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NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE

By William Missouri Downs and Lou Anne Wright

Cast of Characters:

Hazel Ruby The older bar owner

Harry The younger bar owner

The Governor (Marlon Monroe) Older, a candidate

Diane Harry's dream girl

Sarah Diane's daughter (age 8ish)

John Rose Diane's Husband, a parolee

A Nice Single Girl A nice single girl

Plus: A Policeman and a small chorus of Bar Regulars

TIME: The Present (October 31st)

PLACE: Garrison, Iowa

SETTING: The Round Table Bar. A rustic building which has housed a bar since F.D.R. revoked prohibition. There are pinball machines, a pool table, an ancient moose head over the door, neon beer advertisements and Mens' and Womens' bathrooms, respectively labeled "Pointers" and "Setters".

On the other side of the room is the front door which leads to a porch; it is left over from the days during prohibition when the building was probably a country store. At the end of the porch, partially hidden by the autumn leaves, is a sign which reads, "Hazel and Harry's Round Table Bar." Bleeding through the old paint are the words, "Bob's Bar & Grill".

ACT ONE

(As the lights rise we hear cheering. A small crowd of BAR REGULARS [ranchers and farmers] have gathered to hear MARLON MONROE, known to all as the GOVERNOR, give Richard Nixon's resignation speech.)

(The Governor's heavy frame stands atop a soap box as he delivers a great, theatrical, oration. Around him, the bar is decorated in red, white and blue bunting.)

GOVERNOR

"...I have never been a quitter!!!! But as President, I must put the interest of America first. Therefore, I shall resign the Presidency effective at noon tomorrow. Vice President Ford will be sworn in as President at that hour."

(The BAR REGULARS burst into applause.)

BAR REGULARS

(chanting)

FOUR MORE YEARS! FOUR MORE YEARS! FOUR MORE YEARS!

(HAZEL RUBY, a fifty year old Iowa type `A` personality quiets the crowd.)

HAZEL RUBY

Please! Everyone! Please! Quiet!

BAR REGULARS

(chanting)

CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!
CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!

(HAZEL finally gets them quiet.)

GOVERNOR

"To have served in this office is to have felt a very personal sense of kinship with each and every American. In leaving it, I do so with this prayer: May God's grace be with you in all the days ahead." Thank you, goodnight.

(Wild applause. The GOVERNOR bows and heads for the bar.)

REGULAR

Nice job, Governor!

GOVERNOR

Thank you!

REGULAR II

Wow! I was transported back to 1974!

REGULAR

Governor, can I make a request?

GOVERNOR

Certainly!

REGULAR

Nixon's "Checkers" speech.

REGULAR II

I'd like to hear, William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold".

GOVERNOR

All requests will be considered!

(THE GOVERNOR makes his way to the bar where HAZEL RUBY is taping Halloween things to the bar's mirrors.)

HAZEL RUBY

Nice job tonight, Gov.

GOVERNOR

Good evening Hazel, you are beautiful as always.

HAZEL RUBY

Thank you, your honor. How about another speech? Got a few more requests from this afternoon. Let's see, "Life of Strenuous Endeavor" and "The Gettysburg Address".

GOVERNOR

First a drink.

HAZEL RUBY

Two minutes.

GOVERNOR

I may be dead in two minutes.

(HAZEL RUBY checks the cash drawer.)

HAZEL RUBY

Dimes. Harry! Dimes! Harry, we need some damn dimes!

(HARRY enters through the back door. He's a shy man of 31. He tosses down an empty trash can and scrapes the bottom of his shoe with a stick.)

HARRY

You really should get a lock for this back door.

HAZEL RUBY

We need dimes! And while you're at it, nickels.

HARRY

This place could be cleaner.

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, you're actually taking a personal interest in the Round Table?

HARRY

No, but it could be cleaner.

HAZEL RUBY

You know where the broom is; do something about it.

HARRY

Hazel, would it be possible for me to bring up a particular subject, without you going crazy on me?

HAZEL RUBY

What the hell does that mean?

HARRY

You promise to remain as cool and calm as you are right now?

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, I'm so bored I could drop dead. God I must be blind, we've got only two quarters.

HARRY

I'll get'em.

HAZEL RUBY

What's the problem, Harry? We've all got problems. Life is too short to be shy about them.
(When HARRY gets nervous he has a bad habit of stammering . He's nervous.)

HARRY

I...ah...I...

HAZEL RUBY

Spit it out!

HARRY

Quarters.

HAZEL RUBY

Now there's an inflammatory subject.

(HARRY exits to the men's bathroom.)

GOVERNOR

This place smells.

HAZEL RUBY

Open a window.

GOVERNOR

It smells like my Grandmother's house.

HAZEL RUBY

Why thank you.

GOVERNOR

She's been dead for twenty years. Good God, what's that?

(The GOVERNOR sees the Halloween things taped to the mirrors.)

HAZEL RUBY

A goblin.

GOVERNOR

I thought it was a picture of Everett Dirksen!

HAZEL RUBY

It's Halloween.

GOVERNOR

Halloween? I thought they canceled that.

HAZEL RUBY

As far as I know it's still going strong. Harry found a bag of burning shit on the back porch no more than twenty minutes ago. Dinner?

GOVERNOR

Not in the mood.

HAZEL RUBY

Marlon, I think someone should have a man-to-man talk with Harry.

GOVERNOR

Man-to-man eh? You want to do it or should I?

HAZEL RUBY

It could be a girl.

GOVERNOR

A girl?

HAZEL RUBY

Yeah, like me, only younger.

GOVERNOR

How much does he know about them?

HAZEL RUBY

He hasn't had a date in six months.

GOVERNOR

You must be patient.

HAZEL RUBY

He's thirty-one years old and I think he's a virgin.

GOVERNOR

Sounds like a filibuster to me.

(HARRY enters from the men`s room.)

HAZEL RUBY

Well, I guess I'll bring another keg up from the cellar. Harry, take over would ya?

(HAZEL RUBY shoots THE GOVERNOR a poignant look and exits to the back room.)

GOVERNOR

Ahem, well, what appointments do I have coming up?

(HARRY looks at large John Deere calendar as the

GOVERNOR grabs a bar napkin and pen.)

HARRY

Tomorrow at the Vinton Literary Club. It's going to be the annual Husband's night.

GOVERNOR

Damn. I'm better with the ladies. What else?

HARRY

I tried, but every other club was booked, except for the Senior Citizen's Luncheon, but you can't go back there.

GOVERNOR

I didn't start that food fight.

HARRY

I know you didn't.

GOVERNOR

I had no idea that Senior Citizens could be so opinionated.

HARRY

I think you let the hecklers get to you.

GOVERNOR

It's not like the old days.

HARRY

No sir.

GOVERNOR

Harry, you got something you want to tell me? Something up? Call it politician's intuition.

HARRY

...well. ...Something happened to me the other day.

GOVERNOR

It wouldn't be a girl would it?

HARRY

As a matter for fact, yes, it is.

(Suddenly HAZEL RUBY screams with joy as she comes out of hiding from around the corner.)

HAZEL RUBY

You're kidding! What's her name? Where's she live? Is she a blonde? A redhead? God, say she's not a redhead! I'll let her be a redhead only if she dyes it! Where did you meet her? This is great!

GOVERNOR

This calls for a drink! The drinks are on me!

(Several of the REGULARS run to the bar for a free drink.)

HAZEL RUBY

You got a date with her?

HARRY

I think so.

(Another scream of joy from HAZEL RUBY as she pops the cork on a bottle of champagne.)

GOVERNOR

Congratulations boy; you're now a man.

HAZEL RUBY

I'm proud of you, Harry. I'm so happy I think I could cry. It's like V.J. day all over again.

HARRY

You see, this is what I was worried about. It's just a girl.

HAZEL RUBY

Where did you meet her?

HARRY

At the Beauteria.

HAZEL RUBY

The Beauteria! My God! It's a hairdresser. No Vicki Inzer, she's too old for you.

HARRY

It's not Vicki.

HAZEL RUBY

Oh no, then it's Taletha Wheeler. Her mother's a teetotaling faith healer! Oh God, do we have problems.

HARRY

It's not Taletha either.

HAZEL RUBY

Thank God, She's your second cousin.

HARRY

Hazel, you're my second cousin.

GOVERNOR

Well, tell us boy, before the crowd goes insane and storms the grandstand to rip you apart with their bare hands! The name, Harry, the name!

HARRY

Diane Shook.

HAZEL RUBY

Shook?

HARRY

Shook.

GOVERNOR

Shook?

HARRY

Yes, Shook.

REGULAR

Shook?

HARRY

This isn't any of your business.

GOVERNOR

Oh God, I often have trouble dealing with people whose last names are intransitive verbs.

HAZEL RUBY

Is she smart? I hope to God she's smart. But, it doesn't really matter you know. She could be as dumb as a post, and I wouldn't say a thing this time.

GOVERNOR

Is she Republican, Democrat or Bull Moose?

HARRY

I don't know.

GOVERNOR

How can you date her without knowing how she registers?

HARRY

I'm pretty sure she's not Bull Moose.

HAZEL RUBY

Is she pretty? I hope so, for your sake. But of course minor flaws are acceptable. Does she have all her teeth?

HARRY

Yes.

HAZEL RUBY

When's the wedding?

HARRY

I knew this would happen.

HAZEL RUBY

All right, where are you going to take her?

GOVERNOR

I've got the perfect date. Take her over to West Branch and see Herbert Hoover's birthplace and grave. It'll be a great afternoon.

HAZEL RUBY

Don't listen to him. Remember, you did that with the Smith girl and she went screaming off into the woods.

HARRY

That's only because I slammed her hand in the car door.

GOVERNOR

But, did she enjoy it?

HARRY

She had to spend the night in the hospital.

GOVERNOR

But, did she enjoy it!

HARRY

No! She didn't.

HAZEL RUBY

What did I tell you. Now you pick her up and you take her out for some dinner. Not to the T-birds but some place nice. Some place with tablecloths. Some place with crepes!

(HARRY glances at his watch.)

HARRY

How `bout here?

HAZEL RUBY

I don't know how to make crepes.

GOVERNOR

Did you take her to see the slide presentation about the Hoover Dam, narrated by Lowell Thomas?

HARRY

What?

GOVERNOR

The Smith girl.

HARRY

No. I had to rush her to the emergency room.

GOVERNOR

Ah-ha! No wonder she didn't enjoy it.

HAZEL RUBY

Now tell me about her. You met her at the Beauteria and she's not a hairdresser, so she was having her hair done.

HARRY

She's new in town.

HAZEL RUBY

She's moving into the empty apartment above the laundry.

HARRY

No, she's new in Vinton. She was looking for work over here at the Beauteria.

HAZEL RUBY

Once you settle down she won't have to work anymore.

HARRY

Hazel!

HAZEL RUBY

Of course it's her choice.

HARRY

I went over to get my hair cut and while I was waiting, two of the most beautiful ladies I've ever seen walked in.

HAZEL RUBY

Which one was her?

HARRY

Both of them.

GOVERNOR

Oh Lord, she's twins. Now ease into it, boy. Don't bite off more than you can fit into your mouth.

HARRY

No, it was Diane and her little girl.

HAZEL RUBY

Oh dear.

GOVERNOR

She has a child?

HARRY

The sweetest thing you've ever seen.

HAZEL RUBY

Divorced, separated or widowed?

HARRY

Divorced.

HAZEL RUBY

How do you know?

HARRY

I asked Taletha if I could see her job application.

HAZEL RUBY

Good, we'll have something to talk about. Harry, I was going to save this for your birthday but this is just too important. I've just got to give it to you now. Happy Birthday.

(HAZEL RUBY reaches behind the bar and pulls out a box.)

HARRY

Ah, thanks.

(HAZEL RUBY opens the box, pulls out a book and reads the title.)

HAZEL RUBY

I saw it advertised in your Motor Trend Magazine. "Women, How To".

HARRY

Oh my God! Put it down.

HAZEL RUBY

Listen to this. This book will make you, quote, "dramatically more comfortable in social situations." Harry, you've got to read this. It's by Dr. Harry Seymour Pukka. Look, he's got your name and he's a doctor.

HARRY

Hazel, these people just say they're doctors.

(HAZEL RUBY shows HARRY the author's picture on the back of the book.)

HAZEL RUBY

Look.

HARRY

I don't believe that stethoscope for a minute.

HAZEL RUBY

It says he's been studying how to pick up women for twenty years.

HARRY

Does it mention whether he ever succeeded?

REGULAR

Harry, what you got there?

HARRY

Nothing! Nothing at all.

REGULAR

Hey, that's that book, "Women, How To".

HARRY

Put the book down.

REGULAR

Good luck, Harry.

HARRY

Hazel, this book is for idiots.

HAZEL RUBY

I know that but it still could do some good. Look here, he's got a chapter on just about everything. "One hundred and one places where women outnumber men", "How to pick up a woman even if you're lame".

HARRY

Put down the book!

HAZEL RUBY

This is very useful, Harry. No two ways about it. This doctor had you in mind when he wrote this book.

HARRY

Hazel, thank you, but I don't need this book.

HAZEL RUBY

Hell, he even "guarantees" success!

HARRY

I've already succeeded in picking her up.

HAZEL RUBY

Well, there are chapters on what to do after you get her phone number. For example this one, "How to remember it".

HARRY

She's coming over here tonight.

HAZEL RUBY

You're kidding!

HARRY

I wanted to go to a movie but she insisted on meeting me over here.

HAZEL RUBY

Open a window! We've got to get this place aired out!

HARRY

She's not expecting anything more than a bar.

HAZEL RUBY

But this place is so plain. Why don't you take her to Waterloo?

HARRY

She insisted.

HAZEL RUBY

Damnit! Where's my Lysol!

(HAZEL RUBY begins frantically cleaning. Harry grabs the book.)

HARRY

Can we hide this?

HAZEL RUBY

Here, I'll put it under the register in case you need a reference.

HARRY

Governor, can you do me a favor?

GOVERNOR

Would you like to make a request?

HARRY

I was wondering, could you give tonight's speech before she comes. She may not understand.

GOVERNOR

(hurt)

If you want, Harry.

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, I think you hurt the Governor's feelings.

GOVERNOR

No, not at all. Years of training, Hazel. I never show a true emotion while campaigning. If you saw anything on my face it was the stiff upper lip; the strong defiant leader of men, and of women, I haven't forgotten the women. The confident savior of the Republic. Hazel, another drink.

HAZEL RUBY

Take it for me, Harry.

HARRY

How about another speech, Governor?

GOVERNOR

(working himself into a lather)

Tonight, Stevenson, no Washington, no that wouldn't be right at all. Truman! Tonight Truman! Come Wednesday morning you'll see me in the Times as the greatest Cinderella victory in U.S. history. "Marlon Monroe Defeats Everyone And His Brother"!

REGULARS

Speech! Speech!

GOVERNOR

No, the crowd isn't big enough.

REGULARS

Speech! Speech!

HARRY

It's as big as last night's.

BAR REGULARS

Speech! Speech!

GOVERNOR

Where's My Soapbox!

(The REGULARS cheer. HARRY brings over an old Soapbox and THE GOVERNOR steps onto it.)

GOVERNOR

Apropos of our surroundings, I'm inclined to give a speech by a famous former bartender.... "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon upon this continent a new nation...".

REGULAR

I didn't know Harry Truman said that.

GOVERNOR

"...Conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal..."

(A REGULAR enters from the men`s room shaking water off his hands.)

REGULAR

Hey, Hazel, you're out of paper towels!

GOVERNOR

"...We're now engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether this nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure."

(To Harry)

A-7!

(HARRY drops a coin in the juke box.)

HARRY

(Muttering to himself)

A-7....A-7.

(The Juke box clicks on with "The Battle Hymn Of The Republic.)

GOVERNOR

"We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who have struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. It is for us the living rather to be here dedicated to the unfinished work which they, thus far, have so nobly carried on. That we here highly resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth!"

(As THE GOVERNOR nears the end, DIANE and SARAH enter. DIANE is a warm woman in her early thirties.

SARAH, 8 years old, is dressed in a white sheet with eye-holes cut in it. At the end of THE GOVERNOR`s speech, there is an ovation from the small crowd and the REGULARS gather around to shake his hand. HARRY spies DIANE.)

DIANE

(to Sarah)

Now remember what I told you.

HARRY

Hello.

DIANE

Hi, Harry.

SARAH

Booooo!

HARRY

Hi, Sarah.

SARAH

How'd you know it was me, Harry?

HARRY

Wild guess.

GOVERNOR

The Drinks Are On Me!

(The REGULARS rush to the bar for a free drink. THE GOVERNOR sees SARAH.)

GOVERNOR

What's this? A baby? Well, it's close enough. Hazel, is there any film in your camera?

HAZEL RUBY

Always.

(THE GOVERNOR lifts SARAH up and HAZEL RUBY takes their picture.)

GOVERNOR

Well, young lady, how does it feel to have your picture taken with the next Governor of the great state of Iowa?

SARAH

Silly.

GOVERNOR

What's your name?

SARAH

Sarah. What's yours?

GOVERNOR

I'm Marlon Monroe, esquire, gubernatorial candidate representing the Grand Bull Moose Party, at your service.

SARAH

Is that your costume?

GOVERNOR

You bet.

DIANE

I'm sorry sir, but she's really scared of heights.

GOVERNOR

You must be her mother.

DIANE

Yes.

GOVERNOR

Tell me, what're you going to vote Tuesday, Republican, Democratic, or Bull Moose?

DIANE

I'm sorry, I'm not registered.

GOVERNOR

Silliness! Hazel, hand me one of those forms. I can register you right here.

HARRY

Governor...

GOVERNOR

Not being registered is un-American!

HARRY

Here, let me have that. I'll register her.

GOVERNOR

Alright boy, but don't let that date who's coming over see you sitting with another woman.

HARRY

This is my date.

GOVERNOR
(beat)

Am I making an ass of myself?

HAZEL RUBY

All you need are the long ears.

HARRY

Hazel, I'd like you to meet Diane and Sarah.

HAZEL RUBY

Smile!

(Hazel takes their picture.)

HAZEL RUBY

Nice to meet you.

DIANE
(Blinded by the flash)

Yes, nice to meet you.

HARRY

Governor, Diane and Sarah.

He's funny.

SARAH

Hi.

DIANE

Charmed.

GOVERNOR

Make yourselves comfortable.

HAZEL RUBY

I thought we were supposed to be Trick-or-Treating.

SARAH

I'm afraid it'll have to wait a few minutes, honey.

DIANE

Poop.

SARAH

Beer?

HARRY

Harry, she's not going to want beer. Wine! Ladies like wine! (to Diane) We got some of of that Paul Masson stuff. You know, that guy who will sell no wine before it's ready.

HAZEL RUBY

Oh no, I'll need a martini.

DIANE

Hazel, a martini and a Hamms, please.

HARRY

Impressive.

HAZEL RUBY
(to the Governor)

It's on me!

GOVERNOR
(to Harry)

If you're going to sit there, light that candle, it'll make it more atmospheric.

HAZEL RUBY

You're funny.

SARAH
(to the Governor)

So are you.

GOVERNOR

Can I join you?

SARAH

DIANE

Sarah, you don't want to get in his way.

GOVERNOR

Not in my way at all. I would be delighted to have you join me. Can I buy you a drink?

SARAH

Um, martini, please.

GOVERNOR

I'll have the same.

HAZEL RUBY

Right. Two martinis, one virgin martini, and a Hamm's.

SARAH

Hey mister, you got any candy?

GOVERNOR

Why sure. Hazel, hand me a few of those beef jerkys.

(During the following dialogue SARAH gnaws on beef jerky while THE GOVERNOR shows her various string tricks.)

HARRY

Did you get the job?

DIANE

Yes, I need to thank you, Harry. That was an unusual act of kindness, donating your head like that.

HARRY

I needed a haircut anyway.

DIANE

Thank you.

HARRY

What do you say, let's celebrate? We could go to a movie or something over in Cedar Rapids?

DIANE

I've really got to get back home.

HARRY

If it's a babysitter, I'm sure that Hazel...

DIANE

I'm sorry, Harry.

HARRY

Oh. I understand. If you got something you want to do it's all right, your life is your own, I mean, if you got a date already or something it's all right, who are you going out with?

DIANE

It's not another date.

HARRY

Well, whatever.

DIANE

Harry, there's something I've got to tell you.

(DIANE sees HAZEL RUBY coming towards them.)

DIANE

Ah, I think it's a little long on this side.

HARRY

No one ever notices.

(HAZEL RUBY brings HARRY a Hamms and DIANE a tall frosted glass with an umbrella and straw.)

DIANE

I'm sorry, Hazel.

HAZEL RUBY

Yes dear.

DIANE

I ordered a martini.

HAZEL RUBY

And I want to thank you. We appreciate it. We don't get much of a chance to make'em around here.

GOVERNOR

It's on me!

DIANE

Ah, thank you.

(HAZEL RUBY goes back to the bar.)

HARRY

I hope you don't think my family is too weird?

DIANE

(Thinking the opposite)

No, not at all.

HARRY

Hazel and I own this place. She was married to my brother, Bob, before he died. And the Governor is the great, great, great, grandson of James Monroe. You can call him, Marlon, if you like.

DIANE

No, I think "Governor" is cute.

HARRY

He almost became Governor when he was a Republican in 1956, that's...ah...why we call him that.

GOVERNOR

Don't forget 1960. They needed two re-counts that year.

(To HARRY's chagrin THE GOVERNOR joins them at the table.)

HARRY

Yes, it was close in 1960 also. Marlon has been in every gubernatorial race since then.

DIANE

You're certainly persistent.

GOVERNOR

My father is responsible for that. He told me that I should always go forward, never go back; always confront the challenges of life, never avoid them; and he left a will that states that I must run for public office every four years in order to get the money.

HARRY

I'm head of his campaign committee, or, I should say, I am his campaign committee.

GOVERNOR

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat!"

(DIANE doesn't know what to make of this. Harry is embarrassed.)

HARRY

Theodore Roosevelt, 1899.

DIANE
(totally confused)

Oh.

(SARAH points at a Mason Jar filled with yellowish liquid and floating brown chunks.)

SARAH

What's this stuff?

GOVERNOR

Those are pickled turkey gizzards. They go great with beer, and I'm sure they're not bad with martinis.
(THE GOVERNOR opens the jar and SARAH sticks her hand in.)

DIANE

Sarah!

GOVERNOR

Sorry, Mom.

SARAH

If pickles is all I'm going to get, then pickles I'm going to take.

DIANE

Sarah, we'll go trick-or-treating soon, I promise.

HARRY

Maybe we could go together.

DIANE

I've got to talk to you, Harry.

SARAH

Please!

GOVERNOR

Perhaps I could be of some assistance. With your permission, Diane, I could take Sarah trick-or-treating.

DIANE

I don't know.

HARRY

She'll be fine.

GOVERNOR

Hazel, some coffee!

HAZEL RUBY

What is this, a joke?

HARRY

Governor, you promise to take care of her?

(THE GOVERNOR holds up his right hand.)

GOVERNOR

So help me God.

SARAH

Please.

GOVERNOR

It's up to you, Mom.

(Beat.)

DIANE

Stay in the area.

SARAH

Yippeeee!

GOVERNOR

As long as I'm going door-to-door, I might as well take some of these along.

(THE GOVERNOR takes a handful of political pins and pamphlets.)HARRY

It's a small town, not much can happen.

HAZEL RUBY

Goodbye, kids.

SARAH

Goodbye, goodbye.

DIANE

Behave!

GOVERNOR

"I Shall Return!"

(THE GOVERNOR and SARAH exit to the front porch.)

DIANE

Let's go some place quiet.

HARRY

How about the front porch.

DIANE

Sure.

(HARRY and DIANE cross to the front door. They stop and listen to the GOVERNOR and SARAH who are standing on the porch.)

GOVERNOR

Sarah, I was wondering if you could do me a little favor?

SARAH

Sure.

GOVERNOR

Instead of saying, "Trick-or-Treat" this time, could you say, "A Vote For Marlon Monroe Is A Vote For Marlon Monroe"!

SARAH

Will I still get candy?

GOVERNOR

More than that, you'll receive at absolutely no cost to you, a free, "Marlon Monroe to Win" Pin!

SARAH

Can you eat them?

GOVERNOR

No. You wear them, like this.

(THE GOVERNOR pins one on SARAH.)

SARAH

I'd rather have chocolate covered peanuts.

GOVERNOR

So would I.

HARRY

Governor, you're not doing what I think you're doing.

GOVERNOR
(Innocently)

What would that be?

SARAH

A VOTE FOR MARILYN MONROE IS A VOTE FOR MARILYN MONROE! Where's my chocolate pin?

GOVERNOR

They're not chocolate, dear.

HARRY

I think everyone in Garrison is going to vote for you.

GOVERNOR

You never can be too sure, Harry.

SARAH

Let's go!

GOVERNOR

We're off!

SARAH

A VOTE FOR MARILYN MONROE IS A VOTE FOR MARILYN MONROE!

(THE GOVERNOR looks at his coffee as if it is responsible for the following realization.)

GOVERNOR

That is about the stupidest campaign slogan I've ever heard. Amazing stuff, this `coffee'.

SARAH

A VOTE FOR MARILYN MONROE...

GOVERNOR

MARLON!

SARAH

...IS A VOTE FOR MARILYN MARLON!

(SARAH runs off . THE GOVERNOR follows, drinking his coffee. HARRY and DIANE are left alone on the porch.)

DIANE

Harry, I feel it's important you know a little about me.

HARRY

Sure.

DIANE

There's so much you don't know.

HARRY

All I know is that you're the first woman I've ever been calm around.

DIANE

Calm?

HARRY

Comparatively calm. Normally I either talk a woman into the ground or sit there and not say a word. The worst part of an evening is always taking a girl home. With the Smith girl I moved in to kiss her, tripped and fell right into her face. She had to wear a retainer for a month and a half.

DIANE

You're kidding.

HARRY

Ah, right, of course, I'm kidding. It's just a joke.... You don't believe me do you. Look, I don't believe me. Here's my big chance to start off new with a girl and all I do is bring up the dumb things I've done in the past. Do you think they're dumb? Of course you think they're dumb and for a very good reason....they're dumb. But, I'm much better now. That happened over ten years ago. I kiss women now all the time, without incident. I don't want to give you the impression that I'm a total wimp. Once I beat a guy named Hector. Yeah, he was bugging me so I hit him over the head with my lunch pail. It was not a pretty sight.

DIANE

I hate violence. I find it offensive.

HARRY

Oh. I said I was sorry.

(HAZEL RUBY pops her head out the door.)

HAZEL RUBY

Another martini?

DIANE

No thanks, I'm fine.

(HAZEL RUBY steps out on the porch.)

HAZEL RUBY

So. You're a hairdresser at the Beauteria.

DIANE

Yeah.

HAZEL RUBY

How long you been in town?

DIANE

A week. We, Sarah and I, rented a place over in Vinton.

HAZEL RUBY

That's what Harry said. You're lucky.

DIANE

Yes, we really need a place.

HAZEL RUBY

No, you're lucky meeting Harry. He's the best, know what I mean? The kindest, most wonderful...

HARRY

Hazel...

HAZEL RUBY

Shhhh. (to Diane) You got any scissors?

DIANE

Ma'am?

HAZEL RUBY

Scissors! If you're going to be cutting hair at the Beauteria you got to have scissors.

DIANE

Oh, well, I do have...

HAZEL RUBY

Wait a second.

(HAZEL RUBY runs inside.)

HARRY

I must warn you, Hazel likes to give things way. You can't fight it so don't try.

DIANE

I really don't need any scissors.

HARRY

It's a good sign, it means she likes you.

(HAZEL RUBY walks out on the porch with a small leather pouch. She removes a pair of scissors from it.)

HAZEL RUBY

Take a look at those. Those are real, genuine barber's scissors which my Father used to cut Herbert Hoover's hair with in 1929.

DIANE

Impressive.

HAZEL RUBY

And look here, Daddy's name engraved right on the handle. What do you think?

DIANE

They're nice.

HAZEL RUBY

You like'm?

DIANE

Yes.

HAZEL RUBY

They're yours!

DIANE

What? No, really now.

HAZEL RUBY

I want you to have'em. They're just sitting on the shelf doing nothing. My Daddy would be thrilled to know they're being used.

DIANE

Hazel, this is too personal. I mean, being the exact pair your father cut Herbert Hoover's hair with.

HAZEL RUBY

That reminds me.

(HAZEL RUBY looks into the pouch and carefully takes out a sandwich baggie filled with dark brown lumps.)

HAZEL RUBY

Yup, it's still there. Herbert Hoover's hair! You could pin that up on the wall of the beauty shop. Be a great conversation piece. Go on. Take it. I won't rest till you say `yes'.

DIANE

Well....

HARRY

Go ahead.

DIANE

....Thank you.

HAZEL RUBY

What're you doing out here anyhow?

DIANE

Waiting for Sarah.

HAZEL RUBY

Oooooo, that reminds me, I've got something for Sarah too.

DIANE

That's okay, Hazel.

HAZEL RUBY

No trouble.

(HAZEL RUBY enters the bar. DIANE turns away from HARRY.)

HARRY

Diane, is something wrong?

DIANE

Oh no.

(HARRY comes up behind DIANE and puts his hand on her shoulder.)

HARRY

Diane...

DIANE

Ouch!

HARRY

I'm sorry. Don't tell me I've injured you already?

DIANE

No, just sore.

HARRY

You got a bruise?

DIANE

I...fell down...while jogging.

HARRY

Oh.

DIANE

Yes, extremely sore.

HARRY

You should have a doctor look at that. I can get you the name of one in Vinton.

DIANE

No, I'll heal.

HARRY

Diane, it may be too early for this; I don't want to scare you, but I think it's entirely possible that I'm going to be falling in ah...I...ah.....I.....

DIANE

Don't say it, Harry.

HARRY

I always have a habit of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time with girls and that sort. I didn't want to say nothing so I thought I'd better say something. Are you upset?

DIANE

No, I think you're sweet.

HARRY

I was wondering, if you can't go out tonight, how about soon? Saturday or something.

DIANE

No, Saturday I'm busy.

HARRY

Oh. You're popular.

DIANE

No, I'm not popular, Harry...

HAZEL RUBY
(from inside)

HARRY!

DIANE

Harry....

HAZEL RUBY

HARRY!

HARRY

WHAT! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell at you, Diane. Hazel, what is it?

HAZEL RUBY

I need you for a moment!

HARRY

I'm sorry, I'll be right back.

(HARRY enters the bar.)

HAZEL RUBY

I've got the perfect gift. What do you think?

HARRY

Oh Hazel, it's a bit much isn't it?

HAZEL RUBY

Not at all. Help me pull it out.

(They pull a pinball machine out of the storage room.)

HAZEL RUBY

What child wouldn't kill to have a pinball machine in her basement.

HARRY

Does it work?

HAZEL RUBY

Screw there, wire here, good as new. Harry, don't look at me like I'm off my rocker. When you were a kid, where did you spend half of every Saturday? At a pinball machine, right?

HARRY

I suppose.

HAZEL RUBY

I like her, Harry. She's the warmest looking thing you've brought home in five years. Where are you taking her?

HARRY

Date's off. She's got something to do.

HAZEL RUBY

Ask her out again.

HARRY

She said `no' for Saturday.

HAZEL RUBY

Have you sent flowers? Do it. Do it tomorrow, without fail. Harry you've got to take life by the horns and blow. Grab her before someone else does.

HARRY

I don't know if I could grab her. I put my hand on her shoulder and she pulled away. Made up some story about a bruise she got while jogging.

HAZEL RUBY

Try the other shoulder, maybe she's telling the truth.

HARRY

No Hazel, I'm a failure with women.

HAZEL RUBY

No you're not. You're handsome. You're debonair. You're a woman's dream. Now, pick up the other end of this and pull.

HARRY

I tried to tell her that I love her.

HAZEL RUBY

Not too early with the love stuff, save it till she wants it. Trust me. I've been married four times. Now run down the alley to Hector Morgan's. I loaned my microbus to him and he still hasn't returned it. We're going to need it to haul this to Diane's.

HARRY

This may be too much for a first date.

HAZEL RUBY

No, not at all. Now pull it around front and I'll hold off on the surprise till you get back. Hurry.

(HARRY exits by the back door. HAZEL RUBY crosses to the front door.)

HAZEL RUBY

Diane, do you mind if I send Harry on a little errand?

DIANE

I guess not.

HAZEL RUBY

Come on in and we'll chat. Love to stay out there but I got to keep servin' even on an off night.

(HAZEL RUBY and DIANE enter the bar.)

HAZEL RUBY

So, what do you think of Garrison, any different than ...than...

DIANE

Joliet.

HAZEL RUBY

Illinois?

DIANE

Yes.

HAZEL RUBY

I know the place. Used to date a guard from the prison there.

DIANE

Oh?

HAZEL RUBY

What's the matter honey? You seem a little nervous. Things are happening too fast, right? The Governor and I get a little pushy. We'll both admit it. I'll admit it now and Marlon will admit it when he gets back. It's just our nature to make up for Harry's total lack of oats when it comes to women. He's shy if you haven't noticed, but he likes you and I've still got enough woman in me to see a young woman in love.

DIANE

I'm thirty-two.

HAZEL RUBY

So you're a year older than Harry and maybe a little taller, who notices? You realize that you and Harry remind me a lot of my second marriage. I was married four times, wait, five, well, six if you count the one that was annulled when I was fifteen. But that second one, not counting the one that was annulled, was the best. Nothing ever topped it. If I had my way Dougie and I would still be married today. You see, when I was your age I let another five years go by before it occurred to me that first marriages are always failures. They were never meant to succeed. And all those successful first marriages you read about are really failures in private. It's just a big joke on everyone. If they really wanted first marriages to succeed, they'd put a moratorium on marriage until the age of thirty or thirty-two.

DIANE

Why aren't you still married to Dougie?

HAZEL RUBY

Hell, that lasted one glorious year, then he went his way and I went mine. Sorry I ever let him go. Dougie and I were married when I was forty-two and he was seventeen. His mother didn't like the idea of his being married to an older woman, well older than she was anyway. Young men, it's the key to life. (beat) My third and fourth and Harry's brother were all older than me and nothing ever happened. One worked himself to death at the Del Monte plant the other sat on the back porch waiting for his arteries to harden and then there was Harry's brother. Hell, Harry's brother. Tell me something, does Sarah remember her father?

DIANE

Quite well. But she cries when anyone talks about him, so please don't bring it up.

HAZEL RUBY

Run off with another woman?

DIANE

Can I have another martini?

HAZEL RUBY

Coming up. You'll be able to talk about it with time.

DIANE

No need to put an umbrella in it this time.

HAZEL RUBY

No extra charge. You know, Harry's brother, Bob, ran off with a redhead. Was in such a hurry to get out of town, he didn't even stop for the seed train. Derailed thirteen cars, transformed his LeSabre convertible into an import and killed himself in the process. Talk about poetic justice, he took that redhead with him. You can tell me, was it messy?

DIANE

It must have been.

HAZEL RUBY

You don't know?

DIANE

I wasn't there.

HAZEL RUBY

You weren't there for your own divorce?

DIANE

Oh! My divorce, oh, sure it was.

HAZEL RUBY

That's the only favor Bob ever did me. All I had to sit through was ten minutes of a lawyer telling me that Harry and I had inherited the place. The only problem was that after that train knocked Bob into the next county, people started calling the place Dead Bob's. We know something had to be done about that. (beat) So, Harry, the Governor and I had a think session. Harry wanted to call the place "Harrys". We could tell that Harry was in the midst of a creative fit. He's a real bright boy, so don't think I'm talking him down. It's just that sometimes his ideas don't gel with the real world. When he was a senior in high school, he got elected to think up the theme for the half-time at homecoming. He came up with, "Let's Beat Viet Nam". Have you ever tried to make an M-16 out of crepe paper and chicken wire? We made three of these things before Harry and the committee, mostly the committee, thought better of the idea and changed the theme to "Surfin' Safari". We had spent so much time makin' those damned things, I didn't have the heart to throw them away. So we donated them to the public library. They used them in a display window recently, so I know they still got'em.

DIANE

That was very generous of you.

HAZEL RUBY

So, we could see that Harry was going through a creative fit. Marlon tabled his idea, "The Oval Office". And it very well might have won had it not got me thinking in circles and I came up with "The Round Table". The Governor says it's got "panache". He went to law school you know.

DIANE

Hazel, I've got a rather personal question to ask.

HAZEL RUBY

Sounds interesting.

DIANE

It's about Harry. I was wondering about how he reacts to things, like, how does he take bad news?

HAZEL RUBY

Usually he falls into a deep fit of depression which nothing will alleviate, why?

DIANE

Nothing. Just talking. I like your bar lamps.

HAZEL RUBY

You want'em?

DIANE

No, I'm just admiring them.

HAZEL RUBY

They just screw in!

DIANE

That's okay. Hazel, if it's all right with you, I'm going to go out on the porch and wait for Harry there.

HARRY

You don't need permission. Go on, get some of that fresh Iowa air. That porch can be a very pleasant experience if Roy Cobber hasn't spread any manure on his field today.

DIANE

You don't mind?

HAZEL RUBY

No, not at all. I've got work to do. Go on now. Git!

(DIANE exits to the porch. She removes an envelope from her purse and writes, "To Harry" on it. Inside, HAZEL RUBY, pulls some flowers out of a vase and runs out on the porch.)

HAZEL RUBY

Oh, I nearly forgot. Harry asked me to give these to you.

(HAZEL RUBY hands the flowers to DIANE.)

DIANE
(touched)

Oh. That was sweet of him.

HAZEL RUBY

Yes, it wasn't it.

(HAZEL RUBY goes back in. DIANE tries to find a place to prop up the envelope. Suddenly SARAH jumps up from behind the porch.)

SARAH

Booooo!

(DIANE jumps. The GOVERNOR enters.)

GOVERNOR

It worked! You scared the living daylights out of her.

DIANE

Sarah! You scared Mommy very badly.

SARAH

That was the plan. See my pins?

(SARAH's sheet is covered with pins.)

SARAH

I got one every time I yelled, "A VOTE FOR MARLON MONROE IS A VOTE FOR MARLON MONROE"!

GOVERNOR

MARLON!...oh, you got it right that time. In that case, you may have your candy back.

(THE GOVERNOR hands SARAH her bag of candy.)

SARAH

Thank You.

GOVERNOR

And what else did we learn?

SARAH

Oh yeah, walk quietly....

GOVERNOR

Softly.

SARAH

That's what I meant. And, carry a....a...

GOVERNOR

A big.

SARAH

A big....

GOVERNOR

Stick.

SARAH

Stick.

SARAH

That's it! That's what I learned.

DIANE

That's very useful, Sarah, you'll have to remember that.

THE GOVERNOR

But that's not all. What else did we learn?

SARAH

Oh, that's much better.

THE GOVERNOR

Let's give it a try, shall we?

SARAH

Okay.

THE GOVERNOR & SARAH

Allah-man, Allah-man, Allah-Man-Octavia-Ish-Kitty-Boom-Boom, Ray-Postodiah-Go! Iowa! Iowa!
Puuuuuuuuush the ball!

(THE GOVERNOR stands up straight. He is very proud of himself.)

DIANE
(Dumbfounded)

That's just great.

GOVERNOR

If she's ever in the University of Iowa Hawkeye marching band, she's got it made!

SARAH

This is the mostest fun I've had since we moved to this crummy place.

DIANE

This place isn't crummy, Honey.

SARAH

It's close.

GOVERNOR

That's perfectly all right, Sarah, I totally agree with your observation.

SARAH

It was crummy till I met you.

GOVERNOR

I take it you'll be coming around here a lot more.

SARAH

We'll be coming around everyday, right Mom?

DIANE

We can't be too sure, Sarah.

GOVERNOR

That's all right. Every other day will do.

DIANE

Sarah, could you do Mommy a favor?

SARAH

Sure.

DIANE

Go to the car.

SARAH

Sure.

(SARAH skips off.)

DIANE

Governor, I was wondering if you could do me a little favor, also.

GOVERNOR

Anything within my power.

(SARAH skips back on.)

SARAH

There I did it. I went to the car.

DIANE

No, I meant stay at the car.

SARAH

Oh.

(Saddened, SARAH walks off.)

GOVERNOR

I may not be the best influence on her.

DIANE

Governor, will you give this letter to Harry for me.

GOVERNOR

Sounds important. Are you all right?

DIANE

I'll be fine. Will you do that for me?

GOVERNOR

Where is he?

DIANE

Hazel's got him out doing an errand.

GOVERNOR

No. I don't mean Harry, I mean your husband.

(DIANE breaks down crying.)

DIANE

At home.

GOVERNOR

The same place you live?

DIANE

He thinks I'm out trick-or-treating with Sarah.

GOVERNOR

There, there now. We are all tempted by life. Though being tempted by Harry is definitely a new twist.

DIANE

What should I do?

GOVERNOR

I don't think a letter is the answer.

DIANE

I was going to mail it from Vinton, but I couldn't. I just don't want to hurt him.

GOVERNOR

When one makes a poor political decision it is best to call a press conference and admit openly that a mistake has been made.

DIANE
(Boggled)

I don't think I could do that.

GOVERNOR

In that case, I think you should tell him. Just say it. The longer you wait the more harm done. Don't worry. Go ahead and tell him and I'll stay here and drink with him tonight.

DIANE

Thank you, Governor.

(SARAH enters pulling HARRY.)

SARAH

Mommy, look who I found. He pulled up driving a lady bug.

HARRY

How was the trick-or-treating.

GOVERNOR

Fine. I've got to get myself another drink.

(HAZEL RUBY runs out on the porch and drags Sarah inside.)

HAZEL RUBY

You're back! Come here, I got somethin' I want to show you.

SARAH

Sure.

HAZEL RUBY

You know what that is?

An old pinball machine? SARAH

And do you know who it belongs to? HAZEL RUBY

Me? SARAH

That's right, you! HAZEL RUBY

Hurrraaayyyy! SARAH

Sarah! You can't possibly have that. DIANE

She said it was mine. SARAH

Come on everyone! Let's take it to the bus! HAZEL RUBY

(THE REGULARS lift the pinball machine and carry it off stage.)

Harry, you've got to stop them. DIANE

I know it was too much. HARRY

Please, Harry, I've got to talk to you. DIANE

All right now, ALLEY OPP! HAZEL RUBY
(Far off)

(A crash.)

That's all right, it's not broken! HAZEL RUBY
(far off)

Harry, I don't think we should see each other anymore. DIANE

What? You mean you and me? HARRY

DIANE

I'm really very sorry, Harry.

(HAZEL RUBY enters.)

HAZEL RUBY

You lovebirds going to stand there or come along?

HARRY

Hazel, Diane and I have to talk.

HAZEL RUBY

No problem. You ride with her and we'll follow you to her place.

GOVERNOR

Hazel.

(THE GOVERNOR attempts to wave her off.)

HAZEL RUBY

I'll lock up the place and we'll all go.

GOVERNOR

No. They want to talk. Let's go inside.

HAZEL RUBY

Well hell. Hey everyone! They want to talk! Come on back inside!

(The LOCALS enter the bar.)

HAZEL RUBY
(to the Governor)

What's up?

GOVERNOR

Press conference.

SARAH

But what about my pinball machine?

GOVERNOR

First another drink.

SARAH

Martini?

GOVERNOR

It's on me.

DIANE

No, Sarah, stay with me.

(THE GOVERNOR and HAZEL RUBY enter the bar.)

SARAH

Can't I play with the Governor? He's going to teach me the difference between a Republicrat and a Demican.

DIANE

It'll have to wait dear. First, I want you to go to the car.

SARAH

I've been spending a lot of time in the car lately. It may not be good for me.

DIANE

Sarah, remember how I'm always telling you that you can't play 'driving' in the car?

SARAH

Yes.

DIANE

Well, I'm going to let you now.

SARAH

Goodbye Harry. Should I say goodbye to the Governor and the old lady?

DIANE

No, I'll take care of that. Just go.

(SARAH exits to the car. There is a pause, Sarah looks at Harry. A heart is about to be broken.)

HARRY

Why do I have the feeling you're about to tell me something I don't want to hear.

DIANE

Because I am. I don't know how to say this except that, I, don't think we should see each other again.

HARRY

I shouldn't have let you come here. My family is too weird for you. I know it. Hazel is crazy. I mean, for Christ's sake, she married my brother...and the Governor...

DIANE

I love Hazel and the Governor and even the stupid pinball machine.

(The car horn blares.)

DIANE

Sarah! Harry, you can't come to my house because I have a husband.

HARRY

No you don't.

DIANE

I'm a married woman, Harry.

(The car horn blares again.)

DIANE

Sarah! Pretend you're driving through a hospital zone, dear!

HARRY

A husband.

DIANE

Yes.

HARRY

Where?

DIANE

At home.

HARRY

You wrote on your application that you were divorced.

DIANE

I...I...I...made a mistake.

HARRY

How could you make a mistake about something like that?

DIANE

I'm sorry, Harry, what can I do to make it better?

HARRY

Cheat.

DIANE

Harry, when I saw you the other day at the Beauteria, I liked you. It's been so long since a man has bent over backwards to help me like you did. I found you attractive. Silly but attractive. Harry, I'm sorry. I knew exactly what I was doing. I lied because I knew you were watching me. It's just important that I end it now before real damage is done. I'm sorry. If I wasn't married I'd love to get to know you.

HARRY

If you were happy with your marriage, you wouldn't be talking like this.

DIANE

My husband has just been paroled. I've promised that I'd help him start his life over again. He needs me.

HARRY

Prison?

DIANE

Three-and-a-half years.

HARRY

So, you're in love with him?

DIANE

Stop it, Harry. I've got to go.

HARRY

Diane. I never had a chance to kiss you.

DIANE

No Harry. I've got to go or he'll be mad.

HARRY

I'm not going to give up this easily.

DIANE

Harry.

HARRY

I'm not. Does he know that you're this unhappy with your marriage?

DIANE

Don't you fool with him. Don't you dare fool with him, or I'll never speak to you again.

HARRY

It sounds like you were never going to speak with me again anyway.

DIANE

Harry, if you love me, if you care about me and my well being, then you won't do anything more. I'm sorry I led you on, but it's not worth you tangling with him.

HARRY

Let me see that shoulder.

DIANE

What?

HARRY

Let me see your shoulder.

(HARRY grabs DIANE's wrist.)

DIANE

What are you doing this for?

HARRY

Let me see it.

DIANE

No. Harry, stop it.

(HARRY touches her shoulder. She winces.)

HARRY

There's really a bruise there.

DIANE

I told you there was.

HARRY

Did he do it?

DIANE

Oh for Christ Sake! Leave me alone! Just leave me alone!

(DIANE pulls away from HARRY and exits to her car.)

HARRY

I haven't given up. You hear me? I haven't given up!

(The car is heard pulling away)

I might as well give up.

(HARRY thinks for a moment. Then he turns and slowly walks up the stairs and enters the bar. Everyone quiets when he enters. HARRY looks up to see all staring at him.)

HARRY

I am...I...ah...I...

THE GOVERNOR

Are you all right?

HARRY

I...ah...I...

HAZEL RUBY

The Governor told me, Harry. I'm sorry.

HARRY

I...ah...I...ah...

HAZEL RUBY

Hell, he's gone spastic on us.

THE GOVERNOR

Better take a seat, Harry. This one's on me.

HAZEL RUBY

That means I still own that old pinball machine.

(HAZEL RUBY takes out a bottle of whiskey from behind the bar.)

THE GOVERNOR

Woah, whiskey isn't going to solve Harry's problems.

HAZEL RUBY

You're right. Harry, whiskey isn't going to kill the pain, but a little Kickapoo Joy Juice will really blow the cobs out.

(HAZEL RUBY reaches further under the bar and pulls up a mason jar filled with moonshine. She pours three glasses.)

THE GOVERNOR

Times like these call for the best!

(THE GOVERNOR holds up his glass.)

To Life!

(HAZEL RUBY holds up her glass.)

HAZEL RUBY

To Life!

(HARRY follows suit. His hand is shaking.)

HARRY

T-t-t-to...ah...Luh...Life!

(The three of them drink. Pause. HARRY and THE GOVERNOR cough and wheeze at the liquor's kick; HAZEL RUBY is totally unaffected. DIANE re-enters and slowly steps to the porch. She watches as THE GOVERNOR begins giving advice to HARRY. Then she picks up the flowers and slowly exits as the lights fade.)

End of Act One

ACT TWO

(It is now election night and the bar has been decorated with balloons and ribbons. It is quite a celebration. The television glows with the election returns but cannot be heard due to the commotion.)

REGULARS

(chanting)

CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!
CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!

HAZEL RUBY

All right! All right! Go about your drinking. The Governor will be making his entrance soon. Please! Let's keep it to a dull roar! (To HARRY) Sure. I'm getting too old for this. You start dividing your life up into four year segments and it begins to occur to you how short it all is. How are we doing?

HARRY
(Watching the T.V.)

I don't know. They've listed Republicans, Democrats and then just 'other'.

HAZEL RUBY

'Other?'

HARRY

Other than Democrats and Republicans.

HAZEL RUBY

That's not going to please the Governor.

HARRY

No, it's not.

HAZEL RUBY

Now pick up your head and wear it on top of your body where it belongs, not like it's something growing out of your chest.

HARRY

Sorry.

HAZEL RUBY

And don't say you're sorry anymore.

HARRY

I've really been talking you down with me, haven't I?

HAZEL RUBY

A little. I bounce.

HARRY

Sorry.

HAZEL RUBY

I'm warning you, Harry, if you say you're sorry once more tonight, I'm going to have to kick you.

HARRY

I apologize.

HAZEL RUBY

You're buying the boot, Harry.

HARRY

Do you think he's as tough as they say he is?

HAZEL RUBY

Who are we taking about now?

HARRY

Diane's husband. Maybe I could find the energy to fight him. You know, like when you read about a child getting pinned under a car and the mother somehow finds the strength to lift it. That sort of thing.

HAZEL RUBY

This is a man, not a car. And worse than that, he's a convicted criminal.

HARRY

Yeah. I always wondered why the mother let the kid get under the car in the first place.

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, you've been moping around this place for two days. Make up your mind, can you fight him?

HARRY

Of course I can fight him. The question is, how badly will I be left brain-damaged?

HAZEL RUBY

All right. So you fight him and he kills you and you're dead and Diane is still with him and so what? Harry, Harry, I love you kid but you got a one-track mind. You got to get Diane out of that track or you'll never see that nice single girl sitting at the end of the bar.

(HARRY looks at the Nice Single Girl sitting at the end of the bar.)

HARRY

Nah.

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, it's absurd that the owner of a bar should have trouble meeting girls.

HARRY

It's not the right girl.

HAZEL RUBY

How do you know, unless you try them all out first?

HARRY

I dunno.

HAZEL RUBY

How many girls are there in the United States, Harry? Hundreds of millions. And if only one in a hundred is the right girl, then there have got to be millions of girls that are right for you.

HARRY

Thanks for trying to cheer me up, but it's no use. I've got to do this myself. (beat) And I'm going to do it right now. I have just made up my mind that I am not going to be depressed anymore.

HAZEL RUBY

Just like that?

HARRY

Yes. It's ridiculous to go around depressed all the time.

HAZEL RUBY

Smile.

HARRY

There, I'm happy.

HAZEL RUBY

Good, now go talk to her.

HARRY

Diane?

HAZEL RUBY

No! The girl at the end of the bar.

(Pause as HARRY looks at the girl.)

HARRY

Nah.

HAZEL RUBY

You know what your problem is? You think you got no sex appeal. You don't know it, but you're really a very sexy person.

HARRY

No I'm not.

HAZEL RUBY

Yes you are.

HARRY

No I'm not.

HAZEL RUBY

I often have hot flashes around you. Your brother used to drive me crazy and I think a little bit of that has rubbed off on you.

HARRY

No he didn't

HAZEL RUBY

But you know what you have that other men don't? You're sweet. Girls like that.

HARRY

Thanks.

HAZEL RUBY

But more than that, they like a man who's just a little sexy and since you don't have 'sex' written all

over your face, you've got to say something which will place into their sub-conscience the idea that fooling around with you would be a great thing.

HARRY

Have you been reading that book again?

HAZEL RUBY

As a matter of fact, yes. I was looking under "99 new pick up lines" and I found one your brother used to use.

HARRY

Maybe he was a contributing editor.

HAZEL RUBY

What you got to do is walk up to that girl and let the first words out of your mouth be, "Tickle your ass with a feather?"

HARRY

What?!

HAZEL RUBY

"What?" That's exactly what she'll say and then you'll say, "It's particularly nasty weather".

HARRY

Then what?

HAZEL RUBY

You talk about the weather.

HARRY

So what?

HAZEL RUBY

You'll have placed into her mind a sexual thought. Go on, I've been watching her; she's all by herself.

HARRY

My brother used to walk up to strange women and say things like this?

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, is your way working?

HARRY

No.

HAZEL RUBY

You can do it. She's pretty, isn't she?

HARRY

Yeah.

HAZEL RUBY

Go on.

HARRY

Hazel.

HAZEL RUBY

Don't think about it, just do it.

HARRY

What's the line?

HAZEL RUBY

"Tickle your ass with a feather..."

(A REGULAR looks up.)

Not you! Come back here, Harry. "Tickle your ass with a feather" and "It's particularly nasty weather."

HARRY

"It's particularly nasty weather" and "Tickle your ass with a feather." This is sick.

HAZEL RUBY

It'll work fine. Just remember it's the other way around.

(HARRY starts toward the girl then stops.)

HARRY

Yeah, but it's forty-five degrees out and the stars are shining.

HAZEL RUBY

You see, you're going to screw it up because you're thinking about it.

HARRY

What if I fail?

HAZEL RUBY

You fail. You get the next one.

HARRY

What if I fail with the next one, too?

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, are you going to do it?

HARRY

Yes.

HAZEL RUBY

Go.

HARRY

I'm going to do it. I'm going to walk up to that girl and start a perverted conversation with her.

HAZEL RUBY

It happens millions of times every day.

HARRY

Here goes. Please forgive me, Diane.

HAZEL RUBY

Stick up for yourself, Harry, don't be an ass.

HARRY

Right.

(HARRY moves toward the girl. He walks past her and comes in again. He bumps into someone.)

HARRY

Excuse me.

(Finally he sits beside the girl.)

Hi.

NICE SINGLE GIRL

Hi.

HARRY

Ah, stick a feather up your ass?

NICE SINGLE GIRL

What!?

HARRY

I mean, tickle your ass with a feather?

NICE SINGLE GIRL

WHAT!?

HARRY

I said the wrong thing! I was going to say...

NICE SINGLE GIRL

What are you, some kind of weirdo?

HARRY

No! What I mean is...the weather!

NICE SINGLE GIRL

What about it?

HARRY

It's pretty bad!

NICE SINGLE GIRL

Get away from me!

HARRY

No! You see, I'm just trying to place into your sub-conscience the sexual act...

NICE SINGLE GIRL

You're not placing anything in me, buddy!

HARRY

I can't deal with girls.

NICE SINGLE GIRL

I can see why! God, can't a nice girl go out for a drink without being attacked.

HARRY

I'm not attacking you.

NICE SINGLE GIRL

Get away from me!

HARRY

Calm down.

NICE SINGLE GIRL

I'll call the police!

HARRY

I'm sorry.

NICE SINGLE GIRL

The hell you are. You're sick! I'm calling the police!

(NICE SINGLE GIRL exits the bar. HARRY looks around.
Everyone is staring at him.)

HARRY

Look, I was trying to place into her mind the self-conscience sexual act. It didn't work!

HAZEL RUBY

Harry.

(HARRY crosses to HAZEL RUBY.)

HARRY

I just made a complete ass out of myself.

HAZEL RUBY

Chalk it up to experience.

HARRY

I need Diane. I wasn't nervous around her. Well, I was, but nothing like this. Oh God, Hazel, I got chest pains. Who was that anyway?

HAZEL RUBY

I think it's the police chief's niece.

HARRY

Oh great. Someone nearby. I'll probably have my picture up on the post office wall before the week is up. "Wanted for suggesting perverted sexual acts to strangers."

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, calm down.

HARRY

I need Diane. I'm in love with her. I can't help it. I'm in love with her and I'm sorry.

(HAZEL RUBY kicks HARRY.)

HAZEL RUBY

I warned you. If this is the only way I can get you to stop apologizing, that's what I'm gonna do. Are you calm?

HARRY

No! I'm going to call her.

HAZEL RUBY

If you make an overt gesture to Diane, John Rose is going to kick you a hundred times harder and from here to Des Moines.

HARRY

What was he in prison for?

HAZEL RUBY

I don't know.

HARRY

Oh come on, Hazel. You must have had your little feelers out in the community. You found out his name is John Rose, what else do you know?

HAZEL RUBY

No one knows much about him. A lot of people are asking, but no one knows. I've only heard that he was sent to the Pen for robbery.

HARRY

The Pen?

HAZEL RUBY

Yes, Harry, the Big House.

HARRY

Armed robbery?

HAZEL RUBY

No one knows.

HARRY

Then it could have been breaking and entering, or pickpocketing, or some petty crime. He may be just a simple man who just doesn't have sense enough to know any better. That's it! John Rose is just a simple man who doesn't know any better. I'll call him and we'll talk this over man-to-man.

HAZEL RUBY

Harry.

HARRY

You're always telling me to take life by the horns and blow. Well, I'm blowin'.

(HARRY walks to the phone booth, stops and returns.)

HARRY

Have you got a dime?

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, stand there and let me look at you.

HARRY

Why?

HAZEL RUBY

Great. That's good. I just wanted to have one last look at you before you start bleeding. Here's your dime.

(HAZEL RUBY hands HARRY a dime. He drops it and picks it up.)

HARRY

I'm not scared.

(A car horn is heard and some REGULARS begin cheering outside.)

REGULARS

CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!
CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!

(THE GOVERNOR enters. Everyone cheers. HAZEL RUBY hands him a drink and pulls out his soapbox; THE GOVERNOR steps onto it.)

THE GOVERNOR

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the Round Table. I have only one thought, my check arrived today and so The Drinks Are On Me. So everyone grab libation and toast the Round Table, political headquarters of the great and still mighty Bull Moose, home of Harry and Hazel, and one hell of a bar!

(THE GOVERNOR raises his glass.)

We drink in praise to our hero Teddy, `cause we know it was whiskey that made him Rough and Ready!
Cheers!

(Everyone drinks.)

REGULARS

Speech! Speech!

THE GOVERNOR

Have we lost yet?

HAZEL RUBY

Not yet!

THE GOVERNOR

Too early, folks, too early.

HAZEL RUBY

Good evening, Governor.

THE GOVERNOR

Hazel, my love.

HAZEL RUBY

Who will it be tonight?

THE GOVERNOR

I don't know. It's a toss-up between Adlai Stevenson and William Jennings Bryan. Where's Harry?

HAZEL RUBY

Calling Diane.

THE GOVERNOR

Great guy. Gonna miss him. How are we doing?

HAZEL RUBY

I've got something you're not going to be thrilled with, Marlon.

THE GOVERNOR

Oh?

HAZEL RUBY

They're listing Republican, Democrat and something called `other'.

THE GOVERNOR

`Other'?

HAZEL RUBY

Other than Republican or Democrat.

THE GOVERNOR

You're joking.

HAZEL RUBY

Unfortunately not.

THE GOVERNOR

If they think I'm going to sit still for this, they're crazy! Call my secretary!

HAZEL RUBY

You don't have a secretary.

THE GOVERNOR

Where's my election committee?

HAZEL RUBY

He's on the phone trying to call Diane.

(THE GOVERNOR storms over to the phone booth.)

THE GOVERNOR

Harry! Harry! This is important!

(HARRY hangs up and comes out.)

THE GOVERNOR

I'm not going to stand for this. I am not going to stand for this!

(THE GOVERNOR enters the phone booth and places a call.)

HAZEL RUBY

What happened?

HARRY

She hung up on me.

HAZEL RUBY

She answered?

HARRY

Yes.

HAZEL RUBY

You're lucky.

THE GOVERNOR

(on the phone)

Hello! Who am I speaking with? I want to know what's going on down there. What do you mean? You are listing Republicans and Democrats only. "So what!" Do you know who you are speaking with? This is Marlon Monroe, Gubernatorial Candidate for the great state of Iowa and I want to know why my party isn't listed. WHAT PARTY! Bull Moose! What? Your superior? That would be fine. Hello. This is Marlon Monroe. I said Marlon Monroe...no, I did not sleep with Bobby Kennedy! I am a candidate in this election and I want to know just what the Hell...hello? This is not a prank! Hello?!

(The party has hung up on him.)

Hazel, have you been paying your phone bills? Well, they just cut me off! This is the final insult. We're being clumped together with Nazis and Socialists. Harry, Harry, something has got to be done.

HARRY

They just don't take us seriously.

HAZEL RUBY

Hey, wait a minute, something's happening. Yank the knob up on the TV.

(HARRY turns up the volume. We hear Governor STEWART sobbing.)

THE GOVERNOR

It's Stewart! Is he giving a victory speech?

HAZEL RUBY

He doesn't look happy about it.

THE GOVERNOR

Hell, he lost! That's a concession speech! That moron wasn't worth a damn back in '56 when he was my committee chairman. Look at him. What's he doing anyway, crying?

HAZEL RUBY

I believe so.

THE GOVERNOR

You never cry during concession speeches. It shows weakness. People never remember strength, they always remember weakness. He's blown his chance at the next election, the idiot.

HAZEL RUBY

There are the standings.

HARRY

(reading from the t.v.)

Republicans: 310,295 votes. Democrats: 245,166 votes. "Other": Six thousand and one votes.

(THE REGULARS begin to sing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow".)

REGULAR

Congratulations, Governor, you lost!

THE GOVERNOR

(*quietly*)

Thanks.

REGULARS

CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!
CONCESSION SPEECH, CONCESSION SPEECH, WE WANT A CONCESSION SPEECH!

HARRY

I guess it's time.

HAZEL RUBY

Good luck.

THE GOVERNOR

I could've won that election. I've got the know-how.

HAZEL RUBY

Never mind that, you've got a crowd waiting.

HARRY

Should I go?

THE GOVERNOR

"Nuts".

HAZEL RUBY

Who'll it be?

THE GOVERNOR

Adlai Stevenson, 1952.

HAZEL RUBY

Good. Give `em what they want.

THE GOVERNOR

I'm not going to cry, if that's what you mean.

(HARRY steps onto the soapbox.)

HARRY

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's official. The Round Table would like to introduce its favorite patron. Twelve years ago, Marlon Monroe gave his first concession speech here and it has turned into a bigger event than New Years. So, without further delay, I present to you Marlon Monroe, the Governor of, if nothing else, the Round Table.

(The REGULARS applaud. HARRY steps down and the GOVERNOR steps up to give his speech. The REGULARS quiet.)

THE GOVERNOR

"The people have rendered their verdict and I gladly accept it. General Eisenhower has been a great leader in war and he has been a vigorous, valiant opponent in the campaign. It is traditionally American to fight hard before an election. It is equally traditional to close ranks as soon as the people have spoken. From the depths of my heart I thank all of my party and all of those independents who supported Senator Sparkman and me. That which unites us as Americans is far greater than that which divides us as political parties."

(The REGULARS applaud. THE GOVERNOR steps down and walks to the bar. HARRY steps onto the soapbox.)

HAZEL RUBY

Aren't you going to say the drinks are on you?

THE GOVERNOR

Nope. Just buying one for me.

HAZEL RUBY

I think it was one of your best.

THE GOVERNOR

I thank you, Hazel. A politician must always know how to take a compliment, so I thank you.

REGULAR

Damn fine speech, Gov.

THE GOVERNOR

Fine, thank you.

(To HAZEL RUBY)

I'll be on the porch.

HAZEL RUBY

Are you all right?

THE GOVERNOR

My whole campaign has turned into a joke. TV stations don't even list me. Stewart's an ass. Crying in front of America because he wasn't going to be Governor any more. Hell, if there hadn't been a scandal four years ago with the Democrats, he wouldn't have been Governor in the first place. If I had had the slightest scandal to work with in '56, I would have been launched into the Governorship with such force that I would have been president by the end of the next decade. Instead of 'Tricky Dick' we would've had 'Honest Monroe'. Life would've been different. The whole world would've been different. I could've done it. I could have been president, Hazel, I'd just stuck it a little longer.

HAZEL RUBY

I know you, dear, but you must relax.

THE GOVERNOR

"Congratulations, you lost!" Why, twenty years ago I would have punched that man in the nose for saying that to me.

HAZEL RUBY

Governor...

THE GOVERNOR

Don't call me that.

HAZEL RUBY

Marlon? What's this sudden remorse? You knew you didn't have the slightest chance, so why now? I believe that you could have become president, but if you did where would you be now? Some doddering idiot, looking ten years older than you are with your nerves all frayed up. Now, would you be happy like that?

THE GOVERNOR

Yes. (beat) Call Harry out, I've got something to say to him.

HAZEL RUBY

Marlon, I don't like the word 'retirement.' You will run again.

THE GOVERNOR

I'm not going to retire. I need the money too badly. Just call him out, I want to talk to him man-to-man.

HAZEL RUBY

HARRY! The Governor wants to talk to you on the front porch, I'll take over.

(THE GOVERNOR exits to the front porch. HARRY follows. HAZEL RUBY hangs around the front door and listens in.)

HARRY

Governor?

THE GOVERNOR

What have you done in the last two days since that charming young lady left the premises?

HARRY

You mean Diane?

THE GOVERNOR

Yes, the woman you're madly in love with.

HARRY

Well, I tried to call her, but she hung up on me. It was a stupid thing to do.

THE GOVERNOR

Congratulations, boy, you lost.

HARRY

What?

THE GOVERNOR

Keep it up and in another twenty years some inebriated wretch will say that to you.

HARRY

Are you mad at me?

THE GOVERNOR

Just sit there and listen. What are you afraid of?

HARRY

(after a moment of thought)

Dogs.

THE GOVERNOR

I mean the ultimate fear.

HARRY

I dunno. Being bitten by a dog?

THE GOVERNOR

Forget dogs, Harry, this has nothing to do with dogs! Now, what is your ultimate fear?

HARRY

I guess just dying in general then.

THE GOVERNOR

And I'll tell you something, dying alone is number one. Harry, let's look at all the issues. You're not being political. What's your next step?

HARRY

I dunno.

THE GOVERNOR

Is it to sit back and do nothing?

HARRY

I dunno.

THE GOVERNOR

Stop saying 'I dunno'.

HARRY

Sorry.

HAZEL RUBY

(Yelling from the bar)

Harry!

THE GOVERNOR

Life is too short to be wasted away from the one you love. Life without challenge is meaningless. Life without challenge is a joke. Someday, long after I'm gone, the Round Table will be a place where people come from miles around to hear you give a speech by some other great lover and laugh because you're not him. Write your own speech, Harry. Write your own speech and win that election! You understand me? Nothing else will do.

HARRY

I guess you're right.

THE GOVERNOR

"It is the excitement of becoming, always becoming, probing, trying, failing, resting and trying again. But always trying and always gaining."

HARRY

Write your own speech, ah? That was LBJ, 1968.

THE GOVERNOR

All right. I pledge to you, Harry, and the Round Table, that I will never again give someone else's speech. Only mine. No matter how bad. No matter how hideous. Now get out there and change history. Call her. Talk to him. "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate".

HARRY

Kennedy, 1960.

THE GOVERNOR

"You should strive for perfection. You shall not achieve it immediately but you must still strive. You may make mistakes, but they must never be mistakes which result from faintness of heart."

HARRY

FDR, 1945.

THE GOVERNOR

All right! It's been a while since I've vocalized an original thought. I need time.

HARRY

Gerald Ford, 1974.

THE GOVERNOR

No! That was me! I said that! I need time to fulfill that pledge. Now get out there and call her. You're guaranteed the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. So go out there and pursue.

HARRY

All right.

(HARRY enters the bar and crosses to the phone. THE GOVERNOR enters the bar.)

HAZEL RUBY

Are you feeling better?

THE GOVERNOR

Yes.

HAZEL RUBY

Did you enjoy selling Custer on the Little Big Horn?

(SARAH enters the bar alone.)

HAZEL RUBY

Marlon, isn't that Diane's little girl?

THE GOVERNOR

Yes. Yes, it is. (Calling) Sarah!

SARAH

Hi, Mr. Governor!

THE GOVERNOR

To what do we owe this fine visit?

HAZEL RUBY

Where's your mother?

SARAH

I guess she's in the car.

HAZEL RUBY

Is she coming in?

SARAH

Eventually, I'm sure.

THE GOVERNOR

You got troubles, Sarah?

SARAH

Sure do.

THE GOVERNOR

Well, this is the right place to come. A drink?

SARAH

The usual.

HAZEL RUBY

Sarah, honey, what's she doing out there, just sitting in the car? I don't see her.

SARAH

Is Harry around?

THE GOVERNOR

He's on the phone trying to call you.

SARAH

Oh no, he musn't!

(HARRY looks out of the telephone booth and sees SARAH.
He hangs up and steps out.)

HARRY

Sarah, what are you doing here?

SARAH

Harry, I've got to tell you something but I'm not supposed to tell you. I promised I'd never tell anyone but I'm going to tell you, is that okay, I mean I'm not going to get in trouble, am I?

HARRY

What is it?

SARAH

Don't call Mommy anymore.

HARRY

Why?

SARAH

Because Mommy and Daddy have a fight every time you do. That's the part I'm not supposed to tell you, but I don't see why, everybody has a daddy.

HAZEL RUBY

Sarah, where is your mother? She's not in any of those cars.

SARAH

She's probably out in the car looking for me.

HAZEL RUBY

Sarah! That's almost five miles from Vinton. How did you get here?

SARAH

A nice man in a truck gave me a ride.

HAZEL RUBY

What!?

SARAH

I just stuck my finger out like this. Just like Daddy does.

(SARAH sticks out her index finger.)

THE GOVERNOR

Sarah, it's too late for a girl your age to be hitch-hiking.

HAZEL RUBY

Governor, she shouldn't be hitching at all!

HARRY

Sarah, does your mother know where you are?

SARAH

I left a note.

HAZEL RUBY

Oh for Gods' Sake! Call her mother! Somebody pull my bus around front. Sarah, we're going to take you home.

SARAH

I don't want to go home until they stop fighting.

HARRY

They're fighting?

SARAH

The worstest. Daddy listened in on the phone downstairs when you called Harry. He said that you two went to a fair behind his back. I didn't even know it was in town.

HARRY

Sarah, tell me something. Did your Daddy hurt Diane?

SARAH

Yes.

HARRY

There, are you happy, Governor?

THE GOVERNOR

I hadn't planned on this.

(Suddenly DIANE storms up on the porch and enters the

bar.)

DIANE

Oh my God! Sarah, honey!

(She runs to SARAH and hugs her.)

Sarah, you have scared Mommy very badly. Why did you run away?

SARAH

To tell Harry not to call anymore.

HARRY

Diane?

DIANE

Hi, Harry.

HARRY

Did he hurt you?

DIANE

Oh no.

HAZEL RUBY

I'll get you some Kleenex, honey, your nose is bleeding.

DIANE

Oh, this happens when I get upset.

HAZEL RUBY

And I suppose you bruise when you get upset too. (to the Regulars.) That's it for tonight. Let's hit the road. The Round Table is now closed. You can take your drinks with you. Just return them glasses in the morning. No back talk now, lets go.

(The REGULARS begrudgingly leave the bar. They take their drinks.)

HAZEL RUBY

(to Diane)

Why are you protecting him? If you ask me, he needs a swift kick in the nuts.

HARRY

Are you going to be all right?

DIANE

I'm fine.

GOVERNOR

(Sotto to Harry)

It's time for your speech.

HAZEL RUBY

Being afraid of your very own husband is no way to go through life.

DIANE

He followed me to the edge of town before I lost him.

GOVERNOR

We got to call a Lawyer.

HARRY

You know one?

GOVERNOR

Hell, I am one!

DIANE

Thank you, but this is my problem and I don't want to involve you.

HARRY

You've got to think of Sarah's safety.

DIANE

And yours.

HARRY

What can I do to make you stay?

GOVERNOR
(Sotto to Harry)

Perfect.

DIANE

You don't understand, he thinks I'm having an affair. This is only a natural reaction.

HAZEL RUBY

And what was he reacting to when he bruised your shoulder? Sit down, honey, you've been through a lot.

(By now all the REGULARS have left the bar. As Hazel locks the door, she notices a man walk up on the porch. She steps out and stops him.)

HAZEL RUBY

Sorry, we're closed.

JOHN ROSE

Looks to me like you've already let some customers in after closing.

HAZEL RUBY

Private party.

(HAZEL RUBY heads inside, latches the door and turns the sign window to read "closed." The man doesn't exit. He stands in the shadows and watches through the bar's

window.)

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, douse one of those bar rags in some cold water.

SARAH

Mommy's pretty upset, isn't she.

GOVERNOR

Yes she is.

SARAH

Hard life.

HAZEL RUBY

Honey, I don't care who you're in love with or what you want out of life, violence doesn't belong in it. It's your prerogative to be a weak woman if you want but it is your stupidity which lets this man take advantage of you. I'm being deliberately harsh with you, but it hurts me to see you come in here all torn up like this. There is no need for him to treat you like a punching bag and no need for you to stand there and take it. Maybe you and Harry were meant for one another. Yes, this is directed at you too, Harry. You can sit around every night and never be selfish and watch your life go by on the back porch like my fourth husband did. Sitting around waiting for someone else to think about your well being. Now what type of life is that?

DIANE

It's no life at all.

HAZEL RUBY

Point made; point taken. I'll shut my mouth on the subject.

(DIANE takes HARRY's hand.)

DIANE

Maybe that's the attraction; we're both weaklings.

HARRY

I don't know what you felt the other day at the Beauteria but if it was anything like what I felt for you, then it's important.

DIANE

I'm all right now.

HAZEL RUBY

I'm going to let you go as long as you promise to come back the first chance you get. We got our ways here. We could make you disappear off the face of Iowa if we wanted to. We'll protect you.

SARAH

Are you feeling better, Mommy?

DIANE

A little. Now we really must be going. Thank you. I'll try to get back soon.

HAZEL RUBY

Please think about what we said.

DIANE

I will.

THE GOVERNOR
(Sotto To Harry)

Don't let her get away without saying something.

HARRY

Ah, goodbye.

THE GOVERNOR

That's not what I had in mind.

DIANE

Goodbye, Harry.

(DIANE hugs HARRY. HAZEL RUBY opens the door. Just as DIANE and SARAH are about to leave she flicks on the front porch light. JOHN ROSE appears in the light.)

DIANE

Oh my God!

HAZEL RUBY

What is it!?

DIANE

That's my husband!

(HAZEL RUBY slams the door and locks it. JOHN ROSE pounds on the door and jiggles the knob.)

JOHN ROSE

DIANE!

HAZEL RUBY

Get that pinball machine! Let's barricade the door!

(They all pull the pinball machine in front of the door.)

JOHN ROSE

DIANE! I've been waiting for you!

DIANE

Ah, we'll be out in a minute! (TO HARRY) He knows I'm here!

THE GOVERNOR

Obviously.

HARRY

Let's turn out the lights and pretend we're not home.

(HARRY runs around the place turning off lights.)

JOHN ROSE

Diane! Get out here!

SARAH

She didn't go to a fair, why won't you believe us!

DIANE

Sarah! Get away from the window.

(JOHN ROSE disappears into the shadows.)

GOVERNOR

We could all run out the back!

HARRY

Yes, that's a great idea.

DIANE

Okay, but I need light to find my purse!

SARAH

What's going on?

DIANE

Hide-and-go-seek with Daddy.

(SARAH gleefully starts to play hide-and-go-seek.)

THE GOVERNOR

You could make the state border by ten!

HAZEL RUBY

Ah, bull, get the shotgun.

HARRY

I don't see him.

DIANE

Where'd he go? I don't like this.

(Everyone peers out the front windows. Pause.)

HARRY

Maybe we should call the police.

(JOHN ROSE enters unseen through the back door.)

SARAH

Hi, daddy.

(Everyone freezes.)

THE GOVERNOR

Oh my God.

HARRY

Hi.

(JOHN ROSE smashes a pile of glasses at the end of the bar.)

JOHN ROSE

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE!?

(There is a frozen silence as JOHN ROSE slowly walks around the place and looks at everyone. First at HAZEL RUBY who stares steadily back at him and then at THE GOVERNOR.)

And what is this, a joke?

(JOHN ROSE then walks over and stares at HARRY.)

JOHN ROSE

And what's your name?

HARRY

H-Harry, what's yours?

JOHN ROSE

John Rose. Sound familiar?

HARRY

I...ah...I...ah...

JOHN ROSE

I'll bet it does. What's my wife doing here?

(Beat. He grabs HARRY'S jaw.)

What's My Wife Doing Here!!!?

DIANE

John, stop! I came here because Sarah came here. Now please leave him alone.

JOHN ROSE

You're not having an affair with my wife, are you?

HARRY

No, I'm not.

JOHN ROSE

Bull! (To DIANE) Is this why you wanted to move here so you would be closer to your lover-boy?

DIANE

He's not my lover-boy?

JOHN ROSE

All the time I'm rotting in that jail, you were here with him, weren't you? (To HARRY) What type of man screws another man's wife?

HARRY

I'm sorry, I beg to differ, I have never screwed your wife. I'm sorry, Diane, I didn't mean to say that in front of you.

JOHN ROSE

DAMMIT! You got one minute, buddy, one minute! What'd I just say?

HARRY

Ah...I got one minute.

JOHN ROSE

That's right, one minute to tell me what my wife's doing here before I bust your face.

THE GOVERNOR

Remember, Harry, you've got nothing to fear but fear itself.

JOHN ROSE

You got nothing to fear but my fat fist screwin' up your face!

HAZEL RUBY

Hey, pal, there's a child present. You will contain your discussion to decent language.

JOHN ROSE

I'll rip this place apart and you with it! (To HARRY) All right! This is it. Let's go buddy. What have you got?

HARRY

Ah, one minute.

JOHN ROSE

You're a real bright boy. Start talking.

HARRY

Well...I...ah...I...

JOHN ROSE

You seem to be having some diction problems.

(JOHN ROSE grabs HARRY by the mouth.)

Here, does this help?

DIANE

John, remember you're on parole.

JOHN ROSE

No court in the land will convict me after what he's done to you.

DIANE

You idiot, he never touched me! Don't you understand, he never touched me!

(JOHN ROSE picks up DIANE. Her feet dangle.)

JOHN ROSE

You silly witch. I've seen women with no arms more useful than you!

(He throws DIANE to the ground.)

HARRY

All right! That's enough rough stuff with the women. You want me? I love your wife. I've never made love to her, but looking at the way you treat her, I doubt if you have either. Come on! Come on!

(HARRY puts his fists up to fight.)

DIANE

Harry, stop! He crippled a man once.

HARRY

Now you tell me.

(HARRY runs behind the bar. JOHN ROSE laughs.)

HARRY

Hazel, where's the gun?!

HAZEL RUBY

Underay the egistray.

HARRY

"Underay the egistray"? OH! Under the register!

(HARRY runs to the register and frantically looks around. He pulls out a crepe paper M-16. And holds it on JOHN ROSE.)

HARRY

HA!

JOHN ROSE

Hey now, wait a minute buddy.

HARRY

Come on, move against the wall. Come on!

(As HARRY gestures for JOHN ROSE to move against the wall, he accidentally hits the register. The 'barrel' of the M'16 falls off.)

HARRY

Hazel, where did you get this gun.

HAZEL RUBY

I don't know quite how to say this, Harry...but the public library returned that this morning.

HARRY

Great! Where's the real one?

HAZEL RUBY

I gave it away.

HARRY

Just wonderful! (To JOHN ROSE) Couldn't we talk this over?

(JOHN ROSE growls and Harry runs behind the bar and hides behind some shelves. JOHN ROSE reaches through the shelves and grabs HARRY.)

JOHN ROSE

Gotcha! Who the hell are you to tell me I don't make love to my wife!

(JOHN ROSE pulls HARRY through the shelves.)(JOHN ROSE punches HARRY in the face. HARRY falls to the ground. SARAH screams.)

SARAH

Governor, you got to do something!

THE GOVERNOR

Yes, you're right! And I have just the solution. (To JOHN ROSE) Excuse me, sir.

JOHN ROSE

What's the matter? You want some of it?

THE GOVERNOR

As a matter of fact, yes.

HAZEL RUBY

Marlon!

THE GOVERNOR

Is it important that you beat up on the poor lad or that you blow off a little steam. If it is the latter, may I suggest that you beat on my carcass and not Harry's. I have very little use left for it and I might as well use it for some good.

JOHN ROSE

Get away from me, you crazy old man!

THE GOVERNOR

If you will not take me up on my offer, I will be required to take steps against you, such as calling you a Horse's Ass!

JOHN ROSE

What is this? Some kind of Nut House? Come on, Diane, let's get the hell out of here.

DIANE

No.

JOHN ROSE

I said, let's go. Sarah, get in the car.

DIANE

I said NO! I want to check on Harry first, so shut up.

JOHN ROSE

Don't you tell me to shut up!

DIANE

I'm going to check on Harry!

JOHN ROSE

No you're not!

DIANE

YES I AM! HOW ARE YOU HARRY?

HARRY

I think my nose is broken.

DIANE

BUT YOU'RE NOT DEAD!

HARRY

No.

DIANE

FINE! Let's go.

JOHN ROSE

I'm coming back for you one of these days.

HAZEL RUBY

Diane, look at me. Tell me to my face that this is what you want, to go home with this man.

JOHN ROSE

She's my wife; I'm taking her home.

HAZEL RUBY

Diane?

THE GOVERNOR

Please punch me out!

HAZEL RUBY

Honey, just say it and I'll leave you alone.

JOHN ROSE

Diane!

HAZEL RUBY

Quiet! She's thinking.

JOHN ROSE

You're in enough trouble with me as it is.

THE GOVERNOR

I have called you a name. That should cause a lower form of life such as yourself to pulverize any man. Now if you will not take me up on my offer, I shall have to call you another name.

JOHN ROSE

Get away from me!

THE GOVERNOR

You're not scared of me?

JOHN ROSE

Listen, I'm going to hurt you.

THE GOVERNOR

Please do. I would be delighted to have a moron like you Kick the Shit Out Of Me!

HAZEL RUBY

Marlon!

JOHN ROSE

I'm not going to hit you!

THE GOVERNOR

Then I must congratulate you. You have truly reformed. You will never again hit your wife. You're a changed man! Congratulations!

(THE GOVERNOR reaches out to hug JOHN ROSE. He pushes THE GOVERNOR away and punches him very hard in the ribs. THE GOVERNOR collapses.)

HAZEL RUBY

Oh my god! Marlon are you all right!

THE GOVERNOR

That hurt.

SARAH

You hurt him!

HAZEL RUBY

We'd better call an ambulance.

JOHN ROSE

Let's go!

DIANE

No!

JOHN ROSE

I said let's go!

DIANE

I said no! I don't want to go home with you. Not now! Not ever! I hate you. And if you have to punch me, hurry up and get it over with!

JOHN ROSE

I don't want any shit out of you!

(DIANE steps forward and folds her arms in defiance.)

DIANE

Forget the yelling, start the hitting.

JOHN ROSE

I will!

DIANE

I know you will!

(HAZEL RUBY surreptitiously hands HARRY an empty beer pitcher. JOHN ROSE and DIANE glare at one another.)

HAZEL RUBY

Walk quietly...

JOHN ROSE

I'm going to beat your ass so hard you won't forget it this time.

DIANE

I haven't forgotten it in the past, why should this time be any different.

HARRY

Oh John?

(JOHN ROSE turns just as HARRY cracks him over the

head. JOHN ROSE falls to the floor.)

HAZEL RUBY

Voila!

DIANE

Is he out?

HARRY

Cold. I did it. I knocked him cold.

HAZEL RUBY

Marlon?

THE GOVERNOR

Present.

HAZEL RUBY

Why did you do such a thing?

THE GOVERNOR

I've done it. I've changed history!

HAZEL RUBY

All you've done is put yourself in the hospital. Harry?

HARRY
(holding his nose)

I'm calling.

(HARRY enters the phone booth and calls an ambulance.)

HAZEL RUBY

Why?

THE GOVERNOR

John Rose has attacked an innocent person while on parole. He will have to go back to prison. You see, Harry? Where's Harry?

HAZEL RUBY

Calling an ambulance.

HARRY

I'm here.

THE GOVERNOR

Harry, John rose is off to jail, and the path to Diane is open. Am I right, Diane?

DIANE

9 You're right, Governor.

HARRY

You're going to get a divorce?

DIANE

Yes.

SARAH

Hooraaaaay! I'm going to come from a broken home!

THE GOVERNOR

And if Harry plays his cards right.

SARAH

I'll help you, Harry, I know Mommy real well.

THE GOVERNOR

I did it! Ha, ha! I did it!

(THE GOVERNOR coughs.)

HAZEL RUBY

How do you feel?

THE GOVERNOR

It hurts to cough.

SARAH

Then don't cough.

HAZEL RUBY

Harry, pull my bus around and we'll take him to the hospital ourselves. Did you call the police?

HARRY

Yes.

THE GOVERNOR

I feel like I'm about to pass out.

HAZEL RUBY

Oh my God.

THE GOVERNOR

Hold on everyone, this may be it.

HAZEL RUBY

Stop it, you're too young to die.

THE GOVERNOR

"I regret that I only have one life to give for my country."

(THE GOVERNOR passes out.)

HARRY

Governor, please talk to me.

HAZEL RUBY

How's his pulse?

DIANE

Weak.

SARAH

His heart is still beeping.

HAZEL RUBY

Goddammit, Marlon! You're not going to die. I don't care how noble the idea is, do you hear me?

HARRY

The squad car is here, let's get him outside. We can take him to the hospital in that.

(They all move to pick up THE GOVERNOR.)

SARAH

Can I help?

DIANE

You're too short, honey.

(A POLICEMAN enters.)

HAZEL RUBY

Thank god, officer, you're here!

(A beat)

POLICEMAN

All right, where's this pervert who likes feathers?

(HARRY and HAZEL RUBY look at one another and then simultaneously point to JOHN ROSE.)

Blackout.

(The sound of a high school marching band plays "Stars and Stripes Forever". The lights rise and reveal a large banner reading, WELCOME HOME GOVERNOR. It is several days later. JOHN ROSE is, of course, gone.)

DIANE

It's not going to get any cleaner than this.

HARRY

Good. They're almost here.

DIANE

Harry, that date yesterday was fun. I had no idea that Herbert Hoover was buried so close by. I talked to a lawyer this morning. Filed divorce proceedings.

HARRY

You're kidding. All in one visit?

DIANE

I've discovered I can work fast if I want to.

HARRY

Diane, I was wondering, ah, if, ah...I...I don't know if you'd want to rush out of one thing right into another but...

(The sounds of the band and crowd grows louder. HAZEL RUBY runs in the bar.)

HAZEL RUBY

Come on, let's get this place ready for the rush. Have you seen the front page of this month's Garrisonian?

(HAZEL RUBY hands HARRY the thin newspaper.)

DIANE

"Governor Subdues Thug in Local Bar". Impressive.

HARRY

Yeah, they used declaration of war size letters.

HAZEL RUBY

This has to be the biggest day Garrison's ever seen. There must be seventy-five people out there! You can start by bringing up another keg from the basement.

HARRY

Hazel, I've got to talk to you.

(He takes her aside.)

HAZEL RUBY

No time now.

HARRY

I want to ask Diane to marry me.

HAZEL RUBY

So! Do it.

HARRY

I don't know what to say.

HAZEL RUBY

You're not asking me to propose for you?

HARRY

Well...

HAZEL RUBY

I'll tell you how to propose to a woman, but you got to do it yourself. My most interesting proposal came from Chin Lee, the third husband. What you got to do is walk up to Diane and let the first words out of your mouth be, "Do you want to be buried together?"

HARRY

Do you want to be buried together?

HAZEL RUBY

Chin had terrible English, but a great sense of family.

HARRY

You think that'll work?

HAZEL RUBY

You bet. Hurry up though, Harry, the Governor will be here any minute.

HARRY

What if she says yes?

HAZEL RUBY

Marry her.

HARRY

Oh, yeah. I'm going to do it. I'm going to propose to a girl.

HAZEL RUBY

Happens millions of times every day.

(HARRY starts over to DIANE. He bumps into a bar stool.)

HARRY

Excuse me.

(He sits beside DIANE.)

Hi.

DIANE

Hi.

HARRY

Tickle your ass with a feather?

DIANE

WHAT?

HARRY

I mean...ah...I said the wrong thing.

DIANE

What does that mean?

HARRY

I was trying to say something different...that was the other girl I was supposed to say that to.

DIANE

What other girl?

HAZEL RUBY

Harry! For God sakes, hold still, take a deep breath!

HARRY

Do You Want To Be Buried Together?

DIANE

Okay.

HAZEL RUBY

Congratulations, you're engaged!

(HAZEL RUBY grabs her camera from the bar and snaps their picture.)

Well, go ahead and kiss her!

DIANE

I love you, Harry.

HARRY

I love you too, Diane.

SARAH

They're here! They're here!

(The crowd streams in as THE GOVERNOR enters with SARAH. His ribs are heavily bandaged. SARAH, HARRY, HAZEL RUBY and DIANE run out to meet him.)

REGULARS

FOUR MORE YEARS! FOUR MORE YEARS! FOUR MORE YEARS!

(HAZEL RUBY hands the Garrisonian to the GOVERNOR who hoists it in the classic "Dewey defeats Truman" pose. THE REGULARS cheer.)

HARRY

How are the ribs?

THE GOVERNOR

Oh, I don't even feel them anymore. And the nose?

HARRY

Still there.

SARAH

Hellloooooo.

THE GOVERNOR

My favorite! How have you been?

SARAH

Alive and kicking!

REGULARS

SPEECH! SPEECH! SPEECH!

(HARRY brings out the soapbox.)

THE GOVERNOR

I've had five days of lying on my back to think about myself and the people and places I care about. First, I must say that how much I've missed this place amazed me and so I am glad to be home. Second, I would like to announce that I will not be seeking the governorship of the great state of Iowa.

(THE REGULARS hush.)

No, five days on my back have allowed me to see that I am aiming too high. And therefore, I am hereby announcing my candidacy for the mayorship of the magnificent hamlet of Garrison!

(THE REGULARS cheer.)

Harry, B-8!

(HARRY inserts a coin in the juke box. In a moment it clicks on with "Stars and Stripes Forever".)

People, I come to you with only one desire - to represent the people of this nation. A free nation. A shining moment in Earth's history is this nation of ours. And a politician must shine no brighter, nor tarnish any darker than the people who speak through him. Give me your voices so that I may speak. Give me your thoughts so that I may think and give me your hands so that we, together, can stand on the edge of this world and bring continual meaning to the word, `free!'

(All cheer.)

HAZEL RUBY

Governor, that was just great! Who was it by? Who said it first.

THE GOVERNOR

No one, Hazel.

HAZEL RUBY

You mean...

THE GOVERNOR

Yes! I MADE IT UP AS I WENT ALONG!

(All cheer.)

GOVERNOR

Sarah, what have you got to say for yourself?

SARAH

A VOTE FOR MARILYN MONROE IS A VOTE FOR MARILYN MONROE!

(There is a huge ovation from everyone. HARRY leans over to kiss DIANE, HAZEL RUBY hugs THE GOVERNOR, SARAH waves at the crowd from atop THE GOVERNOR'S shoulders, and with "Stars and Stripes Forever" louder than before, confetti flies, the lights fade and they live happily ever after.)

The End

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