

LEE. Ya' just do, that's all! You hear a stupid line you change it. That's yer job.

AUSTIN. All right. (*Makes more notes*)

LEE. What're you changin' it to?

AUSTIN. I'm not changing it. I'm just trying to catch up.

LEE. Well change it! We gotta' change that, we can't leave that in there like that. ". . . the back a' my hand." That's dumb.

AUSTIN. (*Stops writing, sits back*) All right.

LEE. (*Pacing*) So what'll we change it to?

AUSTIN. Um—How 'bout—"I'm on intimate terms with this prairie."

LEE. (*To himself considering line as he walks*) "I'm on intimate terms with this prairie." Intimate terms, intimate terms. Intimate—that means like uh—sexual right?

AUSTIN. Well—yeah—or—

LEE. He's on sexual terms with the prairie? How dya' figure that?

AUSTIN. Well it doesn't necessarily have to mean sexual.

LEE. What's it mean then?

AUSTIN. It means uh—close—personal—

LEE. All right. How's it sound? Put it into the uh—the line there. Read it back. Let's see how it sounds. (*To himself*) "Intimate terms."

AUSTIN. (*Scribbles in notebook*) Okay. It'd go some-thing like this: (*Reads*) "I told ya' you were a fool to follow me in here. I'm on intimate terms with this prairie."

LEE. That's good. I like that. That's real good.

AUSTIN. You do?

LEE. Yeah. Don't you?

AUSTIN. Sure.

Mom, Lee + Austin

LEE. Sounds original now. "Intimate terms." That's good. Okay. Now we're cookin'! That has a real ring to it.

(AUSTIN makes more notes, LEE walks around, pours beer on his arms and rubs it over his chest feeling good about the new progress, as he does this MOM enters unobtrusively down left with her luggage, she stops and stares at the scene still holding luggage as the two men continue, unaware of her presence, AUSTIN absorbed in his writing, LEE cooling himself off with beer)

LEE. (*Continues*) "He's on intimate terms with this prairie." Sounds real mysterious and kinda' threatening at the same time.

AUSTIN. (*Writing rapidly*) Good.

LEE. Now—(*LEE turns and suddenly sees MOM, he stares at her for a while, she stares back, AUSTIN keeps writing feverishly, not noticing, LEE walks slowly over to MOM and takes a closer look, long pause*)

LEE. Mom?

(AUSTIN looks up suddenly from his writing, sees MOM, stands quickly, long pause, MOM surveys the damage)

AUSTIN. Mom. What're you doing back?  
MOM. I'm back.

LEE. Here, lemme take those for ya.

(LEE sets beer on counter than takes both her bags but doesn't know where to set them down in the sea of junk so he just keeps holding them)

AUSTIN. I wasn't expecting you back so soon. I thought uh—How was Alaska?

MOM. Fine.

LEE. See any igloos?

MOM. No. Just glaciers.

AUSTIN. Cold huh?

MOM. What?

AUSTIN. It must've been cold up there?

MOM. Not really.

LEE. Musta' been colder than this here. I mean we're havin' a real scorcher here.

MOM. Oh? (*She looks at damage*)

LEE. Yeah. Musta be in the hundreds.

AUSTIN. You wanna' take your coat off, Mom?

MOM. No. (*Pause, she surveys space*) What happened in here?

AUSTIN. Oh um—Me and Lee were just sort of celebrating and uh—

MOM. Celebrating?

AUSTIN. Yeah. Uh—Lee sold a screenplay. A story,

I mean.

MOM. Lee did?

AUSTIN. Yeah.

MOM. Not you?

AUSTIN. No. Him.

MOM. (*To Lee*) You sold a screenplay?

LEE. Yeah. That's right. We're just sorta' finishing it up right now. That's what we're doing here.

AUSTIN. Me and Lee are going out to the desert to live.

MOM. You and Lee?

AUSTIN. Yeah. I'm taking off with Lee.

MOM. (*She looks back and forth at each of them, pause*) You gonna go live with your father?

AUSTIN. No. We're going to a different desert Mom.

MOM. I see. Well, you'll probably wind up on the same desert sooner or later. What're all these toasters doing here?

AUSTIN. Well—we had kind of a contest.

MOM. Contest?

LEE. Yeah.

AUSTIN. Lee won.

MOM. Did you win a lot of money, Lee?

LEE. Well not yet. It's commin' in any day now.

MOM. (*To Lee*) What happened to your shirt?

LEE. Oh. I was sweatin' like a pig and I took it off.

(*Austin grabs Lee's shirt off the table and tosses it to him, Lee sets down suitcases and puts his shirt on*)

MOM. Well it's one hell of a mess in here isn't it?

AUSTIN. Yeah, I'll clean it up for you, Mom. I just didn't know you were coming back so soon.

MOM. I didn't either.

AUSTIN. What happened?

MOM. Nothing. I just started missing all my plants. (*She notices dead plants*)

AUSTIN. Oh.

MOM. Oh, they're all dead aren't they. (*She crosses toward them, examines them closely*) You didn't get a chance to water I guess.

AUSTIN. I was doing it and then Lee came and—

LEE. Yeah I just distracted him a whole lot here, Mom. It's not his fault.

(*Pause, as Mom stares at plants*)

MOM. Oh well, one less thing to take care of I guess. (*Turns toward brothers*) Oh, that reminds me—You boys will probably never guess who's in town. Try and guess.

(*Long pause, brothers stare at her*)

AUSTIN. Whadya' mean, Mom?

MOM. Take a guess. Somebody very important has come to town. I read it, coming down on the Greyhound.

LEE. Somebody very important?

MOM. See if you can guess. You'll never guess.

AUSTIN. Mom—we're trying to uh—(*Points to writing pad*)

MOM. Picasso. (*Pause*) Picasso's in town. Isn't that incredible? Right now.

(*Pause*)

AUSTIN. Picasso's dead, Mom.

MOM. No, he's not dead. He's visiting the museum. I read it on the bus. We have to go down there and see him.

AUSTIN. Mom—

MOM. This is the chance of a lifetime. Can you imagine? We could all go down and meet him. All three of us.

LEE. Uh—I don't think I'm really up fer meetin' anybody right now. I'm uh—What's his name?

MOM. Picasso! Picasso! You've never heard of Picasso? Austin, you've heard of Picasso.

AUSTIN. Mom, we're not going to have time.

MOM. It won't take long. We'll just hop in the car and go down there. An opportunity like this doesn't come along every day.

AUSTIN. We're gonna' be leavin' here, Mom!

(Pause)

MOM. Oh.

LEE. Yeah.

(Pause)

MOM. You're both leaving?

LEE. (*Looks at Austin*) Well we were thinkin' about that before but now I—

AUSTIN. No, we are! We're both leaving. We've got it all planned.

MOM. (*To Austin*) Well you can't leave. You have a family.

AUSTIN. I'm leaving. I'm getting out of here.

LEE. (*To Mom*) I don't really think Austin's cut out for the desert do you?

MOM. No. He's not.

AUSTIN. I'm going with you, Lee!

MOM. He's too thin.

LEE. Yeah, he'd just burn up out there.

AUSTIN. (*To Lee*) We just gotta' finish this screenplay and then we're gonna' take off. That's the plan.

That's what you said. Come on, let's get back to work, Lee.

LEE. I can't work under these conditions here. It's too hot.

AUSTIN. Then we'll do it on the desert.

LEE. Don't be tellin' me what we're gonna do!

MOM. Don't shout in the house.

LEE. We're just gonna' have to postpone the whole deal.

AUSTIN. I can't postpone it! It's gone past postponing! I'm doing everything you said. I'm writing down exactly what you tell me.

LEE. Yeah, but you were right all along see. It is a dumb story. "Two lambrains chasin' each other across Texas." That's what you said, right?

AUSTIN. I never said that.

(*LEE sneers in Austin's face then turns to Mom*)

LEE. I'm gonna' just borrow some a your antiques, Mom. You don't mind do ya? Just a few plates and things. Silverware.

(*LEE starts going through all the cupboards in kitchen pulling out plates and stacking them on counter as Mom and Austin watch*)

MOM. You don't have any utensils on the desert?

LEE. Nah, I'm fresh out.

AUSTIN. (*To Lee*) What're you doing?

MOM. Well some of those are very old. Bone China.

LEE. I'm tired of eatin' outa' my bare hands, ya' know. It's not civilized.

AUSTIN. (*To Lee*) What're you doing? We made a deal!

MOM. Couldn't you borrow the plastic ones instead? I have plenty of plastic ones.

LEE. (*As he stacks plates*) It's not the same. Plastic's not the same at all. What I need is somethin' authentic. Somethin' to keep me in touch. It's easy to get outa' touch out there. Don't worry I'll get em' back to ya'.