business.
Toni Marachek, asset.
Toni Marachek, good kid.
You stick around, Toni Marachek.
Now I've got all the luck.
I'm funny that way.
I say what's on my mind.
You walk down the street
and a girl asks you for a cigarette.
And a match and the time.
- Life is funny.
- That's philosophy.
It's good, too.
- You want to know how it is with me, Sam?
- No. Tell me.
I've told you.
And even if it's over, quick...
Look, what you don't know, don't talk about.
I bought a new outfit. I want to show you.
Well, let's take a look at it.
\$8.95. How do you like it?
With you in it...
Hello, Sam.
- Toni.
- Yes, Sam.
I heard you talking.

Well, even a crummy hotel like this
has a switchboard.

I have special privileges in this hotel, Sam.

I own it.

This is Mrs. O'Neil, Toni.

- Hello.

- So this is the girl?

Toni's my name. Antonia Marachek.

The sun-suit looks very well on her, Sam.

She's got just the figure for it.

She's a very pretty girl.

- I give another show at 8:00.

- In your room or here?

- Toni!

- Yes, Sam?

- Mrs. O'Neil is sorry she said that.

- I'm sorry I said that.

Okay, forget it.

- Toni.

- Yes, Sam.

I'm going out with Mrs. Neil, on business.

- That's why you came here, isn't it?

- Yes.

I'll be back after a little while.

I got no place to go. I'll be here.

- I didn't like that.

- I apologized.

There was ice on your tongue.

If you want me to say anything else
to her...

You spoke your piece. Let's get out of here.

I've never been in a hotel room
like this before.

I've been in too many.

Just the way you read about it in books.

Window shades, Scotch on the dresser...

Let's stay here, Sam.

- No.

- Why not? We can order our dinner here.

I don't like room service.

- All right, Sam.

- Come on, let's go.

What's your Toni Marachek really like?

That's what she asked me about you.

What are your plans for her?

- She's very independent.
- Hardly.
- How did you meet her?
- We lived in the same house.
- In Iverstown?
- Yeah.
- When?
- Now. Now and then.

Well, let's get back to our drinks.

To continue with your Antonia Marachek, have you other things in common?

Taxicabs, hotels and Bibles.

And we don't like some of the same people and places.

It all sounds like a very substantial beginning.

How long have you known her, really?

- Since the day before yesterday.
- How long have you known me?

Martha, I'm not sure that I've ever known you.

What do you say?

Let's get down to business.

Let's get out of here.

Waiter.

- Yes, sir.
- Check, please.

Yes, sir.

Whiskey and soda.

Thank you, sir.

- Wait outside.
- Sam, what is it?

Wait outside.

Beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful!

Give that back to him when he sobers up.

Tell him I run an honest book.

I always pay off.

- I thought I told you to wait outside.
- I wanted to see.
- You saw.
- You wanted to kill him, didn't you?

Yes, I did.

- This the spot?

- Yes.

I like your car.

You know what happened to Lot's wife
when she looked back, don't you?

- What?

- She was turned into a pillar of salt.

- What happened to Lot?

- He got away. He didn't look back.

You know your Bible.

You would too, if you'd spent
as much time as I did in hotel rooms.

I'll take it up.

Come on. Let's get out of here.

I love to watch the city from this spot.

From up here,

it doesn't even look real, does it?

It's real, very real.

Owning it gives you a sense of power.

You'd know what I meant if you had it.

Ivers, Ivers, Ivers. Ivers.

If anyone asked me my name now,

I'd say it was Martha Smith.

Say, I smell smoke.

Better take a look.

Must have been some kids up here.

Sam, don't. Let it burn.

We used to come up here

when we were kids and build a fire.

Let it burn, Sam.

Okay.

In those days,

we used to think that this was real.

And that...

That didn't even exist.

Just now, you looked like Martha Smith.

If only you hadn't run away.

I waited for you, I remember

I waited a long time in the rain...

but you didn't show.

Give me a cigarette, Sam.

If only you hadn't left town.

I had no one to turn to.

- What did you say, Sam?

- Nothing. I didn't say anything.

When I found out, it was too late.
Much too late.
One thing led to another and...
Another what?
I don't want to talk about it anymore.
No, go ahead, Martha, it will do you good.
- Another what?
- Where was I?
One thing led to another.
It would have been so different,
if you hadn't run away.
It would have been you instead of Walter.
Or if you had stopped me.
When I lifted the cane,
why didn't you stop me?
You knew how much I hated her.
Why didn't you stop me?
I wasn't there, Martha.
And then I stood there after it was over...
You...
- You weren't there?
- No, Martha.
I wasn't there. I left
when your aunt came into the hallway.
I didn't want to stick around.
I was in enough trouble as it was.
I never saw what happened.
I never knew until tonight
about your aunt or that man.
The one they hung.
The man that you and Walter killed.
Sam, help me.
Help me.
All right, Martha. Tell me. Talk.
All right, Sam.
I never imagined
anyone could die so quickly.
I had always supposed
that wherever I went she would be with me.
That she would never die.
But it wasn't like that.
I expected to find her
when I went back to my room.
Later I became frightened.

The coroner and the police
were sympathetic.
The doctor very attentive.
They believed my story.
The one I told Walter's father.
That night I slept heavily, peacefully.
How did you sleep the night
after they hung that man?
It wasn't long when I found out
why Walter's father believed my story.
It was as if my aunt had never died.
He took her place.
He wanted to make something of his son...
and I was tied to them both
from that time on.
It became so unbearable
that I wanted to tell the truth.
But he had deliberately
given me such a sense of guilt...
and had painted such a picture
of what would happen to me...
that I was crazy with fear.
He used that fear well.
To increase it,
he made me part of another crime.
My testimony sent an innocent man
to the gallows.
And he used that to make me marry Walter.
Sam, you're not going to go away again!
I want you here, Sam.
I've lived so much inside of myself,
so choked with wanting something else...
that lives and breathes. So desperate
for air and room to breathe it in.
Sam, please! Please stay here, Sam!
Good night, Martha.
Toni, are you still up?
- Toni?
- Yes.
It's me. It's Sam. Can I come in?
Yes, Sam.
Mind if I put your light on?
In a little while. I was sound asleep.
I've got a headache.

Okay.

I've got something to tell you, Toni.

Yes, Sam.

Toni.

You're crying.

You're crying because you saw...

You were at the window there
when we drove up.

Well, that's what I came in to
tell you about, Toni, the...

Martha and me.

You didn't have to, Sam.

There were no strings on this deal.

Well, that's why I wanted to.

You see, it started a long way back.

I don't know yet how it's going to finish.

What do you want me to say?

- I don't know.

- What do you want me to do?

- I don't know.

- All you have to do is tell me the truth.

Like you did when those goons
worked me over.

Now we're even.

Now I'm beat up.

I'm sorry I said that, Toni.

Look, kid.

I'm sore at myself, not at you.

Do you want me to leave?

Do you want to leave?

That's up to you, Sam.

I'm here on a rain check.

Now, don't put it that way.

You're here because...

that's the way we wanted it.

And now?

I'm not sure.

I'm just not sure.

Hello. Gable Hotel?

I want to speak to Sam Masterson.

- Put that phone down.

- Hello, Sam. This is Walter.

I know I'm not disturbing you.

Martha just came in.

- Well, what do you want?
- I want you to come up here.
Now. Right now.
- Are you crazy? The servants...
- I gave them the night off.
You're drunk.
I've had a lot to drink, but I'm not drunk.
I suppose it would be stupid
to ask where you were.
- Yes, it would.
- Sam's not leaving, is he?
- Ask him when he gets here.
- I just got my answer.
Then there are no more questions.
No, I know what I need to know.
Sam, the superman.
Sam, the dirty, little boy
from the other side of the tracks.
I'll go and change.
I wouldn't want him to see me
in the same dress twice.
Come in.
Toni.
- You're leaving, huh?
- There's a bus out in about an hour.
Toni.
Sam, it's better this way.
Look.
Sam, I came back here with you because...
you said you didn't like
to be pushed around.
I liked you when you said that.
You were looking for trouble,
but it was a good kind of trouble.
- And now...
- Now what?
Sam, I saw her. You're going to get hurt.
Leave her, Sam. Leave this town.
Even without me, but leave.
I can't.
At least, not just yet.
You're going to need some money.
No, thanks. Let's break clean.
- See you around.

- Yeah.
Around.
- Where's Martha?
- Upstairs getting dressed for the occasion.
We'll go upstairs.
Why did you call me?
I've got a riddle, Sam.
Maybe you can help me solve it.
It's a little riddle called, "What's to be
done about me, Martha, and you?"
Sounds just like a poem. If it rhymed,
it would rhyme with murder.
He's drunk. He's been sitting here
drinking all night.
Draw a chalk line and I'll walk it.
Or I'll take a mental test,
any question, like...
what is my object in life?
- I tried to stop him from calling you.
- You're a wiseacre...
an angle boy.
You know all the answers, don't you?
How are you on dreams?
Then I was glad he called you.
I was frightened of him, Sam.
She was frightened of me.
I had a dream, Sam. It was about you.
In my dream,
you were not a handsome corpse.
Maybe it was some other guy.
- In other dreams there were others.
- I told you, he's drunk.
- Did you say "others?"
- Many others.
- He's lying.
- Poor little Martha.
Her life was so empty.
Is that what she told you, Sam?
I don't want him in here, Sam.
Make him get out.
Now you're all of them, Sam.
Every one of them rolled into one.
- Sam, make him...
- Keep talking.

- I'm all of them rolled into one.

- Yes.

You're a gymnasium instructor
in Philadelphia.

With a muscle for a brain
and a tendency to insipid verse.

You're a guy, just a guy, named Pete,
in Erie, who smells of fish and sings.

You're last year's greatest fullback...
and you flunked your bar exam,

but you wanted to be an industrial engineer.

You're a guy who came along to fix a tire...
so well you became a city-paid inspector.

And you're a lot of others.

But worst of all you're the one
and only man who shares with me...

the only claim I have on her. Ask her, Sam.

Say to her, "Martha, is all this true?"

What if it is? What did you expect?

She never wanted to marry you.

If you had any self-respect...

She married me because she felt
that way I would never tell.

That's a lie! Your old man forced her!

How long you expect her

to go on paying off?

Forever.

Well, whatever happens to you,
you've got coming.

What can happen, Sam? Shall I tell you?

She'll try to get you to kill me.

Like she got me to send an innocent man
to the gallows.

I told you the way it was.

It was his father's idea. He...

Did she tell you how she stood up in
the police station...

how she looked at the man
without batting an eye...

how she said, "Yes, that's the man.

"He's the one who came
into the house that night.

"He's the man who killed my aunt."

That even stuck in the throat of my father.

My poor, dear, departed, greedy father.

- But he went right on and so did I.

- He's lying.

- You believe me, don't you, Sam?

- You believe her, Sam?

Martha, at least tell the truth now.

Tell how much you were afraid
of an unsolved murder.

Tell what a threat it was to the power
and the riches...

that you'd learned to love so much.

That I'd learned to love, too.

Tell why I became district attorney.

Tell why you made me hang that man.

Tell the truth!

I told the truth! They were like leeches!

Both of them.

- They wanted everything.

- All I ever wanted was you.

- Everything you are.

- I'm nothing.

- Everything you have, I gave you!

- You gave me nothing!

Then let go!

You're insane.

You're out of your mind.

Me, too.

You see, Sam, how close we really are
to each other?

Don't break up our happy home.

It'll have to be you or me.

And unless you do it now, it'll be you.

You mustn't think I'm drunk. I'm not.

It's just that I'm sick.

Inside of me, I'm sick.

Martha, help me. Please.

Sam, you believe me, don't you?

Now, Sam. Do it now.

Set me free. Set both of us free.

He fell down the stairs and fractured
his skull. That's how he died.

Everybody knows

what a heavy drinker he was.

Sam, it can be so easy.

- I thought you loved me.

- I thought I did, too.

- Now, you hate me.

- Now, I'm sorry for you.

When I dreamed about you coming back...

Your whole life has been a dream.

I thought you'd be the Sam

I knew as a child.

Martha, you're sick.

I could run to you when I was in trouble.

In your mind, I mean,

that's where you're sick.

And you'd help me.

So sick that you don't even know

the difference...

between right and wrong anymore.

You've killed. It says so in your record.

I've never murdered.

Are you all right, now?

All right.

You fell down the stairs.

I remember.

You carried me in here?

Yeah.

You had your chance, Sam.

It's a thin line.

The one between life and death.

You said I didn't know the difference

between right and wrong.

What's right for Walter and myself?

For us to tell the truth?

- I think so, yes.

- And hang for it?

You wouldn't hang for it.

Not if you confessed. You'd do time, sure.

Sure, I'll rot in prison for the rest of my life.

And for what?

- What am I guilty of?

- Murder.

What were their lives compared to mine?

What was she?

- A human being.

- A mean, vicious, hateful old woman...

who never did anything for anybody.

Look what I've done with what she's left me.
I've given to charity, built schools,
hospitals, given thousands of people work.
- What was he?
- Another human being.
A thief, a drunkard, someone who would've
died in the gutter anyway.
Neither one of them had any right to live.
You didn't think Walter had, either.
Good-bye, Martha.
Sam.
Sam's going away.
- Did you hear what I said, Walter?
- Yes, I heard you.
We can't let him go, can we?
Martha's waiting for your answer, Walter.
We'd always be afraid of him.
We couldn't live that way.
We'd be fools to let him go,
knowing so much about us.
You may have a little trouble
squaring this one.
You broke into the house.
You demanded money.
You tried to attack me
and I shot you in self-defense.
I've a right to kill in self-defense.
That's what the law says, doesn't it, Walter?
Isn't that what the law says, Walter?
It'll hold up, Walter.
I'm a man with a police record.
It's a perfect case,
if you can get Walter to be your witness.
Do you want to bet?
I feel sorry for you.
Both of you.
- You love him.
- I hate him.
- That's why you dropped the gun.
- I was afraid.
For the first time in my life, I was afraid.
I felt you'd no longer stand by me.
That you'd leave me.
No, Martha, I won't leave you.

I love you.

Don't cry, Martha. It's not your fault.

- It isn't, is it, Walter?

- No, nor mine.

Nor my father's, nor your aunt's.

It's not anyone's fault.

It's just the way things are.

It's what people want

and how hard they want it.

And how hard it is for them to get it.

He's near the gate.

I'm glad he's going.

- He'll always be here.

- No, he won't, Walter. He won't.

And he'll never tell. You needn't be afraid.

And you'll see, things will be different
now between you and me.

Just like...

just like nothing ever happened.

Just like nothing ever happened.

Will you kiss me, Martha?

You believe me.

Ivers, Ivers, Ivers.

No.

No, Martha Smith.

I missed a bus once and I was lucky.

I wanted to see if I could be lucky twice.

Don't look back, baby. Don't ever look back.

You know what happened

to Lot's wife, don't you?

- Whose wife?

- Sam's wife.

Sam's wife.