

The Night of the Hunter
by
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FULL SHOT -- THE STARLIT SKY

VOICE
And he opened his mouth and taught them,
saying...

FADE sky to DAY.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

LONG SHOT -- HELICOPTER -- OHIO RIVER COUNTRY
High over the country, CENTERING the winding river.

VOICE
Beware of false prophets....

LOWER LONG SHOT -- HELICOPTER -- RIVER COUNTRY
We approach a riverside village.

VOICE
... which come to you in sheep's clothing ...

A CLOSER, LOWER HELICOPTER SHOT
We descend low over a deserted house; CHILDREN in yard run and hide; we
hear "IT" counting "five, ten, fifteen, twenty..."

VOICE
... but inwardly, they are ravening wolves.

MEDIUM SHOT -- "IT"
He finishes his count with a loud "Hundred" and turns, then:

"IT"
What's wrong?

We PAN as he comes towards a little boy, beside an open cellar door, who
gestures towards the open door. "IT" looks down.

"IT"
(a low gasp)
Heyy!
(then he shouts to all
and to us)
Heyy!

We DOLLY IN fast to, and TILT DOWN into, open cellar, into:

CLOSE SHOT -- A LEG
A skeletal leg in a rotted fume of stocking and a high-heeled shoe. We
HOLD a moment, then PULL UP and AWAY over the converging heads of several

CHILDREN. A CHILD whimpers softly.

HELICOPTER SHOT

The yard and the CHILDREN, same angle and height as the last descending helicopter shot. We PULL BACK and AWAY.

VOICE

Ye shall know them by their fruits.

DISSOLVE TO

HIGH LONG SHOT -- HELICOPTER
CENTERING the river.

VOICE

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit....

LOWER LONG SHOT (HELICOPTER)

CENTERING on open touring car, as it drives along a river road.

VOICE

Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good
fruit.

We stoop low towards the car.

VOICE

Wherefore by their fruits, ye shall know them.

CUT TO

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

He is the driver of the car. Pleasant river landscapes (PROCESS) flow behind him. He is dressed in dark clothes, a paper collar, a string tie. As he drives, he talks to himself.

PREACHER

What's it to be, Lord, another widow? Has it
been six? Twelve? ... I disremember.

He nods, smiles, and touches his hat. We see a farm couple in a poor wagon.

PREACHER

You say the word, and I'm on my way.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER DRIVING

He brakes his car in a small riverside town; then proceeds.

PREACHER

You always send me money to go forth and preach
your Word. A widow with a little wad of bills
hidden away in the sugar-bowl.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER DRIVING

He shifts into second gear, climbing a steep little hill.

PREACHER

I am tired. Sometimes I wonder if you really understand.

(pause)

Not that you mind the killin's...

The stones of a country graveyard gleam in the last daylight.

PREACHER

Yore Book is full of killin's.

He starts fast and noisily down a steep hill.

PREACHER

But there are things you do hate, Lord:
perfume-smellin' things -- lacy things --
things with curly hair --

CUT TO

INT. A BURLESQUE HOUSE -- MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT -- A DANCER

She is hard at work to music o.s.

FULL SHOT -- AUDIENCE -- CENTERING ON PREACHER, IN AISLE SEAT

Among the members of the sad burlesque audience, he is in strong contrast: a sour and aggressive expression. Music o.s. We MOVE IN fast to a HEAD CLOSE-UP.

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT -- THE DANCER

INSERT -- PREACHER'S LEFT HAND

Labeled H-A-T-E in tattoo across four knuckles, it grips and flexes.

INSERT -- HIS RIGHT HAND

Before we see the lettering he slides it into his pocket.

EXTREME CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

His head slants; a cold smile; one eyelid flutters.

INSERT -- RIGHT HAND AND POCKET

We hear the snapping open of a switchblade knife and the point of the knife cuts through his clothes.

LESS EXTREME CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

He seems to "listen" for something.

PREACHER

No, There are too many of them; you can't kill
the world.

A hand descends firmly onto his shoulder. He glances up behind him as we

TILT TO

CLOSE SHOT -- A STATE TROOPER
He bends down and speaks quietly next PREACHER's ear.

TROOPER
You driving an Essex tourin'-car with a
Moundsville license?

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INT. COURTROOM -- CLOSE THREE-SHOT -- JUDGE AND CLERK, OVER PREACHER

JUDGE
Harry Powell, for the theft of that touring car
you will spend thirty days in the Moundsville
Penitentiary.

PREACHER
(correcting Clerk)
Preacher Harry Powell.

JUDGE
A car thief! Picked up where you were! A man
of God?
(to Clerk)
Harry Powell.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- MOUNDSVILLE PENITENTIARY -- DAY (HELICOPTER)
A grim, stone-turretted facade; an American flag idles at top center.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE DOWNWARD TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL HARPER
They sit in the grass, a sentimental picture. JOHN is nine; PEARL is five.
They are working together on PEARL's doll; PEARL is dressing her, while
JOHN gets on a difficult shoe.

PEARL
Stand still, Miss Jenny!

JOHN
(across her)
There! What's so hard about that?

He proudly exhibits the shod foot.

They hear the sound of an auto engine o.s. They look o.s. and get up, PEARL
dangling the doll.

LONG SHOT -- OVER THE CHILDREN -- BEN HARPER'S FORD
A Model-T Ford approaches at maximal speed on uneven dirt road.

PEARL
(to John, happily)
Daddy!

The car careens towards us; then swings into the sideyard as we PAN, and stops.

They run towards their father fast; then JOHN looks puzzled and they stop short.

BEN HARPER half-falls out of the far door, his shoulder blood-stained, his eyes wild. A hefty, simple man of thirty. He looks at them, dazed, across the car.

MEDIUM SHOT -- BEN HARPER

BEN
Where's your Mom?

JOHN
Out shopping -- you're bleeding, Dad --

BEN
Listen to me, John.

On this he comes around clear of the car with a revolver in one hand and a bloody roll of banknotes in the other.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He screams. BEN slaps him with the back of the money hand, leaving blood on JOHN's cheek.

CLOSE GROUP SHOT -- JOHN, BEN, PEARL
PEARL, and the house, are in the BACKGROUND. PEARL just clutches her doll. During BEN's next lines, JOHN touches his cheek and looks at the blood on his fingers and at the bloody money -- of which we FLASH-CUT an INSERT.

BEN
(rushing)
Listen! This money here! We got to hide it
before they get me! There's close to ten
thousand dollars.
(his eyes dart wildly)
Under a rock in the smokehouse? Ah, no. Under
the bricks in the grape arbor? No, they'd dig
for it.

CLOSE SHOT -- BEN

BEN
(sudden triumph)
Why, sure! That's the place!

He moves forward and OUT and in his place we see two police cars, small in distance, coming fast. We hear sirens.

INT. FRONT POLICE CAR -- THROUGH WINDSHIELD
...and over two STATE TROOPERS. They move at high speed, with sirens.

BEN and his CHILDREN, tiny in the distance, dilate.

TROOPER
(driving)
That's him.

2ND TROOPER
(over his shoulder, as if to us)
He prob'ly still has that gun.

CLOSE GROUP SHOT -- BEN AND THE CHILDREN
Police cars approaching in BACKGROUND. PEARL hugs her doll. JOHN is dazed.
BEN stands, pistol in hand.

BEN
Here they come.

JOHN
Dad, you're bleeding....

He grabs JOHN's shoulder and stoops as we TIGHTEN IN.

BEN
Listen to me, son. You got to swear. Swear
means promise. First swear you'll take care of
little Pearl. Guard her with your life, boy.
Then swear you won't never tell where that
money's hid. Not even your Mom.

JOHN
Yes, Dad.

BEN
You understand?

JOHN
Not even her?

In b.g. the TROOPERS get out of their cars and fan out cautiously to
surround BEN: guns in hand.

BEN
You got common sense. She ain't. When you grow
up that money will be yours. Now swear. "I
will guard Pearl with my life ..."

JOHN
(fumbling)
I will guard Pearl with my life ...

BEN
... "And I won't never tell about the money."

JOHN
And I won't never tell about the money.

BEN
You, Pearl. You swear too.

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL

PEARL
(giggling)
Who's them Blue Men yonder?

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN

JOHN
(under his breath)
Blue men.

GROUP SHOT -- TROOPERS IN BACKGROUND

A TROOPER
Ben Harper!

BEN
I'm goin' now children. Goodbye.

BEN backs away from his CHILDREN, raising his hands, gun in one hand. We PULL BACK a little, enlarging the GROUP SHOT and the role of the TROOPERS in it.

TROOPER
Drop that gun, Harper. We don't want them kids hurt.

TWO TROOPERS approach BEN from behind.

BEN
Just mind what you swore, son. Mind, boy!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He runs forward and clasps his stomach, with his mouth open.

MEDIUM SHOT -- BEN AND TROOPERS -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT
One TROOPER smacks the back of BEN's head with a pistol barrel.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

JOHN
(shouting; a sickly smile)
Don't!

MEDIUM SHOT -- BEN AND TROOPERS -- AS BEFORE
Another TROOPER, with a pistol barrel, knocks the pistol from BEN's lifted hand.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

JOHN
(shouting)
Don't!

BEN AND TROOPERS

BEN sinks to his knees as both men, and two others from the front, close in on him.

HEAD CLOSE UP -- JOHN

JOHN

Dad!

He takes in the GROUP with his mouth open.

O.S., we hear the slamming of car doors, and car starting away.

FULL SHOT -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT -- THE CARS

They drive away fast in road dust.

THREE-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN AND WILLA HARPER

Carrying a shopping bag, their mother, WILLA, runs up from BACKGROUND between the CHILDREN, looking always to cars o.s.

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA

She has a rich body.

RESUME THREE-SHOT

PEARL comes to her and she picks up PEARL and the doll; JOHN, laden with his oath, walks quickly into the house. WILLA does a bewildered take, then looks again towards the cars o.s.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INT. COURTROOM -- CLOSE THREE-SHOT -- JUDGE AND CLERK, OVER BEN

JUDGE

Ben Harper, it is the sentence of this Court that for the murder of Ed Smiley and Corey South, you be hanged by the neck until you are dead, and may God have mercy on your soul.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- THE MOUNDSVILLE PENITENTIARY

Same view as before but now it is NIGHT.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INT. BEN'S CELL -- NIGHT -- CLOSE DOWN-SHOT -- BEN

He lies on his back, chuckling and murmuring indistinctly in his sleep.

BEN

I got you all buffaloed! You ain't never gonna git it outen me; not none o' you!

PREACHER'S VOICE

(o.s., very low)

Where, Ben? Where? Where?

BEN

(distinctly)
And a little child shall lead them.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- NEW ANGLE -- BEN, THEN PREACHER
BEN lies in profile. From the bunk above, the face of PREACHER stretches down into the SHOT, upside down, snake-like.

PREACHER
(softly)
Come on, boy: tell me.

BEN awakes, sees PREACHER, and hits him so hard in the face that he falls from bunk to floor. PREACHER collects himself into a squat, nursing his face, BEN sits up in bed.

PREACHER
(with wholesome dignity)
Ben, I'm a Man of God.

BEN
Tryin' to make me talk about it in my sleep!

PREACHER
No, Ben.

BEN
What'd I say?
(he grabs Preacher by the
throat and shakes him)
What? What? What? What?

PREACHER
(choking)
You was quotin' Scripture. You said -- you
said, "And a little child shall lead them."

BEN
Hm!

He lies back, amused. PREACHER sits on the bedside; manner of a parson visiting the sick.

PREACHER
(gravely)
You killed two men, Ben Harper.

BEN
That's right, Preacher. I robbed that bank
because I got tired of seein' children roamin'
the woodlands without food, children roamin'
the highways in this year of Depression,
children sleepin' in old abandoned car bodies
on junk-heaps; and I promised myself I'd never
see the day when my youngins'd want.

PREACHER
With that ten thousand dollars I could build a

Tabernacle that'd make the Wheeling Island
Tabernacle look like a chicken-house!

BEN

Would you have free candy for the kids,
Preacher?

He picks up and wads a sock.

PREACHER

Think of it, Ben! With that cursed, bloodied
gold!

BEN

How come you got that stick-knife hid in your
bed-blankets, Preacher?

PREACHER

I come not with Peace, but with a Sword.

BEN

You, Preacher?

PREACHER gets and pockets the knife.

PREACHER

That Sword has served me through many an evil
time, Ben Harper.

BEN

What religion do you profess, Preacher?

PREACHER

The religion the Almighty and me worked out
betwixt us.

BEN

(contemptuously)
I'll bet.

PREACHER

Salvation is a last-minute business, boy.

BEN

(sock near mouth)
Keep talkin', Preacher.

He wads the sock into his mouth and lies back, sardonic.

PREACHER

(his voice fading into Dissolve)
You reckon the Lord wouldn't change his mind
about you if...

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. PENITENTIARY -- NIGHT

DISSOLVE TO

INSERT -- PREACHER'S HANDS

They rest on sill of cell window, the lettered fingers legible. The right hand is lettered L-O-V-E. The hands open, disclosing his open knife. They close over it.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER, AT CELL WINDOW

His eyes lift from his hands, heavenward. Moonlight on his face. He prays, quietly.

PREACHER

Lord, You sure knowed what You was doin' when
You brung me to this very cell at this very
time. A man with ten thousand dollars hid
somewheres, and a widder in the makin'.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. PENITENTIARY COURTYARD -- NIGHT

Same shot as before, but now, prison lights are on: and a man, a prison GUARD, waits close inside door. BART THE HANGMAN joins him with a silent salute. BART wears a hard derby.

EXT. PENITENTIARY -- THE DOOR (REVERSE)

They walk in silence into MEDIUM, MOVING SHOT, the GUARD talkative, BART reluctant to talk.

The Penitentiary recedes in b.g.

GUARD

Any trouble?

BART

No.

GUARD

He was a cool one, that Harper. Never broke.

BART

He carried on some; kicked.

EXT. BART'S HOUSE -- MEDIUM SHOT -- BART AND THE GUARD

On porch, by door, is a doll's perambulator. BART and GUARD walk into the SHOT.

GUARD

He never told about the money.

BART

(walking up steps)

No.

GUARD

What do you figure he done with it?

BART
(turning, at door)
He took the secret with him when I dropped him.

The GUARD leaves the shot; BART goes in.

INT. BART'S HALLWAY -- CLOSE SHOT -- BART
He hangs up his coat and hat. Across this his wife speaks o.s.; a lighted door is ajar at rear of hall. A clatter of dishes and pans o.s.

BART'S WIFE (o.s.)
That you, Bart? Supper's waitin'.

BART just nods and, tiptoeing, walks into a door next the kitchen and snaps on a light and turns on water o.s. His wife comes out of the kitchen and goes in.

INT. BART'S BATHROOM -- CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- BART AND WIFE
He is washing his hands in thick lather. Passing, she pecks his cheek and, as we PAN, looks into the next room. He looks past her, and we see two small CHILDREN asleep in a big brass bed. BART registers, turns again to the basin, and we PAN them back into the original TWO-SHOT.

BART
(low)
Mother: sometimes I think it might be better if
I was to quit my job as guard.

His WIFE's eyes go sharp and quiet.

WIFE
(low)
You're always this way when there's a hangin'.
You never have to be there.

BART rinses his hands. A sigh; he takes up the towel.

BART
Sometimes I wish I was back at the mine.

WIFE
And leave me a widow after another blast like
the one in '24? Not on your life, old mister!

He looks at her for a moment. She goes out. He looks o.s. towards his CHILDREN. He goes into their room on tiptoe.

MEDIUM SHOT -- BART
He approaches his children, across whose bed we SHOOT without yet seeing them. He comes into MEDIUM CLOSE-UP. As he leans and we TILT DOWN, he extends his large hands.

CLOSE DOWNWARD TWO-SHOT -- HIS CHILDREN
Two rose-and-gold little GIRLS lie in sleep; BART's hands enter the SHOT and gently rearrange the covers so that their mouths and throats are free. We watch for a moment more, the two sleeping faces.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- BART, HOVERING HIS CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S VOICES
(o.s., chanting)
Hing, hang, hung. See what the Hangman done!

LAP DISSOLVE TO

EXT. CRESAP'S LANDING -- DAY

We are in Peacock Alley. The tree-shaded dirt street of a small, one-street river town; a picturesque, mid-19th century remnant of the old river civilization, which general Progress has left behind. Chiefly we see, in this order: A schoolhouse (on far side of street); Miz Cunningham's second-hand shop; a Grange House sporting a poster for a Western movie; Spoon's Ice Cream Parlor. At the end of the street, down the river-bank, is a brick wharf and Uncle Birdie's wharf-boat. In b.g. and in passing, suggestions of sleepy small-town life.

From the HEAD CLOSE-UP of BART the Hangman o.s. chanting, we

LAP DISSOLVE TO

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN HARPER

Chanting voices o.s. complete "see what the Hangman done!"

PULL BACK TO

CLOSE PULLING TWO-SHOT -- PEARL AND JOHN

They stroll barefoot down the empty dirt sidewalk. They look towards the voices, PEARL friendly, JOHN hostile.

MEDIUM SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, OVER JOHN AND PEARL

Several, within the door of the Schoolhouse, stick their heads around the edge. They chant at the HARPER CHILDREN. Another next the door, is drawing something on the wall.

CHILDREN
(chanting)
Hung, hang, hing! See the Robber swing!

OVER these lines we CUT briefly to --

CLOSER SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

... chanting, drawing. The ARTIST completes in chalk, a large simple sketch of a man hanging from gallows. As the verse ends we CUT TO

MEDIUM SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, OVER JOHN AND PEARL

They look towards OUR CHILDREN; JOHN pays them no attention. The drawing is revealed. JOHN takes PEARL's hand. The other CHILDREN giggle.

CHILDREN
(chanting)
Hing, hang, hung! Now my song is done!

Between lines one and two JOHN turns away from them into --

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL -- THROUGH WINDOW

We SHOOT them through the window of MIZ CUNNINGHAM's second-hand store. The back of a watch is silhouetted large in FOREGROUND; JOHN's eyes instantly fix on it; in b.g. the SCHOOL-CHILDREN finish their song and vanish, giggling, into the schoolhouse. We hear the ticking of the watch.

INSERT -- THE WATCH

A watch with a moving sweep-hand, ticking.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL

PEARL

Are you goin' to buy it, John?

No answer. JOHN's eyes are fixed on the watch. OVER a shop door-bell we hear:

MIZ CUNNINGHAM'S VOICE (o.s.)

Uh-Hawwww!

They glance toward her.

MEDIUM SHOT -- MIZ CUNNINGHAM

Fantastically dirty and fantastically dressed, she hustles to them and we PAN her into a THREE-SHOT. She talks like a Tidewater Cockatoo.

MIZ CUNNINGHAM

(continuing)

So your Mommy's keepin' you out of school!
Poor little lambs!

PEARL watches her; JOHN the watch.

MIZ CUNNINGHAM

And how is your poor, poor mother?

JOHN

She's at Spoon's Ice Cream Parlor.

MIZ CUNNINGHAM

(she snuffles)

The Lord tends you both these days!

JOHN doesn't take his eyes off the watch.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

His eyes are fixed on the watch o.s.

MIZ CUNNINGHAM'S VOICE (o.s.)

Didn't they never find out what your father
done with all that money he stole?

Eyes as before till "money," then he looks up towards her.

MEDIUM SHOT -- MIZ CUNNINGHAM

MIZ CUNNINGHAM

When they caught him, there wasn't so much as a penny of it to be seen! Now what do you make of that! Eh, boy?

She grins horribly.

TWO-SHOT -- OVER JOHN AND PEARL

JOHN

Pearl and me, we have to go.

He walks off fast as we DOLLY BEHIND THEM; he leads PEARL who hugs her doll.

PEARL

(chanting)

Hing, hang, hung.

JOHN

You better not sing that song.

PEARL

Why?

JOHN

'Cause you're too little.

A few paces in silence; now they come to the big window of Spoon's Ice Cream Parlor.

PEARL

Can we get some candy?

WILLA's face is seen within; serving a customer, she sees them and waves them away.

JOHN

No.

He keeps her strolling. WALT SPOON comes out, proffering two lollypops.

WALT

Howdy, youngins.

PEARL drags at JOHN's hand but JOHN, pretending not to see or hear, drags her out of the SHOT, shaking his head. We DOLLY IN on WALT, who looks after them, surprised and touched, then goes inside.

INT. SPOON'S PARLOR -- GROUP SHOT -- WALT, WILLA, ICEY SPOON

We PAN WALT across a little of his Parlor; he plants the lollypops back in a jar on the counter and leaves the SHOT as we TIGHTEN IN on WILLA and ICEY. WILLA slides used dishes into wash-water; ICEY jaws down her back, from first moment of SHOT.

ICEY

Willa Harper, there is certain plain facts of life that adds up just like two and two makes

four and one of them is this: No woman is good enough to raise growin' youngsters alone. The Lord meant that job for two!

WILLA

Icey, I don't want a husband.

CLOSE SHOT -- ICEY

ICEY

(fiercely)

Fiddlesticks!

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

The weekly movie audience is letting out, next door to Spoon's. Some start cars or wagons, others stroll to Spoon's.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INT. SPOON'S PARLOR -- EVENING -- TWO SHOT -- ICEY AND WILLA

We start with a CLOSE SHOT as ICEY's hands slap together a gooey banana split; TILT UP to TWO-SHOT, favoring ICEY; finish on WILLA, on "it's a man you need," etc.

Murmur of customers o.s.

WALT'S VOICE

(calling o.s.)

One solid brown sody, one Lover's Delight.

ICEY

'Tain't a matter of wantin' or not wantin'!
You're no spring chicken, you're a grown woman
with two little youngins. It's a man you need
in the house, Willa Harper.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

LONG SHOT -- NIGHT -- A TRAIN

A short, lighted, toy-like train departs the town along the river-bank, whistling. The whistle TIES OVER the previous DISSOLVE. Starlit sky.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FRAMING SHOT -- EXT. HARPER HOUSE -- NIGHT

A square, HEAD-ON SHOT, river water below and vibrant starlight above; featuring a gas-lamp by the road; a tree; and pretty tree-shadows which work across a window.

INT. HARPER CHILDREN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT -- TWO SHOT -- JOHN, PEARL, SHADOWS

PEARL lies in their bed, her doll snug on her shoulder. JOHN sits on the edge of the bed, in his underwear.

PEARL

Tell me a story, John.

JOHN

Once upon a time there was a rich king...

He sees the shadows on the wall and gets up and looks at them.

JOHN

... and he had him a son and a daughter and they all lived in a castle over in Africa. Well, one day this king got taken away by bad men and before he got took off he told his son to kill anyone that tried to steal their gold, and before long these bad men come back and --

PEARL

The Blue Men?

He moves and as his shadow moves away we see the shadow of PREACHER, motionless. PEARL sits up and points at it. JOHN notices her and sees it. We PAN JOHN to the window. He looks out.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER -- THROUGH WINDOW -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT
He stands motionless.

RESUME PREVIOUS SHOT -- JOHN AT WINDOW
He turns and we PAN him to bed.

JOHN

(casually)

Just a man.

He climbs into bed and pulls up the covers.

JOHN

Goodnight, Pearl, sleep tight; and don't let the bedbugs bite.

PEARL

(to doll)

'Night, Miss Jenny; don't let the bedbugs bite.

As they settle down we hear PREACHER's singing, sweet and quiet o.s.:
"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RIVER AND TOWN -- MORNING -- FULL SHOT -- A GINGERBREAD SIDE-WHEELER
She steams around a bend towards a toy-like small town. PREACHER's song,
o.s., TIES OVER. People are waving from shore and boat.

FULL PANNING SHOT -- THE BOAT, FROM SHORE

We PAN her into frame UNCLE BIRDIE STEPTOE's toy-like little wharf-boat. As she passes broadside we CUT TO

MEDIUM SHOT -- BIRDIE, THEN JOHN

... as boat passes. BIRDIE's head sticks through a porthole. He is a wiry old river character. The boat whistles. As BIRDIE speaks we PAN JOHN, and

foundered skiff, into TWO-SHOT with BIRDIE.

BIRDIE

She don't put in at Cresap's Landing no more,
but she still blows as she passes. Come on in
and have a cup of coffee.

JOHN

Ain't nobody stole Dad's skiff.

BIRDIE

Ain't nobody goin' to neither, long as Uncle
Birdie's around.

He vanishes from the porthole. We PAN JOHN from skiff to wharf and BIRDIE's door.

BIRDIE'S VOICE

(calling o.s.)

First day my jints is limber enough, I'll haul
her up and give her a good caulkin'.

INT. BIRDIE'S BOAT -- TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND BIRDIE
JOHN enters and sits on a box. BIRDIE, in a ramshackle rocking chair, pours coffee. BESS'S photograph on chest near BIRDIE.

BIRDIE

Ain't seen you in a coon's age, Johnny.

JOHN

I been mindin' Pearl.

BIRDIE

Pshaw, now! Ain't it a caution what women'll
load onto a feller's back when he ain't lookin'?

He gives JOHN a cup of coffee.

BIRDIE

'Scuse me, Cap, while I sweeten up my coffee.

He fetches a liquor bottle from beneath the rocking chair; about to pour, he does a take at BESS'S PHOTOGRAPH.

INSERT -- THE PHOTOGRAPH

It stands in a cabinet frame: A fine-looking young woman in archaic dress, with sharp, accusing black eyes.

BIRDIE'S VOICE (o.s.)

Dead and gone these twenty-five years and never
takes her eyes off me.

CUT OVER his line to --

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND BIRDIE

He turns the picture away and splashes liquor into his coffee.

BIRDIE
(pouring)
Man o' my years needs a little snort to get his
boiler heated of a morning.

They drink. BIRDIE, satisfied, sighs and rocks.

BIRDIE
This mornin' I was talkin' to this stranger
up at the boardinghouse. He knowed your Dad!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
JOHN looks cautious.

JOHN
Where'd he know Dad?

CLOSE SHOT - BIRDIE
BIRDIE's face falls; he takes another drink.

BIRDIE
Well, boy, I'll not hide the truth; it was up
at Moundsville Penitentiary.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- NEW ANGLE
JOHN puts his cup down and gets up.

JOHN
I got to go now, Uncle Birdie.

BIRDIE
Why, shucks, boy, you just got here.

JOHN
(running)
I told Mom I'd be back to Spoon's for Pearl.

EXT. STREET -- MEDIUM SHOT -- JOHN
He runs up the street close to Spoon's and stops dead.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He is horrified by what he sees.

INT. SPOON'S ICE CREAM PARLOR
GROUP SHOT through door-glass, from JOHN'S VIEWPOINT:

PREACHER, WILLA and PEARL surround a little table. WALT stands by, puffing his pipe. ICEY, in BACKGROUND, stirs fudge at a little soda-fountain stove. WILLA looks both moved and pleased. PEARL, shyly flirting with PREACHER, all but hides in WILLA's skirts. PREACHER dandles PEARL's doll on his knee as he talks. All the grown-ups are avid for his words, which we don't hear through the glass.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
We SHOOT THROUGH the DOOR; he quietly enters.

GROUP SHOT

They look casually to JOHN, and continue talking.

ICEY
(stirring, with a meaningful
glance at Willa)
God works in a mysterious way, His wonders to
perform.

OVER this JOHN ENTERS the SHOT and stands at the fringe of the GROUP, staring
at PREACHER's hands and at the doll.

PREACHER
I was with Brother Harper almost to the end...

GROUP SHOT -- NEW ANGLE -- FAVORING JOHN AND PREACHER

PREACHER
(continuing)
... and now that I'm no longer employed by the
Penitentiary, it is my joy to bring this small
comfort to his loved ones.

FLASH-CUT CLOSE-UP -- JOHN
On "Penitentiary" he glances quickly at PREACHER's face; then back to his
hands.

GROUP SHOT -- ICEY

ICEY
(sniffing)
It's a mighty good man would come out of his
way to bring a word of cheer to a grieving
widow!

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT

WALT
So you ain't with the State no more?

GROUP SHOT -- FAVORING PREACHER AND JOHN

PREACHER
No, Brother; I resigned only yesterday. The
heart-renderin' spectacle of them poor men was
too much for me.

He becomes aware of JOHN's staring.

PREACHER
Ah, little lad, you're staring at my fingers.

He hands the doll to PEARL. JOHN's eyes follow the doll. PREACHER holds up
both hands to JOHN. JOHN looks back at his hands.

PREACHER
Shall I tell you the little story of Right-Hand-
Left-Hand -- the tale of Good and Evil?

JOHN stands still. PEARL, with her doll, crosses to PREACHER and twines about his knee.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He looks on, in dumb alarm.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER
H-A-T-E!
(he thrusts up his left hand)
It was with this left hand that old brother
Cain struck the blow that laid his brother low!
L-O-V-E!
(he thrusts up his left hand)
See these here fingers, dear friends! These
fingers has veins that run straight to the soul
of man! The right hand, friends! The hand of
love!

GROUP SHOT -- ICEY, WALT, WILLA -- OVER PREACHER'S HANDS
They are impressed in their different ways.

PREACHER (o.s.)
Now watch and I'll show you the Story of Life.
The fingers of these hands, dear hearts! --
They're always a-tuggin' and a-warrin', one
hand agin t'other.

He locks his fingers and writhes them, cracking the joints.

PREACHER
Look at 'em, dear hearts!

MEDIUM SHOT -- JOHN -- OVER PREACHER'S HANDS
He looks on with unseeing eyes.

PREACHER (o.s.)
Old Left Hand Hate's a-fightin' and it looks
like Old Right Hand Love's a goner!

GROUP SHOT -- WALT, ICEY, WILLA -- OVER HANDS

PREACHER (o.s.)
But wait now! Hot dog! Love's a winnin'!
Yessirree!

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER
It's Love that won! Old Left Hand HATE gone
down for the count!

He crashes both hands down to the table.

FULL SHOT -- THE WHOLE GROUP

Slight applause from the ADULTS. PREACHER takes PEARL with her doll, onto his lap.

ICEY

I never heard it better told. I wish every soul in this community could git the benefit. You jest got to stay for our church pick-nick Sunday!

PEARL offers PREACHER the doll to kiss. PREACHER complies.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN'S REACTION

RESUME GROUP SHOT

PREACHER

(finessing it)

I must wend my way down River on the Lord's work.

ICEY

You ain't leavin' in no hurry if we can help it!

WILLA

John: take that look offen your face and act nice.

PREACHER

He don't mean no impudence, do ya, boy?

(no answer)

Do you, boy? Ah, many's the time poor Brother Ben told me about these youngins.

JOHN

What did he tell you?

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

He does a little take. His eyes twinkle palely.

PREACHER

Why, he told me what fine little lambs you and your sister both was.

GROUP SHOT

JOHN

Is that all?

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

Something new enters his eyes; a game has begun between them.

PREACHER

Why, no, boy; he told me lots and lots of things. Nice things, boy.

A tight silence. ICEY pours fudge into a buttered pan.

PREACHER
My, that fudge smells yummy!

CLOSE SHOT - ICEY

ICEY
(with horrid archness)
It's for the pick-nick. And you won't get a
smidgen of my fudge unless you stay for the
pick-nick!

Over her line, o.s., hymn-singing begins and now, over her "the case rests"
smile, we bring up the singing and

LAP DISSOLVE TO

EXT. THE RIVER-BANK - CHURCH IN B.G. - FULL SHOT - THE SINGING PICKNICKERS
A pleasant, grassy river-bank. Few men in proportion to women and children.
We CENTER PREACHER. They are singing "Brighten the Corner;" PREACHER sings
conspicuously well. The women watch him and admire him. He gives WILLA the
eye as we PAN to CENTER WILLA, who looks wooed and self-conscious. ICEY
enters the SHOT and whispers and beckons WILLA and, as the singing continues,
they leave the group and start towards a shade tree in MEDIUM GROUND, which
we PAN TO CENTER.

FULL SHOT -- WILLA AND ICEY
They walk; singers in BACKGROUND.

ICEY
Don't he have the grandest singin' voice?

WILLA nods. ICEY, looking ahead, is displeased.

MEDIUM SHOT -- THE TREE, JOHN AND PEARL
They sit on the bench, their backs to us, partly concealed by the tree trunk.

ICEY'S VOICE
(sharp)
John! Pearl!

They look around. ICEY and WILLA enter the SHOT, their backs to us.

ICEY
Run along and play, you two.

JOHN
Where?

ICEY
Down by the river. My goodness!

Docile, they leave the shot as WILLA and ICEY approach the bench.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- WILLA AND ICEY
They sit on the bench, their backs to us. The CHILDREN recede towards the
river in BACKGROUND. WILLA meekly keeps her head down. Singing continues

O.S.

ICEY

That feller's just achin' to settle down with
some nice woman and make a home for himself.

WILLA

It's awful soon after Ben's passing.

ICEY

If ever I saw a sign from Heaven!

WILLA

John don't like him much.

ICEY

Pearl dotes on him.

WILLA

The boy worries me. It's silly, but it's like
there was something still between him and his
Dad.

ICEY

What he needs is a good dose o' salts!

WILLA

There's something else.

ICEY

What?

WILLA

The money, Icey.

ICEY

I declare, you'll let that money haunt you to
your grave, Willa Harper!

WILLA

I would love to be satisfied Harry Powell don't
think I've got that money somewhere.

ICEY

You'll come right out and ask that Man of God!

(turning and yelling)

Mr. Paow-well!

(to Willa)

Clear that evil mud out of your soul!

PREACHER starts towards her. ICEY pivots and we PAN OVER her to CHILDREN by
the river.

ICEY

(yelling)

John! Pearl!

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL AND JOHN

JOHN looks up from pebble-skimming and loosens his tie.

ICEY

(yelling o.s.)

Come along hee-ere and get some fuu-udge!

JOHN

(calling)

I don't want no fudge.

His brow is furrowed. He skims another pebble.

ICEY

(shouting o.s.)

You'll do what you're told!

They unwillingly get moving.

RESUME TWO-SHOT -- ICEY AND WILLA

ICEY

You go set down by the River.

WILLA

(getting up)

Oh, Icey, I'm a sight!

ICEY

Get along with you.

Both women set off, WILLA to River, ICEY towards GROUP. We TRACK after ICEY. PREACHER approaches. ICEY, crossing him, gives him a little shove towards WILLA and a coy --

ICEY

You!!!

CLOSE GROUP SHOT -- ICEY AND WOMEN, FAVORING ICEY

... a few men in BACKGROUND, and, beyond them, PREACHER sits down by WILLA at water's edge. JOHN and PEARL approach. As ICEY starts yammering, the men, WALT among them, shyly withdraw.

ICEY

That young lady'd better look sharp or some smart sister between here and Captina's a-gonna snap him up right from under her nose!

They nod and agree, ad lib.

ICEY

She's not the only fish in the river!

More agreement. JOHN and PEARL join ICEY. ICEY speaks to JOHN.

ICEY

Now, you two stay put!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He looks hard towards WILLA and PREACHER o.s.

ICEY
(o.s., to women)
Shilly-shallying around ...

LONG SHOT -- WILLA AND PREACHER
... from JOHN'S VIEWPOINT in tableau of decorous courtship, framed by heavy domestic bodies.

ICEY (o.s.)
A husband's one piece of store goods ye never
know till you get it home and take the paper
off.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- WILLA AND PREACHER
They sit by the water; drooping willows; almost in travesty of a romantic scene. WILLA dabbles one hand in the water.

WILLA
(very shy)
Did Ben Harper ever tell you what he done with
that money he stole?

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- PREACHER
His head goes slantwise and he smiles oddly.

PREACHER
My dear child, don't you know?

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He watches intently towards his mother; PEARL holds his hand. ICEY's voice o.s.

GROUP SHOT -- WOMEN, JOHN AND PEARL

ICEY
She's moonin' about Ben Harper. That wasn't
love, it was just flapdoodle.
(agreeing nods and murmurs)
Have some fudge, lambs.

She hands some down to JOHN and PEARL. PEARL smears her mouth with it; JOHN, watching always towards his mother, takes one nibble and throws the rest away.

ICEY
When you're married forty years, you know all
that don't amount to a hill o' beans! I been
married to my Walt that long, and I'd swear in
all that time I'd just lie there thinking about
my canning.

In BACKGROUND WALT looks sheepish.

WILLA'S VOICE
(calling o.s.)
John! John?

All look towards her.

LONG SHOT -- OVER GROUP
WILLA is standing, beckoning JOHN.

MEDIUM TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL
They start towards their mother.

GROUP SHOT -- ICEY AND WOMEN -- NEW ANGLE

ICEY
A woman's a fool to marry for that. It's
something for a man. The good Lord never meant
for a decent woman to want that -- not really
want it! It's all just a fake and a pipe dream.

The others agree with her. She puts a piece of fudge in her mouth.

CLOSE GROUP SHOT -- PREACHER, WILLA, CHILDREN
... as JOHN and PEARL (with DOLL) come shyly up. WILLA is seated again. She
is radiant.

WILLA
John, Mr. Powell has got something to tell you.

PREACHER
Well, John, the night before your father died,
he told me what he did with that money.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He desperately conceals his reaction; he thinks BEN has betrayed him.

RESUME GROUP SHOT

PREACHER
That money's at the bottom of the river,
wrapped around a twelve-pound cobblestone.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL
He now conceals his new reaction.

RESUME GROUP SHOT
WILLA touches PREACHER's hand, warmly.

WILLA
Thank you, Harry.

She looks all around her, glowing, and stands up, hands to hair.

PEARL
John...

JOHN

Sshhh...

WILLA

I feel clean now! My whole body's just
a-quivering with cleanness!

She walks away towards ICEY and the WOMEN.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER

John: here.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL

JOHN moves to stand in front of him; PEARL to stand beside PREACHER, with the
DOLL.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER AND CHILDREN

From JOHN's eye-level; as JOHN steps in front of him and PEARL beside him.

PREACHER

Your tie's crooked.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN

The hand named LOVE and the hand named HATE come in to straighten the
necktie. JOHN looks down. He looks up and sees:

GROUP SHOT -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT

PREACHER, in close-up, hands busy o.s.; PEARL with doll; and between them, in
BACKGROUND, WILLA. She is now running fast towards ICEY, who walks towards
her with arms outstretched. Behind them the group of WOMEN. BIRDIE's guitar
music begins o.s.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. BIRDIE'S BOAT -- EVENING -- MEDIUM SHOT -- BIRDIE, JOHN AND SKIFF
BIRDIE sits beside his open door, strumming a guitar and singing. The scene
is lamplighted from within. BEN's skiff is inverted on trestles in
FOREGROUND. At start of scene, we see only JOHN's feet; he's under the skiff
examining it. After three lines of song, he comes out from under, and
lounges against the skiff, tracing a tarry seam with his forefinger.

BIRDIE

(singing)

'Twas down at Cresap's Landing, Along the River
Shore, Birdie Steptoe was a Pilot in the good
old days of yore. Now he sets in his old
wharf-boat...

JOHN

(across him)

When'll Dad's skiff be ready?

BIRDIE

Can't hear ye, boy.

(singing)

So the big boats heave a sigh, They blow for

Uncle Birdie...

JOHN
(across him)
When'll the skiff be ready?

BIRDIE
(singing)
And the times that are gone by. I'll have her
ready inside of a week; and then we'll go
fishin'. How's your Maw?

Through rest of scene BIRDIE picks lazily at his guitar.

JOHN
O, she's all right.

BIRDIE
How's your sister Pearl?

JOHN
Just fine.

He gets up.

BIRDIE
Leavin', boy?

JOHN
Yep; gotta watch out for Pearl, Uncle Birdie.

BIRDIE
Well, goodnight, boy. Come again -- any time.

JOHN leaves the SHOT.

BIRDIE
And mind now -- I'll have your Paw's skiff in
ship-shape, 'side of a week.

MOVING SHOT -- JOHN
As he runs past SPOON'S, looking in, he is curious.

MOVING SHOT -- SPOON'S, HIS VIEWPOINT
ICEY embraces WILLA or waltzes her around; WALT looks on, pleased.

FULL SHOT -- JOHN
He hurries away from us towards home.

FRAMING SHOT -- THE HARPER HOUSE
In the otherwise dark house, one window is lighted. JOHN enters the SHOT,
his back to us. Seeing the lighted window, he hesitates.

JOHN
(softly)
Is somebody there?

Silent pause, listening; then he walks cautiously towards us.

FULL SHOT -- JOHN

A tall, narrow shooting-frame; right and left thirds of screen are black. We SHOOT from inside the screen door. JOHN crosses the porch and softly opens the door and enters on tiptoe and pauses, close to us, in the dark hallway, listening sharp.

JOHN
(softly)
Is somebody here?

Silence. Relieved, but puzzled, he tiptoes along towards the rear of the hallway in CLOSE-UP as we PULL AWAY. We bring in the bottom of the stairs.

PREACHER'S VOICE (o.s.)
Good evening, John.

JOHN gasps, peering, and looks up.

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND THE PREACHER -- NARROW SCREEN

PREACHER looks at JOHN; JOHN sinks onto the edge of a chair. PREACHER sits opposite. A bar of light from door falls on PREACHER's face.

PREACHER
I had a little talk with your mother tonight,
John; and your mother decided it might be best
for me to -- let you know the news.

From JOHN, just a questioning helpless reaction.

PREACHER
Your mother told me tonight she wanted me to be
a daddy to you and your sister. We're going to
get married, son.

JOHN is still.

PREACHER
Did you hear what I said, son?

JOHN
Huh?

PREACHER
Married! We have decided to go to Sistersville
tomorrow, and when we come back --

JOHN
(breathing it)
You ain't my Dad! You won't never be my dad!

PREACHER
(obsessed, disregarding him)
-- and when we come back, we'll all be friends --
and share our fortunes together, John!

JOHN
(screaming)
You think you can make me tell! But I won't! I
won't! I won't!

He gawks at his own folly, covers his mouth with his hand and looks up at
PREACHER.

PREACHER
(softly)
Tell me what, boy?

JOHN
Nothin'!

PREACHER
Are we keeping secrets from each other, little
lad?

JOHN
No. No.

PREACHER stiffens, relaxes, and chuckles softly.

PREACHER
No matter, boy, we've got a long time together.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PREACHER
JOHN starts for the stairs.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. HARPER YARD -- MORNING -- CLOSE SHOT -- BEN'S FORD
It stands vibrating, then moves out of shot with receding engine sound o.s.,
disclosing:

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL
ICEY's skirts in BACKGROUND. They are awfully spic-and-span; they even wear
shoes.

ICEY (o.s.)
Wave yer hands! Great sakes!

They wave after the car, bewilderedly.

ICEY (o.s.)
You wait here while I get your night things.

She hustles out of shot.

PEARL
Now can I tell?

JOHN
Hm?

PEARL
When Mr. Powell's our Daddy, then can I tell
him about--

His hand clamps over her mouth. She struggles and whimpers.

JOHN
You swore, Pearl!

PEARL
(across him)
John! Don't!

JOHN
You promised Dad you wouldn't never tell!

He takes his hand away but holds it ready.

PEARL
I love Mr. Powell lots and lots, John.

JOHN grabs her by the shoulders and glares.

JOHN
Don't you tell! Don't you NEVER DARE tell!

Over them we

LAP DISSOLVE TO

SHOULDER CLOSE-UP -- WILLA
She is caressing her shoulders.

FULL SHOT -- WILLA
Her back is to us. She is in a pathetic night dress; she stands before a
mirror in a hotel bedroom in Sistersville. She walks to the door.

INSERT -- WILLA'S HAND
It hesitates on the doorknob.

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA
Shooting OVER her as she opens the door, we see PREACHER in bed, his back to
us. Beyond him, a window. The drawn shade rustles quietly.

CLOSE SHOT -- THE DOOR
... from within the room. WILLA closes the door on which PREACHER's coat
hangs. The closing brings a knocking sound. WILLA feels the outside of the
coat; feels something hard; takes out the knife and looks at it.

INSERT -- THE KNIFE IN HER HAND

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA
A moment of perplexity; then a little smile.

WILLA
(whispering)
Oh! It's... uh...

She puts it back in the pocket and gives the pocket a pat. She starts towards the bed.

TWO-SHOT -- WILLA AND PREACHER

We SHOOT OVER PREACHER as she approaches modestly and stands by the bed.

WILLA
(softly)
Harry...

His hand comes up; she puts out her own, expecting a loving hand-clasp; but PREACHER points to the window.

PREACHER
Fix that window shade.

Startled, then again tender, she moves to:

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA AT WINDOW

She adjusts the shade, looking always towards the bed. She smiles maternally. As we PULL BACK and PAN into FULL SHOT OF BED, she comes to the bed and sits on the edge and slips off her mules. PREACHER's back is to her.

WILLA
(softly)
Harry!

PREACHER
(cool and clear)
I was praying.

WILLA
Oh, I'm sorry, Harry! I didn't know! I
thought maybe--

With a sounding of bedsprings, PREACHER turns. His voice is quiet and cold.

PREACHER
You thought, Willa, that the moment you walked
in that door, I'd start in to pawing you in the
abominable way men are supposed to do on their
wedding night. Ain't that right now?

WILLA
No, Harry! I thought--

PREACHER
I think it's time we got one thing perfectly
clear, Willa. Marriage to me represents a
blending of two spirits in the sight of Heaven.

He gets out of bed. WILLA puts her face down to the pillow and moans. PREACHER snaps on a harsh bare bulb at center of room.

PREACHER
(quietly)

Get up Willa.

WILLA
Harry, what--

PREACHER
Get up.

She obeys.

PREACHER
Now go and look at yourself yonder in that mirror.

WILLA hesitates.

FULL SHOT -- OVER PREACHER -- CENTERING A STAINED BUREAU MIRROR

PREACHER
Do as I say.

WILLA walks to meet her image in the mirror; her eyes on PREACHER.

PREACHER
Look at yourself.

Her head drops, facing the mirror.

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA, PREACHER, BULB
WILLA is in HEAD CLOSE-UP; bulb hangs at center; PREACHER, in his nightshirt,
is beyond it.

PREACHER
What do you see girl?

Her mouth trembles; she can't talk.

PREACHER
You see the body of a woman! The temple of
creation and motherhood. You see the flesh of
Eve that man since Adam has profaned. That body
was meant for begetting children. It was not
meant for the lust of men.

WILLA just opens her mouth.

PREACHER
Do you want more children, Willa?

WILLA
I-- no, I--

PREACHER
It's the business of our marriage to mind those
two you have now -- not to beget more.

WILLA

Yes.

He stands watching her for a moment; then he snaps off the light and gets into bed.

PREACHER

You can get back into bed now and stop shivering.

WILLA

(whispering)

Help me to get clean so I can be what Harry wants me to be.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INSERT -- A TORCH OR RAILROAD FLARE

VOICES (o.s.)

AAA-MEN!

GROUP SHOT -- CONGREGATION

A dozen country men and women in religious ecstasy.

(NOTE: No set necessary for this scene. Flare, or flares, in every SHOT. Faces lighted by flares.)

CONGREGATION

AAA-MEN!

WILLA

(o.s., very loud)

You have all sinned!

CONGREGATION

Yes! Yes!

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- WILLA

WILLA

But which one of you can say, as I can say: I drove a good man to murder because I kept a-houndin' him, for clothes and per-fumes and face paint!

GROUP SHOT -- CONGREGATION

WILLA (o.s.)

And he slew two human beings and he come to me and he said: Take this money and buy your per-fumes and paint!

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- WILLA, STANDING; PREACHER STANDING IN B.G.

WILLA

But Brethren, that's where the Lord stepped in!

That's where the LORD stepped in!

PREACHER

Yes!

CONGREGATION (o.s.)

Yes! Yes!

GROUP SHOT -- CONGREGATION

WILLA

(o.s., screaming)

And the Lord told that man--

CONGREGATION

Yes! Yes!

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA

WILLA

The Lord said, take that money and throw it in
the River!

CONGREGATION (o.s.)

Yes! Yes! Hallelujah!

WILLA

Throw that money in the River! In THE RIVER!

CONGREGATION (o.s.)

IN THE RIIV-ER!

CUT TO

EXTREME CLOSE DOWN-SHOT -- PEARL'S DOLL

It lies face down on arbor bricks, its back wide open; money spilling out. A
little breeze toys with the money. HOLD, a moment in silence. Then we hear
a snipping sound o.s. TILT UPWARD into --

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL

She sits at the end of the grape-arbor. She finishes cutting a skirted
paper-doll out of a hundred dollar bill and lays it down beside a male
hundred dollar paper-doll. She pats the dolls.

PEARL

Now! You're John -- and you're Pearl.

JOHN'S VOICE

(o.s., calling)

Pearl? ... Pearl?

PEARL starts guiltily and looks towards him, scrambling money together.
JOHN's footsteps o.s.

PEARL

You'll get awful mad, John. I done a Sin!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN -- PEARL'S ANGLE

JOHN
You what?

He hears the frantic rustling of paper --

JOHN
(aghast)
Pearl! You ain't--

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL, OVER JOHN

PEARL
John, don't be mad! Don't be mad! I was just
playing with it! I didn't tell no one!

FLASH CUT CLOSE-UP -- JOHN
... as he stoops towards her, dumb with horror.

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL
She continues to gather the money together.

PEARL
(pleading)
It's all here.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL

JOHN
Pearl! Oh, Pearl!

She's stuffing bills back into the torn doll. They slide through her
fingers. He helps.

FLASH INSERT -- PREACHER'S FOOT
... as he plants it, with sound, in damp grass.

CLOSE SHOT -- THE CHILDREN
JOHN freezes.

PREACHER'S VOICE (o.s.)
John?

JOHN
Oh -- yes?

LONG SHOT -- PREACHER -- CHILDREN'S VIEWPOINT
He stands at far end of arbor.

PREACHER
What are you doing, boy?

LONG SHOT -- CHILDREN -- PREACHER'S VIEWPOINT

JOHN
Getting Pearl to bed. I--

PREACHER
What's taking you so long about it?

FLASH INSERT -- THEIR FRANTIC HANDS, MONEY, THE DOLL

JOHN (o.s.)
It-- she--

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER -- PEERING TOWARDS THEM

PREACHER
What's that you're playing with, boy?

LONG SHOT -- CHILDREN -- PREACHER'S VIEWPOINT

JOHN
Pearl's junk. Mom gets mad when she plays out here and don't clean up afterward.

PREACHER
Come on, children!

INSERT -- JOHN'S HANDS PIN THE DOLL TOGETHER

FULL SHOT -- CHILDREN
They stand up, look towards PREACHER, and slowly start towards him. The two forgotten paper-dolls are blown towards him too.

MOVING SHOT -- PREACHER -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT
PREACHER's watch-chain gleams. The shot SLOWLY CLOSES DOWN on it and becomes still. We see the paper-dolls blow past him.

PREACHER'S VOICE
Now, up to bed with the both of you.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL
JOHN starts to laugh uncontrollably. We PAN them past PREACHER's stomach into FULL SHOT.

PREACHER'S VOICE
Come here, John. Run along, Pearl.

PEARL goes, JOHN comes towards PREACHER.

PREACHER -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT

PREACHER
Your mother says you tattled on me, boy. She says you told her that I asked you where that money was hid.

JOHN (o.s.)
Yes. Yes.

PREACHER
That wasn't very nice of you, John. Have a

heart, boy.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
His helpless reaction. Pause.

PREACHER'S VOICE
Run along to bed.

As JOHN turns away we

LAP DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA IN PROFILE
...and PULL AWAY showing JOHN as he turns to her. (PEARL's head is turned away; she's asleep.)

WILLA
Were you impudent to Mr. Powell, John?

JOHN
Mom, I didn't mean--

WILLA
What were you impudent about?

JOHN
He asked me about the money again, Mom.

WILLA
You always make up that lie, John. There is no money, John. Can't you get that through your head?

LAP DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE SHOT -- A GAR, UNDERWATER

CLOSE UPWARD TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND BIRDIE
They look down into the water.

BIRDIE
Meanest, orneriest, sneakiest critter in the whole river, boy! A gar!

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND BIRDIE
They sit up into it.

JOHN
Here's your can o' hooks, Uncle Birdie.

BIRDIE
There hain't nary a hook in the land smart enough to hook Mister Gar. What a feller needs is mother-wit -- and a horse-hair.

Over this, he pulls horse-hair out of his hatband. He sets to work rigging his noose.

JOHN
Won't he bust it, Uncle Birdie?

BIRDIE
Shoot, a horse-hair'll hold a lumpin' whale.

He puts over his line. Pause.

BIRDIE
You don't mind my cussin', boy?

JOHN
No.

BIRDIE
Tell you why I ask -- your step-pa bein' a
Preacher an' all...

JOHN's lips go like string. BIRDIE sees it.

BIRDIE
Never was much of a one for preachers myself.
I dunno what's wrong up at your place, but just
remember one thing, Cap -- if ever you need
help, you just holler out and come a-runnin'.
Old Uncle Birdie's your friend.

A powerful strike. BIRDIE lands the gar. The air is full of sparkling water.

BIRDIE
There! You slimy, snaggle-toothed, egg-suckin',
bait-stealin' so-and-so!

QUICK INSERT -- THE THUMPING FISH IN BOTTOM OF BOAT

FULL SHOT
He beats the fish with the heel of an old shoe.

BIRDIE
(beating)
Mind what I told you. If ever you get in a
crack just come a-runnin'.

Now there is no sound or thumping or beating.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
Admiring BIRDIE, he squares his shoulders, full of confidence.

JOHN
Can we eat him, Uncle Birdie?

BIRDIE
If you got n appetite for bones and bitterness.

On this, he flings the dead gar in a wide arc out into the river.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT
The children are ready for bed.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER
Smiling awaiting an answer.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

JOHN
I don't know.

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PREACHER
PEARL plays unconcernedly in BACKGROUND.

PREACHER
(intimately)
She thinks that money's in the river, but you
and me, we know better, don't we, boy?

JOHN
I don't know nothin'!

PREACHER
The summer is young yet, little lad.
(he turns away from John)
Pearl?

He holds out his hands to her; she comes to his lap, dropping her doll at his feet. JOHN turns his back and looks out the window beside bureau.

PREACHER
John's a feller who likes to keep secrets.

PEARL
Mm-hm.

PREACHER
I'll tell you a secret.

PEARL
Yes?

PREACHER
I knowed your Daddy.

PEARL frowns.

PREACHER
And do you know what your Daddy said to me? He
said, "Tell my little girl Pearl there's to be
no secrets between her and you."

INSERT -- JOHN'S HAND COMES TO REST BESIDE A HAIRBRUSH

RESUME TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND PEARL, JOHN IN B.G.

PEARL
Yes?

PREACHER
Now it's your turn.

PEARL
What secret shall I tell?

PREACHER
How old are you?

PEARL
That's no secret. I'm five.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN -- PREACHER AND PEARL IN B.G.
A look of impotent hatred.

PREACHER
Sure, that's no secret.

RESUME TWO-SHOT

PREACHER
(continuing)
What's your name?

PEARL
(giggling)
You're just foolin'! My name's Pearl.

PREACHER
Tst-tst! Then I reckon I'll have to try again!
Where's the money hid?

JOHN throws the hairbrush, striking PREACHER's head.

JOHN
(screaming as he throws)
You swore you wouldn't tell!
(he beats the air with his fists)
You swore! You swore! You swore!

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER
He is sure know PEARL knows.

THREE-SHOT -- PEARL, PREACHER, JOHN

PEARL
(awed)
You hit Daddy with a hairbrush!

Another silence.

PREACHER
(cheerfully)

You see? We just can't have anything to do
with John.

(light off)

You and me will go down to the parlor.

PEARL

Miz Jenny! Miz Jenny!

She gets the doll. We PAN them through the door.

TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND PEARL

Outside door as he closes it.

PREACHER

John's just plumb bad through and through--

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL

As PREACHER's hand locks the door.

PEARL

(at door)

Yes, John's just plumb bad.

CUT TO

INT. SPOON'S ICE CREAM PARLOR -- THREE-SHOT -- WILLA, ICEY, WALT

We shoot over ICEY as WILLA opens the door to leave. WILLA is in outdoor
clothes and is not dressed for work in the parlor.

WILLA

That boy's as stubborn and mulish as a sheep!

ICEY

It's a shame!

WILLA's face shines like one possessed.

WILLA

Goodnight.

WALT enters the shot, his back to us.

ICEY

Goodnight, honey.

As WILLA starts away, we DOLLY THROUGH DOOR and PAN her to deserted street.
There is a river mist.

TWO SHOT -- WALT AND ICEY

WALT is ill at ease.

RESUME SHOT ON WILLA

ICEY

(o.s., calling)

Plan on a longer visit next time.

WALT (o.s.)
You don't hardly get settled till your frettin'
to git home again.

Again WILLA pauses and turns.

WILLA
(with sweet radiance, to Walt)
I'm needed to keep peace and harmony between
them.
(to Icey)
It's my burden and I'm proud of it, Icey.

She walks off into the mist.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

EXT. HARPER HOME -- NIGHT -- MEDIUM SHOT -- LIGHTED PARLOR WINDOW-
REST OF HOUSE DARK
Distant muffled sound of river-boat whistle.

PEARL (o.s.)
John's bad.

WILLA enters, her back to us; she stops.

PREACHER
Yes, John's bad.

PEARL
Tell me another secret about my dad.

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA
She smiles benignly.

PREACHER (o.s.)
O no! Your turn!

PEARL
All right.

PREACHER
Where's the money hid?

WILLA keeps smiling.

PEARL
John's bad.

PREACHER
Where's the money hid? Tell me, you little
wretch, or I'll tear your arm off!

Still smiling, shaking her head in disbelief, WILLA makes for house as PEARL
screams.

INT. HARPER HALLWAY -- TWO-SHOT -- WILLA AND PREACHER

Narrow screen, same set-up as in earlier corridor scene, PREACHER and WILLA. Their eyes meet. Pause.

PREACHER
(stunned)
I didn't expect you home so soon.

CLOSE SHOT -- WILLA
She still smiles; her eyes turn to sound of PEARL's sobbing.

TWO SHOT -- AS BEFORE
PREACHER stands still; WILLA in BACKGROUND opens closet door where PEARL sobs.

CUT TO

TWO SHOT -- WALT AND ICEY
...washing and drying glasses. ICEY is washing briskly, WALT is drying slowly.

WALT
Icey, I'm worried about Willa.

ICEY
How do you mean?

WALT
I'm figurin' how I can say it so's you won't get mad.

ICEY
Say what, Walt Spoon!

WALT
There's something wrong about it, Mother.

ICEY
About what?

WALT
About Mr. Powell. All of it!

ICEY
Walt!

WALT
Now, Mother, a body can't help their feelin's.

ICEY
May the Lord have mercy on you, Walt Spoon!

WALT
Mother, I only--

CUT TO

INT. WILLA'S AND THE PREACHER'S BEDROOM -- FULL SHOT -- WILLA ON BED --

PREACHER IN BACKGROUND

WILLA lies in profile on the bed along the bottom of the frame. A prim, old woman's nightdress makes her look like a child. Her hands are clasped. PREACHER, fully dressed, stands at the window, which is in BACKGROUND towards foot of bed. His coat, hung over a chair, is in silhouette. River mist outside window halated by exterior gas-lamp. The window shade is up. She is mumbling in prayer. She stops.

PREACHER
(his back still turned)
Are you through praying?

WILLA
I'm through, Harry.

He turns. WILLA is calm and immobile with the ecstasy of a martyr.

PREACHER
You were listening outside the parlor window.

WILLA
It's not in the river, is it, Harry?

PREACHER
Answer me!

WILLA
Ben never told you he throwed it in the river.
Did he?

PREACHER hits her across the mouth. A pause.

WILLA
(continues, unruffled)
Then the children know where it is hid? John knows? Is that it? Then it's still here, somewhere amongst us, taintin' us?

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER, LISTENING FOR A VOICE

RESUME TWO-SHOT

WILLA
So you must have known it all along, Harry.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER, LISTENING
After a moment, the river boat whistle blows, nearer. HOLD CLOSE-UP for a moment after whistle.

CLOSE DOWN-SHOT -- WILLA, SAINT-LIKE

WILLA
But that ain't why you married me, Harry. I know that much. It couldn't be that because the Lord just wouldn't let it.

RESUME TWO-SHOT -- WILLA

WILLA

He made you marry me, so's you could show me
the Way and the Life and the Salvation of my
soul! Ain't that so, Harry?

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

He has heard the voice and starts to move out of CLOSE SHOT.

RESUME TWO-SHOT

He has moved over to the coat on back of chair.

CLOSE SHOT -- COAT

His hand goes into the pocket and brings the knife out. (It is the same
coat, and pocket, as in the wedding-night scene.)

RESUME TWO SHOT

WILLA

So you might say that it was the money that
brung us together.

He pulls down the blind. He moves toward the bed.

WILLA

The rest of it don't matter, Harry.

INSERT -- PREACHER'S HAND AND KNIFE

It clicks open.

RESUME TWO-SHOT

As he raises his arm to strike:

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- WILLA

...with foolish, ecstatic eyes.

WILLA

Bless us all!

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM -- FULL SHOT -- THE SHADOWS ON THE WALL

They are shaped as in earlier scene, but altered by mist. Set-up as in
earlier scene. Over them we hear the whinny-and-catch and the failure of the
Ford being cranked; once; then again: then JOHN's shadow moves on the wall
and on a third cranking which engages the engine, we PAN TO WINDOW, shooting
over JOHN, who peers out, into blind mist. The gears of the car shift; the
car moves away unseen; its sounds diminish slowly, and die. A moment of
silence; then JOHN turns and we PAN him to the bed. He gets in beside PEARL,
who is asleep, and, as we TIGHTEN IN CLOSE, puts his hand across the face of
the doll.

DISSOLVE TO

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- ICEY

An ominous expression. She looks sharp to WALT, beckoning secretly, through
rear screen door of kitchen, onto porch.

ICEY
(loud whisper)
Walt! Come quick!

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- WALT
He is scrubbing out an ice cream container on the back porch. He looks up and moves towards her.

WALT
(natural voice)
What's wrong, Mother?

MEDIUM CLOSE -- ICEY, THEN WALT

ICEY
(whisper)
Sshhh! He's in there.

WALT ENTERS SHOT with pipe.

WALT
Who?

ICEY
(whisper)
Mr. Powell!
(Walt looks enquiry)
Willa has run away!

WALT
I'll be switched! ...

They enter the kitchen. We hear muffled sounds of sobbing o.s.

MEDIUM CLOSE -- TWO-SHOT

WALT
Just went?

ICEY
She took out some time during the night -- in
that old Model-T --

WALT clucks his tongue.

WALT
Is he hit pretty bad?

ICEY
All to pieces!

WALT moves towards kitchen cabinet.

WALT
There's a little peach brandy -- maybe a sip?

ICEY
A man of the Cloth?

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT -- WALT
He pours, snaps it down; weak-defiance.

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT -- ICEY

ICEY
Walt Spoon, that's for sickness in the house!

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT -- WALT
He looks towards o.s. sobbing.

WALT
What can we do, Mother?

TWO-SHOT

ICEY
I thought if you went and talked to him --
another man --

MEDIUM SHOT -- PREACHER
He sits at a table, his back towards us, mumbling over his Bible.

TWO-SHOT -- WALT, ICEY BEHIND HIM, ENTERING THROUGH DOOR

WALT
Mister Powell?

PREACHER
(suddenly loud)
A strange woman is a narrow pit!

ICEY
(a reverent whisper)
Amen! Amen!

PREACHER
She lieth and wait as for a prey. And
increaseth the transgressors among men.

He closes his Bible and turns to them with weepy eyes and a brave little smile.

PREACHER
My dear, dear friends! Whatever would I do
without you!

CLOSE SHOT -- ICEY

ICEY
(wailing)
Mister Powell!

THREE-SHOT -- NEW ANGLE

WALT
Is there anythin' -- anythin' ...?

PREACHER
It is my shame -- my crown of thorns. And I
must wear it bravely.

ICEY
What could have possessed that girl?

PREACHER
(simply)
Satan.

ICEY
Ah.

WALT sits across from PREACHER. ICEY is at PREACHER's elbow.

WALT
Didn't you have no inkling?

PREACHER
Yes; from the first night.

WALT
The first night?

PREACHER
Our honeymoon.

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT

WALT
How's that?

TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND ICEY

PREACHER
She turned me out of the bed.

ICEY
(with pleasure)
Nnnooooo!!

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT
Filling his pipe.

WALT
What do you figure to do?

TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND ICEY

PREACHER
Do? Why, stay and take care of them little
kids. Maybe it was never meant for a woman

like Willa to taint their young lives.

ICEY
(hands clasped; with approval)
Mmmmm!

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT
Dabbing at moisture in the corner of his eye.

WALT
That's mighty brave of you, Reverend.

TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND ICEY

PREACHER
I reckon it's been ordained this way, Brother
Spoon.

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT

WALT
Didn't-- didn't she leave no word?

TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND ICEY

PREACHER
A scrawl. On a piece of notepaper on the
bureau.

ICEY smiles sideways.

PREACHER
I burned it.

PREACHER holds out his hand, stares in disgust, and wipes his palm
dramatically on his coat sleeve.

PREACHER
I tore it up and burned it -- it stank so
strong of hellfire.

ICEY
Amen.

PREACHER
The pitcher has went to the well once too often,
my friends.

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT

WALT
She'll come draggin' her tail back home.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER
She'll not be back. I reckon I'd be safe in

promising you that.

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT

WALT

Maybe she's just run off on a spree.

PREACHER'S VOICE (o.s.)

No!

WALT

Well, there's no harm in hopin'.

TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND ICEY

PREACHER

Ain't no sense in it, neither. I figured somethin' like this was brewin' when she went to bed last night.

ICEY

(all woman)

How?

PREACHER

She tarried around the kitchen after I'd gone up, and when I went downstairs to see what was wrong...

ICEY

(eagerly)

What?

PREACHER

She'd found this fruit jar of dandelion wine...

(Icey touches him)

... that the husband -- Harper -- had hid somewheres in the cellar.

(playing his ace)

She was drinking.

CLOSE SHOT -- ICEY

ICEY is happy to let her mouth fall open and let out a gasp.

CLOSE SHOT -- WALT

Sniffing.

THREE-SHOT -- PREACHER, ICEY, WALT

PREACHER

I tried to save her.

ICEY

I know you did, Reverend. Oh, I know how you tried!

PREACHER

The devil wins sometimes!

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER
(eyes upturned)
Can't nobody say I didn't do my best to save
her!

DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE UNDERWATER SHOT (Tank)

We PAN, with slowly streaming weeds, and bring in WILLA in close profile; the current, coming from behind her, drifts her long hair across her throat.

MEDIUM SHOT -- WILLA AND CAR

She is in profile as before--

CLOSE SHOT -- A BAITED HOOK

It descends and catches on the windshield, and the line tautens; then tugs. We start to follow the line up.

CLOSE SHOT -- ABOVE WATER -- THE LINE

We continue to follow the line up, and bring in, close, the stern of BEN HARPER's skiff.

MEDIUM SHOT -- UNCLE BIRDIE

He sits back, tugging unconcernedly at the line. Then he leans over to see what's wrong.

CLOSE SHOT -- BIRDIE

... as he peers over side.

DOWNSHOT -- FULL SHOT OF CAR AND WILLA; BIRDIE'S VIEWPOINT

CLOSE SHOT -- BIRDIE, HORROR-STRICKEN

MOVING UNDERWATER SHOT -- WILLA

We hear PREACHER's voice o.s., singing:

PREACHER (o.s.)
Leaning! Leaning! Safe and secure from all
alarms!

Meanwhile, we move vertically DOWNWARDS TOWARDS HER FACE, serene in death. We may or may not glimpse the gashed throat, through drifting hair.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

EXT. HARPER HOME -- FULL SHOT -- THE HOUSE AND TREE

PREACHER leans against the tree; he continues singing:

PREACHER
Leaning! Leaning! Leaning on the everlasting
arms!
(seductively)
Children!

CLOSER MOVING SHOT -- PREACHER

We start moving before he does. LOW CAMERA; full figure. We TILT to frame him from the waist downward and follow close behind him. As he leaves the tree and walks along the side of the house; we TILT DOWNWARD and CLOSE IN, to follow only his feet; he steps past a tiny cellar window and we PAN and TIGHTEN IN CLOSE ON IT, into--

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL

Their noses are flat against the glass; their cheeks touch; their window isn't quite big enough to hold both their heads. It is on the ground; we don't see their chins. They look towards the departed PREACHER.

PREACHER'S VOICE (o.s.)

Chill-dren?

PEARL, who is on the side PREACHER has left by, turns her head towards JOHN.

INT. CELLAR -- MEDIUM CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL

They are standing on a coal heap, faces at the window.

PEARL

John, why do we have to hide?

JOHN has taken charge. He speaks very quietly, but calmly and cheerfully, as to an invalid. He starts down the rustling coal-heap, helping PEARL down.

JOHN

Careful.

The following dialogue as they climb down, making as little noise as possible. We PULL slowly away.

PEARL

Where's Mom?

JOHN

She's gone to Moundsville.

PEARL

To see Dad?

JOHN

Yes, I reckon that's it.

They have achieved the cellar floor.

PREACHER'S VOICE

(more peremptorily outside)

Children!

During the following dialogue we hear, o.s., the opening of a door, and PREACHER's footsteps indoors as he crosses floor, climbs stairs, and opens another door.

JOHN

Someone is after us, Pearl.

PEARL

I want to go upstairs. It's cold and spidery down here. I'm hungry.

JOHN

Now, listen to me, Pearl. You and me is runnin' off tonight.

PEARL

Why?

JOHN

If we stay here, somethin' awful will happen to us.

PEARL

Won't Daddy Powell take care of us?

JOHN

No, that's just it. No.

FULL SHOT -- A ROOM UPSTAIRS
PREACHER looks under a bed.

RESUME CELLAR -- TWO-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

PEARL

Where are we goin', John?

JOHN

Somewheres. I don't know yet.

O.s., PREACHER's footsteps come down stairs; JOHN leads PEARL carefully past a rake, a hoe, and a shelf-prop and they crouch down into --

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL

... beside an apple barrel. PREACHER's footsteps cross kitchen, o.s.

PEARL

I'm hungry, John.

JOHN

We'll steal somethin' to eat.

PEARL

It'll spoil our supper.

PREACHER'S VOICE (o.s.)

Pearl?

Both look sharp towards cellar door o.s.

THE CELLAR DOOR -- THE CHILDREN'S VIEWPOINT

The door opens; PREACHER'S head, carrying a candle in holder, a white-washed wall and stairs are lighted.

PREACHER'S VOICE

I hear you whisperin', children, so I know
you're down there. I can feel myself gettin'
awful mad, children.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

PEARL

(whispering)

John...

JOHN claps his hand over her mouth.

CELLAR DOOR

PREACHER'S VOICE

My patience has run out, children. I'm comin'
to find you now.

He clop-clops nearly to the bottom of the stairs. ICEY's voice cuts
cheerfully across his descent.

ICEY

(calling o.s.)

Yoo-Hooooo! Mis-ter Paow-welll!

He goes up the stairs and vanishes. Light on wall through open door to
kitchen.

ICEY'S VOICE

Just a little hot supper I fixed for you and
the children.

PREACHER'S VOICE

Bless you, bless you!

ICEY'S VOICE

And how are the children?

PREACHER'S VOICE

They're down there playin' games in the cellar
and they won't mind me when I call 'em. I'm at
my wit's end, Miz Spoon.

ICEY clucks her tongue o.s.

ICEY'S VOICE

(yelling)

John: Pearl:

She appears at head of stairs. Her voice crackles with authority.

ICEY

John! Pearl! Shake a leg!

She claps her hands smartly.

FULL SHOT -- THE KITCHEN -- OVER ICEY

ICEY
(continuing)
I won't have you worrying poor Mister Powell
another minute.

A short pause; then the children, covered with coal-dust, emerge into the light and climb the stairs. JOHN's head is hung in defeat. As they enter the kitchen, we PULL BACK.

ICEY
Just look at you! Dust and filth from top to
toe!

GROUP SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, OVER PREACHER AND ICEY

ICEY
Want me to take 'em up and wash 'em good?

PREACHER
Thank you, no. Thank you, dear Icey. I'll tend
to them. Thank you.

ICEY pats JOHN's head.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

ICEY'S VOICE
Don't be too hard on 'em, Reverend. Poor
motherless children.

JOHN looks to PEARL and we PAN HER IN as PREACHER's hand named LOVE moves through her locks. We PAN with PREACHER and ICEY as they move towards the door.

ICEY
Remember now, Mister Powell, don't be afraid to
call on us. Good night.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He watches ICEY leave, o.s.

PREACHER (o.s.)
Good night, Miz Spoon, and thank you again.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER AND ICEY
ICEY goes away along path outside. PREACHER, his back to us, watches her a moment, then turns.

PREACHER
Weren't you afraid, my little lambs, down there
in all that dark?

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN
Wondering what to do next.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE SHOT -- BIRDIE, OVER BESS'S PICTURE

We begin with HEAD CLOSE-UP of BIRDIE as he rocks, and PULL BACK. He is rocking; and drunk. A bottle stands beside the picture. He turns and speaks to the picture.

BIRDIE

They'll think it was me! They'll think it was
old Uncle Birdie.

CLOSE SHOT -- BIRDIE -- NEW ANGLE

His hands grip the edge of the chest on either side of the picture, which we now see.

BIRDIE

If you'd o' seen it, Bess! I'm drunk as a lord
and I know it, but...

INSERT -- BESS'S PICTURE

BIRDIE'S VOICE

(o.s., continuing)

Sweet Heaven, if you'd o' seen it!

RESUME PREVIOUS SHOT

BIRDIE picks up the bottle. His hand and the liquor tremble.

BIRDIE

(continuing)

Down there in the deep place... her hair wavin'
lazy and soft like meadow grass under flood
waters, and that slit in her throat, just
like she had an extry mouth.

INSERT -- BESS'S PICTURE

BIRDIE'S VOICE (o.s.)

And there ain't a mortal human I can tell but
you...

RESUME PREVIOUS SHOT

BIRDIE

(continuing)

... Bess, for if I go to the Law, they'll hang
it on to me.

The bottle falls from his hand onto its side on the edge of the chest.

CLOSE SHOT -- BIRDIE -- NEW ANGLE

The reverse angle of the opening shot. BIRDIE rocks heavily; liquor gurgles from bottle to floor.

BIRDIE

Sweet heavens, save poor old Uncle Birdie.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

MEDIUM THREE-SHOT -- PREACHER, JOHN, PEARL

PREACHER sits at head of table. JOHN stands to PREACHER's right, around corner of table. He remains expressionless and immobile until he speaks. PEARL stands to JOHN's right, hugging the DOLL. The table is loaded with good food. PREACHER, well-fed and at leisure, dabs his mouth delicately with his napkin, folds it, puts it in a ring, and folds his hands. He waits.

PEARL
(at last)
I'm hungry.

PREACHER
Why, sure. And there's fried chicken and
candied sweets and cornsticks and apple
cobbler!

PEARL
Can I have my supper, please?

PREACHER
Naturally.

PEARL
Can I have milk too?

PREACHER
Yes. But, first of all, we'll have a little
talk.

PEARL frowns and puts her finger in her mouth; she remembers he twisted her arm.

PREACHER
(softly)
About our secrets.

PEARL
No.

PREACHER
Why, pray tell?

PEARL
Because John said I mustn't.

THREE SHOT REVERSE -- PREACHER, OVER NECKS OF CHILDREN
He slaps the table; his eyes crackle.

PREACHER
NEVER--MIND--WHAT--JOHN--SAID!

PEARL starts to snivel.

PREACHER
John is a meddler. Stop sniveling. Looky here

a minute!

He brings out the knife.

PREACHER
Know what this is?

PEARL shakes her head for no.

PREACHER
Want to see something cute? Looky now!

He touches the spring; the blade flicks open.

PREACHER
How about that! This is what I use on
meddlers.

He lays the open knife on the table.

PREACHER
John might be a meddler.

THREE SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, OVER PREACHER
PEARL thinks the knife is a toy and crosses behind JOHN to pick it up.

PREACHER
NO -- no, my lamb. Don't touch it! Now, don't
touch my knife! That makes me mad. Very, very
mad.

She hugs the DOLL and he puts the hand named LOVE on her curls.

PREACHER
Just tell me now; where's the money hid?

PEARL
(affectionately)
But I swore. I promised John I wouldn't tell.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER
JOHN--DOESN'T--MATTER! Can't I get that
through your head, you poor silly, disgusting
little wretch!

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- PEARL
Her mouth quivers; a large tear brims in her eyes.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER
There now! You made me lose my temper!

THREE SHOT -- CHILDREN, OVER PREACHER

PREACHER
I'm sorry! I'm real sorry!

PEARL snuffles and wipes here eyes with her free fist.

PREACHER
Now! Where's it hid, honey?

JOHN
(suddenly and lightly)
I'll tell.

THREE SHOT -- PREACHER, OVER NAPES OF CHILDREN

PREACHER
(lightly)
I thought I told you to keep your mouth shut--

JOHN
(light and quick)
NO -- it ain't fair to make Pearl tell when she
swore she wouldn't. I'll tell.

PREACHER's eyes crinkle and he turns to PEARL, smiling brightly.

PREACHER
(chuckling)
Well, I declare! Sometimes I think poor John
will make it to Heaven yet!

His eyes snap back to JOHN and his voice is like a whip.

PREACHER
All right, boy: where's the money?

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN

JOHN
In the cellar; buried under a stone in the
floor.

THREE SHOT -- PREACHER, OVER CHILDREN
He closes and pockets the knife. His eyes never leave JOHN's.

PREACHER
It'll go hard, boy, if I find you're lyin'.

THREE SHOT -- CHILDREN, OVER PREACHER
PEARL gapes up at JOHN as he speaks.

JOHN
I ain't lyin'. Go look for yourself.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER
... as he gets up, cellar door in BACKGROUND.

PREACHER

All right...

He turns towards the door; then glances around.

PREACHER
Come along.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN

JOHN
What?

THREE SHOT -- PREACHER, OVER CHILDREN

PREACHER
Go ahead of me -- the both of you.

They cross him towards the door.

FULL SHOT -- THE CELLAR STEPS -- FROM THE BOTTOM

The CHILDREN precede PREACHER, who carries a candle in holder. PEARL is gaping at JOHN's lie. JOHN is looking left and right, casing the joint.

PREACHER
(continuing)
You don't reckon I'd leave you?

JOHN
(with forced lightness)
Don't you believe me?

PREACHER
(sardonically)
Why sure, boy, sure.

Now they are at the bottom of the stairs. JOHN sees PEARL's expression and takes her hand.

PREACHER
Now, where, boy? Mind; no tricks. I can't
abide liars.

JOHN
Yonder.

He squeezes PEARL's hand harder, and points.

FULL SHOT -- NEW ANGLE -- OVER THE THREE

JOHN points out a place beneath a shelf laden with Mason jars; it is at the most distant part of the cellar from the stairs. PREACHER starts toward it, leaving them at foot of stairs, then turns, catching JOHN's ruse.

PREACHER
(sardonic)
O no you don't!

He shepherds them ahead of him.

THREE SHOT -- NEW ANGLE
They arrive beneath the shelf.

PREACHER
Now: where?

JOHN
(lying magnificently; meeting
Preacher's eyes)
Under the stone in the floor.

PREACHER sets the candle on a barrel near the shelf-prop and sinks to his knees below shot as PEARL gapes up at JOHN and JOHN looks stony. She seems about to speak.

FLASH INSERT -- JOHN SQUEEZES PEARL'S HAND HARD

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER, FEATURING FLOOR
His hands sweep dust and expose concrete. He straightens on his knees and turns to the CHILDREN in close BACKGROUND.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- PREACHER
... as he turns.

PREACHER
This is concrete.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN
A moment's silence.

PEARL
John made a Sin. John told a lie.

THREE-SHOT -- FAVORING PREACHER
PREACHER gets slowly to his feet and puts on his "listening" look. His sincerity is beyond doubt.

PREACHER
The Lord's a-talkin' to me now. He's a-sayin',
"a liar is an abomination before mine eyes."

He takes his knife out, and springs it open.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- FAVORING JOHN

PREACHER
Speak, boy: where's it hid?

The knife pricks the flesh under JOHN's ear.

PREACHER
Speak, before I cut your throat and leave you
to drip like a hog hung up in butcherin' time.

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL
She starts to sob.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PREACHER

JOHN
Pearl, shut up! Pearl, you swore!

PREACHER
You could save him, little bird.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- PEARL

PEARL
(crying)
Inside my doll! Inside my doll!

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PREACHER, FAVORING PREACHER
PREACHER is astounded. His hands fall away from JOHN. He leans back against the wall and talks through laughter.

PREACHER
In the doll! Why, sure! Sure!

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN
His eyes are all over the place.

PREACHER'S VOICE (o.s.)
The last place anyone would look!

THREE-SHOT -- PREACHER, JOHN, PEARL
PREACHER makes a lunge across JOHN for the doll; JOHN, ducking under his arm, pulls PEARL forward with his left hand; he turns backwards and with his free hand, in one movement, knocks over the candle and pulls out the support on the shelf.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER
Jars shower over him; one crown hits him and breaks, shedding gunk, which he wipes from his eyes.

TWO SHOT -- THE CHILDREN
They start up the stairs.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER
He makes one step forward, steps on a rolling jar and falls.

TWO SHOT -- THE CHILDREN
They are near the top of the stairs. We hear PREACHER below them. JOHN slips and they nearly fall backward. As JOHN recovers, PREACHER enters the shot, his back to us. The children get through the open door as PREACHER reaches the top. JOHN slams the door, catching PREACHER's hand. PREACHER screams. JOHN's astonished eyes peer through the crack in the door; the door loosens; PREACHER yanks his hand loose and sucks it, groaning; the door slams to; the bolt is shot home.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- PREACHER
... over sound of slamming bolt. He snarls like the Big Bad Wolf.

All the above happens at once.

INT. KITCHEN -- CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL, BY DOOR
PEARL, dangling her doll, cries. JOHN, panting, leans against wall by door.
JOHN is wondering what to do now. Pause.

PREACHER'S VOICE
(o.s., sweetly)
Chill-dren? The only reason I wanted that
money is so's you could have it.

JOHN
(to himself, panting)
The river. That's the only where! Uncle Birdie
Steptoe!

PREACHER'S VOICE
(cooing)
Puhr-urrl? Want your Mommy back?

Pearl hugs her doll.

PREACHER'S VOICE
Want me to get her right now?

PEARL
(sharply)
John?

JOHN
Hush, Pearl. Come on.

They fly out of the house.

PREACHER'S VOICE
(bellowing, as they go)
OPEN THAT DOOR, YOU SPAWN OF THE DEVIL'S OWN
STRUMPET!

FRAMING SHOT -- EXT. HARPER HOUSE

A pretty, pastoral shot of the house in light mist, as they run across and
leave the shot. Before they disappear, we hear PREACHER's fists hammering
against the door. We stay on the house at leisure; we hear him lunging,
shoulder to door; we begin to hear squeaking of hinges and splintering of
wood.

FULL CIRCLE SHOT -- FRAMING BIRDIE'S WHARF-BOAT

An ultra-romantic image of shelter and peace. Frogs or river noises o.s.,
then the rattle of running footsteps. The CHILDREN enter, their backs to us,
sprinting towards the boat. Light mist as in previous shot.

JOHN
(calling)
Uncle Birdie! Uncle Birdie!

INT. BIRDIE'S BOAT -- GROUP SHOT -- BIRDIE AND CHILDREN

We shoot over BESS's turned photograph and over BIRDIE close, passed out in
his rocker. The CHILDREN run through open door in BACKGROUND and JOHN runs up

to BIRDIE.

JOHN
Uncle Birdie!

CLOSE SHOT -- BIRDIE

BIRDIE
(gesturing feebly)
Don't!

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- NEW ANGLE -- BIRDIE, OVER JOHN

JOHN
Hide us, Uncle Birdie! He's a-comin' with his
knife!

He grabs BIRDIE's shoulder; BIRDIE half-rises, and falls face down on floor.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- BIRDIE ON FLOOR, OVER JOHN

JOHN
It's me! John Harper and Pearl! You said to
come a-runnin' if we needed you!

BIRDIE rears on one elbow and looks up at him.

BIRDIE
(in friendly recognition)
Johnny!

He falls face down again.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- NEW ANGLE -- FAVORING JOHN
JOHN grabs BIRDIE by one ear, turning his face up.

JOHN
Uncle -- Birdie! Oh -- please! Please, wake
up!

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- FAVORING BIRDIE
He looks up earnestly at JOHN.

BIRDIE
I never done it, boy. Sweet Heaven, I never
done such a terrible thing! I'll swear on the
Book to it, boy! I never done it! I never!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He is lost; and he becomes a man.

BIRDIE'S VOICE (o.s.)
Lord save poor old Uncle Birdie Steptoe that
never hurt a fly!

He snores softly.

JOHN
(quiet)
There's still the river. The skiff is down by
the willows.

He masterfully takes PEARL by the hand and leads her into the night.

LONG SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

We shoot from the river. They struggle through the sumac and pokeberry weeds at edge of river, towards skiff, whose prow, tethered to willow, we see throughout this unmoving shot, at our extreme right. When they come opposite skiff -- which is a few yards out from shore --

WE CUT TO

TWO-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

PEARL, frankly bored, dangling her doll, is yawning. JOHN, as he finishes undoing the rope from a willow root, looks up and around, checking on pursuit. His eyes fix.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER'S SHADOW

On the bank above, it is huge in the mist. Same camera position as foregoing; new angle.

TWO-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

BACK view: skiff in BACKGROUND. Same camera position; new angle.

JOHN
(whispering)
Please be quiet-- Oh, please, Pearl!

PEARL
(natural voice)
John, where are we g--

JOHN
Hush.

FULL SHOT -- SHADOW, THEN PREACHER

Same position and angle as before. PREACHER's own figure advances to supplant his shadow. He peers downward, his open knife catching the light.

PREACHER
(businesslike)
Children?

He starts slashing his way through the brush-filth.

FULL SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

Same camera position as before. They are floundering through mud, half-way to the skiff.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER

Same position and angle as in previous shot of him. He is half-way down the bank. With his knife, he hacks at an entangling vine.

FULL SHOT -- THE CHILDREN

Position and angle as before. They reach the skiff. Hacking sounds, o.s.

JOHN
Get in the skiff, Pearl, goodness, goodness,
hurry!

PEARL
(hesitant)
That's Daddy!

He picks her up and throws her into the skiff.

CLOSE SHOT -- PEARL AND DOLL
... as they land, sprawling, in bottom of skiff among fish-heads and bait
cans. JOHN gets in after them.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER -- CHILDREN'S VIEWPOINT
He tears free of brush to edge of river, knife glittering.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
With his oar, he tries to push the boat free of mud.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER -- CHILDREN'S VIEWPOINT
He wades toward them, knee-deep in mud.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He is shoving at the oar even more desperately.

INSERT -- JOHN'S HANDS
Straining.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER -- CHILDREN'S VIEWPOINT
He flounders deeper and more heavily through the mud; much closer.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He pushes the boat free of mud.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER -- CHILDREN'S VIEWPOINT
He hurries much closer through shallow water. Prow of boat in FOREGROUND.

PREACHER
Wait, you little whelps! Wait!

Another step forward and he does a pratt-fall and makes a splash.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN -- PEARL IN BACKGROUND
He is trying to feather the boat out to where the current will catch it. In
panic and haste he is clumsy.

JOHN
Why can't I do it when I know how to do it!

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER
... as he gets up at edge of mud.

PREACHER
Wait! Wait! I'll slit your guts!

FULL DOWN SHOT -- THE SKIFF, THEN PREACHER

The current catches it and spins it round like a leaf. JOHN's efforts with the oars are useless. PREACHER enters, wading fast. His hands are within an inch of reaching the helpless skiff; capriciously the current takes it downstream.

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL

The skiff is taken steadily by the current. PEARL sits up, doll in arms. JOHN is almost asleep with exhaustion.

FULL SHOT -- THE SKIFF, OVER PREACHER

It is well away from him and getting smaller. Waist-deep, he wades a couple of steps after it, then just looks.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- PREACHER

He begins a steady, rhythmical, animal scream of outrage and loss.

LONG SHOT -- THE RIVER AND LANDSCAPE

Featuring starlight; and the drifting boat -- PEARL in stern.

TWO-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN -- FRONT ON

JOHN is asleep. PEARL sits sleepily whispering to her doll.

PEARL

Once upon a time there was a pretty fly, and he had a wife, this pretty fly...

MEDIUM LONG SHOT -- THE DRIFTING BOAT, THROUGH FIREFLIES

PEARL'S VOICE (o.s.)

...and one day she flew away, and then one night his two pretty fly children...

SPECIAL SHOT -- THE MOVING SKIFF, THROUGH DEW-JEWELED SPIDER-WEB

PEARL'S VOICE (o.s.)

...flew away too, into the sky, into the moon...

SPECIAL SHOT -- A FROG, AND SKIFF

A big frog is profiled; the skiff drifts by in distance; the frog twangs out a bass note.

DISSOLVE TO

INSERT -- A PICTURE POSTCARD -- A COUNTY COURTHOUSE

As the card is turned to the handwritten side we

CUT TO

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- WALT AND ICEY

WALT

(reading aloud)

Dear Walt and Icey: I bet you been worried and gave us up for lost. Took the kids down here

with me for a visit to my sister Elsie's farm.
That a little change of scenery would do us all
a world of good after so much trouble and
heartache. At least the kids will get plenty
of good home cooking. Your devoted Harry Powell

ICEY

Now ain't you relieved, Walt?

WALT

Sure, but you was worried too, Mother; takin'
off with never a word of goodbye. I even got to
figurin' those gypsies busted in and done off
with all three of 'em.

ICEY

You and your gypsies! They been gone a week!

WALT

Not before one of 'em knifed a farmer and stole
his horse. Never caught the gypsies nor the
horse.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

DESCENDING HELICOPTER SHOT -- THE RIVER -- DAY

A man is going along a river lane on horseback. It is PREACHER; he walks the
horse away from us.

DISSOLVE TO

DESCENDING HELICOPTER SHOT -- ANOTHER BEND OF THE RIVER

We descend to a poor riverside farmhouse; JOHN and PEARL tether a boat in
front of it.

GROUP SHOT (FROM GROUND) -- THREE HOMELESS CHILDREN, OVER JOHN AND PEARL
They are eating hot boiled potatoes. A glance at JOHN and PEARL, and they
turn away towards lane in BACKGROUND. JOHN and PEARL proceed towards the
house.

MEDIUM SHOT -- JOHN, PEARL, WOMAN, THROUGH DOOR

We shoot from within open door of kitchen. JOHN and PEARL advance to edge of
porch. A TIRED FARM WOMAN stands by the door within. We shoot OVER her.

TIRED FARM WOMAN

Hungry, I s'pose. Well, I'll see if there's
any more potatoes to spare. Where's your
folks?

JOHN

Ain't got none.

Woman leaves shot briefly (we HOLD on CHILDREN). She re-enters and goes to
them with a bowl of steaming potatoes. They take hands-ful and make to eat.

TIRED FARM WOMAN

Go 'way; go 'way.

They turn and walk towards boat. She looks after them.

TIRED FARM WOMAN

Such times, when youngins run the roads!

She leaves the SHOT. We frame them briefly, walking away, then:

DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE SHOT -- A PLACARD -- NIGHT

It is lit by firelight. It reads:

PEACH-PICKERS WANTED

WEEKLY HIRE

PREACHER'S VOICE (o.s.)

An ungrateful child is an abomination...

LAP DISSOLVE TO

GROUP SHOT -- PREACHER AND MEN

PREACHER stands behind the flames; in FOREGROUND an OLD MAN sits profiled on a box. Other workers, all men, sit around fire.

PREACHER

(continuing)

...before the eyes of God. The world is fast going to damnation because of impudent youngins a-flyin' in the face of Age.

Short silence as the other men look at PREACHER without liking. Then the old man spits into the fire.

CLOSE SHOT -- THE FLAMES

A spurt of steam as spit strikes.

CLOSE SHOT -- A HOOT OWL

... hooting.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE SHOT -- A TURTLE -- NOONDAY

He comes down to water.

JOHN'S VOICE (o.s.)

They make soup out of them...

LONG SHOT -- THE CHILDREN IN PASSING SKIFF

Full landscape in BACKGROUND.

JOHN

(continuing)

... but I wouldn't know how to go about gettin' him open.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

LONG SHOT -- CHILDREN AND SKIFF, OVER RABBITS IN GRASS
We shoot over two sitting rabbits as they watch, their ears up. The skiff passes. PEARL plays with doll; JOHN unsnarls line.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- THE CHILDREN AND SKIFF, FRAMED BY WILLOWS -- TWILIGHT
The skiff passes. Baa-ing of sheep o.s.

MOVING SHOT -- FROM RIVER -- A SHEEP
The sheep bleats. We PAN in a big barn near the river, then a lighted house; willows along shore.

FULL SHOT -- THE SKIFF -- FROM THE BANK
JOHN re-sets his oar. They angle towards us for the shore.

JOHN
We're gonna spend a night on land.

UP-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, OVER THE MOORED SKIFF
... they reach top of the bank. Corner of barn and lighted window in BACKGROUND. Sounds of mouth-organ and girl singing o.s.

FULL SHOT -- A LIGHTED WINDOW, THE SHADE DRAWN
A wire bird-cage hangs close to the shade, silhouetted. On the perch, a canary. Lullaby and mouth-organ continue o.s. After a moment, the CHILDREN enter, backs to us, and stop, looking.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- THE CHILDREN
Window-light on faces, song over. A moment.

PEARL
Are we goin' home, John?

JOHN
Ssh...

He turns, her hand in his. We PAN as they tiptoe towards the big, open door of barn; big open hayloft window above.

INT. ROOM -- LOW TRACKING SHOT -- THE CHILDREN
As they walk down aisle of barn, we shoot them past bellies and legs of row of cows. Sounds of munching and soft lowing o.s. JOHN helps PEARL up a little ladder to the hayloft.

MEDIUM SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, WINDOW -- TWILIGHT
... as the CHILDREN bed down in hay, only legs visible, protruding into frame of window, which frames a middle-distant white lane beyond house, and a landscape. Whippoorwill o.s. A darkening of light.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

SAME SET-UP
A full moon is half-risen. Whippoorwill o.s.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

SAME SET-UP

The moon is well above the horizon. Whippoorwill o.s.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

SAME SET-UP

The moon is still higher. A pause; the whippoorwill stops in mid-phrase. Brief pause; then JOHN sits up into silhouette.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

He listens intently. We hear nothing. His eyes alter. We hear, distantly

PREACHER'S VOICE

(o.s., singing)

Leaning, Leaning ...

At various distances o.s., we hear dogs barking at the sound of the singing.

PREACHER'S VOICE

(continuing; louder)

... safe and secure from all alarms;

[LANE]

The dog from the farm rushes braying to his gate. Other dogs continue o.s. PREACHER appears astride his walking horse, singing.

PREACHER

Leaning...

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

Watching dread and despair. Sounds go.

PREACHER (o.s.)

Leaning; Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER

He approaches and crosses center screen, continuing the hymn. (We do not PAN with him; he crosses the frame of the great window.)

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

Eyes following PREACHER. PREACHER and dogs continue o.s.

JOHN

(to himself)

Don't you never sleep?

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER

He vanishes beyond trees, his singing more distant. Dogs continue.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL -- NEW ANGLE

He wakes her. PREACHER's singing o.s.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER

He vanishes; scuttling of CHILDREN in hay, o.s.; dogs quiet; his song dies. Brief silence. The whippoorwill resumes.

MEDIUM LONG SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, NEAR BARN
Hand in hand, they hurry out of barn and, as we PAN, along its side, towards
River, o.s. Whippoorwill o.s.

FULL SHOT -- A BRIGHT FULL MOON
The whippoorwill's singing continues o.s.

FULL SHOT -- CHILDREN AND SKIFF
JOHN steers through turbulent moonlit water. Whippoorwill continues. Low
moon.

CLOSE SHOT -- A FOX, BARKING

CLOSE DOWN-SHOT -- CHILDREN ASLEEP IN SKIFF (TANK)
Blank, calm water; the skiff enters and passes full length below us, the
CHILDREN asleep in it; blank water again; again the fox barks.

MEDIUM SHOT -- THE SKIFF, DRIFTING SHOT, THROUGH RIVERSIDE GRASS
Crickets o.s. The skiff nears a sand-bar.

INSERT -- THE PROW, GROUNDING
The prow softly grates against sand.

MEDIUM SHOT -- THE GROUNDED SKIFF, AGAIN THROUGH GRASS
Crickets fainter. TILTING UPWARD.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- THE STARLIT SKY

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- RIVER LANDSCAPE -- SUNRISE
Distant; medium; the near; roosters crow o.s.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN WAKING
He looks to PEARL o.s.

FULL SHOT -- PEARL, THEN RACHEL, OVER JOHN
PEARL is picking daisies. A fence up beyond her. Beyond the fence, a woman,
RACHEL COOPER, appears. She carries a berry-basket on her arm. JOHN
scrambles up, grabs an oar, and holds it defensively. PEARL freezes.

RACHEL
(loud)
You two youngsters get up here to me this
instant!

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND PEARL -- RACHEL'S ANGLE

RACHEL (o.s.)
Mind me now!

JOHN lowers the oar at the female authority in her voice.

RACHEL (o.s.)

Now git on up to my house.

They hesitate.

THREE-SHOT -- OVER JOHN

RACHEL

I'll get me a willow switch!

They still hesitate. She breaks off a switch and comes for them, squishing through the mud. She surrounds them and drives them like geese up the bank.

LOW FULL SHOT -- THE THREE, FROM SIDE

They move across the meadow like a nursery frieze. She tweaks with her switch. As she goes near PEARL's calves, JOHN turns.

JOHN

Don't you hurt her!

RACHEL

Hurt her nothin'! Wash her's more like it!

(hand to mouth, yelling)

Ruby!

FULL SHOT -- A TOMATO PATCH

Three crouching figures pick tomatoes beyond a low white fence; Rachel's house in BACKGROUND. RUBY, thirteen, pops her head up like a rifle-target.

RACHEL (o.s.)

Clary!

CLARY, eleven, pops up.

RACHEL (o.s.)

Mary!

MARY, four, pops up.

THE GIRLS

(in chorus)

Yes, Miz Cooper!

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND HARPERS, MOVING TOWARDS FENCE

She has JOHN and PEARL by their napes.

RACHEL

Bring yer baskets.

The three girls enter, their backs to us, carrying baskets of tomatoes.

GROUP SHOT -- THE GIRLS, OVER RACHEL AND HARPER CHILDREN

She holds JOHN and PEARL very firmly, inspecting baskets across gate of fence.

RACHEL

Nicely picked, Clary. Mary; put the big ones on top. Ruby, most o' them ain't fit to go to

market. Put them baskets down. Ruby, fetch the washtub and put it by the pump. Mary, Clary, fetch me a bar o' laundry soap and the scrub brush.

GIRLS
(in chorus)
Yes, Miz Cooper!

They hurry off.

RACHEL
Come on, now; up to the house.

She opens the gate, pushes the Harper children through, shuts the gate, and walks between them, her back to us. The CHILDREN hesitate. She turns to them and stops.

THREE -SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, OVER RACHEL
She looks them up and down. If we saw her face, her lips would be pursed and working with anger.

RACHEL
Gracious! If you hain't a sight to beat all!
Where you from?

No answer; their eyes are wide with curiosity.

RACHEL
Where's your folks?

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

RACHEL (o.s.)
Speak up now!

His eyes go down to her feet. He, and we, start to examine her from foot to head; for this is our heroine at last.

CLOSE TILTING SHOT -- RACHEL
... from JOHN's eye-level. We TILT SLOWLY UP her height. She wears man's shoes, heavy with mud; a rough skirt; a shapeless sweater hangs over her shoulders; she is in her middle sixties and wears a man's old hat. Her face says:

RACHEL
(sort of roughly)
Gracious! So I've got two more mouths to feed!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
For no reason at all he feels he has come home.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

GROUP SHOT -- JOHN, PEARL, RACHEL, RUBY, DURING WASHING
RACHEL mercilessly scrubs JOHN; JOHN doesn't like it; RUBY washes PEARL with

a cloth.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

Hating the scrubbing. He breaks away.

FULL SHOT -- JOHN AND RACHEL

JOHN dodges behind a bush, RACHEL in hot pursuit.

CLOSE SHOT -- THE BUSH; RACHEL

RACHEL's head bobs up and down above the bush; we hear the unmistakable hand of a female hand on the child's bottom.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- A SHELF

Full of market baskets, neatly covered with damp muslin.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- THE CARRIED BASKETS, IN MOTION

EXT. MOUNDSVILLE STREET -- TRACKING SHOT -- RACHEL AND HER BROOD

All carry baskets. RACHEL charges along at the head of the procession. A CATTLE DEALER strolls the other way.

CATTLE DEALER

Howdy, Miz Cooper -- you goin' to sell me yer hog this year?

RACHEL doesn't stop walking.

RACHEL

With the price o' pork what it is?

CLOSE TRACKING SHOT -- RACHEL

She keeps walking.

RACHEL

(talking to herself)

I'm butcherin' my hog myself, smokin' the hams, and cannin' the sausage.

(she calls to the children

over her shoulder)

You-all have your work cut out!

CLOSE TRACKING TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND CLARY IN MID-PROCESSION

JOHN

She talks to herself.

CLARY

All the time.

JOHN

Your Maw's funny.

CLARY

She ain't our Maw. We just live at her house.

They walk in silence.

JOHN
Where's your folks?

CLARY
Some place.

MARY
My Daddy's in Dee-troit.

JOHN
(to Ruby)
Who's your folks?

RUBY
I dunno.

FULL SHOT -- THE STREET

A WAITRESS, wearing an apron labeled EMPIRE EATS, hurries across the street towards the GROUP. We PAN her into MARY. The procession halts briefly. She embraces MARY.

WAITRESS
Mary! Honey!
(to Rachel)
Mornin', Miz Cooper.
(to Mary)
Guess what! I'm savin' up to buy ye a charm bracelet!

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

RACHEL
Never mind the geegaws; don't you miss your visit this Sunday; and come to Church with us.

FULL STREET SHOT

The WAITRESS hurries away. She dodges past a car.

WAITRESS
See ye Sunday, love!

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

She follows WAITRESS, then LOVERS in car, with her eyes.

FULL STREET SHOT

The car CENTERS, held up in traffic; two lovers in it, sitting close.

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

She takes in the LOVERS.

RACHEL
Women is durn fools! All of 'em!

She sighs, angry at all women, herself included, and turns away. We are at the door of a GROCERY STORE. The GROCER is on his doorstep.

FULL SHOT -- GROUP AND GROCERY

RACHEL
(to children)
Take yer baskets in.

The CHILDREN file in past her and GROCER.

RACHEL
(to Grocer)
Looky there.
(she indicates the lovers)
She'll be losin' her mind to a tricky mouth and
a full moon, and like as not I'll be saddled
with the consequences.

She starts into store with the GROCER.

INT. STORE -- GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL, GROCER, CHILDREN
RACHEL and GROCER come up to counter. She takes a list from her bosom and gives it to the GROCER.

RACHEL
Here's what you owe me.
(she counts baskets)
One, two, three, four, five... where's the
other basket? Where's Ruby?

CLARY
She went.

RACHEL
John, you go fetch Ruby.

JOHN goes. As GROCER empties baskets and tots up, RACHEL continues:

RACHEL
Big Ruby's my problem girl. She can't gather
eggs without bustin' 'em; but Ruby's got mother
hands with a youngin, so what're you to say?

EXT. DRUG STORE -- FULL SHOT -- RUBY
She stands with her market-basket, reacting to wolf whistles o.s.; she is seeking the world.

THREE-SHOT -- RUBY, OVER TWO YOUNG LOAFERS

1ST LOAFER
How 'bout tonight, Ruby?

RUBY gestures RACHEL's nearness.

2ND LOAFER
(to 1st)

What gives?

1ST LOAFER
The Old Lady's around.
(to Ruby)
How 'bout Thursday?

RUBY nods.

1ST LOAFER
(to 2nd)
The old gal thinks she comes in fer sewin'
lessons o' Thursday.

FULL SHOT -- RUBY; JOHN IN BACKGROUND

JOHN
(calling)
Miz Cooper wants you.

He turns and goes; RUBY, with an eye to 1ST LOAFER, turns and follows.

INT. GROCERY STORE -- GROUP SHOT -- CENTERING RACHEL

GROCER
(to Pearl)
And will you show me your dolly, little lady?

JOHN has entered in BACKGROUND. PEARL holds the doll to her, and JOHN moves in quietly by her side. They stand together, as so often before.

GROCER
See ye got two more peeps to your brood.

RACHEL
Yeah, and ornerier than the rest.

GROCER
How's your own boy, Miz Cooper?

RACHEL
Ain't heard from Ralph since last Christmas.
Don't matter -- I've got a new crop.
(she laughs, loudly)
I'm a strong tree with branches for many birds.
I'm good for something in this old world and I
know it, too!

We know that she will rout the Devil.

GROCER
(a good tradesman)
Got a good buy in soap, Miz Cooper.

RACHEL
(triumphant)
Don't need no soap. I'm boilin' down the fat

from my hog.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. RACHEL'S SCREENED PORCH - EVENING - GROUP SHOT-RACHEL, GIRLS, JOHN ASIDE CENTERING RACHEL as she takes a book from table, and the GIRLS move to set at her seat, and JOHN stands to one side. RACHEL glances at him.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

He looks suspiciously to the Book in her hands, for to him it has come to mean only Preacher.

INSERT -- THE BIBLE

... as she opens it on her lap o.s. we hear a screen door open.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL, CHILDREN, JOHN IN BACKGROUND

We see the door closing as JOHN goes out. The GIRLS sit on low stools in semi-circle at RACHEL's feet. We CENTER RACHEL. RACHEL, keenly aware of JOHN, pretends to ignore him. JOHN crosses behind her and stands with his back to us. RACHEL, changing her mind about what story to tell, finds the new page she's after, and spreads her hands flat on the pages. She never glances at the text. She is fishing for JOHN.

RACHEL

Now old Pharaoh, he was the King of Egyptland!
And he had a daughter, and once upon a time...

(louder)

... she was walkin' along the river bank and
she seen somethin' bumpin' and scrapin' along
down on a sandbar under the willows.

CLOSE SHOT -- THE BACK OF JOHN'S HEAD -- IMMOBILE

RACHEL (o.s.)

And do you know what it was, children?

RESUME GROUP SHOT

RUBY, CLARY, MARY

(excited)

No!

PEARL

No!

RACHEL

(still loud)

Well, it was a skiff, washed up on the bar.
And who do you reckon was in it?

RUBY

(confidently)

Pearl and John!

RACHEL

(still loud)

Not this time! It was just one youngin -- a

little boy babe. And do you know who he was
children?

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN'S HEAD
... as he turns around.

RUBY, MARY, CLARY, PEARL
(o.s., in unison)
No!

RESUME GROUP SHOT
RACHEL closes the Bible; she knows the Lord's battle is won. As she
continues, she puts aside the book and takes up her mending.

RACHEL
(very quietly)
It was Moses! A King of men, Moses, children.
Now. Off to bed. Hurry.

On "off to bed," JOHN turns his back again.

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL; JOHN IN BACKGROUND
She mends for a few moments.

RACHEL
(commandingly)
John, git me an apple.

JOHN crosses behind her and off, towards door. We hear it open and close.

RACHEL
Git one for yourself, too.

MEDIUM SHOT -- JOHN
he approaches with two apples. We PAN him into a:

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND RACHEL
He gives her an apple. She immediately takes a bite. He doesn't bite his.
She looks at him from her apple.

RACHEL
(suddenly)
John, where's your folks?

JOHN
(plainly)
Dead.

RACHEL
Dead.

She nods with finality. JOHN starts to eat his apple.

RACHEL
Where ye from?

JOHN

Up river.

RACHEL

I didn't figger ye rowed that skiff from Parkersburg!

JOHN makes a move; he slowly and tenderly reaches out his hand and lays his fingers on her knuckles.

JOHN

Tell me that story again.

Our heroine would like to thank the Lord openly, but she knows she must not show her feelings; she speaks gruffly --

RACHEL

Story, honey? Why, what story?

JOHN

About them Kings. That the Queen found down on the sandbar in the skiff that time.

RACHEL

Kings! Why, honey, there was only one.

JOHN

I mind you said there was two.

RACHEL

Well, shoot! Maybe there was!

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

Maybe we see -- though JOHN does not -- the thanksgiving in her eyes.

RACHEL

Yes, come to think of it, there was two, John.

O.s., in distance, we hear the whistle of a river boat.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. MOUNDSVILLE STREET -- EVENING -- MOVING SHOT -- RUBY

Her head and shoulders from behind as she walks down the neon-lighted street; drugstore and loafers in b.g.; jazz music o.s.

FULL SHOT -- RUBY, OVER DRUGSTORE LOAFERS

Our two loafers lounge on bench. RUBY approaches.

2ND LOAFER

(to 1st)

Hey. Must be Thursday.

1ST LOAFER

Here we go.

He gets up and starts towards RUBY, who catches his eye.

RUBY, FROM BEHIND

She turns to a magazine stand and fingers a magazine, awaiting LOAFER, who approaches in BACKGROUND.

INSERT -- RUBY'S HAND; MAGAZINES

They are lurid, tawdry fan and pin-up magazines.

PREACHER enters, between RUBY and LOAFER, and turns to RUBY into CLOSE TWO-SHOT. LOAFER pauses in BACKGROUND.

PREACHER

You're Ruby, ain't you, my child?

RUBY

Can I have this?

PREACHER

Surely. I'd like to talk to you, my dear.

RUBY

Will you buy me a choclit sody?

LOAFERS

Watch out, Preacher! Why, Preacher!

PREACHER

(sternly)

Shet yer dirty mouths!

CLOSE SHOT -- RUBY

She looks up at him admiringly; then to LOAFERS; back to PREACHER.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INT. DRUGSTORE -- CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND RUBY

RUBY is finishing her soda.

RUBY

Ain't I purty?

This is a familiar clue to PREACHER.

PREACHER

Why, you're the purtiest girl I've seen in all my wandering. Didn't nobody never tell you that, Ruby?

RUBY

(hoarsely)

No. No one ever did.

PREACHER

(moving in)

There's two new ones over at your place, ain't there, Ruby?

She nods.

PREACHER
What's their names?

RUBY
Pearl and John.

PREACHER
Ahhh.
(whispering)
And is there -- a doll?

RUBY
(nods)
Only she won't never let me play with it.

PREACHER
Ahh!

He gets up and heads for door. RUBY, dismayed, hurries after him.

PREACHER
(firmly)
Yes!

He strides through door, RUBY following.

THREE-SHOT -- PREACHER AND RUBY ON SIDEWALK, 2ND LOAFER IN B.G.
1ST LOAFER has gone. PREACHER comes out fast, RUBY touches his arm, he turns on her. They are in CLOSE TWO-SHOT. RUBY goes on tiptoe. PREACHER inclines his ear.

CLOSE SHOT -- RUBY

RUBY
Did you ever see such purty eyes in all your
born days?

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

INSERT -- PREACHER'S HAND
It slides into his knife pocket. We hear a click.

2ND LOAFER (o.s.)
Don't let him git away, Sugar!

THREE-SHOT -- PREACHER AND RUBY, LOAFER IN B.G.

RUBY
He ain't like you-all! Next time I won't even
ask him to buy me a sody!

She turns to PREACHER, but PREACHER, on "next time," has left the SHOT.

CLOSE SHOT -- RUBY
She looks after him, clasping the magazine under her chin.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER
Her hero strides away into darkness.

CLOSE SHOT -- RUBY
Gazing after him.

RUBY
I been bad!

DISSOLVE TO

CLOSE DOWN-SHOT -- THE MAGAZINE, OPEN, IN RACHEL'S LAP
We PULL UP and AWAY into:

TWO-SHOT -- RACHEL, SEATED; RUBY STANDING BESIDE HER

RACHEL
Ruby, you didn't have no money to buy this.

RUBY
You'll whip me!

RACHEL
When did I ever?

RUBY
This man down at the Drugstore...

RACHEL
The Drugstore?

RUBY
Miz Cooper. I never went to sewin' lessons all
them times.

RACHEL
What you been up to?

RUBY
I been out with men.

RUBY collapses face down over RACHEL's lap and sobs, as we TRACK IN CLOSE.

RACHEL
Dear God, child!

Now RACHEL also weeps. She bends low over RUBY, stroking her hair.

RACHEL
You was lookin' for love, Ruby, the only
foolish way you knowed how.

She lifts RUBY's face cheek to cheek beside her own.

RACHEL
We all need love. Ruby, I lost the love of my
son -- I've found it with you all.

They weep together.

RACHEL

You must grow up to be a fine, full woman; and
I'm goin' to see to it you do.

She starts making up RUBY's hair like that of a young woman.

RUBY

This gentleman wasn't like them! He just give
me a sody and the book.

RACHEL

Now who was this?

RUBY

He never asked me for nothin'.

RACHEL

He must have wanted somethin', Ruby. A man
don't waste time on a girl unless he gets
something.

RUBY shakes her head.

RACHEL

What'd you all talk about?

RUBY

Pearl and John.

RACHEL

John and Pearl!

RUBY nods.

RACHEL

Is he their Pap?

RUBY shrugs.

RACHEL

Why hasn't he been to the house?

DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER ON HORSE ON ROAD

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- RUBY

Seeing PREACHER, she drops two eggs.

RUBY

(shouting)

Miz Cooper!

RACHEL

(o.s., from within house)
What?

RUBY
The man! The man!

TRACKING SHOT -- PREACHER
He tethers his horse and, as we PAN and TRACK on behind him, walks to the bottom of the steps; RUBY moves into side of SHOT: beyond PREACHER, RACHEL stands behind her screen door, hands folded under apron.

PREACHER
Mornin', ladies.

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- RACHEL, BEHIND SCREEN

RACHEL
How'do.

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- PREACHER
RACHEL'S VIEWPOINT, through screen.

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- RACHEL, BEHIND SCREEN

PREACHER
You're Miz Cooper, I take it.

RACHEL
(coming through door)
It's about that John and that Pearl?

THREE SHOT -- PREACHER, RACHEL, RUBY IN BACKGROUND
PREACHER's face twitches with emotion. He breaks out into great thankful sobs. He falls to his knees.

PREACHER
My little lambs! To think I never hoped to see them again in this world! Oh, dear Madam, if you was to know what a thorny crown I have borne in my search for these strayed chicks.

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL
She takes him in. He doesn't take her in.

THREE-SHOT -- AS BEFORE

RACHEL
Ruby, go fetch them kids.

RUBY minces off around the side of the house.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER -- RACHEL'S ANGLE
He wipes off tears with the heel of his left hand, watching her.

PREACHER
Ah, dear Madam, I see you're looking at my hands!

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL
She is.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER -- AS BEFORE
He holds up the right hand.

PREACHER
Shall I tell ye the little story of Right-Hand-
Left-Hand -- the tale of Good and Evil?

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

PREACHER (o.s.)
It was with this left hand that old Brother
Cain struck the blow that laid his brother
low--

RACHEL
(wanting to know)
Them kids is yours?

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

PREACHER
(recovering from the interruption)
My flesh and blood!

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

RACHEL
Where's your Missus?

TWO-SHOT -- PROFILING RACHEL AND PREACHER
PREACHER gets to his feet.

PREACHER
She run off with a drummer one night. Durin'
prayer-meetin'.

RACHEL
Where's she at?

PREACHER
Somewheres down river! Parkersburg, mebbe!
Cincinnati! One of them Sodoms on the Ohio
River.

RACHEL
She took them kids with her?

PREACHER
Heaven only knows what unholy sights and sounds
those innocent little babes has heard in the
dens of perdition where she dragged them!

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

RACHEL

Right funny, hain't it, how they rowed all the way up river in a ten-foot john-boat!

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

... recovering, and by-passing it.

PREACHER

Are they well?

He turns his head.

FULL SHOT -- RACHEL AND PREACHER, FROM SIDE

All the CHILDREN enter, around corner of house. As they move in, RACHEL replies:

RACHEL

A sight better than they was.

By now, JOHN is on the top step beside RACHEL. One of his hands holds on to her skirt, as if he were pulling her towards him. His eyes never leave hers. All the CHILDREN freeze, PEARL is on ground, just beyond JOHN. Others in BACKGROUND; RUBY as near PREACHER as she can get.

PREACHER

Gracious, gracious! You are a good woman, Miz Cooper!

RACHEL

How you figgerin' to raise them two without a woman?

PREACHER

The Lord will provide.

PEARL with a wail of happiness, drops the DOLL on the step and runs to PREACHER, who picks her up. JOHN instantly picks up the DOLL and holds it to him. He looks up at RACHEL.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND RACHEL

JOHN looks deep into RACHEL's eyes.

PREACHER (o.s.)

The Lord is merciful! What a day is this! And there's little John!

RACHEL

What's wrong, John?

JOHN

Nothin'.

He smiles.

PREACHER (o.s.)

Come to me, boy!

RACHEL
What's wrong, John?

TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND PEARL

PREACHER
Didn't you hear me, boy?

TWO-SHOT -- JOHN AND RACHEL
RACHEL bends a little over him. She wants the situation clarified.

RACHEL
John, when your Dad says 'come', you should
mind him.

JOHN
He ain't my Dad.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- RACHEL
She takes this in; JOHN has sold her. She looks to PREACHER o.s.

RACHEL
He ain't no Preacher, neither. I've seen
Preachers in my time, an' some of 'em was
saints on earth. A few was crookeder'n a dog's
hind leg, but this 'un's got 'em all beat for
badness.

She starts to turn.

GROUP SHOT
She walks purposefully into the house. PREACHER lunges for JOHN and the
DOLL.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- PREACHER AND JOHN
JOHN ducks under the porch and PREACHER tries to follow him. He can't get
under. O.s., we hear the slam of the screen door. PREACHER's head comes up
to see and we TILT UP, shooting OVER the back of his head. RACHEL stands
there full figure, with a pump-gun.

RACHEL
Just march yourself yonder to your horse,
Mister.

Back of PREACHER's head is still immobile.

RACHEL
March, Mister! I'm not foolin'.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER, OVER GUN BARREL
PREACHER gets to his feet. The open knife is in his hand. As we see it, the
gun barrel twitches. PREACHER backs away towards his horse, bouncing the
knife lightly in his hand.

PREACHER
(screaming)

You ain't done with Harry Powell yet! The Lord
God Jehovah will guide my hand in vengeance!
You devils! You Whores of Babylon! I'll come
back when it's dark.

As he mounts his horse we

DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- RACHEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

It is dark. O.s. we hear PREACHER singing "Leaning."

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- RACHEL

She sits in profile, her gun across her knees. Song continues o.s.

FULL SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, ASLEEP

... in a big bed. RUBY sits up, listening to song o.s.

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- RACHEL, AS BEFORE

Song continues o.s. We PAN to PREACHER outside. We see him through window.
He sits hunched on a stump.

FULL SHOT -- THE HOUSE, OVER PREACHER

He continues singing.

HEAD PROFILE -- RACHEL

After a moment, we see her mouth open; and either to comfort herself or to
drown out PREACHER's voice, she joins in the hymn.

FULL SHOT -- THE HOUSE -- AS IN OPENING SHOT

A descending candle moves past a window; RACHEL and PREACHER sing o.s.

FULL SHOT -- PREACHER ON STUMP

... over back of RACHEL's head. The song ends. RUBY enters SHOT carrying a
candle. Its light blacks out the window-glass. RACHEL looks up.

RACHEL

Moonin' around the house over that mad dog of a
Preacher! Shame, Ruby!

She blows out the candle. We see through the window. PREACHER has gone.

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

RACHEL

Merciful Heaven!

She stands up.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT -- RACHEL AND RUBY

RACHEL

Ruby, get the children out of bed. Bring them
all down here to the kitchen.

RUBY leaves the SHOT. RACHEL moves towards window. She puts her hand over
her eyes.

RACHEL
Women is such fools!

The soft hoot of an owl o.s. RACHEL looks up.

CLOSE SHOT -- AN OWL ON A BRANCH LOOKING DOWN

CLOSE SHOT -- A BABY RABBIT

CLOSE SHOT -- THE OWL SPREADS HIS WINGS AND SWOOPS

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL
Still for a second; then, o.s., the scream of a rabbit.

RACHEL
It's a hard world for little things.

OVER this line we have heard the patter of feet down staircase. She turns.

GROUP SHOT -- THE CHILDREN [IN KITCHEN]
They look at her with complete trust.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL, OVER CHILDREN

RACHEL
(snapping)
Children, I got lonesome. I figgered we might
play games.

PEARL and MARY jump up and down, patting their palms. RACHEL extends her hands and they gather close to her.

PEARL
Won't you tell us a story?

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

RACHEL
I might.
(a swift furious glance
into the moonlight)
I might tell a story.

She sits down, the gun against her knees.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN
... as MARY and PEARL sit at her feet. RUBY stands beside RACHEL. JOHN
stands near RACHEL.

CLARY
I'll light the lamp.

RACHEL
It's more fun hearin' stories in the dark.

CLARY sits at RACHEL's feet.

CLOSE PANNING SHOT -- JOHN

He is alert now. He moves in close beside RACHEL, whom we PAN into

CLOSE TWO-SHOT with him, and presses the whole of his right arm against her arm. RACHEL registers quietly.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN

RACHEL

Well... mind what I told you about little Jesus
and his Ma and Pa and how there was No Room at
the Inn?

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- RACHEL

Her eyes, sharp and glittering, look outside.

FULL SHOT -- THE OUTSIDE

Featuring empty stump, RACHEL's viewpoint.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN

She gets up with gun; we PULL AWAY; in BACKGROUND, CHILDREN turn faces to keep watching her. She comes close to window, gun ready, CHILDREN in BACKGROUND.

RACHEL

Well, there was this sneakin', no-'count,
ornery King Herod!

She turns round and walks back to her chair; CHILDREN's eyes always on her.

RACHEL

And he heard tell of this little King Jesus
growin' up and old Herod figgered: Well, shoot!
There sure won't be no room for the both of us!
(she sits down)
I'll just nip this in the bud.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN, FROM SIDE

RACHEL

(continuing)

Well, he never knowed for sure which one of all
them babies in the land was King Jesus.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- RACHEL

Her eyes glittering as she turns to look towards us.

RESUME SIDE GROUP SHOT

RACHEL gets up with gun. Again we PULL AWAY, as faces of all CHILDREN in b.g. turn to watch her.

RACHEL

And so that cursed old King Herod figgered if
he was to kill all the babies in the land, he'd
be sure to get little Jesus.

Without speaking, she goes back to her chair.

FRONT GROUP SHOT

RACHEL

And when little King Jesus' Ma and Pa heard
about that plan, what do you reckon they went
and done?

CLARY

They hid in a broom closet!

MARY

They hid under the porch!

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- JOHN

JOHN

No; they went a-runnin'.

TWO-SHOT -- RACHEL AND JOHN

RACHEL

Well, now, John, that's just what they done!
They went a-runnin!

The clock starts striking three. RACHEL looks to sound o.s.

FULL SHOT -- CLOCK AND HALL MIRROR, BEYOND DARK KITCHEN
In the mirror, a shadow ducks.

FULL GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN
RACHEL gets up, gun at port, and faces into the darkness.

PREACHER (o.s.)

Figured I was gone, huh?

Eyes on the darkness, she bends low to the CHILDREN.

RACHEL

(whispering)

Run, hide in the staircase! Run quick!

They scatter out of SHOT; RUBY lingers.

RACHEL

(without turning to her)

Ruby, git.

RUBY obeys in a trance. RACHEL, gun at ready, looks into the darkness.

FULL SCREEN -- DARKNESS

Pause.

RACHEL

(o.s., in a high, steady voice)

What do you want?

PREACHER (o.s.)
Them kids!

RACHEL (o.s.)
What are you after them for?

PREACHER (o.s.)
None of your business, Madam.

RACHEL
I'm givin' you to the count of three to get out
that screen door; then I'm a-comin' across this
kitchen shootin'!

A stepped-on cat screams o.s. and PREACHER's satanic face, and his hand
lifting the open knife, rise swiftly from the floor.

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- RACHEL -- SAME SHOT AS BEFORE
She fires off her gun.

FULL SHOT -- SCREEN DOOR
PREACHER staggers out and runs yelping with pain into the barn. O.s. we hear
the zing-zing of a country phone being cranked.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL, OVER BACKS OF CHILDREN'S HEADS
They huddle on the stairs in reverent silence. RACHEL, her gun slung
sportily under one arm, talks into wall phone which hangs just within the box
stairway.

RACHEL
Miz Booher? Rachel Cooper. Git them State
Troopers over to my place. I done treed
somep'n up in my barn.

DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- RACHEL AND JOHN
RACHEL sits on the screened porch, awake, gun on knees. JOHN sits on floor,
asleep, his head leaning against her. Barn in BACKGROUND. Sunrise.

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL AND JOHN
Same position. JOHN awakes.

JOHN
I'll see to Pearl.

RACHEL
I'll make coffee.

They get up and start into kitchen.

GROUP SHOT -- THE CHILDREN, OVER RACHEL AND JOHN
They lie huddled in calm sleep. JOHN and RACHEL watch a moment.

JOHN
She's all right.

They start for the stove.

TWO-SHOT -- RACHEL AND JOHN, AROUND STOVE

RACHEL puts her gun beside the stove, ready to hand, and picks up a coffee-pot; JOHN puts kindling in stove.

RACHEL

John, you know? When you're little, you have more endurance than God is ever to grant you again? Children are Man at his strongest. They abide.

JOHN looks at her a moment. O.s. we hear police car sirens. They look towards the sound.

FULL SHOT -- THROUGH POLICE CAR WINDSHIELD

We SHOOT OVER TWO TROOPERS. Sirens loud, they rapidly approach RACHEL's house as RACHEL, without gun, holding JOHN's hand, comes down to fence. Presently, the other CHILDREN hurry out of house behind. The car brakes.

FULL SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN OVER TWO POLICE CARS -- BARN IN BACKGROUND

The TROOPERS, fanning wide, advance towards the barn. RACHEL and the CHILDREN are grouped a short distance behind them. The barn door gapes black. Short pause; then PREACHER appears.

A TROOPER

(shouting)

Is that him, Ma'am?

RACHEL

(shouting)

Yes! Mind where you shoot, boys! There's children here!

TROOPER

Whyn't you call us up before?

RACHEL

Didn't want yer big feet trackin' up my clean floors.

CLOSE SHOT -- PREACHER

He stands, swaying; his left arm is bloody and helpless. In his right hand the open knife hangs apathetic. His eyes are glazed. He does not seem to care whether they come or not.

TROOPER'S VOICE (o.s.)

Harry Powell, you're under arrest for the murder of Willa Harper!

MEDIUM SHOT -- PREACHER AND TROOPERS -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT

TROOPERS close in on PREACHER, from before and behind, exactly as for BEN's arrest.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

The same sickly look, as at BEN's arrest.

MEDIUM SHOT -- PREACHER AND TROOPERS -- JOHN'S VIEWPOINT
One TROOPER smacks the back of PREACHER's head with a pistol-barrel.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

JOHN
(shouting)
Don't!

RESUME VIEWPOINT SHOT

Another TROOPER, with pistol-barrel, knocks the knife from PREACHER's lifted hand.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

JOHN
(shouting)
Don't!

RESUME VIEWPOINT SHOT

PREACHER sinks to his knees as both men, and two others from the front, close in on him. The tableau is the same as in BEN's arrest.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

JOHN
(shouting)
DAD!

FRONT GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN
JOHN grabs the DOLL from PEARL and starts to run.

RACHEL
John! John!

She starts after him.

FULL SHOT -- TROOPERS, JOHN, RACHEL, OVER PREACHER
PREACHER prostrate along bottom of screen. TROOPERS are beating him. JOHN runs up from BACKGROUND followed by RACHEL. JOHN rushes among the TROOPERS, flogging PREACHER over the head with the DOLL. The TROOPERS, astounded, lay off. RACHEL is stopped in her tracks.

JOHN
Here! Here! Take it back! I can't stand it,
Dad! It's too much, Dad! I don't want it! I
can't do it! Here! Here!

The DOLL has burst open and the money has spilled over PREACHER. Now two TROOPERS gently lift JOHN away. RACHEL lifts him in her arms; she turns towards house.

FULL FIGURE SHOT -- RACHEL AND JOHN -- GROUP IN BACKGROUND
She carries JOHN towards the house. His head hangs back over her arm. We hear his dry, exhausted sobs.

INT. COURTROOM -- DAY -- CLOSE SHOT -- ICEY

ICEY
(yelling)
Lynch him! Lynch him!

TWO-SHOT -- WALT AND ICEY

ICEY
(yelling)
Bluebeard!

WALT
(yelling at all the men around him)
Twenty-five wives!

ICEY
And he killed every last one of 'em!

GROUP SHOT -- WALT, ICEY, MEMBERS OF COURTROOM AUDIENCE
Perhaps ten faces. Most are frenetic. Our two LOAFERS are having fun.
General hubbub o.s. A gavel o.s.

ICEY
(yelling)
If the People of Marshall County...

LOAFERS
(cynically, across her)
Bluebeard! Bluebeard!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN
He looks to sound of gavel. The hubbub and the gaveling stop.

LAWYER (o.s.)
Will you identify the prisoner?

JOHN looks over his shoulder in same direction as the gavel.

LAWYER (o.s.)
Please, little lad. Won't you look yonder...

His pointing finger enters the SHOT. JOHN shakes as if he had a cold.

LAWYER (o.s.)
...and tell the Court if that is the man who
killed your mother?

JOHN looks at the finger. Short pause.

LAWYER (o.s.)
It's all right, Mrs. Cooper. You can take the
little fellow away.

The LAWYER's hands gently help him from chair.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN

... as LAWYER's hands consign JOHN to RACHEL.

LAWYER (o.s.)
Merry Christmas to you and yours, Mrs. Cooper.

The CHILDREN bob and reply, ad lib, "Merry Christmas to you." RACHEL sniffs.

LAWYER (o.s.)
And what's Santy Claus going to bring you,
little man?

Above JOHN's head, by winding and holding to ear, RACHEL pantomimes a watch.

LAWYER (o.s.)
Oh-ho-oo-o!

ICEY (o.s.)
Them is the ones he sinned against, my friends!

Gaveling starts.

LOAFER (o.s.)
Bluebeard! Bluebeard!

CROWD (o.s.)
Bluebeard! Bluebeard!

As RACHEL and CHILDREN turn to go, gaveling and hubbub fade and we

LAP DISSOLVE TO

INT. A CAFE -- NIGHT

RACHEL and her CHILDREN sit in two booths in a corner, next to a big front window. Christmas parcels on bench at RACHEL's right.

FULL SHOT -- RACHEL AND HER GROUP, THEN CAFE AND WINDOW

Sound o.s. of approaching crowd. As we PULL BACK we bring in a few other customers and the big window. There are Christmas decorations in the cafe and the street outside is hung with them. Thirty feverish people, some of whom carry torches, enter the scene; ICEY stares in the window and screams.

ICEY
(high-pitched)
Them's hers!

Everyone in the cafe stands up. RACHEL gathers her parcels. ICEY rushes to door and opens it.

ICEY
Them's her orphans!

She turns to crowd.

RACHEL
Where's Ruby?

CLARY

She went.

ICEY shouts into the cafe.

ICEY
Them poor little lambs!

ICEY turns to the street mob. RACHEL hurries her CHILDREN to door. ICEY leaves door to yell at mob.

ICEY
Them's the ones he sinned against, my friends!

CASHIER
(across Icey)
Go out the back way, Miz Cooper.

As RACHEL leaves SHOT, the CASHIER shouts and locks the door.

EXT. BACK ALLEY -- NIGHT -- PANNING SHOT -- RACHEL AND COMPANY
...emerging from door. MARY and CLARY come out first and start walking to our left. RACHEL comes out and hurries off to our right, followed by JOHN holding PEARL's hand. We PAN to MARY and CLARY.

CLARY
Ain't we goin' to the Bus Depot?

No answer. They turn and we PAN with them as they hurry after RACHEL, and we bring in RACHEL, charging away from us with her brood hustling to keep up.

GROUP SHOT -- FEATURING WALT AND ICEY
ICEY carries a torch. She is flanked by rabid faces and smiling LOAFERS, one of whom carries an axe. As she speaks, a MAN rushes up to WALT and gives him a rope.

ICEY
(shouting, high-pitched)
Draggin' the name of the Lord through the evil
mud of his soul!

WALT
(bellowing)
Come on!

They all start marching, in step.

PANNING SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN
Marching and voices o.s. and in BACKGROUND. Carrying Christmas parcels, they hurry alongside a building and at CENTER of PAN, cross the end of a street. The MOB marches down the street TOWARDS CAMERA; MEN run to join it.

ICEY
(high-pitched)
He lied!

WALT
Tricked us!

ICEY

He taken the Lord's name in vain and he
trampled on his Holy Book!

WALT

String that Bluebeard up to a pole!

ICEY

He's Satan hiding behind the Cross!

OTHERS

(ad lib)

Lynch him! String him up!

We PAN RACHEL and CHILDREN past this street and they hurry towards RUBY, who stands alone in BACKGROUND, facing the jail.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- RUBY'S ECSTATIC FACE

In BACKGROUND, RACHEL and CHILDREN hurry towards her. MOB noise o.s. Hearing the approach of RACHEL'S GROUP, RUBY turns the back of her head towards us. Now there are no mob voices; only the ominous sound of fifty-odd people marching step.

RUBY

I love him!

TRACKING SHOT -- RUBY

Ominous silence.

RUBY

He loves me because I'm so purty! You think
he's like them others!

SIDE TRACKING SHOT -- RUBY, RACHEL AND GROUP

Marching sound o.s. RACHEL firmly takes RUBY's arm and drags her off in our direction. RACHEL shoos MARY and CLARY ahead of her. JOHN and PEARL flank RACHEL, clinging to her wide skirts. RUBY, nearest us, keeps looking back over her shoulder. We TRACK them alongside of JAIL to rear of JAIL.

RUBY

(continuing)

You took on something awful about him buying me
that there movie book. You was so mad, you
shot him and the blue men took him.

On "blue men," we stop TRACKING and, as GROUP leaves SHOT, CENTER a POLICE CAR, waiting at rear door of JAIL. POLICEMEN start out of door.

MEDIUM GROUP SHOT -- POLICEMEN AND PREACHER

They roughly hustle PREACHER into the car. Marching sound o.s.

SHOT -- FROM WITHIN CAR -- BART

PREACHER and POLICE are in b.g. Through car window we see BART THE HANGMAN come out of his door. He wears his derby. A POLICEMAN puts head out of window. Marching o.s.

MEDIUM SHOT -- BART THE HANGMAN

On porch, by door, is a doll's perambulator, but this time there is a Christmas wreath on the door. Marching o.s.

POLICEMAN (o.s.)

Hey, Bart!

Auto engine starts up o.s.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- BART

BART

Yeah?

MEDIUM SHOT -- POLICEMAN

Marching o.s.

POLICEMAN (o.s.)

We're savin' this bird up fer you!

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- BART

Marching o.s.

BART

This time it'll be a privilege.

FULL PANNING SHOT -- POLICE CAR, THEN RACHEL AND GROUP

The car jumps fast out of SHOT and we PAN PAST BART and CENTER RACHEL and GROUP, walking fast away from us. Mob voices o.s.

A VOICE

(o.s., over departing car)

Bust the door down!

CLOSE GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN

Clutching Christmas parcels, they hurry away from us into darkness. RUBY, hanging back, dragged by RACHEL, babbles over her shoulder.

RUBY

(happily)

They'll git him out. I'll git my things ready -- my shawl and my Mickey Mouse watch that don't run and the straw hat with the flower, and we'll be married and live happily ever after.

VOICES

(o.s., ad lib, cutting across Ruby)

Bust down the door! Set fahr to it! Where's that axe?! Climb up on the balcony! You six git 'round to the back!

ICEY

(o.s., screaming)

People of Marshall County!

DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- NIGHT LANDSCAPE -- PINE TREES AND SOFTLY FALLING SNOW

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE -- EVENING; SNOWING -- CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL AT MAILBOX
She peers into empty mailbox.

RACHEL
Nothing!

She slams the box shut and, as we TILT and PAN, walks away from us through snow towards her lighted house.

RACHEL
I'm glad they didn't send me nothing! Whenever they do it's never nothing I want but something to show me how fancy and smart they've come up in the world.

She goes into the house.

INT. RACHEL'S KITCHEN
It is decorated for Christmas.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN
Rachel enters; the four girls stand in line, packages ready; JOHN stands in b.g., in doorway to next room.

MARY
Can we give you your presents now?

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL

RACHEL
Shoot! You don't mean to say you got me a present?

Their hands hold packages up to her.

RACHEL
Shoot now!

She takes a package.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

RACHEL (o.s.)
Why, Ruby!

Embarrassed, JOHN leaves the SHOT.

RACHEL (o.s.)
A POT-HOLDER!

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN -- NEW ANGLE
From a fruit bowl, he selects the biggest apple, shines it on his shirt,

wraps it in the doily under his bowl, opens a drawer and gets out a clip clothes-pin, clips his package, and leaves SHOT.

RACHEL
(o.s., continuing)
And much neater than last year's, Ruby!

Sound of tearing gift paper o.s.

RACHEL (o.s.)
And Clary! ANOTHER POT-HOLDER! Ain't that thoughtful. I'm always burnin' my hands.

FULL SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN, OVER JOHN
... as he enters with present. RUBY and CLARY are standing aside; MARY and PEARL hold up a third pot-holder.

RACHEL
And did you two make this together?

MARY
You hop us, some.

CLOSE SHOT -- RACHEL, ACCEPTING JOHN'S GIFT
She opens it.

RACHEL
(quietly)
John, that's the richest gift a body could have.
(continued, briskly)
You'll find your presents in the cupboard under the china-closet.

GROUP SHOT -- RACHEL AND CHILDREN

RACHEL
You know where, Ruby.

All turn and run through door except RUBY, whom RACHEL detains.

RACHEL
Ruby:
(she takes a box from
her apron pocket)
This is yours.

RUBY opens it quickly; it is a cheap costume jewelry flower-spray. RUBY and RACHEL kiss like grown women and RUBY goes to join the others.

FULL SHOT -- RACHEL
She turns to her stove and is framed by Christmas garland in b.g.; banging pots about and stirring; praying as she works, which is the best way to pray. Appropriate noise, o.s., of opening presents.

RACHEL
Lord save little children! (bang) You'd think the world would be ashamed to name such a day

as Christmas for one of them... (bang) ... and then go on the same old way.

(she starts stirring)

My soul is humble when I see the way little ones accept their lot.

(she pauses in stirring)

Lord save little children! The wind blows and the rain is cold. Yet, they abide...

In BACKGROUND, the GIRLS run upstairs, their new dresses over their arms. RACHEL glances over her shoulder.

MEDIUM SHOT -- JOHN -- RACHEL'S VIEWPOINT

JOHN stands in next room, looking at something in his hand.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN -- IN OTHER ROOM

We see he holds a watch. He looks like any boy, rich or poor, with his first watch.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- RACHEL

RACHEL

(whispering, so that he does not hear)

For every child, rich or poor, there's a time of running through a dark place; and there's no word for a child's fear. A child sees a shadow on the wall, and sees a Tiger. And the old ones say, "There's no Tiger; go to sleep." And when that child sleeps, it's a Tiger's sleep, and a Tiger's night, and a Tiger's breathing on the windowpane. Lord save little children!

JOHN enters boldly behind her and, with a scrape, masterfully swings a chair around close to her and straddles it. RACHEL turns her back to us. She expects him to speak, he doesn't, so she fills in:

RACHEL

That watch sure is a fine, loud ticker!

JOHN gives her a burning, proud smile.

RACHEL

It'll be nice to have someone around the house who can give me the right time of day.

JOHN finds his tongue.

JOHN

This watch is the nicest watch I ever had.

RACHEL

A fella just can't go around with run-down, busted watches.

She turns back, face to us, and goes on with her stirring. JOHN goes off towards the staircase to join the GIRLS; then turns back.

CLOSE SHOT -- JOHN

JOHN

I ain't afraid no more! I got a watch that
ticks! I got a watch that shines in the dark!

He turns and hurries to the stairs.

HEAD CLOSE-UP -- RACHEL

Over the sound of his running upstairs:

RACHEL

(telling us)

They abide and they endure.

LAP DISSOLVE TO

FULL SHOT -- STARRY SKY

FADE IN TITLE:

THE END