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# Flesh and Bone

By Steve Kloves

Clem?

Turn down that thing, will ya?

You're gonna wake Scotty.

- What's that?

- The RCA.

- Scotty's got school tomorrow.

- All right.

Say, you haven't

seen my glasses, have you?

On the table next to the clock.

Yes, you're such a pretty girl,  
aren't you?

- No, they're not here.

- Try the washroom.

What's gotten into Jack?

Anderson's bitch

must be in heat again.

I'll go run her up the road.

What is it, Jack?

That old bitch doggin' you again?

Lulu, is that you out there?

You go on home, now, you hear?

Go on. Get.

What the devil?

Still dead?

I don't understand it.

County ran a new wire  
just last month.

You can drive him into town  
in the mornin'.

He looks like he could use  
a good night's rest anyway.

You get anything more  
out of him?

No. He just

keeps saying he's lost.

Scotty, what are you doing  
down here?

You don't know this here boy,  
do you, son?

- Hush.

- I'll put him in the barn. Come on.

Come on.

You get out.

Why don't we go upstairs  
and run you a bath?  
Didn't your mama think  
to give you a haircut?  
Now, what is this?  
My God.  
Who'd do such a thing to a boy?  
They're supposed to be asleep.  
You always know  
they're supposed to be asleep.  
Somebody else in this house  
beside that baby?  
Somebody else in this house?  
Boy, I am your father...  
and you answer your father.  
Is there somebody else  
in this house?  
Is this one as smart  
as the other one?  
Afraid so.  
How come they're all  
named Betty?  
Well, now,  
that is a good question.  
Maybe they're not as smart  
as we think.  
Here.  
Stick with the jukebox.  
My bird's fryin' her ass  
out there in the hot sun, Theodore.  
Yeah, well, County Health's gonna  
fry my ass if I put her back inside.  
- I serve food here, Arlis.  
- So to speak.  
And by the way,  
some 14-year-old kid...  
bought a pack of cigarettes  
out of your machine there...  
and his parents  
are threatening to sue me.  
- You want me to take it out?  
- Hell, no.  
I'm just tellin' you  
what I'm up against.

Your mangy chicken's the least  
of my problems.  
You should have heard the stink  
over the rubbers last week.  
Do we have to have a prophylactic  
machine in the ladies' toilet?  
We are doing 2-to-1  
compared to the men's room.  
I know, Arlis,  
but this ain't Abilene.  
We're a small town.  
We got small-town values.  
- Am I right, Cindy?  
- Amen.  
Like I said,  
you just missed him.  
We were preparing  
to close the casket.  
Well, it's probably best.  
I was sort of the black sheep  
of the family.  
Well, as they say,  
"In death, all is forgiven."  
That's a nice sentiment.  
I'll have to remember that.  
Exactly what relation are you?  
It's complicated.  
Would you mind  
giving us a moment alone?  
Of course.  
The book is here  
if you care to sign.  
Thank you.  
God bless, whoever you are.  
You know, my face breaks out  
about two days after you leave town.  
Every time,  
like some goddamn teenaged girl.  
- It's the chocolate.  
- I know. I just can't help myself.  
How come you don't have those cheese  
and peanut butter crackers anymore?  
They pick up pinworms  
in the heat.

Pinworms? Jesus.  
Too bad.  
My kids love those things.  
You want a carton of Kools  
for Nathan?  
No. He's quit. Again.  
Jesus. I never get used  
to these chickens.  
- About twenty-five.  
- Twenty... Twenty-five late?  
Lay it down.  
You heard about Lou Jamison?  
I heard his widow was lookin'  
to unload his machines.  
Was. Pudge Riley  
got to her Friday last.  
He get the Remingtons?  
Two dozen electro-slots.  
Says he's got a buyer  
for 'em in Oklahoma.  
All I know is  
Lou Jamison's widow is sittin'...  
on all the Texaco stations  
in Benson County...  
and most of the Dairy Queens,  
with no machines.  
I don't want Benson County.  
But Arlis, I had to drive  
through Benson to get here.  
- Why not expand a little?  
- I'm big enough.  
- I don't need Benson.  
- But Arlis...  
Just make a note  
about the machines, Elliot.  
Say, Arlis, I almost forgot.  
There was a fella askin'  
about you over in Woodlake.  
- Denny Harris?  
- No. Just some fella.  
Said he knew you from way back.  
I figured he must've  
worked for you sometime.  
- Why is that?

- He had one of our dimes.  
You know, the blue juke dimes?  
- You get a name?  
- He didn't offer. I didn't ask.  
Said he wanted to look you up.  
Anyway, I stayed vague.  
You did right.  
I'll see you on the 7th.  
Looks like I'm gonna  
be stretchin' felt in the mornin'.  
You're gonna be stretchin' your luck  
if you're thinkin' about take-out...  
anytime soon.  
It is a slight feverish tonight.  
Just wait till that damn cake  
pops its lid.  
Unless that little pastry inside  
comes with a bicycle pump...  
and two sisters, there ain't gonna  
be a farm animal safe tonight.  
Go! Go! Go! Go!  
Three, two, one!  
Christ Almighty.  
Just put her in my pickup.  
- Lookin' good.  
- Here's to ya, honey!  
Feel like knockin' a few sins  
off your ledger, Arlis?  
You want me to find out  
if she's got a home.  
And take her there.  
What's the damage?  
Well, put it this way.  
Feed this girl a cucumber,  
it'd come out pickles.  
Jesus.  
I figure the bed's one  
of those vibratin' numbers...  
so that explains the quarters.  
Nobody could possibly  
fancy pretzel twists that much...  
so I figured you won some kind  
of weird contest.  
As for the condoms, well,

either you got a yen...  
for cheerleading squads,  
or we had the night of all nights.  
Whatever.  
There's an explanation.  
As for the blue chicken,  
I need a little help with that one.  
- You passed out.  
- Who wouldn't?  
The coins just need  
to be papered for the bank.  
The condoms and the twists  
are inventory.  
The chicken's Brainy Betty.  
I take it Betty's one  
of the exotics?  
She plays tic-tac-toe.  
What makes her so brainy?  
She wins nine times out of ten.  
You want some coffee?  
You got a machine for that too?  
Half a dozen  
in the next three counties.  
But given the circumstances  
of your immediate past...  
I would suggest the real bean.  
You wouldn't happen to have a pair  
of chinos and a belt, would ya?  
"Boo-boo"?  
Story of my life.  
Wait. Don't forget Lorraine.  
Peek's Beauty Academy,  
right outside Red Grove...  
near Green Gene's Pickle Factory.  
Buy a burger around here, chances  
are it's Green Gene's under the bun.  
Anyway...  
seein' as the beauty academy was  
next door to the pickle factory...  
we always had plenty of people  
to practice on.  
So one day I'm doin'  
this tint job on this lady...  
and my instructor comes over

and is giving me...  
The collar picked up  
a little perfume...  
so if you got a suspicious wife,  
I'd run some soap through it.  
I don't need to worry about that.  
Headin' home?  
I don't think so.  
I got a girlfriend up in Bayview.  
That oughta be enough for now.  
- You got a coat?  
- Yeah.  
- Money?  
- Sure.  
Well, thanks for the eggs.  
Everything.  
Thanks for the company.  
It must get lonely  
on the road sometimes.  
Like anything else,  
you're born to it.  
Well, you're a born listener,  
that's for sure.  
Depends on who's talkin'.  
- What's your name?  
- Kay.  
All right, Kay.  
You girls watch yourselves.  
- You're sure this is no trouble?  
- No use you waitin' seven hours...  
on a bus to Bayview when I can  
get you there in two.  
I just hate to take ya too far  
off the beaten path.  
There's a man I can see on the way,  
if you don't mind a detour or two.  
- It's greased.  
- Huh?  
The wristband.  
By the way, I get those novelties  
straight from Korea.  
I can do you ten on the dollar,  
as many as you want.  
Bayview's a little south for you,



ain't it, Arlis?

Who said anything about Bayview?

'55, '56, somewhere in there.

Eisenhower days.

- '57.

- Whatever.

- How'd you know about Bayview?

- Reese Davies.

- Who's Reese Davies?

- A moron.

Used to own a movie theater  
down that way.

At least, his father did,  
till he died.

Reese ran it into the ground  
in about 18 months.

I had a couple of cigarette machines  
in the lobby from his old man's day.

Then when the theater went south,  
Reese tried to claim 'em as assets.

It's his wife. Reese's.

Ugly as sin, ain't it?

Maybe some music'll  
take the bite out of it.

Keep going. Sometimes you can  
pick up K-MOO drivin' south.

Or here. Big Lake's got a station  
plays George Jones most afternoons.

You like George Jones?

You spend much time  
out this way?

Who? Me? No.

Like I said, my girlfriend...

There's no girlfriend.

It's just me.

See, if I hadn't have  
gotten my money stolen...

I wouldn't have been jumpin' out of  
the cake, and we never would've met.

And you wouldn't be wastin' time  
drivin' me back to Bayview.

I'm sorry I lied.

That's all right.

It's just...

I'm really not myself  
right now.  
That's all right.  
And I'm married.  
That's all right too.  
America's number-one  
shop-at-home television service...  
bringing you 24 hours of savings,  
fun and excitement every day.  
Jesus. Will you look at this.  
Two days.  
Think if I'd been gone a week.  
If you're just joining us,  
you're not too late.  
Don't worry. We're alone.  
It's always on.  
Reese goes through a picture tube  
every six months.  
I make it a rule not to trespass...  
especially in a man's house  
I don't know.  
Well, believe me, it's more my house  
than it is his.  
Drop that anywhere.  
I'll be right back.  
You're welcome to a beer  
if you can find one.  
- I oughta be pushin' off.  
- What's that?  
I said, "I left my smokes  
in the truck."  
What the hell?  
Afternoon, Mr. Davies.  
I'm Earl Logan,  
Ned Foster's man.  
Is that your truck?  
Yeah. I mean...  
Well, I was wondering if we could  
get you to move it.  
See, it sure would make our job  
a whole lot easier.  
And I need you to sign here 'fore  
we can start. Watch your finger.  
Son of a bitch.

Son of a bitch!  
They're...  
Hello? Hubie?  
This is Kay Davies.  
Does my husband happen to be there?  
Don't lie to me, Hubie!  
Shit!  
What the hell is that  
in the driveway?  
I think that they're lookin'  
for your husband.  
Well, they're not the only ones.  
Can I help you?  
Ma'am, I need the gentleman's  
signature so we can begin.  
You're not takin' my furniture.  
Ma'am, I'm not  
emotionally involved.  
Well, I am!  
Christ!  
"Boo-boo"?  
Since it looks like  
I'm not needed here anymore...  
Hey, Darlene. You haven't  
by any chance seen Reese, have you?  
You have.  
Really?  
Who are you?  
Never mind, Darlene.  
Here he is.  
Sorry to bother you.  
This don't look like a good time  
for introductions, so I'm gonna...  
Where'd you put that duffel?  
There.  
I understand all about schedules.  
Just give me a minute  
to get my ducks in line.  
Quack, quack.  
Jesus, Kay, where in the hell  
have you been?  
Just what in the hell  
are you wearin'?  
And just who in the hell is this?

You're askin' me questions?  
Exactly what the hell is that truck  
doin' outside?  
Well, if you'd been here, Kay, maybe  
I wouldn't have to explain it to ya.  
I'm gone two days,  
and you sell the furniture?  
Well, if it makes you feel better,  
I sold it two weeks ago.  
Well, shit, Reese, that makes me  
feel a whole lot better.  
Look, I don't wanna talk about  
no goddamn chest of drawers, anyway.  
I wanna know  
who in the hell this man is.  
None of your fuckin' business.  
Hell, no.  
He's in my house with my woman.  
- Are you cheatin' with my wife?  
- Actually, I just...  
That's right, Reese.  
Not two hours ago...  
we were sweatin' over each other in  
the back room of the Shady 8 Motel.  
He don't mind it in the mornin'.  
And guess what, Reese.  
I haven't showered...  
or brushed my teeth.  
Actually,  
I just gave her a ride...  
in the truck.  
Now, you listen to me, darlin'.  
There are two men on our front lawn,  
and they got a job to do.  
Now, I'm gonna open that door,  
and you're gonna let 'em do it.  
Ain't that right?  
Fuck you.  
Go for it, Slick.  
You got yourself  
a real lionheart, Kay.  
Fuck my pretty wife now.  
Fuck this.  
- That's my gun.

- Very good, Reese.

It's your gun, in my hand,  
pointed at you. Get the picture?  
Christ, Kay, you don't even know  
how to use that thing.

I got a pretty good idea.

Now, Reese, darlin', I suggest  
you take your sorry ass outside...  
and tell the gentlemen on the lawn  
that the deal is off.

I can't do that.

- Christ, Kay!

- Trust me, Reese.

That clock ain't the only thing  
runnin' out of time.

I took money. I shook hands, Kay.

The deal is done.

How much?

Seven hundred dollars.

- Where is it?

- You know them bills we had to pay!

Shit, Reese, you haven't paid a bill  
in three years. Where is it?

Kay, I just told you.

For God's sake, Kay.

All right. It's gone.

I lost it.

Poker?

Mostly.

You sell that too?

The piano?

Hell, no. I bought you that  
for your birthday, Kay.

- All right then. We'll take it.

- Take it?

You got room

in the truck there, Arlan?

- Wait just a second here.

- It's Arlis.

You don't even know his name?

For Christ's sake, Kay, what  
in the hell has happened to you?

Excuse me.

Who's holding the gun here?

You are.  
So I guess I can call anybody  
any damn thing I damn well please.  
Am I right?  
That's right.  
Sorry.  
Back there. Your name.  
Mixing it up.  
That's a horrible thing  
to do to a person.  
You were close enough.  
It's just I have a habit  
of doin' it when I get nervous.  
I got so mad at a boss of mine  
one time, I was screamin' at him...  
a full three minutes 'fore I  
realized I was callin' him Leroy...  
and his name was Ed.  
Not even close.  
It sort of took the sting  
out of it.  
Scary sometimes.  
What's that?  
Moments.  
Little split-seconds of time  
where you find yourself capable...  
of things you would never even think  
of doing normally.  
Like back there,  
holdin' that gun.  
There was a moment  
when my finger twitched.  
Not so you could see.  
More like inside, under the skin.  
Some crazy little muscle.  
And I could've done it. I could've  
shot him right in the face.  
My whole life would've changed  
in one tiny little second.  
It's not in your blood.  
Ain't that a kick?  
Yeah, it's a real tickler.  
You mind tellin' me  
what you got in here?

Seven years of bad luck,  
at least what's left.  
Well, thank God  
the furniture's spoken for.  
Believe me, sooner or later, he'd  
have slapped a price tag on my ass.  
To hell with him.  
He's just taillights to me now.  
Not that he didn't  
leave a few dents behind.  
Let me see.  
You take a hell of a punch.  
Practice makes perfect.  
We'll get you some ice.  
Arlis, you're tellin'me this now?  
I've been settin'here  
all afternoon.  
I've been settin'here for  
three hours waitin'for you to call.  
Rosie, I told ya,  
something's come up.  
Something's come up, huh?  
Well, I know what's come up.  
You got another woman over there  
with you, don't you?  
- Don't you, Arlis?  
- Rosie, listen to me.  
You know what I'm gonna do? I'm  
gonna go to town, go into a bar...  
and pick up the first man I see.  
I'm gonna pick up  
the first two men I see.  
I don't think that's such  
a good idea, do you, Rosie?  
You know what, Arlis?  
I don't care.  
Are you still there,  
or did you hang up on me?  
No, I'm still here.  
You're sort of an odd fellow,  
you know that?  
You don't ask many questions...  
personal, I mean.  
I figure people share

what they want to.  
No sense crowdin' 'em.  
Women must love you.  
Put that on your face  
once you're out.  
You mind grabbin' me  
another one of these?  
- Ever been married?  
- Nope.  
Ever been in love?  
- Am I crowdin' you?  
- No.  
- I've never been in love.  
- Me either.  
What about your husband?  
Hell, no. I mean,  
you saw his hair, right?  
Besides, he's no different  
than any of the others.  
I was 13 when the first one  
pulled my blue jeans off...  
and ever since, they seem  
to pass me off, one to another...  
my whole life.  
Like they're all members  
of the same club or something.  
You know, you look good  
without that hat.  
But you're gonna bald.  
See how high your peaks are?  
That's from wearin' the hat all day.  
You have to  
let your scalp breathe.  
Besides, you shouldn't hide  
your head. You got a nice shape.  
I'll keep that in mind.  
It's not 'cause of that, is it?  
The tattoo?  
I bet that was one crazy night.  
No more than any other.  
Well, whatever.  
Nothin' to feel shy about.  
You hardly notice it's there.  
Come on. Let's go



for a little walk, okay?  
Why can't you sleep?  
The night air usually calms her.  
This stuff is awful.  
You sure you asked for Cover Girl?  
Yes, I asked. They were out.  
Well, my skin  
does not take to this.  
How I could forget my beauty bag,  
I do not know.  
Probably wouldn't fit  
in the suitcase.  
How do you abide this seat?  
Ten more miles,  
my ass'll be flat as a pancake.  
Seats take breakin' in.  
All right. I get the message.  
I'm not usually like this. If we'd  
met under normal circumstances...  
you'd probably like me.  
Most people do,  
or I guess they do.  
I didn't say I didn't like you.  
Hell, I like you.  
It's just that there's been  
a whole lot of...  
activity  
in the past couple of days.  
I go from one town to the next,  
you understand?  
I see the same faces.  
I hear the same talk.  
I sleep in the same beds.  
I eat the same food.  
Then I start all over again.  
I like it that way.  
I don't like walkin'  
into people's houses I don't know.  
I don't like guns  
comin' out of nowhere.  
I don't like lookin'  
over my shoulder for angry husbands.  
I don't like surprises, period.  
You really like me?

What's not to like?  
Arlis, that stew of yours...  
has got to where it's nothin'  
but potatoes and carrots.  
I don't make it, Kyle;  
I just stock it.  
Hell, Homer and I are about the  
only ones who buy the damn stuff.  
We get up to our elbows  
in John Deere, we got no choice.  
I can go back to the chili  
if you want.  
Shit, no.  
We work close enough quarters  
in that pit as it is.  
All I need is Homer's ass  
in my face after two cans of that.  
Now, I could stand a little  
of that in my face.  
She'd steal you blind.  
So old Sam found you, did she?  
- Came right up.  
- Yeah, she knows the truck.  
Here. Introduce yourself.  
You like that, don't you?  
Better than that scratch  
old Charley feeds you.  
- She'll follow you all day now.  
- What happened to her throat?  
She ran herself through a fence  
couple of years back...  
tore herself up pretty good.  
- Hey, girl.  
- But you're still here, ain't ya?  
You ride?  
Once or twice. County fairs,  
stuff like that.  
You?  
Once or twice.  
I bet you can't swim neither.  
That?  
Beginner's luck.  
Well, there was a cowboy a while  
back who showed me a thing or two.

Comin' in?  
I'm fine.  
Suit yourself.  
So who showed you about horses?  
When I was about 12, 13, I worked  
at a little horse farm like this.  
I shoveled stalls during the day,  
got a roof over my head at night.  
Well, where was your mother?  
She died.  
How 'bout your father?  
Long story.  
He still alive?  
You ask all your cowboys  
this many questions?  
Why don't you come on in here  
and cool off?  
We gotta go.  
I don't wanna go.  
Storm's comin'.  
There's no storm.  
I can feel it.  
How come some of them are blue?  
- Those dimes?  
- They're juke dimes.  
Juke dimes?  
What's that?  
I give the boss man a roll of these,  
he'll start up a jukebox.  
You play your own jukebox?  
That don't make sense.  
People don't make sense.  
Man walks into a place  
with a jukebox, right?  
Nine times out of ten,  
if that box isn't already playin'...  
he'll be shy about startin' it up  
or won't even know it's there.  
But you get it goin' for him...  
nine times out of ten,  
he'll keep it goin'...  
with his own money.  
Trick of the trade.  
How come you paint 'em blue?

This keeps 'em separate from  
the boss man's money, that's all.  
You go east...  
Billy Breckins paints his green.  
Drop down two counties...  
Buddy Clarke, his are red.  
Me, I'm just partial to blue.  
You could use a trim.  
I got a man in Blackwell does me  
every third Wednesday of the month.  
I could do ya.  
A couple of snips here.  
Couple there.  
I think your hands  
are a couple of beers past steady.  
Yeah, I'd do you better blind  
than you been gettin'.  
Your man in Blackwell  
doesn't understand your head.  
Besides, I'm not drunk.  
I know exactly what I'm doin'.  
Looks like you were right...  
about that storm.  
What?  
Nothing.  
What? Did you say something?  
Is there somebody out there?  
Shit!  
Maybe it's Reese come.  
Jesus.  
Oh, thank God.  
I'm sorry to bother you,  
but the night man's gone to bed...  
and I'm having some trouble  
with my car.  
You try the bell?  
- The bell?  
- For the night man.  
Sure, but no one came.  
And no one along here  
would open their door to me.  
- You're the only one.  
- What's wrong with your car?  
Hell if I know.

I am lost when it comes  
to anything mechanical.  
But you look like you might know  
something about motors.  
Am I right?  
- You got the keys?  
- Inside.  
- You got it in gear.  
- What?  
You got it in gear.  
Well, damn.  
You'd follow a mouse  
into the mouth of a snake...  
wouldn't you, Junior?  
He's hurt bad.  
Hurt bad?  
Honey, I cut my lip worse  
than this when I'm whistlin'.  
See, it's just that  
I can't fix it myself...  
and my sweet pea there,  
she don't know how.  
How long has it been, boy?  
Well, long time...  
no see.  
Ugly little bastards, ain't they?  
How's it look?  
I've seen worse.  
Yeah, I guess  
my whole life's back there.  
A good portion of yours too,  
huh, son?  
Be glad it's just bird seed  
chasing you this time.  
Not like that night in Kilgore, huh?  
Hell, come winter...  
it get cold enough...  
the pinch'll get somethin' fierce.  
Sometimes you can't get it all out.  
Sometimes you got to  
carry it with you.  
Now, don't get me wrong.  
You was always a good boy.  
You always did what you was told.

Well, most of the time.  
I managed to raise the night man,  
and I have a key...  
Shit!  
Shouldn't we get a doctor?  
Little darlin', I don't believe  
there's a pill peddler alive...  
got a better touch  
than my boy here.  
And best of all,  
he don't ask no questions.  
Practice makes perfect.  
You got an injured man here, boy.  
Easy, easy.  
That's nice.  
That's nice, that smell.  
You've got the smell  
of love on you, boy.  
Tell me...  
does she taste as good?  
Come here, boy.  
Get your father's boots off.  
That's the least a son can do...  
till he's ready  
to wear them himself.  
Get yourself out of those clothes  
before you catch a chill.  
Don't worry yourself.  
I never caught anything in my life.  
Everybody catches something.  
Not me.  
Well, I broke a finger once...  
but I don't figure that counts.  
Shit.  
This is too fucking weird.  
Wish I could say the same.  
I'm always catching a cold.  
Had one just last month.  
I'm sorry to hear it.  
You can't sleep in those.  
Find yourself something of mine.  
I'll hang yours up to dry.  
Come on.  
What's your name?

Ginnie.

With a J or a G?

You plannin' on writin' me a letter?

All right, keep it a mystery.

It's a nice name either way.

Yeah, well...

I'm not a nice girl.

But I'll bet that you are,  
aren't you?

I'd like to think so.

And the guy

who did that to your face...

did he think you were nice?

Not at the time.

But you stay with him anyway,  
don't you?

Who, Arlis?

He didn't do this to me.

He's not like that at all.

Don't kid yourself.

Eventually,

they are all like that...

evil.

But once you know that...

you can turn it back against 'em.

Use it.

Arlis doesn't have

an evil bone in his body.

But...

What?

I don't know.

I get the feeling...

he's been close to it,

felt the heat of it.

I think that you're the one

that's felt the heat of it.

And not too long ago at that.

There's a pretty cotton nightshirt

in there with tulips on it.

I know you'll love that.

You don't exactly travel light,  
do you?

Long story.

Take anything you want.

Well, how about this?  
That was my mother's.  
I'm sorry.  
This her?  
She's pretty.  
Yeah, I guess she was.  
Fuck.  
You lookin' for something?  
Three guesses.  
I had some serious shit  
in that car.  
- Your shit's still in it.  
- You mind telling me where?  
Across the tracks over there  
in Mesquite.  
You mind telling me why?  
Anybody see you last night?  
Last night? No.  
- You sure?  
- Yeah.  
You sure?  
Are you deaf?  
Yeah, I'm sure.  
Then whose pepper was I pickin'  
out of my father's shoulder?  
That?  
Some half-wit pump owner...  
stumbled onto us in the rain,  
took a wild shot and hit something.  
It was fluke luck.  
Nobody saw the car.  
I guess I just wasted my time.  
I guess you did.  
I'm his kin, you understand?  
I got no choice.  
So don't think this is some game  
that you're playin'.  
Last night, it could have just  
as easily been you out there...  
bleedin' in the rain.  
Only difference is,  
he'd have left you behind...  
or finished the job himself.  
Well, shit.



No wonder old black eyes loves you.  
You wouldn't have the balls  
to shoo a fly off a steak.  
Warm you boys up?  
Is that one at a time  
or both together?  
You're a little devil, aren't you?  
I'd damn sure put the curl in your  
hair if you'd give me half a chance.  
I don't need a man for that.  
- There you go.  
- Thank you, ma'am.  
Oh, my God.  
Where you from?  
Why do you wanna know that?  
Who gave her that mask?  
Does it matter?  
I suppose you're right.  
People get what they deserve.  
What do you want?  
- If it's money, l...  
- Money?  
Money? Hey, boy...  
I don't need your money.  
Well, why are you here?  
I got shot. You fixed me up.  
I'm havin' some eggs.  
Does that seem strange?  
Just like old times, huh?  
Just coincidence.  
I had a loose end to take care of  
up north Oklahoma way...  
around Ardmore, them parts.  
An associate of mine...  
got a little greedy.  
Started threatenin'.  
Started to weigh on me...  
stole my sleep, and you know  
how I feel about loose ends.  
Being one myself.  
That's true, isn't it, Junior?  
He bought me lunch, and...  
he bought me a pack of cigarettes.  
After Oklahoma, I was working north,

drifted on down...  
and run into this little girl  
over here.  
And I saw her...  
switching tickets at this diner  
in Cherry Spring.  
She had a full rancher's breakfast,  
and she pulled a switch...  
with this little old lady  
had coffee and a piece of pie.  
Little low-rent for you, ain't it?  
Well, it was the way she did it.  
Smooth as glass.  
Real nerve.  
Well, at least you won't go hungry.  
Well...  
she's a little bigger than that.  
The last couple months, she's been  
runnin' this slick little game.  
Thing of beauty.  
She steals from the dead.  
She's been sloppy about it,  
of course.  
Would've got caught  
if I hadn't come along.  
But she's got grit in spades.  
I'll have to watch my back  
with this one.  
Heart beats about twice a minute.  
At least it beats.  
Don't you kid yourself, Junior.  
You see, you and me...  
we're flesh and bone.  
The same blood  
that runs my veins...  
runs yours.  
- You seen my duffle?  
- Maybe in the truck.  
What happened last night...  
with your father?  
He just has a habit  
of puttin' himself...  
at the wrong place  
at the wrong time.

What's all that?  
She hardly has a thing to wear  
from what I gather.  
Lord knows I got enough.  
Besides, most of these  
are full of bad memories.  
Not too many spring picnics here.  
This may not be  
none of my business, but...  
I run into that  
little scarecrow you got...  
runnin' that north territory  
up there.  
- Did he mention that?  
- He mentioned it.  
Yeah.  
- His name Eddie?  
- Elliot.  
Elliot, right.  
He's a nervous little  
son of a bitch, ain't he?  
Got a real strange way of walkin'.  
Them ankles so close together.  
You ever notice things like that?  
What's your point?  
Well...  
it might not be my place.  
It looked to me like  
he's stealin' from you, son.  
Elliot's an honest man.  
You sure know him better than I do.  
But it's just that, you see...  
I watched him at this fillin'  
station outside of Paint Rock.  
This one afternoon,  
he had him two sacks...  
and he was runnin' quarters  
in the both of them.  
I guess it don't take  
no great genius...  
to count Clark Bars and  
figure out that you're short.  
He has been short, hasn't he?  
Short don't mean he's stealin'.

No, I guess not.  
But then again,  
what else would it mean?  
Bye, y'all.  
You sure you're fit to travel?  
Hell, this ain't nothin', darlin'.  
I'm what you call a quick healer.  
You ask Arlis there.  
I'd wreck my shoulder on a Sunday...  
and still give him a smack  
on a Monday.  
Ain't that right, son?  
There's a Texaco station  
about ten miles east.  
That'll be your last chance  
for a while.  
I appreciate that.  
Truly, I... Except I think  
we're gonna head up north there...  
around Benson County.  
You remember Benson County,  
don't you, Junior?  
I'm just needlin' him.  
Boy always hated it up there.  
Them locusts liked to drive him  
crazy. You take care, now.  
Get yourself packed.  
We're leavin'.  
It's funny. I'd have never  
put it together... him and you.  
If I'd met you separate,  
I'd never see the tie.  
I guess we don't get  
much choice in it, do we?  
What was all that talk  
about Benson County?  
Just talk.  
I don't remember the locusts at all.  
Pass me that bottle again, will ya?  
We finished the last we had.  
We or you?  
What's the difference?  
It's gone.  
Next place you see, you stop.

You're the boss.  
That's strange.  
What?  
Look at that house up there.  
Looks familiar.  
Sure, that's the one  
in the photograph.  
Photograph?  
The one that lady had.  
I saw it in her suitcase when  
I went looking for a nightshirt.  
- You're wrong.  
- No.  
That roof was just the same.  
And the trees. And the windmill...  
There's dozens of houses  
look just like that up here.  
I'm positive.  
No one has lived in that house  
for years.  
Well, looks like  
it was a nice place once.  
I think whoever lived there  
would have kept it up.  
Not that house.  
What do you mean?  
Years ago,  
they say some Mexican...  
shot the man  
he was working for...  
and then shot the whole family  
right after.  
Jesus.  
I mean, that's the story I heard.  
It changes over the years.  
Who knows what the truth is anymore?  
No matter what the story is,  
it all comes back to one thing.  
What's that?  
Well, the house.  
They say it's haunted.  
But then,  
I don't believe in ghosts.  
All right, Darlene. Thanks.

No, I'm glad you told me.  
Yeah, you too.  
Bye.  
I can't believe it.  
He filed for divorce, Reese did.  
I'm sorry.  
Sorry? I'm just amazed he could do  
the paperwork by himself.  
I wanna celebrate.  
Celebrate?  
Yeah, I feel free...  
for the first time in my life,  
I think, and I wanna celebrate.  
I wanna put on a pretty dress,  
get you out of that damn hat...  
and go have a nice big fat steak.  
What do you say?  
Any suggestions?  
Try C-17.  
C-17.  
How come this place is closed  
in the middle of the week?  
Pete's boy plays baseball  
for the local school.  
Anytime Tommy's set to pitch,  
Pete throws a lock on the place...  
and he rides the bus with the team.  
That's how come I got the key.  
He must trust you.  
I guess he does.  
You play this for all the girls,  
old C-17?  
First time.  
You an honest man, Arlis Sweeney?  
Yes, ma'am.  
You like the dress?  
I like the dress.  
You like the girl?  
I'd say she's the prettiest one  
in the room.  
Pretty enough to dance with?  
Well...  
Now, don't tell me you don't.  
Well, don't you think

it's about time you learned?  
Dancin'...  
frees the soul.  
Howdy, partner.  
That's all I get after last night?  
Mornin'.  
Good mornin', darlin'.  
Why don't you shake on  
into the kitchen...  
and crack me a beer?  
Need some help?  
Get me two cases of Milky Ways

**by 9:**

'cause that's what my hired man's  
gonna be lookin' to take with him...  
back to Crockett County.  
I haven't even got me one case.  
Hell, I ain't got  
a Milky Way, period.  
Well, I'm sure the good people  
of Crockett County...  
can do without a Milky Way  
for a day or two.  
It's my job, all right?  
We're a little surly  
in the morning, aren't we?  
That's okay.  
It runs in my family too.  
What's that?  
The morning bear.  
I said it runs in my family too.  
What else runs in your family?  
Your family.  
You never talk about 'em.  
Believe me, there's a lot more  
interesting things to talk about...  
than my family.  
I already told you everything  
that's worth tellin' anyway.  
Besides, I haven't  
seen them in years.  
Not since I got married.  
But when you were a kid growin' up,

what were they like?  
What'd your mother do?  
What'd your father do?  
If I didn't know you better,  
I'd say you were crowdin' me.  
Maybe you don't know me.  
What'd my father do?  
Drink mostly. Gamble.  
Lost everything we had eventually.  
That's how I met Reese.  
Went to go collect my father one  
night at this place in the woods...  
where there was always  
an all-night game...  
and there they were,  
sittin' shoulder-to-shoulder...  
two drunks...  
Losing money faster than  
one sober fool ever could.  
Of course, I was a real fool.  
Ended up takin' Reese home.  
Stayed to make his breakfast.  
Never left.  
Why the sudden interest?  
Nothin'. I'm just...  
I happened to see that photograph...  
in your suitcase.  
Well, that's not me.  
It is me, but it isn't.  
See, my parents...  
The only parents I've ever known...  
are really my aunt and uncle  
by blood.  
I mean...  
the people in the photograph  
I never knew.  
They were lost when I was a baby.  
Killed.  
Car accident.  
Car accident?  
When I was old enough to know, I was  
given the picture and told about it.  
I don't know why I hang onto it.  
It's just...



You grow up in an ugly house  
the way I did...  
sometimes you wonder  
how it might have been...  
if things hadn't happened  
the way they did.  
It's funny.  
Your father the other day...  
mentioned Benson County.  
That's where they lived,  
I'm pretty sure.  
The people in the picture.  
My family.  
I'm about ready.  
Listen.  
I think maybe it'd be better  
you stay here.  
Stay here?  
While I run up the road  
to tend to Elliot.  
There's some money over there.  
Get yourself something to eat  
while I...  
while I'm gone.  
Well, they must make  
one hell of a Spanish omelette.  
All right, I'll wait for ya.  
You don't want to be  
going anywhere without this.  
Earl's Truck Stop  
over in Coke County...  
run out of Cheez-Its again.  
Cheez-Its and truckers.  
They sure go together.  
And Phil Pritchard wants you  
to ring him up...  
about puttin' another Coke machine  
in his ice rink.  
I can't figure why  
he waited so long.  
- Two years I've been tellin' him.  
- You're a little light here.  
Yeah, well, I had trouble  
with the Mexicans again.

They hurt the machines?  
Nothin' I couldn't put right  
with a crowbar.  
I had to replace the brace on one.  
Slung it with...  
a three-quarter inch York.  
- That should solve your problem.  
- Should.  
But those boys are strong.  
Hell knows I couldn't pop her.  
- Without the key?  
- Yeah.  
Well, that's what I meant...  
without the key.  
You look like you had  
one too many cups of coffee, Elliot.  
It's the chill, I guess.  
Are you stealin' from me?  
You know I did time in Big Spring.  
I told you that  
right off day we met.  
But I did the time.  
I'm out now...  
and I want to stay that way.  
I'm not sure  
that answers my question.  
You don't know...  
'cause you've never been in trouble.  
But once you been in trouble...  
and people know it...  
you feel guilty for things  
you never done.  
Just because you know...  
they think you got it in you.  
That potential.  
Is that why your hands are shaking?  
That's why my hands are shaking.  
I like my job, Arlis.  
I like you.  
I like you too, Elliot.  
I'll see you next week.  
And Elliot,  
that business about the machines...  
It ain't the Mexicans.

Up there they blame everything  
on the Mexicans.  
We asked 100 women this question.  
Give me the most popular answer...  
from the 100 women who answered.  
Tell me a reason why  
women leave their husbands.  
Infidelity.  
Did our women say infidelity?  
It's number one!  
Who needs him anyway?  
Stardust Motel.  
Emma, it's Arlis.  
Ring 12 for me, will you?  
Not unless you wanna talk to  
Theresa. She's pulling the sheets.  
Speaking of which, what do you  
want me to do with the suitcase?  
Suitcase?  
I'll have Jimmy put it in  
Maintenance. Just give me the word.  
I don't follow you.  
Where's the lady?  
Gone. Been gone  
about an hour now.  
They just got in the car and left.  
They? Who's they?  
She and her friend.  
A young lady in sunglasses.  
A real stinger, that one.  
Asked me for directions  
three times...  
then liked to take half  
the guest mints from the bowl.  
I swear, some people  
just have no manners.  
They say where they were goin'?  
Up north, I guess. The young one  
had gotten turned around.  
Wanted to know how  
to get back on the farm route.  
That doesn't help much. They  
could be anywhere in the county.  
It suits you... the dress.

Well, you can have it back  
if that's what you mean.  
I'm just sayin' it suits you,  
that's all.  
You might think about doin'  
something with your hair.  
You got a nice face.  
You should let the boys see it.  
It ain't my face  
the boys wanna see.  
Maybe you haven't met  
the right boy.  
- And you have?  
- I thought so.  
Last night, at least,  
but now I...  
I don't know what to think.  
Look, you can't figure men.  
So don't run yourself  
ragged tryin'.  
I guess. I don't know why  
he just didn't call me himself.  
I told you, it's a surprise.  
I don't even know  
what's goin' on myself.  
I'm just doin' what I was told.  
Well, here we are.  
This is where we're goin'?  
I don't...  
Oh, my God.  
Surprise.  
Howdy.  
She's some old dame, ain't she?  
Look at that face, sweet pea.  
Does that break your heart?  
To pieces.  
First time you've seen it?  
- How did he know?  
- What's that now?  
The house.  
How did he know where it was?  
Oh, Arlis.  
He knows a lot more  
than he lets on.

Anyway, sweet pea saw it and...  
said something about a photograph.  
- That about right?  
- Right.  
Where is he?  
He'll be along.  
Say, you wanna take a little look  
inside there, look around?  
Well, go on.  
But you be careful, now.  
Watch yourself,  
especially on them stairs there.  
There's more termites  
than there is timber by now.  
How was the movie?  
I got here as fast as I could.  
You talk to that clerk there  
at the motel?  
Dropped enough crumbs  
for a flock of geese.  
That's ten minutes.  
Where the hell you been?  
She had to pee twice...  
and I had to make  
a little stop of my own.  
I know how grim you get,  
you don't get your breakfast.  
You're smarter than I thought.  
I'm not smart enough to figure out  
what we're doin'...  
wastin' our time out here  
in cracker land.  
I'm gonna tell you all about  
loose ends some day.  
And you'll want to listen careful.  
You look like you've seen  
a ghost there, Junior.  
I hope you brought some food.  
You all right?  
Hell, he's fine. Just fine.  
Cat's got his tongue is all.  
Come on up.  
There's something I wanna show you.  
Watch your step, son.

It's like heaven, isn't it?  
My mother must have stood  
right here...  
brushin' her hair...  
daydreamin'.  
I think I figured it out.  
I must've slept in here...  
or there.  
No. In front.  
In those days, houses like these...  
they used to put the baby  
in the front of the house.  
That way, if a woman was hangin'  
laundry and the baby cried...  
she could hear.  
Maybe my mother hung laundry  
out back.  
Sun's strongest in the front.  
You seem to know more about me  
than I do, so why don't you tell me.  
Were my parents good people?  
Were they nice to baby Kay?  
I'm sure they were.  
- What makes you so sure?  
- 'Cause you're good people.  
And good people  
come from good people.  
Ain't that right, son?  
- That's right.  
- I'm not so sure that's true.  
But it's nice of you to say.  
No, I'm...  
I'm not just saying it.  
I know it, and that's a fact.  
I'm gonna go outside.  
That's a good idea.  
Would you do me a favor?  
Would you take Ginnie  
while you're at it?  
She's probably down there  
bitin' on her nails by now.  
- I'll go with you.  
- No.  
I need to talk to you.

Father to son, you know.  
Let the girls get some wind  
in their hair.  
We could walk for days, I bet,  
and never see anything but this.  
Wouldn't that be a thrill.  
See, it was the girl, sweet pea,  
that first mentioned it...  
the house being the same and all.  
I thought she had it all wrong,  
naturally.  
See, I knew I never seen  
this woman of yours before...  
'cause I never forget a face.  
But...  
Still, there was something  
doggin' me. A sound.  
Halfway to Shreveport, I see a lady  
standin' by the side of the road.  
A mother.  
And that's when I knew what it was.  
That sound in my head...  
her cryin'.  
You see, I had forgotten...  
about the baby.  
What's that sound?  
You hear it?  
Bugs.  
She doesn't know.  
There's no reason for her to know,  
no reason for me to tell her.  
I realize that.  
I truly, truly do.  
But this woman, she's different.  
See, I noticed that  
the first time I seen her.  
The way she looked at you  
and the way you looked at her.  
It was touching, truly.  
She'll never know.  
I swear it on my life.  
Damn, I wish I could believe that.  
But as much as we are the same...  
you've always been

a little too emotional.  
I left her this mornin'.  
I only came back 'cause of you.  
This little game.  
This ain't no game, Junior.  
You know me better than that.  
I must be out of my fuckin' mind.  
It's not gonna change, you know!  
They don't grow this stuff  
but one color.  
It's a shame, really.  
She's so sweet.  
Almost innocent.  
She is innocent. But I'm not.  
Take me...  
and she can't know.  
I couldn't do that.  
What kind of man  
would that make me?  
A man who'd shoot his own kin.  
I couldn't sleep with that,  
and I do prize my sleep.  
There's really only  
one question here, son.  
Do I do it...  
or you?  
I could hear 'em.  
You don't mind if I smoke,  
do you?  
You know how I always enjoyed  
a good cigar.  
That's what separates me from other  
men... I can tell the difference.  
A good cigar's not what  
separates you from other men.  
What separates you, Junior?  
You fuck their wives?  
I don't shoot their children.  
You'd done what you were told, there  
would have been no blood that night.  
I didn't pull the trigger.  
But you opened the door,  
and they were supposed to be asleep.  
And you know they're always



supposed to be asleep.  
Besides, wasn't me that shot first.  
I had no choice.  
And the boy?  
Did he have a choice?  
Fuck that little boy!  
He almost got your daddy killed.  
We had one bad night.  
It was 30 years ago.  
There was more than one bad night.  
But that was your night,  
wasn't it, Junior?  
You're right.  
You didn't pull the trigger.  
You did open the door.  
And now, you brung her to me.  
You're stupid.  
You've always been stupid.  
You was stupid  
when you were a little kid.  
As a man, shit,  
you're being stupid now.  
Who's got the gun, boy? Me?  
Go ahead, son.  
Put it on me and pull the trigger.  
Come on.  
See, you can't.  
You just can't.  
You can't because we're kin.  
Blood.  
Look, you go ahead and run along  
and fill up them candy machines.  
It's only right that I do it.  
This way, we both will sleep easy.  
Dad?  
Son?  
Sweet dreams.  
- What happened?  
- Get in the truck.  
- But...  
- Get in the truck!  
Everything he told you...  
it's a lie.  
Thanks for the advice.

Don't be in a hurry to leave.  
They know me here for years, so  
you just stay as long as you want.  
Until you figure out  
your next step.  
You got your key?  
Yeah.  
I got my key.  
What was I doin'  
in that house today?  
Or am I crowdin' you?  
There are some things that...  
are better left unsaid.  
It just does no good  
to talk about 'em.  
No good at all.  
It's like I said.  
I'm a creature of habit.  
Each town I go,  
there's a place to eat...  
place to sleep.  
And in each town,  
there's also a woman.  
I'm startin' to miss 'em.  
Sure, I understand.  
I just sort of  
fell into your life anyway.  
There wasn't any reason to it.  
God knows I've been a burden.  
It's just...  
I really haven't been myself  
these last few days.  
Yes, you have.  
You've been fine.  
Better than fine.  
Looks like they're almost gone.  
The bruises.  
I better go.  
I got a jukebox up the road  
that's only playin' George Jones.  
That ain't so bad.  
I guess not.  
I stumble on any of those  
blue dimes of yours...

maybe I'll use a couple of'em...  
give you a call,  
let you know how I'm doin'.  
You know where to find me.  
What's that on your pocket?  
That's nothin'.  
It's just a little blood.