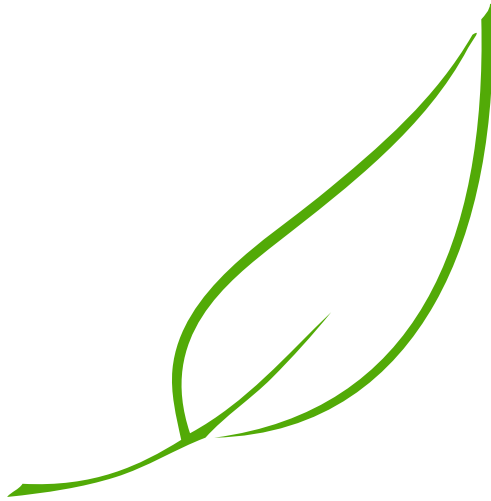


TOO GOOD TO SAY GOODBYE

by Jim Gustafson



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SYNOPSIS: Redmon Hunter, a best-selling author of pulp fiction, has created an unusual world for himself. His talent lies in his ability to make his characters come to life for his readers; they're so real, in fact, that they literally take up residence in his home while he's working on a novel. Once the book is published, they pack up and leave him to "live in the minds" of the readers. Recently, writer's block has set in, so all the characters from his works in progress have set up semi-permanent residence in literary limbo. Redmon's chance meeting with Amanda Hawkins, a beautiful, young pop literature professor, sets the wheels in motion for a madcap comedy where wild imaginary characters clash with real-world snobs. Fast, inventive and hilarious. *Winner of the Northern Kentucky University Y.E.S. Festival of New Plays.*

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9-12 female, 13-14 male, 0-1 either, 5-15 extras)

REDMON HUNTER (m) Handsome, rugged and trim novelist in his mid-50s. A bit mysterious about his background. The rumors are that his characters' adventures may be somewhat autobiographical. His books are best sellers but the critics call his work "standard pulp potboilers." He doesn't mind, because he finds the literati a bit too pretentious anyway. He'd prefer to live his life quietly on his own terms.
(241 lines)

AMANDA HAWKINS (f) A young, vivacious college English professor teaching contemporary pop literature. She judges books and writers on their merit, not by reputation or their critical acclaim. She uses Redmon Hunter's books in her teaching because she feels no other author can create such

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life-like characters. Her relationship with the department chairman is strained because she's beautiful, intellectual, and popular with the students. (248 lines)

DUTCH VAN DYKE (m) Redmon's fictional character who has come to life to live with him. Dutch is a two-fisted, tough talking detective who has appeared in a series of novels. His paperbacks were the first to become best-sellers. (160 lines)

POMEROY SMITH (m) Pomeroy is an arrogant, overbearing fictional attorney who always wins the case. Oddly enough, he's still lovable with a pixie's smile in all his bombastic behavior. The "Pomeroy Smith Mysteries" are Redmon's only hardcover books – a fact that Pomeroy never lets his paperback character colleagues forget. Rotund, Pomeroy is constantly eating (powdered sugar donuts are a good prop because the powder builds on his otherwise immaculate attire). (177 lines)

VALERIE LESUR (m) A living fictional character, Valerie is a secret agent working for the National Security Agency. His "cover" as a world class chef gives him access to global leaders and the international aristocracy. His stature as a spy is exceeded only by his reputation with the ladies. Valerie's literary life is very exciting so he's not thrilled about being cooped with the others while Redmon is stymied by writer's block. (15 line)

SHERRIFF BARLOW (m) Another living character, Barlow is a blustery cowboy philosopher (think "Yosemite Sam"). While he prefers to reason with wrangles and horse thieves,

when he has to, he can be the toughest brawler in the bar and the fastest gun in the west. (49 lines)

DEPUTY JAMES (m)Barlow's sidekick. This son of a preacher is in his early 20s. He's the protégé of Barlow and he's learning "peace-keeping the way it should be done." Earnest, but overeager, Deputy James often courts disaster. (22 lines)

GINO ROTELLIL (m).....Mob boss and Dutch Van Dyke's arch nemesis. In the novels, he's a ruthless cut-throat gangster... but in literary limbo, he's a lovable, unpolished gem. (115 lines)

MILLIE MONROE (f).....Redmon's first female protagonist. It's hard to define Millie because she's a new character and Redmon hasn't yet decided who or what she will be. Initially she's a sweet girl but she turns into a sexy, tough femme fatale. (101 lines)

ALEXANDER LEBREA (m).....Amanda Hawkins department chairman and fellow professor. For him, having Amanda as a subordinate gives him an opportunity to enjoy "pay-back time" for every beautiful, popular woman who spurred his advances when he was in school. (49 line)

PROF EDITH KITTLE (f).....The only other female in the "Old Boys" English department. An older woman, Edith was liberated before anyone else knew what the term meant. She is Amanda's advocate and best friend on campus. (73 line)

THE PROFESSORS:

HOWARD GARRET (m)(6 line)
 PERCIVAL JOHNSON (m).....(5 lines)
 THADDEUS STEWART (m).....(3 lines)
 CHANCELLOR
 CEDRIC CHANDLER (m).....(10 lines)

**THE PROFESSORS' PETTY, ARROGANT,
AND OVERBEARING WIVES:**

SYLVIA LEBREA (f)..... Wife of Prof. Alexander LeBrea.
 (35 lines)
 PORTIA GARRETT (f) Wife of Prof. Howard Garrett. (23 lines)
 EUGENIA JOHNSON (f) Wife of Prof. Percival Johnson.
 (11 lines)
 CASSANDRA STEWART (f) Wife of Professor Thaddeus Stewart.
 (18 lines)
 LOUISE CHANDLER (f) Wife of Chancellor Cedric Chandler.
 (5 lines)

ENSEMBLE (doubling possible)

BETTY (f)..... The bartender. (13 lines)
 DON (m)..... The unrequited suitor. (23 lines)
 CHARLENE (f)(2 lines)
 CHARMAINE (f)(2 lines)
 WAITER (m)(Non-Speaking)
 WAITRESS (f).....(Non-Speaking)
 HOTEL CLERK (m/f)(Non-Speaking)
 PARTY GUESTS (m/f)
 STUDENTS (m/f)

PRE SHOW SCENE

Stage is dimly lit. Flying above the set are four book covers... DUTCH "Rats Don't Fetch" LESUR "Lunch Is Served in Leningrad?" POMEROY "Strawberry Torts", BARLOW "Sagebrush Shoot-Out," (Music in "As Time Goes By."). REDMON is restlessly sitting on the sofa aimlessly flipping channels on the TV with his remote. HE gets up and walks over to his typewriter and bangs out a couple of words then rips the paper from his typewriter and throws it away. HE crosses the stage to get a framed photo from a bookcase. As HE crosses, DUTCH enters unnoticed.

Spotlight comes on the hanging poster of DUTCH's book. DUTCH finds a spot and freezes in a pose. Light fades on his book poster.

REDMON looks at the photo longingly and takes it back to his desk and begins to type again. Enter LESUR unnoticed.

Spotlight comes on next hanging poster of LESUR's book. LESUR finds a spot and freezes in a pose. Light fades on his book poster.

REDMON rips the paper from his typewriter and throws it away. HE gets up and goes to the cupboard and takes out a Twinkie. HE returns to the desk as SHERIFF BARLOW enters.

Spotlight up on BARLOW's book poster overhead. SHERRIFF finds a spot and freezes in a pose. Light fades on their book poster.

REDMON takes one bite from the Twinkie and sets it on the desk. HE starts to put another sheet of paper in his typewriter but stops and picks up a pad and pen. As HE crosses GINO and POMEROY enter unnoticed.

Spotlight up on POMEROY's Book poster. POMEROY and GINO find a spot and freeze in a pose. Light fades on their book poster.

REDMON tosses the pad aside. HE crosses to the desk, picks up the framed photo and returns it to the bookshelf. Then as the song ends

REDMON exits and all the characters follow him off stage except DUTCH. DUTCH goes to the kitchen table and sits down reading a newspaper.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: *Lights up full on REDMON's apartment. DUTCH, wearing rumpled slacks, suspenders, an un-ironed white shirt, his tie askew and a wide-brimmed hat on the back of his head, is at the kitchen table reading the newspaper. DUTCH also has a shoulder holster with Snub-nose 38. POMEROY enters, wearing a three-piece gray business suit, white shirt, red tie, and carnation boutonniere. He makes a beeline for the Twinkie REDMON left and eats it.*

DUTCH: Good morning, counselor. How are you on this fine morning?

POMEROY spots the Twinkie on the desk and races over and takes a bite.

POMEROY: I'm miserable... again. Just like every morning. I didn't get a wink of sleep last night until after two A.M.... they were so noisy at that bar downstairs.

DUTCH: That's the charm of living over a sports bar. The Lakers' game went into double overtime.

POMEROY: I don't know how you do it, Dutch... do you ever sleep?

DUTCH: Not often... and with one eye open.

POMEROY: Well, I wish Redmon would move and get us all out of here.

DUTCH: Give him a break, Pommy. It's his only connection with reality. The noise from the Goal Post reminds him there are real people in this world. So, do you have anything new happening in your life?

POMEROY: Same as yesterday. And you?

DUTCH: Same ole', Same ole'. I saw Redmon at his typewriter last night. I thought you might have something new to report.

POMEROY: I heard the typing, too, but since I wasn't involved I thought you were getting somewhere. You're kind of a no-brainer but I'm so much more complex. So cerebral.

DUTCH: Pomeroy, you're such an arrogant snob!

POMEROY: Don't take offense, Dutch. Face the facts... you're paperback... pulp fiction. I'm hardcover... up-scale. That's all I'm saying.

DUTCH: You can get on your damn high horse when you've got six reprintings. If I recall, your books are one run and out.

POMEROY: A cruel fact of life. *Touché.*

SHERIFF BARLOW: *(Off stage.)* Yee haw!

SHERIFF BARLOW comes out of the bathroom. He's in a leather vest, collarless shirt, chaps, boots with a six-shooter strapped to his hip. As he comes out, he puts on his cowboy hat.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Howdy, boys. So who's the lucky one with news?

POMEROY: Nothing new for you either, Sheriff?

SHERIFF BARLOW: I'm still stuck in chapter one. I'll wager it was LeSur who got the treatment last night. I don't know about you, but I really got a hankerin' to hit the trail... Ain't you gettin' a little antsy?

POMEROY: Actually, I'm beginning to adapt to this sedentary lifestyle.

DUTCH: You guys don't take the lumps like I do. I'm in no hurry to leave.

Enter VALERIE LESUR. VALERIE has a chef's outfit on.

POMEROY: Ah, ha... our man of the hour. So, Valerie, are you getting ready to pack your bags?

VALERIE LESUR: *(French accent.)* Are you kidding? I've been standing in front of the Bulgarian Embassy for three months now. Why do you think I'm going anywhere?

DUTCH: Redmon was writing last night so we figured it must be about you.

VALERIE LESUR: Dream on...

Enter DEPUTY JAMES in western gear.

DEPUTY JAMES: I gotta move on... I'm going stir crazy without some rustlers to chase or a shoot-out ta handle.

VALERIE LESUR: Maybe Red was just writing a letter... or...

They all look at each other desperately.

POMEROY: Oh, Lordy, I hope not...

DUTCH: Oh, geez. Do you think he was starting another novel?

They all rush over to the typewriter. All stand but DUTCH who sits.

SHERIFF BARLOW: That's the last thing we need...

Enter MILLICENT "MILLIE" MONROE. She's twenty-something, attractive, wearing a modest skirt and blouse. She's carrying a note pad and pencil.

MILLIE: Good morning, gentlemen.

ALL MALES: *(Screaming.)* AH!

MILLIE drops her pencil and bends over, provocatively but innocently, to pick it up.

MALE CHARACTERS: *(Admiringly.)* AHHHHHHH!

DUTCH: Good grief... A dame!

DEPUTY JAMES: Howdy, ma'am.

POMEROY: And you would be?

MILLIE: Millicent Monroe... Millie!

DUTCH: And how far did Redmon get with you last night?

MILLIE: *(Indignant.)* I beg your pardon...

SHERIFF BARLOW: How many chapters... how many chapters did Redmon write about you last night?

MILLIE: About a chapter and half and some in an outline. *(Suddenly confused.)* But how did I know that?

POMEROY: I hate this.

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DUTCH: You do? You know how many times I've been through this... Remember, I was Redmon's first creation? I had to get each of you guys squared away... and a lot of minor characters that never even got published.

MILLIE: You've been through what? What's going on?

DUTCH: Newbies!!!

MALE CHARACTERS: *(One at a time, VALERIE, POMEROY, SHERIFF, DEPUTY.)* Newbies!

MILLIE: *(MILLIE puts her arms across her chest.)* Newbies???

SHERIFF BARLOW: New characters... they're all alike.

MILLIE: Would someone explain what's going on?

DEPUTY JAMES: Yes, ma'am. Every time Redmon creates a new character, they kind of come to life and live here... and, now with you moving in, its getting a mite crowded.

POMEROY: Look, Maleficent...

MILLIE: Millicent...

POMEROY: Millicent, let's make this quick. When Redmon is writing a novel all his characters live here with him... in his imagination. As soon as the novel's published, we move out to live in the minds of the readers... it's not rocket science.

SHERIFF BARLOW: And we're getting fidgety because we've been here a long time.

MILLIE: So don't take it out on it me. I didn't ask to be here.

DUTCH: But you are here and that means we all gotta stay longer until Redmon's done with you and you're out to the publisher.

MILLIE: *(Goes to the typewriter and looks at the paper in it.)* So all of you boys are going to be in my story?

DUTCH: Don't flatter yourself, Toots. You just gummed up the works by appearing last night.

VALERIE LESUR: I'm never going to leave that God forsaken Bulgarian embassy.

POMEROY: So, Millicent, what are you? Tell us about yourself.

MILLIE: I'm a newspaper reporter... *(Slightly confused.)* or an insurance investigator.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Which is it - reporter or investigator?

MILLIE: I don't know.

DUTCH: That's because Redmon hasn't made up his mind... I was either a private eye or a rogue cop in the beginning. He'll eventually figure it out. I'll bet you're a reporter. A dame ain't tough enough to be one of Redmon's private eyes.

MILLIE: What you talking about? What does Redmon have to do with what I am?

POMEROY: Heh... new characters; they're all alike. They just don't get it.

DUTCH: Listen, Sugar, you're just a figment of Redmon's imagination. For all you know, he could scrap you and your story tomorrow.

MILLIE: He wouldn't!

DEPUTY JAMES: *(Reaches in wastebasket and pulls out papers.)*
That's what happened to Striker McKenzie, Soldier of Fortune.

DUTCH: He was a knucklehead.

DEPUTY JAMES: And Jet West, Aerial Ace... I liked him.

POMEROY: Another macho idiot. Good riddance, Jet!

Enter GINO ROTELLI in a double-breasted, black pinstripe suit, black shirt, white tie and white wide-brimmed hat. He has a large cigar that he uses as a pointer. He immediately notices MILLIE and looks her over, circling her menacingly.

GINO: Well, well. Way to go, Redmon, the scenery's getting better around here.

DUTCH: Put a sock in it, Rotelli.

GINO: Hi ya, doll. I'm Gino Rotelli. Forget these losers... I'm a guy who can show you a good time.

DEPUTY JAMES steps to MILLIE's defense.

DEPUTY JAMES: Back off, Mr. Rotelli... She's new.

GINO: Then it's my job to break her in right... if you get my drift.

DEPUTY JAMES: I said, back off!

GINO: You're awfully brave, kid. You back off or I'll have my boys clean the gutter with your face.

POMEROY: No, you won't, Rotelli. You don't have any boys... I saw Redmon's outline and your gang isn't introduced until chapter three. You're a chapter and a half away from having any muscle to back you up... and at this rate, it could be months until you have your goons around.

GINO goes MILLIE and puts his arm around her. Enter REDMON in a sweat suit looking like he just woke up. Without comment he pulls GINO off MILLIE.

REDMON: Ah... I see you've met Millie. Millie, are the fellas being nice to you?

DUTCH: (*Rushes to REDMON.*) Redmon, are you crazy? What are you doing? Startin' another book when you got all of us stranded here. Are you out of your mind?

REDMON: I needed a change of pace... something different.

POMEROY: But a woman! You've never had a woman as the main character.

REDMON: It's exciting, isn't it?

GINO: That depends on the woman. Is Millie a hot number?

REDMON: Behave yourself, Gino. I'm not so far along I can't change the antagonist in Cement Shoes Overture.

DUTCH: So where'd your little slice of heaven come from?

REDMON: Either Chicago or Milford, Ohio... I haven't decided.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Come on, Red. You know what he means.

VALERIE LESUR: How could you, Redmon? I'm getting frostbite standing on that street corner in Plovdiv... can't you at least get me inside before you start another novel?

REDMON: Patience, LeSur... all in good time.

REDMON goes into bathroom. MILLIE follows him for safety but is stopped as he closes the door. LESUR swings a kitchen knife at her but misses.

POMEROY: Writer's block... that's what it is. Ever since Sophia died.

SHERIFF BARLOW: He loved her a lot. Twenty-six years... that's how long they were married.

DUTCH: Well, forgive me for being insensitive, but I've been waiting here for two years while he's been looking for inspiration... You know the worst part... I'm starting to enjoy the easy life, ain't that a hoot?

POMEROY: I admit, it does have its advantages.

GINO: Like what? In the novels I got dames... money to burn... (*Looks at the DEPUTY.*) and my boys to take care of punks. What have I got now? Goofy roommates, a couple of cowboys, a dead-end P.I., Frenchie and a blow-hard lawyer. Maybe Millie here will spice things up, heh, Doll?

DUTCH: (*Looks at a typewritten page.*) Not likely. Redmon's notes say, "Millie Monroe, a good girl caught in a cesspool of corruption."

GINO: I'll change that.

DUTCH: (*Reads notes.*) I don't think so. (*He pulls the paper from the typewriter and reads.*) "Millie might be a former nun..."

MILLIE kneels, crosses herself and folds her hands in prayer.

LIGHTS OUT

Transition: Spotlight comes on center stage. DUTCH steps in it.

DUTCH: It felt like one of those mornings after a night of gumbo, jambalaya and cold beer... But the morning was long gone... And so was the afternoon. The sun had already driven across the sky and parked beyond the horizon... I guess another day got lost to a cheap bottle of gin and the pleasures of The Big Easy. The humidity hung in the air and clung to my face like wet fur. Over in the corner of the dumpy office, a \$3.95 fan churned, lifting the police reports off the desk so they stuck to my forearms like wallpaper. My head throbbed so hard I hoped a crazed hood would step through the door and put a .38 caliber aspirin between my eyes... just to put me out of my misery.

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE: *AMANDA's Office at Haswell U. Class is just over. A couple of students gather books and exit. One student is at the front desk talking to AMANDA HAWKINS. AMANDA is professional looking in a sweater and skirt. Though she's in her late twenties/early thirties, she could pass for a student. ALEXANDER LEBREA, the assistant chairman of the English department and AMANDA's academic antagonist, walks in. HE's very stuffy and professorial. Students leave. Throughout the scene, he unconsciously stares at AMANDA's "assets" and is occasionally caught by AMANDA.*

ALEXANDER LEBREA: My, my, Professor Hawkins, by those smiling faces leaving your classroom, I have to assume you were quite enlightening today.

AMANDA: We had a spirited discussion about one of the novels. I'm surprised you'd notice... one would think smiling students are commonplace in your fascinating discussions of the 16th century French classics.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: Tsk, tsk, tsk... Now Amanda, some of us in the world of academia believe a deep appreciation of literature is a bit more valuable than a few chuckles. (*ALEXANDER picks up books from AMANDA'S desk.*) Let's see what pearls of wisdom we're teaching this week. This is deep... Anita Brownell's *Passion in Paris*... that's a romance novel, isn't it? Isn't that what they call the genre? Oh, and here's is a legendary tome... *The Washington Memo*... the genre here is ... ah, yes, potboiler. I'm sure this will cultivate a desire for literature... And the author is an icon in the arts... Horace Silverman... a true giant.

AMANDA: (*Takes the books from him.*) My course happens to be Popular Fiction. The goal is to get the students to realize that not all the quality writers died a hundred years ago.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: Quality writers? Surely, you jest... A romance novel? A Potboiler?

AMANDA: Anita Brownell writes with such passion... such emotion. And Silverman's Potboilers have artfully crafted plots. The intricacies of his story development are incredible.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: *(Grabs other books off her desk and eyes them.)* What have we here? A detective novel, a western, a spy novel. All by the same author... ah, yes, by Redmon Hunter - the Patriarch of Pulp.

AMANDA: He's my favorite author.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: Redmon Hunter? He's a hack. He produces novels like a deli makes sandwiches... fast, sloppy and nothing to nourish you.

AMANDA: *(She takes the books from him.)* His characters are so real... so genuine. You feel like they're in the room with you. Perhaps you should read some of Hunter's books. You may discover what real people are like.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: Meaning?

AMANDA: Nothing. Did you come here just to criticize my choice of popular authors or is there a purpose for your visit?

ALEXANDER LEBREA: I just thought I should remind you that your vote for tenure comes up at the end of the semester.

She leans over desk to pick up book. LEBREA walks up close behind her.

AMANDA: I don't need a reminder.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: Amanda... Professor Hawkins, I'm assuming you'd like to be a tenured associate. I mean, especially concerning the alternative.

AMANDA: The alternative? *(She straightens up finding herself uncomfortably close to LEBREA.)*

ALEXANDER LEBREA: Faculty members are expected to resign if they fail to get tenured. You understand?

AMANDA quickly steps away.

AMANDA: *(Sarcastically.)* Yes, I understand. You have a way to help me get tenured?

ALEXANDER LEBREA: There are ways.

AMANDA: I thought so. Is there a point to all this?

ALEXANDER LEBREA: I'm just saying perhaps you might want to spend your evenings at the University Club with me... with them... with your academic colleagues... instead of at that tawdry sports bar across town.

AMANDA: Are you having me followed?

ALEXANDER LEBREA: Of course not, but there's talk. As the associate chairman of the department, I just need to know what image my faculty brethren are projecting. Some of your colleagues feel that place is a little trendy for a university employee.

AMANDA: Do you know who goes there? Doctors... (*DR. LEBREA points to himself indicating "I'm a doctor".*) real doctors! Lawyers, stock brokers, young professionals. I find the people interesting. They live in the real world... not an ivory tower. And you know what? They even talk about current events. They discuss people who are alive today... not authors who died a century ago. You should go there. It would be a unique experience.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: I think not. But with your tenure vote a couple of weeks away, I'm just offering some friendly advice.

AMANDA: Advice noted, Assistant Chairman LeBrea.

ALEXANDER LEBREA: That's Associate Chairman! Think about the University Club... for your own good. And perhaps you may consider some, shall I say, more conventional authors.

LIGHTS OUT. Transition: "Godfather" type music as GINO comes to center stage spotlight.

GINO: Every one of them clowns is about three doughnuts short of a good dozen. You know that? Geez-Louise... Where did I find them creeps...? Idiots R Us? I spend a million bucks to buy off the Attorney General and that "Grits for Brains" trigger man calls him and leaves a message... Got that... leaves a message... on the Attorney Generals answering machine... "We whacked a dame... Gino Rotelli wants you to cover it up." Luckily my man in the DA's office got to it first... He clued in the Sheriff I got in my pocket so everything's copacetic... They're calling it a Mistaken Identity... Accidental shooting... Case closed! Closed that is

unless Dutch Van Dyke gets wind of this. That guy's stickier than syrup in your pocket. (*GINO exits as lights fade out.*)

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT RISE: *The Goal Post Bar & Grill. It's crowded with young people. AMANDA is at the bar and DON is trying to make conversation with her. BETTY, the bartender is looking on.*

DON: So I realized I screwed up. The guy wanted to sock away his money for retirement but I talked him into getting on the fast track. Hey, Betty.

BETTY: Hey, Dummy.

DON: That's Donny.

BETTY: Whatever.

DON: The only problem was, the portfolio I put together for him crashed and now he hasn't got a dime to his name. But, hey, that's how the business works. Some days you eat the bear... some days the bear eats your client. (*AMANDA turns away disgusted.*) What's the matter, Professor?

AMANDA: What's the matter? You kidding?

DON: Give me a break. It wasn't a big deal... it's only money.

AMANDA: Somebody else's money. Some poor man's life is ruined and all it means to you is an new anecdote for the bar.

DON: Come on, I lost my commission. He wasn't the only one that got stung.

AMANDA turns her back to him. Music up. Two attractive women begin dancing. DON joins them. He's an animated but terrible dancer. At first they let him dance along but then he goes crazy break dancing [badly]. The women scurry away. For a while he doesn't notice they've left. Then he realizes he's the only one dancing. Undaunted he turns to return to the bar.

AMANDA: Betty, can I have another Club soda and lime, please?

BETTY: Sure, Amanda. Who's your buddy?

AMANDA: You noticed... what a jerk.

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BETTY: Oh-oh, here he comes.

AMANDA: Betty.

BETTY: I'll take care of it.

DON comes to bar and cozies up to AMANDA as she squirms uncomfortably.

DON: Come on, Professor. What do you say to taking me back to your place?

BETTY: Hey, pal, can I have a word with you?

DON: Not now. Hey, Professor.

BETTY: Listen to me. You'll thank me later.

Irritated, DON follows BETTY to center stage.

DON: What?!

BETTY: Hot number, the professor, huh!

DON: Yeah, what's it to ya?

BETTY: Nothing, but I gotta tell you, you've got something stuck in your teeth. It looks like spinach and you've got something right there... and your hair.

DON: You're joking.

BETTY: Go to the bathroom and check it out. You're not going to get anywhere with her looking like that.

DON: Crimany. Thanks, I'll be right back.

BETTY: Glad to help out, Sport.

DON leaves.

AMANDA: Thanks, Betty. I'm getting out of here.

BETTY: No, he'll catch up to you in the parking lot. Go upstairs to the apartment.

AMANDA: Go upstairs?

BETTY: Yeah, There's a nice old widower who lives up there. I send chicks up there all the time. He knows the routine. He's a great guy. Here comes whatz-his-name. Now go. I'll call upstairs when he's gone.

AMANDA leaves as DON enters.

DON: Hey, where's Professor. Hey, anybody here seen the Prof?

LIGHTS OUT. Transition: POMEROY comes to the center stage spotlight. He has a powdered sugar donut with him.

POMEROY: The law, ladies and gentlemen, is like beauty... Its interpretation is strictly in the eye of the beholder. The esteemed prosecutor, would have you believe that the law is based on innuendo, circumstantial happenstance, hearsay testimony, and carefully crafted inference. However, his dubious notions are easily exposed when, you, as bright intelligent citizens, are presented with verified facts, indisputable evidence, unimpeachable testimony, and credible conclusions based on Aristotelian Logic and Socratic principles. Ladies and Gentleman, just because you tell a lie often enough and loud enough does not make it true... and by the way, is it true that in America "buffet" really means all you can eat?

POMEROY exits. LIGHTS OUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT RISE: *REDMON's apartment. REDMON and VALERIE LESUR are working at the kitchen counter baking a pastry. DUTCH, SHERIFF BARLOW, POMEROY, and GINO ROTELLI are playing a board game as MILLIE MONROE and DEPUTY JAMES look on.*

SHERIFF BARLOW: Hey, Redmon... LeSur can make those tarts by himself... Don't think you should do a little writing tonight?

REDMON: *(Phone rings.)* I suppose I should... but I don't have any ideas. *(Answering the phone.)* Yeah. O.K. Sure, no problem. *(Hangs up.)*

VALERIE LESUR: Who was that?

REDMON: Betty. Where's the powdered sugar?

As VALERIE talks to REDMON, he pats his face with his flour covered hands.

VALERIE LESUR: Redmon, I can handle this. You really ought to be writing... like on my novel.

DUTCH: Come, Red, its time to tickle the keyboard. Pomeroy's getting on my nerves. Why don't you just sit at the typewriter and I'll dictate the story so you can finish Pommy's book and we can send him on his way.

POMEROY: Wouldn't that be something? A Pomeroy Smith novel penned by Dutch Van Dyke...

DUTCH: Hey, I could do it.

POMEROY: Sure, a knucklehead gumshoe writing a sophisticated courtroom novel, really!

DUTCH: Eh, I could do it.

POMEROY: Of course, you could. A guy who doesn't know the difference between writs of *coram nobis* and Ritz crackers.

Doorbell rings.

GINO: We got company... Hide the stuff.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Hide the stuff? It's a Monopoly board!

GINO: Sorry. Force of habit.

MILLIE: I'll get it.

DUTCH: Newbie...

MILLIE goes to the door but can't open it.

DEPUTY JAMES: Ma'am. that doorbell's real life... we're fiction. You can't go there.

Doorbell rings.

REDMON: Coming... coming...

*DUTCH, POMEROY and GINO follow REDMON to the door.
REDMON opens the door.*

AMANDA: Ah... hi...

REDMON: Hello?

AMADA enters. ALL men stare in awe. REDMON follows her in.

AMANDA: Ah, hello.

GINO: Whoa... what magazine did she step out of?

DUTCH: We got an angel on our doorstep.

REDMON: Hi.

AMANDA: Ah... Betty... Betty downstairs sent me up.

REDMON: Of course, come on in.

GINO: That's right, baby. Come on in, said the spider to the fly.

AMANDA: Thanks.

DUTCH approaches her and gives her a "once over" look.

DUTCH: I gotta say it... the quality of women Betty's sent has been good, but this dame just raised the bar.

As soon as AMANDA turns away, REDMON pushes DUTCH aside.

AMANDA: You're very kind.

POMEROY: Look at you two... you're like a couple of sailors who just pulled into port.

REDMON looks out the door and closes it quickly.

AMANDA: I... ah... Betty...

REDMON: I know... some guy's bothering you. Nothing to be embarrassed about.

GINO starts following AMANDA as SHE walks about the apartment.

GINO: A guy's hassling this doll?

AMANDA: He's kind of a jerk.

GINO: If I were real, he'd be in a car trunk with a one-way ticket to nowhere.

REDMON: They all are... move!

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When she turns her back, REDMON pushes GINO aside. AMANDA sits on the couch – almost on POMEROY who scoots away just in time.

VALERIE LESUR: Sac le Bleu!

MILLIE: Does Redmon take in strays all the time?

AMANDA: Sounds like this has happened before.

REDMON: Oh, yeah. We've been doing this ever since the bar opened.

AMANDA: We? You and Betty?

REDMON: Ah, yeah. Actually, Betty, Sophia and I...

ALL: *(Except REDMON.)* Aww.

REDMON: Sophia was my wife.

ALL: *(Except REDMON.)* Aww.

REDMON: She passed away a couple of years ago.

DUTCH: She was the tops.

SHERIFF BARLOW: The best there was.

AMANDA: I'm sorry... *(Pause.)* I really appreciate this.

REDMON: Think nothing of it. There are so many wackos out there now days. Sometimes I think the world's going insane. *(Pause.)* Betty will call when he's gone... it's usually just a few minutes.

DUTCH: We can hope it's longer this time.

AMANDA: Thank you, again.

SHERIFF BARLOW: That's enough, Van Dyke. She looks like a nice girl... reminds me of my Becky.

AMANDA: I'm not interrupting anything am I?

VALERIE LESUR: Yeah, you're interrupting Hunter from writing me off the streets of Bulgaria.

REDMON: Oh, no. I was ... I was just baking some tarts. Did I just say tarts?

AMANDA: Yeah.

DUTCH: He bakes but he still likes women, Toots!

REDMON: Would you like one? And milk... or coffee?

DUTCH: How about a shot of red eye, Toots?

REDMON: I'm sorry, I don't have any wine.

POMEROY: I think her palate is more accustomed to a cabernet... or a tart Claret.

AMANDA: That's O.K., I don't drink.

SHERIFF BARLOW: She doesn't drink... just like my Becky.

AMANDA: But I will try one of your tarts.

VALERIE: Aha, my tarts!

REDMON: I'll get it. Make yourself at home... Sorry, about the mess... I wasn't expecting anyone.

He goes to the kitchen area as AMANDA looks around. She sees the Monopoly board.

AMANDA: Are you and your friends playing one of those never-ending Monopoly games?

When she says "friends" everyone panics. They scatter and try to hide.

REDMON: My friends?

GINO: What the? Do you think she can see us?

REDMON: My friends?

POMEROY: You better hope she can't hear us.

REDMON: *(Reacting to her comment.)* What do you mean?

AMANDA: I saw the Monopoly board out.

GINO: I told you we should'a stashed the evidence.

AMANDA: When my dad retired, he and his friends used to play all the time. He'd just leave the board on the dining room table and whenever his cronies stopped by, they'd just pick up where they left off.

REDMON: Oh, ah... yes. No... I just didn't get around to putting it away. I'll occasionally play with myself just to past time the time.

ALL: *(Except REDMON. Moan.)* Oh...

GINO: You don't tell a dame something like that, Red!

AMANDA: Are you retired?

VALERIE LESUR: Yeah, Redmon.

REDMON: Well...

VALERIE comes over to REDMON shaking a wooden spoon at him.

VALERIE LESUR: Oui, Redmon. Tell us. Are you retired or are you going get back to writing someday?

Doorbell rings.

REDMON: Now who could that be?

AMANDA: Another girl in need of help?

DEPUTY JAMES: Must be a busy night in the saloon.

REDMON: I doubt it... Betty always calls first.

Knock on the door as POMEROY looks out through the security viewer.

POMEROY: I believe this is our unrequited lover.

DON: Hey, professor, I know you're in there.

AMANDA: Oh, no! It's that guy...

DUTCH: He's got some nerve coming up here.

REDMON: I'll take care of it ...

AMANDA: No, please, I don't want any trouble...

REDMON: No trouble.

AMANDA: I don't know anything about this guy. He could be...

REDMON: Trust me...

SHERIFF BARLOW: Saddle up, boys. We might have us a shoot out.

SHERIFF, DEPUTY, LESUR, MILLIE, DUTCH and GINO all pull out their guns and get in a "ready position."

POMEROY: Gentlemen, those firearms will be of little use unless this night visitor is fictional... and he looks very real to me.

REDMON goes to the door, looks through the security viewer and winks at AMANDA. REDMON takes a breath and then quickly yanks open the door and grabs DON by the shirt, pulls him in and throws him to the floor. The others circle around DON. MILLIE cowers behind AMANDA up stage throughout.

REDMON: Listen, you slimy cockroach. Leave the broad alone. I know your type... tough guys with the ladies. Well, buster I'm not buying it.

POMEROY: Good form, Redmon, Kudos on a bravura performance.

DUTCH: Threaten him, Red, the sooner the better.

REDMON: If I hear you even look cross-eyed at this babe again, I'll beat you so bad even your mother couldn't identify your ugly mug...

DUTCH: Atta boy, Red.

SHERIFF BARLOW: I would'a said pistol-whip. That puts the fear of God in 'em.

POMEROY: No, no... Too much controversy over guns today. Go ahead, Redmon, we're with you.

REDMON: Now we have an understanding, don't we? You're not going to disappoint me... are you? PUNK.

DON is completely taken by surprise and acts like he just confronted a mad man.

DON: Hey, hey, hey. Settle down... I didn't mean anything by this... I... I...

GINO: You got him sweatin', Red... Now get rid of him before he realizes you qualify for a Senior Discount.

REDMON: I was just leaving... That's what you were about to say, wasn't it?

REDMON leans close to him. The DEPUTY kneels down and puts him in a headlock and gives his head a "nuggy rub"; of course DON doesn't react.

DON: Yeah... yeah. I was just leaving.

REDMOND starts rubbing his knuckles on DON's head.

REDMON: Friendly advice, Buster. This place ain't your watering hole no more. You try to come back and I'll hunt you down and shoot you like a dog. You wouldn't like that, would you?

DON: No... no ... I wouldn't like that.

POMEROY: *(Leans close to DON.)* That was a rhetorical question, you fool.

REDMON: You probably think I'm crazy... a little off my rocker. *(REDMON starts to walk away from DON. DON stands up.)* You probably don't know what I'm going to do next. You know what? *(REDMON quickly turns and rushes toward DON.)* I don't either... Why don't you try something? *(REDMON grabs DON's shirt.)* Push me over the edge... Come on.

DON: No... No...

VALERIE LESUR: *(Shouting from the kitchen.)* Is Red using that "I'm crazy" threat again?

DON: You're not nuts!

DUTCH: Why not? Works for me.

DON: You're fine...

DUTCH: Good, good... let him go... get his guard down.

REDMON relaxes and lets him go.

REDMON: *(Quietly.)* You think so? You think I'm fine?

DON: Yes... yes, of course.

DUTCH: Get him, Red.

REDMON goes ballistic and grabs his shirt again. REDMON emits an intelligible growl like an animal and RED pushes DON down. DON gets in a kneeling position and crosses himself.

DON: *(Panicking.)* Hail Mary, Mother of grace.

GINO: You got him now. It's all over. He thinks he's gonna die.

REDMON relaxes and motions to AMANDA. She reluctantly comes to him.

REDMON: We're finished with this, aren't we?

POMEROY: A nod will suffice...

REDMON: Now me and the little lady are never gonna see you again. Right? Now, what's your name?

DON: Don... my name's Don.

REDMON: That's nice name for gravestone, Donny Boy... (*GINO steps behind DON. With every line REDMON pushes DON away and GINO pushes him back.*) You dodged a bullet this time. Now indulge me... you're not gonna come back and disappoint me., are you, Donny?

DON: No... no... I'm gone. I'm out'a here.

REDMON strikes a karate attack pose. DON runs to the door and fumbles with it.

REDMON: Aarrgghhhh!!!! (*Pause.*) Don, one more thing... you have a nice day, you understand?

DON runs off. DUTCH, GINO, and all the other characters give in a round of applause. REDMON nods in an abbreviated bow and then closes the door. AMANDA stands in shock. REDMON's demeanor changes completely back to his docile self.

POMEROY: Good show, old boy.

GINO: You've got this down to an art form, Red.

REDMON: (*Cheerfully.*) Works every time. Now let me get you that tart.

AMANDA: I... I...

REDMON: Please, Miss, I didn't mean to frighten you. That was just an act I use to scare the young jerks. You know, a little tough talk and they think I might be crazy... and nobody's gonna fool with a crazy man.

AMANDA: (*Lost in thought... wistfully.*) "You're not going to disappoint me, are you? Nobody's gonna fool with a crazy man."

REDMON: I beg your pardon?

AMANDA: Those words... I've heard them before. Those are the trademarks of Dutch Van Dyke, the detective.

DUTCH: How about that, Pommy?

REDMON: You know Dutch Van Dyke?

AMANDA: You scared that guy with lines from a Dutch Van Dyke novel. Yeah, "The Case of the Heiress Apparent." That's what Dutch said when he cornered Gino Rotelli's trigger man.

DUTCH: I like this doll.

REDMON: That's amazing.

GINO: Oh, please, don't tell me my triggerman fell for that malarkey.

REDMON: You sure know your Dutch Van Dyke novels.

AMANDA: I've read them all. Redmon Hunter's my favorite author. I use his books in my class... I teach popular literature at the college.

DUTCH: You hear that, Pommy, old boy? She's teaching about me in college.

POMEROY: Little wonder why our educational system receives so much criticism.

AMANDA: In fact, I lecture about all of his characters... Valerie LeSur (*VALERIE responds "Oui".*), Sheriff Sam Barlow (*SHERIFF responds "Howdy".*), Pomeroy Smith (*POMEROY responds "Present".*) Are you a Redmon Hunter enthusiast?

SHERIFF BARLOW: Well, partners, looks like we have a fan.

POMEROY: I knew it was just a matter time until we were appreciated by the literati.

REDMON: Most critics don't applaud Redmon Hunter's books.

AMANDA: But the public adores him. You don't have to be a reviewer for the New York Times to understand Hunter's art of character development. I think he's wonderful.

ALL CAST: (*Except AMANDA and VALERIE LESUR.*) Oooh.

AMANDA: (*Continued.*) I can't wait for his next novel to come out.

VALERIE LESUR: You can't wait? You haven't been freezing your tail off on a Bulgarian street corner.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Or been cooling your heels while the Barton Gang's been rustlin' all the cattle west o' the Pecos.

Phone rings and REDMON answers. As REDMON speaks GINO and DUTCH give AMANDA the once over. Of course, SHE's not aware of them.

REDMON: Excuse me... Hello... ah...

DUTCH: You know, Gino, we could use a gal like this in one of our books.

REDMON: Really, yeah...

GINO: You're telling me... a little satin mini-skirt... fishnet hose. We got ourselves a gun-moll...

DUTCH slaps him on the side of the head.

DUTCH: Forget it. This broad's got class... I see a tailored business suit... her hair just so... maybe a little wisp hanging down... yeah... Vassar girl... judge's daughter... looking for a guy on the right side of the law but walking on the wild side of life.

POMEROY: (*As she walks by his eyes.*) I wonder who that would be?

REDMON: Sorry, Betty, that's a customer you won't be seeing again.

MILLIE walks over by AMANDA.

MILLIE: You guys are really disgusting.

POMEROY: Is that jealousy? Patience, my dear, they'll be back to ogling you as soon as this young lady leaves.

REDMON: (*On phone.*) Thanks, I'll tell her. (*REDMON hangs up and turns to AMANDA.*)

REDMON: That was Betty downstairs. Our friend is gone... Betty saw him drive off.

AMANDA: (*Looking at her watch.*) It's late... I have an eight o'clock class tomorrow... I better go.

GINO: What's your hurry, gorgeous? The night is still young.

DUTCH hurries over to REDMON.

AMANDA: How can I ever thank you?

DUTCH: Red, tell her who you are. She loves your books... you could talk her into moving in with us.

REDMON gives him a "look." Then REDMON and AMANDA go to the door.

AMANDA: What you did was wonderful.

REDMON: Thanks are for saps, Sweetheart. I was just balancin' life's ledger if you get my drift.

AMANDA: "A Bullet For Benny"... That was one of the best.

REDMON: It was nice to have some company.

VALERIE LESUR: Send her on her way so you can sit down and write.

MILLIE: That was rude.

AMANDA: I can't believe you're a Redmon Hunter fan. I could spend hours with his characters.

DEPUTY JAMES: Try weeks, Missy. You haven't been here over a year, ma'am. We're all a little antsy 'bout now.

AMANDA: Well, thanks again.

She walks to the door; POMEROY, DUTCH, GINO and SHERIFF BARLOW walk with her.

AMANDA: Good night, and *(In sexy character voice.)* and next time I need somebody to take the garbage out, I got your number, Dutch.

After a few steps she stops. POMEROY, DUTCH, GINO and SHERIFF BARLOW bump into each other.

AMANDA: Would you mind if I stopped up again sometime? To talk about books. I love to talk about literature.

GINO: Sweetie, you can stop by any time...

REDMON: I'd love to have you stop by any time, too. Please,

POMEROY, DUTCH, GINO and SHERIFF BARLOW react and urge him to say more.

REDMON: *(Continued.)* ...stop by.

POMEROY, DUTCH, GINO and SHERIFF BARLOW react.

REDMON: *(Continued.)* Whenever...

POMEROY, DUTCH, GINO and SHERIFF BARLOW react.

REDMON: *(Continued.)* Good night.

POMEROY, DUTCH, GINO and SHERIFF BARLOW react.

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AMANDA: Bye-bye.

She exits as REDMON stands in the door.

GINO: Hubba-Hubba, now that's a dish!

DUTCH: Hey, Red what do you need? A Burning Bush? You "had an angel delivered unto you" and you say, "Catch ya later?" Are you out of your mind?

REDMON: Did you guys hear that? She loves my books... She really likes what I write!

POMEROY: Redmon, what's the matter with you? You sell tens of thousands of books every year and you need a reader's personal appearance to realize your work's appreciated?

SHERIFF BARLOW: Well, it was nice seeing the school marm. Let's get back to our game. Say, Red, how about we all have some o' them tarts you and LeSur was baking.

REDMON: Help yourself, fellas. I've got something to do.

REDMON goes to the bedroom and the others return to the game table.

POMEROY: Monopoly and tarts... Who would have thought my career would have come to this?

DUTCH: Come on, Pommy. A couple shots of Wild Turkey and the world will look better to you.

POMEROY: That is, if I can still see after them.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Millie, would you mind getting us some tarts and coffee?

MILLIE: Yeah, I would mind... haven't you heard of Women's Lib?

POMEROY: Actually, the sheriff hasn't. His stories take place in the 1880s... a little patience, my dear.

DEPUTY JAMES: I'm getting my bedroll and turning in. G'nite everyone.

As DEPUTY JAMES leaves, he passes REDMON who is returning with a hand full of paper.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Night, deputy. Make sure the horses have their feed bags and there's water in the trough.

REDMON goes to the typewriter. The players return to the Monopoly board.

POMEROY: Who's turn was it?

GINO: Mine... I just landed on Marvin Garbage.

POMEROY: That's Marvin Gardens!

GINO: Have it your way... I wanna to buy it.

LIGHTS OUT. Transition: Spotlight up center stage. Enter LESUR

VALERIE LESUR: Just an hour ago I had the elegant Contessa Zola Casimir on my arm. We were the toast of the town... I was lapping up the kudos from European royalty for the spectacular banquet I orchestrated. The countess was being feted because... Well, because she's the Countess... The most desirable woman on the continent, or maybe the world. Every titled make guest would have given up his crown jewels to trade places with me. Little did they know this delectable femme fatale is as dangerous as she is beautiful. Behind those liquid blue eyes is a diabolical mind with plans to rule the world.

Now, as the temperature drops and the wind picks up I stand shivering in Bulgaria, a pocketful of tarts, a spatula and broken meat thermometer, while she slips between silk sheets in a five star hotel room. This frigid stake out will be worth it if my hunch is right... There's the signal... that's my cue to step in and save the countess. I don't want to win my way into this beauty's heart... I want to work my way into her confidence so I can crush her and bring her to justice. *(He spins and exits.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 5

AT START: *AMANDA's office at Haswell U. The next morning. AMANDA is at her desk working with a laptop computer. EDITH enters.*

EDITH KITTLE: Good Morning, Amanda.

AMANDA: Good morning, Dr. Kittle. How are you on this fine day?

EDITH KITTLE: "This fine day!" My, my... aren't you chipper this morning.

AMANDA: That's what Dutch Van Dyke says, and, yes, I am chipper. That's not a word I use very often but I must say I do feel chipper.

EDITH KITTLE: There must be a man involved.

AMANDA: You're such a romantic, Doctor.

EDITH KITTLE: I suppose that's why I teach Romantic Literature. Well, am I right?

AMANDA: Sort of... but not in the way you think.

EDITH KITTLE: I'm assuming you're going to explain that.

AMANDA: Last night I meet the most amazing man...

EDITH KITTLE: I thought so!

AMANDA: No, it's not like that... He's a much older man... and... and, well, I don't know how to explain it, but we just... connected... Do you know what I mean?

EDITH KITTLE: Yes, I think I do... That's wonderful. So when are you going to see the young man again?

AMANDA: He's not a young man... Well actually, Edith...

EDITH KITTLE: He's closer to my age than yours? That's wonderful... A December/May romance... Well, maybe an April/July romance.

AMANDA: No, no, no... It's not a romance... He's just a very nice... No, I think I'd say an "intriguing" man... That's it! He's an intriguing man... And he's a fan of Redmon Hunter, my favorite author.

EDITH KITTLE: A Redmon Hunter fan... My, my, this could get serious. But Amanda, I didn't come to pry into your love life. I'm here to talk about your future... Your tenure... That's what we must discuss.

AMANDA: Everyone seems more concerned about that than me.

EDITH KITTLE: Well, to the department, granting tenure is tantamount to conferring knighthood... It's like being admitted to a very exclusive club... And right now the faculty is split, you know that?

AMANDA: Yes, Dr. LeBrea takes great pleasure in reminding me of that.

EDITH KITTLE: Alexander is an nincompoop... He doesn't want anyone new getting tenured... He and that Classical Literature Gang of his... But, my dear, I am worried... Your popularity with the students is unquestioned and that threatens a lot of the dullards who have low class enrollment...

AMANDA: It's not my fault this generation prefers Horace Silverman, Anita Brownell and Hunter to Moliere and Marlowe...

EDITH KITTLE: That's not the point... Amanda, whether you admit it or not, you're a very pretty young woman... And the students like you... You're just the kind of girl little men like Dr. LeBrea lusted after but could never have when they were in college... Now I'm afraid its payback time.

AMANDA: Edith, you're kidding... That's so petty.

EDITH KITTLE: Of course it is, but Alexander is a hateful little rodent. But don't worry about him... I can handle Dr. LeBrea. This weekend Dr. Chandler's hosting his annual faculty party... Everyone will be there and it's the last time you can schmooze before the tenure vote...

AMANDA: I'm surprised at you Edith... That's as petty as Dr. LeBrea.

EDITH KITTLE: Of course it is, Amanda... But a girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do around here. Look, honey, I feel like I've finally found a kindred spirit and I'm not going to let you go... And that's that... I'm selfish... I need somebody to smile and laugh with on this stodgy old faculty and, Amanda, you're it!

AMANDA: All right, I'll be there...

EDITH KITTLE: And you'll be there with a date... The last thing you need is the faculty wives buzzing about a beautiful, unencumbered young lady working side by side with their husbands.

AMANDA: I have to worry about the wives? Now you are joking!

EDITH KITTLE: Believe me, you need a date.

AMANDA: I need a date?

EDITH KITTLE: Without question... Bring someone presentable... Perhaps your new friend.

LIGHTS OUT. Transition: center stage spotlight SHERIFF and DEPUTY enter.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Rustlers, wranglers, horse thieves... I've seen 'em all. Varmits ready to slap leather because ya look at 'em cross-eyed or they think they seen ya pull an ace out'a your sleeve. Tin horns, slickers, worn out horse soldiers, farmers looking for a few acres and a better life... I protect 'em when there's trouble... or stop 'em if they're the trouble. My territory stretches as far as the eye can see and beyond. Out here there's only one kind'a law... my kind. I'm not just the Marshall... I'm the Judge, Jury, and Executioner.

DEPUTY JAMES: Sheriff, I think I just sat on a cactus.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Deputy, you got the brains of a sour pickle and half the looks. Fine. We'd better get you to Doc Stevens so's he can pull those spines out'a your britches.

DEPUTY JAMES: I got bit by a snake, too.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Just get on your horse!

SHERIFF and DEPUTY exit.

ACT ONE, SCENE 6

AT START: REDMON'S apartment. Same morning. Dutch is at the kitchen table reading the newspaper. POMEROY enters. He's immaculate in a three-piece gray business suit, white shirt and tie. [Scene Note: In this scene MILLIE takes on a completely new persona as a tough, no nonsense, self-assured woman.]

POMEROY: Good morning, Dutch... Anything new to report? I saw the good scribe was working just about until sun up...

DUTCH: Not on my novel.

POMEROY: Nor mine. I'm hungry this morning... I wish LeSur didn't sleep in so he could have eggs benedict waiting when I arose.

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DUTCH: Well, Pommy, we're going have to get used to cooking for ourselves again.

POMEROY: *(Semi-panicked.)* Redmon finished "Espionage A La Cart?"

DUTCH: You got it... He dropped the manuscript in the mailbox about six-thirty this morning. LeSur packed up and followed him out the door.

POMEROY: *(Full panic.)* Ohmigod! I'm going to miss that man's cooking. What do you suppose got Redmon inspired enough to finish a novel?

DUTCH: Think about it, counselor. That babe that stopped by last night...

POMEROY: AAAAHHH! You just might have something there.

DUTCH: It's a good thing I'm the flat foot and not you, Pomeroy... You couldn't see a clue if it was tossed in your face.

SHERIFF BARLOW: *(Enters with six-guns drawn.)* Either of you varmint's missing anything?

DUTCH: Nah... Should we be?

SHERIFF BARLOW: I thought I heard somebody cavortin' in the closet last night, but I was just too tuckered out to look.

DUTCH: You did hear someone... it was LeSur checking out.

SHERIFF BARLOW: You mean?

POMEROY: Precisely... Apparently Redmon's been inspired.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Ah-ha... That little gal who came-a-callin' last night... huh. It didn't him take long to finish that LeSur novel, now did it! ...It's like when Sophia was here... Remember?

DUTCH: *(Rather melancholy.)* Yeah, yeah. I miss Sophia... she was quite a dame. The only other real person besides Redmon who could see us before we got published.

POMEROY: The magic of love.

SHERIFF BARLOW: She took good care of us. She'd whip up the victuals when we we're hungry...

POMEROY: And she always got the starch right in my shirts...

DUTCH: Yup, she was quite a broad... When she was here, we never hung around too long... Ol' Red just cranked out the novels... like... like...

POMEROY: Like he did last night. Dear Lord... Do you think our author could be smitten? (*Goes to the kitchen and begins eating donuts.*)

SHERIFF BARLOW: I hope so... The old wrangler could stand a bit of cheering up... I'd wager even Sophia would like to see that... He's been mopin' like a lost calf since she passed on. Maybe this gal put a burr under his saddle.

DUTCH: You could be right, Sheriff.

DUTCH gets up and walks to REDMON'S typewriter. Enter MILLIE dressed in a skin-tight leather outfit with a lot of makeup.

MILLIE: Can't you guys hold it down so a girl can get some beauty sleep?

SHERIFF BARLOW: Well, tie me to the back of a horse and drag me to Tombstone. She's gone from schoolmarm to madam!

DUTCH: What's with the get-up, Toots?

POMEROY: That's quite a fashion statement you're making, Millicent.

MILLIE aggressively walks over to POMEROY and stands 2 inches from him.

MILLIE: Can it, Counselor... I'm undercover...

POMEROY: I presume the phrase you wanted is "tightly covered?"

MILLIE: Listen, fat man, one more word out'a you and...

DUTCH: (*Sits on the desk and picks up a sheet of paper by the typewriter.*) I don't believe this...

MILLIE: (*Goes to the desk and leans back close to him in a sexy pose.*) You better believe it, Dutch. There's a new cop in town.

DUTCH: That's what it looks like... "Boardrooms and Bordellos" by Redmon Hunter. When America's top auto executives mysteriously turn up dead, the only link is an exclusive ring of call girls. A tale of intrigue and murder unfolds in the executive offices and the tawdry world of sin for sale.

GINO: (*Enters.*) Did I hear Sin for Sale? Now you're playing my song.

MILLIE: Looks like I'm the priority around here, gentlemen...

GINO: *(Notices the new MILLIE.)* Hubba Hubba... Welcome to my world, Millie.

POMEROY: Careful now, Mr. Rotelli... During the night it seems our kitten turned into a tigress...

MILLIE steps to center stage and strikes a defensive pose.

GINO: My kind of woman!!!!

MILLIE does a cartwheel toward GINO and ends up punching him in the stomach. GINO buckles in pain.

MILLIE: Listen, you slime-ball, it's scum like you that killed my father.

GINO: *(In pain.)* So now we got "Little Miss Whips and Chains," huh? Redmon has been busy, hasn't he?

MILLIE pushes GINO on the couch where he remains in the fetal position.

MILLIE: Yeah, and look who he's writin' about!

SHERIFF BARLOW: It's just "Ladies First," ma'am... Been nice knowing you... You better saddle up your pony because you'll be hitting the trail in a day or two.

MILLIE: *(Moves to center stage triumphantly.)* This is exciting... I can't wait to blow this pop stand.

POMEROY: *(With donut in hand, approaches MILLIE.)* You're going to hate living with the readers. Believe me... you wouldn't believe how some of them will picture you in their mind's eye. Why there's a man in Pittsburgh who envisions me as PORTLY and ARROGANT. *(All in mock disbelief: What?!.)* Can you imagine that! Portly and arrogant... I must talk to Redmon about his descriptive adjectives.

GINO: Reader dames dig me... My pages are dog-eared from gettin' read over and over.

DUTCH: In your dreams, Rotelli.

MILLIE strikes a provocative pose leaning forward to slowly lick POMEROY'S donut and carefully takes a bite. POMEROY is paralyzed by her as she continues to hold his hand. GINO and SHERIFF oogle her uncontrollably. She finishes by carefully wiping her lips with her index finger. POMEROY walks away as if in a trance. DUTCH calmly approaches her while shuffling through the pages of MILLIE'S novel.

DUTCH: Sweetheart, you're going to meet a real fine group of readers judging by the cover copy... "Introducing Millie Monroe, a wasp-waisted beauty with enough sensual electricity to light up Times Square." I don't think you'll end up on a bookshelf with Dickens or Camus.

MILLIE walks away from DUTCH as he reads and approaches GINO on the couch.

GINO: Listen, Cupcake, If you feel like your electricity is gonna blow a fuse, you call Gino, okay?

MILLIE: Sure, Sugar... (*MILLIE smiles at GINO then grabs him by the hair and Karate chops his throat.*) What do you want me to call you?

REDMON enters with DEPUTY JAMES.

DEPUTY JAMES: You see, Mr. Redmon, there are a lot of Deputy James fans out there so maybe you'll just think about this... (*Stops short when he sees SHERIFF.*) Oh, howdy, Sheriff. (*Hides behind POMEROY.*)

REDMON: Sheriff, it would seem your deputy would you like to take a bullet so he can bring the Barton Gang to justice by himself.

SHERIFF BARLOW: You want me shot out of the saddle?

DEPUTY JAMES: They just wing you. I don't want you sent to Boot Hill, Sheriff...

SHERIFF pulls his gun and shoots the DEPUTY who "dies."

REDMON: I didn't write that!

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SHERIFF BARLOW: Darn it!

DEPUTY springs back to life.

POMEROY: It appears our deputy doesn't like playing second fiddle in a string duet.

DEPUTY JAMES: It's not like that...

REDMON: Enough. We're all getting on each other's nerves... You've all been here too long.

POMEROY: Perhaps you're right. It is time to send those westerners off along the dusty trail. But, what about breakfast, Redmon? With LeSur gone, what will we do about our repast?

REDMON: You know where the kitchen is, Pomeroy... Help yourself. What's the matter, can't you cook?

POMEROY: Of course not. Who should know better than you...? You gave me Lee Ling as my cook and gentleman's gentleman.

REDMON: Well, you guys will just have to catch as catch can. I've got work to do. You figure this out on your own. (*MILLIE sits on the desk with arm around REDMOND.*) Sit with me, Millie... I left you hiding under the president's desk at Global Motors.

DUTCH: Come on, Pommy... All I need is a can opener and a Zippo and breakfast will be on the table.

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 7

AT RISE: *REDMON's apartment. That evening. ALL are lounging about the apartment. GINO's doing push-ups center stage. REDMON is at the typewriter pounding away as MILLIE stands behind him massaging his shoulders.*

SHERIFF BARLOW: I reckon you are ready to do a little ropin' and ridin' on your own, boy. I'll talk to Red when he unhitches his wagon over there.

DEPUTY JAMES: You don't gotta get shot, Sheriff. You could just go east to see your daughter.

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SHERIFF BARLOW: We'll leave that up to Red.

POMEROY: The man's obsessed. He hasn't gotten up since he sat down.

DUTCH: What are you complaining about? You said it was getting crowded around here.

MILLIE: Can you guys hold it down? We're trying to think over here.

GINO: Now she's a hot number!... Wouldn't you know it? Just when Red creates a piece a cheesecake I could fall for, he works to send her on her way.

MILLIE: (*Sweetly.*) So, you like what you see, Gino?

GINO: You bet, Hot Stuff!

As GINO talks, he get to his knees. MILLIE walks over to him and nonchalantly kicks him so he falls flat on his back.

MILLIE: How's it look from that angle? Things lookin' up for you?

MILLIE returns to REDMON without missing a beat. Doorbell rings.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Who could that be?

POMEROY: (*Looking at his watch.*) It's only seven o'clock... A little early for Betty to send up a lady in peril.

REDMON: (*Not looking up.*) Would somebody get that?

GINO: Sure... Like we can.

REDMON: Oh, yeah...

He gets up and heads to the door. MILLIE chases after him stepping on GINO without noticing.

MILLIE: (*Agitated.*) Redmon! What are you doing? You left me in mid-sentence...

REDMON: You'll be all right.

MILLIE: Redmon....

DUTCH: Don't worry, Sugar.

MILLIE: Easy for you to say, Dutch. You're not being held down on a pool table.

MILLIE returns to the desk stepping on GINO again. GINO jumps up, sits next to MILLIE and begins to read the manuscript.

GINO: Pinned on a pool table? Excuse me, gentlemen, but I think I better proof read this... You know, check for typos.

REDMON opens the door and AMANDA's there.

AMANDA: Hi... I... ah... I hope I'm not intruding.

REDMON: No... No, of course not... Ah... Come in... Trouble downstairs again?

AMANDA: Actually, I haven't been downstairs... I came right here. I hope I'm not interrupting anything.

GINO: The Hot Tamale returns...

DUTCH: She's a doll with class, you know that.

AMANDA: I really don't want to disturb you...

REDMON: No... No, of course. I was just catching up on some correspondence!

MILLIE: (*MILLIE jumps up on the desk and strikes a defiant sexy pose.*) What do you mean? Catching up on some correspondence?

REDMON: Please, come in.

MILLIE: I'm pinned on a pool table with some gorilla drooling on me and you say this chick isn't interrupting? Get your priorities straight, Redmon.

AMANDA: I was, um, going through my bookcase and I came across some of Redmon Hunter's early novels...

MILLIE: I'm sure he doesn't have time for this.

AMANDA: They're kind of hard to find so I thought maybe you'd enjoy them if you haven't read them.

REDMON: That's very thoughtful of you.

DUTCH goes over to them to see what she's brought.

AMANDA: I have his first novel, ".38 Special Delivery." That's where Dutch Van Dyke leaves the police force to become a private eye.

DUTCH: It was because the mob dusted my partner, Richie Velour. Can we have a moment of silence here?

DUTCH, SHERIFF and DEPUTY hold their hats over the hearts. MILLIE, GINO and POMEROY bow their heads.

AMANDA: And I have "Reckless Disregard." Pomeroy Smith was just a bit player in that one.

POMEROY: *(Steps forward with a swagger.)* It was a small role but I was magnificent!

AMANDA: It was Hunter's first hard cover novel.

POMEROY: And you will notice, Dutch, that I began my career in hard cover.

AMANDA: And here's "Sagebrush Shoot-Out"...

DEPUTY JAMES: "Sagebrush Shootout?"

AMANDA: The first Sheriff Barlow story.

DEPUTY JAMES: I don't remember that.

REDMON: I haven't seen these for years.

SHERIFF BARLOW: You weren't in it. You didn't come along until novel three, "Watering Hole Rustlers."

DEPUTY JAMES: You were in stories alone?

SHERIFF BARLOW: Yes, Deputy... *(Pulls his six guns.)* And I can be again... Just keep that in the back of your Stetson.

REDMON: *(Melancholy.)* I hardly remember them.

MILLIE: *(Sitting on the desk next to GINO.)* Sure, sure... You can go down memory lane later.

AMANDA: Oh, so you've read them?

MILLIE: Come you've got work to do... Don't leave me hangin'...

REDMON: A long time ago... A lifetime ago...

GINO: But I haven't aged a day... I'm as good now as I was in "Rats Won't Fetch."

Without even looking MILLIE swings her arm to sock GINO in the nose with the back of her fist. He rocks back in pain.

AMANDA: They aren't as good as his later novels but you can see sparks of brilliance in them.

REDMON: I don't believe you have copies of these... They were all flops... They almost killed my... his... career.

AMANDA: Commercial failures but some great passages and even greater promise... I have all his books. You can hold on to those as long as you like... When you read them you'll see how far he's come as a writer.

POMEROY: I believe she meant to say, "How far we've carried him!"
Let's place the credit where it's due.

REDMON: (*Wistfully.*) ".38 Special Delivery..."

DUTCH: Take it easy, Red. You're getting misty.

AMANDA: I thought you'd enjoy them... I, um. I've got to go.

GINO: (*Races over to AMANDA.*) Go? You just got here, toots. Take off your shoes... Have a drink.

DUTCH: (*DUTCH walks over to GINO.*) Back off, Rotelli... I thought Millie was your "Dame du jour."

REDMON: Thank you so much...

GINO: Not likely... It's one of my boys that's got her on the pool table.

REDMON: This is really so sweet.

POMEROY: You're the consummate romantic, Mr. Rotelli.

REDMON: I lost my copies of these years and years ago... They're out of print and I never thought I'd see them again.

MILLIE: Now you've seen them... You can read them later... Time to get back to work.

MILLIE reaches for the books and REDMON instinctively pulls them away. AMANDA gives him a funny look.

AMANDA: I'm glad they mean so much to you... I... I... (*Slowly turns to the door.*)

POMEROY: Get a grip, Redmon... How can you be choked up over a novel that features me as a side story character.

AMANDA: Well, I'd better be going now.

SHERIFF BARLOW: You know, Redmon, that little filly's gonna walk out of the door and out of your life if you don't do something quick. Miss..

POMEROY: Miss...

GINO: Miss...

DEPUTY JAMES: Miss..

MILLIE: Miss..

DUTCH: Miss..

REDMON: Miss...

AMANDA: *(Stops and turns.)* Yes...?

REDMON: *(He turns to the others for help with something to say. All pantomime eating.)* Have you had dinner yet?

SHERIFF BARLOW: *(Patting REDMON on the back.)* Atta boy!

AMANDA: No... That's where I was going.

REDMON: Would you like to join me for dinner?

POMEROY: Albany.

REDMON: I know a nice little place on Albany... A couple of blocks from here.

SHERIFF BARLOW: I'm proud of you, Red.

AMANDA: I'd like that very much... Thank you.

GINO: I'll get my coat.

DUTCH: And a clean shirt.

SHERIFF BARLOW grabs GINO as he passes.

REDMON: Let me just put on... A clean shirt... I won't be a minute.

AMANDA laughs.

REDMON: What?

AMANDA: That's what Dutch Van Dyke always says when he leaves his office with a lady...

DUTCH: Of course.

AMANDA: You're a bigger fan than you realize.

MILLIE: See... You're living in your stories... She knows it... You know it...

REDMON: Maybe you're right.

MILLIE: Now tell the skirt to split and write that goon off of me.

REDMON: Make yourself at home... I'll be back.

He goes to the back room with MILLIE following and protesting. AMANDA walks around the apartment looking things over. She and the characters weave past one another as she makes her way to the desk and typewriter.

SHERIFF BARLOW: She's a sweet girl, isn't she?

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DUTCH: Quite a dish.

POMEROY: She's sophisticated, refined... No doubt preferring a man of culture. My type of woman, I'd say.

DEPUTY JAMES: I bet she'd like to read about me in my own novel.

MILLIE: *(Coming out of the back room.)* You guys are like a bunch of schoolboys... She's just another broad. What's she got that I don't have?

POMEROY: Where would we begin that inventory? Style, elegance... bearing... an intelligent mind.

GINO: I'd set my sights a little lower than her brains... Know what I mean?

SHERIFF BARLOW: Whatever she's got, it caught Red's attention.

AMANDA sits down at the desk and begins reading the papers by the typewriter.

MILLIE: She doesn't even know who Redmon is... She just thinks he's some old man in an apartment.

DUTCH: Oh-oh... We got trouble... She's gonna know now.

SHERIFF BARLOW: Take those away from her.

DEPUTY JAMES grabs at the manuscript but can't grasp them because he's imaginary.

GINO: Sure... How, Marshal? We ain't real, remember?

POMEROY: Dear Lord... [In Latin] "Todus velle comisarresse seu quo vero"

GINO: Say what?

POMEROY: "All will be revealed as the truth." I'd think with your courtroom experience, you'd know that legal term.

GINO: I pay people to know that for me, counselor.

AMANDA turns to the typewriter and begins to read.

REDMON: *(From off stage.)* It was so thoughtful of you to bring those books over.

AMANDA doesn't reply as she reads.

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REDMON: *(From off stage.)* I said... It was so thoughtful of you to bring those books over.

MILLIE: *(Walking over to AMANDA.)* That's right, honey... He's Redmon Hunter and he's been stringin' you along... Now beat it so he can get back to his work.

REDMON comes on stage buttoning a clean shirt. AMANDA stares at him holding the manuscript.

REDMON: Miss, are you all right... You look like you've seen a ghost.

AMANDA: *(Indignantly.)* I just realized, we've never been formally introduced... I'm Amanda Hawkins...

REDMON: And you're a professor at the college.

AMANDA: That's right...

DUTCH: The jigs up!

AMANDA: And you're Redmon Hunter, the writer.

GINO: Rats... And just when she was starting to warm up to me.

REDMON: Yes, yes, I am.

MILLIE: That's it, honey... He played you for fool. Show some self-respect and walk out'a here.

REDMON: *(Embarrassed.)* I'm sorry...

MILLIE: The man's got work to do.

AMANDA: Why didn't you tell me?

MILLIE: Come on, beat it.

REDMON: I don't know.

POMEROY: Hush, Millicent.

REDMON: Maybe because I didn't think you'd believe me... Maybe I thought you'd be disappointed if you did? I don't know... I'm sorry... I don't know what to say.

AMANDA: Redmon Hunter at a loss for words... Who'd believe that?

REDMON: People just expect writers to be... well, something we aren't. I'm sorry. *(Long pause.)* Ummm... Aren't you going to say anything?

AMANDA: I'm going to dinner...

MILLIE: Atta girl... Let me help you with the door.

MILLIE walks with AMANDA to the door. AMANDA pauses.

AMANDA: There's a little place a couple of blocks from here. Would you like to join me?

REDMON: You mean?

AMANDA: I never walk out in the middle of a Redmon Hunter story... and this could be the best one yet. Coming?

All start to exit. REDMON turns to CHARACTERS and pumps his arm "Yes." All stand stunned.

DUTCH: How do you like that!

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT ONE, SCENE 8

***AT RISE:** REDMON's apartment. Much later that evening - near morning. All are asleep in the apartment, Except MILLIE who is pacing by the typewriter. AMANDA can be heard giggling off stage as the door key is inserted. They enter and MILLIE moves to greet REDMON.*

MILLIE: Four A.M...

AMANDA: Thanks for suggesting dinner...

MILLIE: Well, it's about time you got home.

AMANDA: And the stroll in the park...

MILLIE: Do you have any idea what a precarious position you left me in?

AMANDA: And the walk on the beach... I had a wonderful time.

MILLIE: I'm sure you did... But this conversation's about me, sister.

REDMON: Thanks for asking me to dinner on your way out. As Dutch would say, (*DUTCH wakes up and speaks in unison with REDMON.*) Not many dames would put up with the trouble I pack.

MILLIE: And I'm one of those dames.

AMANDA: Well, it's the kind of trouble I like.

REDMON: Can I talk you into a night cap? A soda? Coffee? Tea?

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AMANDA: No, besides it's not nighttime. It's almost sunrise, and I have an eight o'clock class.

MILLIE: Good! Now get out'a here!

POMEROY wakes up on the couch and pokes GINO, waking him. GINO stands and stretches.

AMANDA: I think I can give the students a little more insight...

POMEROY: Millicent, what are you yammering about?

AMANDA: Into the reclusive Redmon Hunter now.

REDMON: I knew I talked too much tonight. I must have told you my life story from my first steps to picking up today's mail.

AMANDA: Now I know what makes Redmon Hunter the man he is.

DUTCH: That's something we've been wondering about... Ask to her explain this, Red.

REDMON: And what kind of man is he?

DUTCH: Thanks.

AMANDA: *(Comes close to him and puts her hand on his shoulder.)*
He's talented...

MILLIE: This makes me sick...

AMANDA: Clever...

MILLIE: He's distracted, procrastinating...

AMANDA: Kind...

MILLIE: And sucker for her soft soap...

AMANDA goes and sits on the left side of the couch. POMEROY is sitting on the middle cushion.

AMANDA: He's very sweet... He's brave and chivalrous...

MILLIE: Pleeesease...

REDMON sits on the right side of the couch with POMEROY between him and AMANDA.

AMANDA: Saving damsels in distress...

MILLIE: I am a damsel in distress, and he left me on a pool table.

GINO: *(Goes by MILLIE and looks at the typewriter.)* Hey, babe... I could have finished that chapter. Ba da bing!

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REDMON: He certainly sounds like a lovable guy.

AMANDA: Oh, he is...

DUTCH: I think this dame has taken a tumble for you, Red.

AMANDA: He's very lovable.

DUTCH walks over to REDMON and AMANDA. They lean forward over POMEROY and almost kiss but pause causing an awkward moment. MILLIE sits on the desk.

MILLIE: Redmon... Don't tell me you're falling in love with this phony.

A spotlight flashes on and off on MILLIE. Then AMANDA looks over his shoulder and stands up with a start with a start.

AMANDA: Aaagh!

REDMON: What's the matter?

AMANDA: I thought I saw somebody on your desk.

REDMON: *(Turns and looks at MILLIE.)* Ah, did it look like a girl? A tall guy? An Italian Guy?

AMANDA: I'm not sure... Maybe...

POMEROY: Oh, dear Lord, do you think...

AMANDA: It was like a flash.

DUTCH: Think fast, Red. Something's going on here.

REDMON: *(Jumps up and animatedly points to the window.)* This street's on a hill...

DUTCH: Quick thinking, Red.

REDMON: When cars come over the top... sometimes... sometimes. *(MILLIE steps in front of RED and thrusts her chest out.)* Their head lights... Yeah, their headlights flash through my window. The curtains cause funny optical illusions. It takes a little getting used to.

POMEROY: Boffo performance, Redmon.

DUTCH: Good job, Millie.

REDMON: *(Turns AMANDA back to the desk.)* Well, you have an early class and I have work to do. Maybe we can do this again...

MILLIE: Time out...

REDMON: Tomorrow?

MILLIE: *(Runs over to REDMON and puts her face in his.)* You can go only go play with Amanda if you get me out of my predicament.

DUTCH: *(Pulling MILLIE away.)* Don't threaten him, Millie.

AMANDA: Tomorrow?

POMEROY: He left LeSur on a freezing street corner for three months, dear...

AMANDA: Why not? I'd love it.

POMEROY: I'm sure he doesn't care how long he leaves you in the clutches of that thug.

AMANDA: Now the Redmon Hunter I've read about doesn't drive... Is that the real Redmon?

REDMON: Yeah, I'm afraid it is.

AMANDA: Then I'll pick you up ... Ah... Could I ask you something?

MILLIE: Ask him when he's going to get back to work.

REDMON: If it has to do with driving, I can't answer it... I never have and never will drive a car.

AMANDA: It has nothing to do with that... This weekend I have a faculty get-together at the college...

GINO: The dame wants a date...

AMANDA: It's kind of mandatory that I attend.

GINO: Hey, Red, if you can't make it, I can...

AMANDA: Would you be my escort to Dr. Chandler's annual faculty party?

GINO: My calendar's open.

REDMON: Me with a university faculty... That would be a first.

AMANDA: I have to go and my friend said I should bring someone presentable.

REDMON: But you're going to invite me instead.

AMANDA: Something like that.

POMEROY: I'd very much like to accompany you on this, Redmon...

REDMON: Well, sure I'll hobnob with the literati.

POMEROY: I could use a little intellectual repartee.

REDMON: I need to get away from these four walls anyway.

AMANDA: *(Talking a deep voice with a western twang.)* A man's gotta have elbowroom or he'll burn up from cabin fever.

REDMON: You like Sheriff Barlow?

SHERIFF BARLOW: *(Waking up at the mention of his name.)* Yee haw! Did I hear my name?

AMANDA: I love Sheriff Barlow... After tonight I can see he's a lot like you. But he hasn't been in anything new lately. When are you going to write another Western?

SHERIFF BARLOW: That's what I've been asking too, Missy.

REDMON: *(Grabbing AMANDA and pushing SHERIFF to the desk.)* Soon, Amanda... soon.

MILLIE: Not until he finishes "Boardrooms And Bordellos", Marshall.

MILLIE stands on the desk towering over SHERIFF BARLOW. AMANDA steps close to REDMON and touches his cheek.

AMANDA: I have to go.

MILLIE: It's about time.

AMANDA and REDMON lean forward to kiss as a spotlight flashes on MILLIE. AMANDA is startled like before.

AMANDA: Aaagh!

REDMON: Amanda!

AMANDA: The car lights again... Spooky... Good night, Redmon.

REDMON: Good night... I'll see you tomorrow.

POMEROY: Redmon, could I have a word with you?

REDMON: Not now, Pomeroy. I have work to do. *(Goes to his desk and typewriter.)*

MILLIE: I'll say you do.

POMEROY: But Redmon, I think your involvement with Amanda has... implications.

MILLIE: *(Jumps off the desk and shouts threateningly at POMEROY.)* Not now, fat man. O.K. Redmon, let's get crackin'...

REDMON: Pomeroy, I don't want to talk about it. Sheriff... Would you come over here.

SHERIFF joins him as REDMON pulls the paper out of the typewriter. SHERIFF laughs devilishly as he swaggers over to the desk. He and MILLIE lean across the desk nose to nose.



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