

VIRGIL. They're a li'l older'n you. They learned a li'l more. They can be *gallant* with gals...when they *wanta* be.

BO. I ain't gonna *pertend*.

VIRGIL. I cain't blame ya.

BO. But a gal *oughta* like me. I kin read and write, I'm kinda tidy, and I got good manners, don't I?

VIRGIL. I'm no judge, Bo. I'm used to ya.

BO. And I'm tall and strong. Ain't that what girls like? And if I do say so, m'self, I'm purty good-lookin'.

VIRGIL. Yah.

BO. When I get spruced up, I'm just as good-lookin' a fella as a gal might hope to see.

VIRGIL. I know ya are, Bo.

*Suddenly seized with anger at the injustice of it all, Bo jumps up, crosses U.S.*

BO. Then hellfire and damnation! Why don't she go back to the ranch with me?

*His hands in his hip pockets, he begins pacing, returning to his corner like a panther, where he stands with his back to the others, watching the snow fly outside the window.*

ELMA. (*Having observed Bo's disquiet.*) Gee, if you only loved him!

CHERIE. That'd solve ev'rything, wouldn't it? But I don't. So I jest can't see m'self goin' to some God-forsaken ranch in Montana where I'd never see no one but him and a lotta cows.

ELMA. No. If you don't love him, it'd be awfully lonely.

CHERIE. I dunno why I keep expectin' m'self to fall in love with someone, but I do.

ELMA. (*Sits on stool by Cherie.*) I know I expect to, someday.

CHERIE. I'm beginnin' to seriously wonder if there *is* the kinda love I have in mind.

ELMA. What's that?

CHERIE. Well... I dunno. I'm oney nineteen, but I been goin' with guys since I was fourteen.

ELMA. (*Astounded.*) Honest?

CHERIE. Honey, I almost married a cousin a mine when I was fourteen, but Pappy wouldn't have it.

ELMA. I never heard of anyone marrying so young.

CHERIE. Down in the Ozarks, we don't waste much time. Anyway, I'm awful glad I never married my cousin Malcolm, 'cause he turned out real bad, like Pappy predicted. But I sure was crazy 'bout him at the time. And I been losin' my head 'bout some guy ever since. But Bo's the first one wanted to marry me, since Cousin Malcolm. And natur'ly, I'd like to get married and raise a fam'ly and all them things but...

ELMA. But you've *never* been in love?

CHERIE. Mebbe I have and din know it. Thass what I mean. Mebbe I don't know what love is. Mebbe I'm expectin' it t'be somethin' it ain't. I jest feel that, regardless how crazy ya are 'bout some guy, ya gotta feel...and it's hard to put into words, but...ya gotta feel he *respects* ya. Yah, thass what I mean.

ELMA. (*Not impudent.*) I should think so.

CHERIE. I want a guy I can look up to and respect, but I don't want one that'll browbeat me. And I want a guy who can be sweet to me but I don't wanta be treated like a baby. I...I just gotta feel that... whoever I marry...has some real regard for me, apart from all the lovin' and sex. Know what I mean?

ELMA. (*Busily digesting all this.*) I think so. What are you going to do when you get back to Kansas City?

CHERIE. I dunno.—There's a hillbilly program on one a the radio stations there. I might git a job on it. If I don't, I'll prob'ly git me a job in Liggett's or Walgreen's. Then after a while, I'll prob'ly marry some guy, whether I think I love him or not. Who'm I to keep insistin' I should fall in love? You hear all about love when yor a kid and jest take it for granted that such a thing really exists. Maybe ya have to find out fer yorself it don't. Maybe everyone's afraid to tell ya.

ELMA. (*Glum.*) Maybe you're right...but I hope not.

CHERIE. (*After squirming a little on the stool.*) Gee, I hate to go out to that cold powder room, but I guess I better not put it off any longer.

*Cherie hurries out the rear door as Dr. Lyman sits again at*