

winnowed for WORK SONG and MISS YOU 14 March '08

JEFF: Jesus, a fuckin' miracle. The card slick's actually gonna tote a bucket a water.

MONTY: (shaking his head in mock sorrow) Jeff, you treat me like a motherless child. And after I stuck up for you the other day, too. <sup>tried to tell me</sup> Fellow ~~said~~ you didn't have the brains God give a crowbar. But I told him he was wrong, you sure did.

(Jeff thinks slowly and heavily, glares at Monty, then begins struggling into a stiff pair of brand-new Levi blue jeans as he dresses up for town.) John winks at Pete over his coffee cup.)

Pete: (after watching Monty at solitaire) When'd you start playin' cards, Monty? I mean, how old was you?

MONTY: (laughs softly) <sup>by Jesus.</sup> An' I bid more than "one" the first time I picked up the cards. Can't remember when I wasn't playin'. (He pauses, then continues in a less derisive tone than before.) You heard that song, haven't you, about how a deck a cards is like life ~~ist~~ itself?

(He affects a heavy T Texas Tyler accent to parody the soppy sentiments as he continues to play a winning game of solitaire.) There are 52 cards in a deck, you see, one for every week of the year . . . The

four suits, hearts, ~~a~~ diamonds, clubs and spades, represent the four seasons of the year. <sup>They</sup> ~~the~~ also represent the seasons of human heart -- love, wealth, war and death. Add up all the spots of all the cards and they come out to 365, one for every day of the year . . . (Monty breaks off his parody with a combination chuckle and snort, and continues playing.)

PETE: But what do you get out of playing cards all the time?

MONTY: They're a game, like anythin' else.



## ACT ONE

### Scene One

The bunkhouse of a ranch in Montana, in the summer of 1951.

The bunkhouse is a single large room, with raw walls of dark weathered boards and two-by-fours<sup>studs</sup>. Even on the brightest day, it would look gloomy and disheveled. Around the room are beds for six men. Monty's is up right, set apart from the others. John's is along the rear wall right center. Bunk beds extend both directions from the corner up left. Jeff has the lower bunk and Rudy the upper in one set, Alex the lower and Pete the upper in the other set.

Each man has only scanty belongings -- a battered suitcase, the bedroll on his bed, perhaps an extra pair of shoes. Some have pictures or pinups on the wall; typically, Monty's pinups are the fleshiest.

A wash stand with a porcelain basin and a galvanized bucket with a dipper in it stands between John's bed and the bunks along the rear wall. A potbellied stove is along the wall down left, with a small pile of chopped wood behind it. A grimy blue porcelain coffee pot sits on the stove. A few scanty shelves are scattered along the walls. A long-unwashed window is behind the wash stand.

~~The~~ A large round table with six assorted and battered chairs is at stage center. The door leading outside is ~~at~~ stage right; down right from it are two bales of hay, with a balehook stuck in the <sup>one</sup> top bale.

The curtain rises to the riffle of cards being shuffled quickly and deftly. Rudy, John and Monty are at the table playing a card game called pitch, with Monty the dealer. Pete is kibitzing over Monty's shoulder. Alex sits on his bunk darning a very worn gray stocking. Occasionally there is the sound of hard rain and the boom of thunder. Monty gives the cards one final brisk shuffle and plops the deck down in front of John:



MONTY: Cut 'em thin an' win, cut 'em thick ~~and~~ an' be up shit crick.

(John cuts the deck of cards. Monty slickly deals each player six cards.)

RUDY: I'll bid two.

JOHN: Goddamn the goddamn cards. That the best you can deal, a mess like this? Pass.

MONTY: Three, in them things called . . . spades.

(Monty flips down his first card with a flourish as he says "spades", then rapidly sweeps the cards to him and leads out again. John disgustedly throws in his hand on the third trick, <sup>saying "aw, hell with it."</sup> Monty takes every trick.)

MONTY: Don't much like them spades, huh? (He turns up the cards which have been played and deftly thumbs out <sup>those</sup> ~~the~~ cards which score for him) I'll just take high, low, jick, jack and game. (Reaches to the "kitty" -- -- a box of Diamond wooden kitchen matches -- and takes out five matches while counting loudly:) One, ~~two~~, two, three, four, five -- as many as the thumbs on the end of me hand, as the Irish carpenter says to the Dutchman. (He grins sardonically at John and Rudy.) Puts me out again.

JOHN: (to Rudy) Ever see such a <sup>scissor will</sup> son of a bitch for winning every time?

(John gets up from the table, crosses to the stove, looks in the coffee pot. He reaches down a can of MJB coffee from a shelf, spoons three spoonfuls onto the grounds already in the pot, then ladles water into the pot with the dipper from the nearly empty water bucket. He sets the pot near the front of the stove and stands with his back to the stove and his hands clasped behind him. Rudy meanwhile has pushed his chair back from the table and is rolling



a cigarette. Monty has taken out a pack of Lucky Strikes and lit a cigarette.)

MONTY: (shuffling cards) Not givin' up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (He grins the sardonic grin, flashes the deck in mock invitation.)

JOHN: (He shakes his head at the cards.) Nope. Can't make hay, so might as well make some coffee. (John stretches mightily and yawns:) Ohhh, Keerist Katy! (The yawn finished, he clasps his hands behind him again and looks at Alec:) Hard week of doin' nothin'. Want a fresh cup of mud, Alec?

ALEC: (He looks up from darning the sock.) No thanks. I gotta go give that orphan calf some hay.

(Monty has given Rudy an inquiring look and gesture with the deck to ask if he wants to play more. Rudy shakes his head. Monty begins playing solitaire quickly and deftly.)

MONTY: (in a mocking tone) Alec, ain't it bad enough we work our guts out in the hayfield without havin' the damn stuff in here, too? Whyn't you keep your damn bales somewheres else? Reminds me of livin' in a cow shed.

ALEC: (bridling) You know this wind and rain raised hell with the barn ~~roof~~, and I gotta keep some bales dry somewhere for that calf. Mike asked you all a week ago if it's okay to use that corner. Them bales don't take up much room anyways ...

MONTY: (cutting him off) Yeah, well . . . That green hay makes me ache all over just lookin' at it. I don't begrudge the piling crew all them

green bales to be stacked. (He glances at Alec putting on a yellow slicker coat.) Anyway, I'd sure hate to have to go out in this weather just to play mama for a skim-milk calf. Them raindrops 'll grow moss on your back. You watch 'im, Pete. Alec'll come back in here all green and fuzzy, lookin' like half an acre a crick bottom.

(Pete smiles shyly and uncertainly, pleased to be noticed but aware of the jibe in Monty's words about Alec.)

RUDY: Well, I wish to hell ~~this weather 'd~~ ~~it'd~~ quit. This settin' around and settin' around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to hayin' or go to town till it quits.

MONTY: Gettin' thirsty, Rudy?

RUDY: (tetchily) I'd rather be puttin' up hay, that's all. Good Godalmighty, there's a half a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground. I never ~~saw~~ saw so goddamn much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.

MONTY: (He pauses with a card in his hand ready to play and looks at Rudy) I thought that's Mike's problem. It's his ranch, his hay. You're startin' to sound like old folks over there in the slicker coat.

(Alec has crossed to the bales of hay, where he takes a balehook from a bale, uses it to lift one bale atop another, and then breaks the twine around the hay by deftly twisting the hook in it. He looks hard at Monty, then with a sweeping motion jabs the balehook into the bale where he found it. Taking about one-fourth of the opened bale in his arms, he goes out the door.)



MONTY: Touchy, ain't he? Goes with bein' a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

JOHN: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bothers him to see Mike havin' all this rain in the middle of hayin', I suppose.

MONTY: Mmm. Speakin' of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out of here this morning cussin' a blue streak. Fixin' a fence in the rain don't seem to appeal to old Jeff. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a l-o-n-g sheet a paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Spiff up your vocabulary somethin' wonderful.

JOHN: (He chuckles.) Jeff's never happy unless he's bitchin' about Mike, but every summer he's back here workin' for him. (He pours a cup of vile black coffee, sips contentedly.) You think Mike was feelin' ornery this mornin', you oughta been around him when he was drinkin'. I worked with him one hayin' time down at Greybull, Wyoming, years ago before he bought this place. Rained a couple a days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howlin' drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ amighty! Then when the boss finally did get him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We was still usin' horses then, and Mike'd been workin' a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He's the only one in the crew could handle 'em. So he gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy *station* hat he wore whenever he got dressed up, big wide brim on it out to here. (John indicates by holding a hand ~~about~~ out about twelves inches from his head.) He puts that on -- still drunk as a lord -- and goes down

to the barn, everybody on the <sup>ranch</sup> ~~place~~ followin' him. He's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his knees between that horse's hind legs with his big hat on; show us how tame he's got that roan horse, see.

PETE: (listening with fascination) Did he do it?

JOHN: Well, <sup>Mike</sup> ~~he~~ starts going through there on his knees when the horse gives a big kick -- catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off, sails it plumb across the barn. That horse's hoof didn't miss his head by a inch. Mike, he looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then he yells: Whoa, you big pink sonofabitch, WHOA! Then you know, that goddamn horse just stood there, and Mike goes right through his hind legs like he said he would. (John pauses, swills the coffee pot a bit and pours more in his cup.) Been you or me or anybody else, that horse would've kicked him into the middle of next week.

MONTY: (to Pete) See, I told you the two of 'em are a regular education. Mike'll show you how to get your brains kicked out, and Jeff's livin' proof that you don't need no brains anyhow.

(There is the sound of a person clomping across the wooden porch.

The door opens and Jeff comes in, his slicker running with water and his boots heavy with mud.)

RUDY: 'Lo, Jeff. Rainin' just as hard?

JEFF: Like a cow pissin' on a flat rock.

JOHN: Mike comin' in now?

JEFF: Stopped by the cookhouse first t' git the grocery list from the Missus. (Shakes more water off himself) That goddamn sparrowhead of a Mike, makin' a man fix a goddamn fence this kind a goddamn weather.



MONTY: (half-mockingly to Jeff) Game of pitch?

JEFF: (even more grumpy at Monty's invitation) What a goddamn spread. A boss that thinks he's a little Jesus, and a card shark settin' around on his polished ass all day.

(Jeff clomps across to shave and wash, using the last of the water in the bucket.)

JOHN: (to Monty) Who's goin' to town with Mike -- you an' Jeff?

MONTY: (He glances at Rudy, then ~~says~~ speaks contentedly) Yup.

~~MONTY~~ RUDY: (He has been watching Jeff begin to get ready for town; now, he clears his throat.) Kinda wish I was goin' in myself. Need a haircut pretty bad.

JEFF: (crushingly) Why doncha set out walkin'? It's only 20 miles of mud up to your ass.  
(in mock innocence)

JOHN: Jeff, that what you got in mind, too? Goin' in to get a haircut?

JEFF: Haircut, hell. First thing I'm doin' is hittin' the whorehouse.

PETE: (incredulously) In the afternoon?

(All the men look at Pete, then loudly laugh him into mortification.)

MONTY: Pete, we better git your young mind off of cathouses. How about some pitch? C'mon, you watched enough to know how by now.

(Pete hesitates, flattered to be asked but unsure of himself. He decides to play to cover his embarrassment.)

PETE: Uh, sure, okay.

(Pete sits at the table, Monty deals in his swift style, talking as he does.)

MONTY: That's the stuff. Make a pitch player out a you yet. Now if there's anything you don't savvy, see, you just ask as we go along.

PETE: (trying to seem to know more than he does) Ah ... when you count up the tricks ... what's the jick again?

MONTY: (chants to Pete as a sort of recital) What's the jick. The jack of the same color as trump. Say spades is trump, jack of clubs counts as jick. It's higher than the ten a trump, but lower than the jack.

Jack always takes ~~j~~ the jick. All you gotta remember. On any trick, jack takes jick. Whatta you bid there, Pete?

PETE: (carefully spreads his cards in both hands, looks at them for a long moment) One.

MONTY: ONE? Christawmighty, that's no kind a bid. Lemme see your hand. (He reaches across the table and peers at Pete's cards.) Hell, you can make two or maybe three on a hand like that. Go on an' bid.

PETE: (gratefully) Two!

MONTY: Three.

(Pete is dismayed at the brusque doublecross as Monty relentlessly leads his trump cards and wipes Pete out.)

MONTY: Le's see, I got high, jick, jack and the game, and you got low. Four to one so far. (He divvies out matches from the "kitty". Pete has leaned back from the table with an exasperated sigh.) <sup>The hell</sup> What, you ain't quittin', ~~are ya?~~

PETE: I better study up on this game some more.

(Monty shrugs, goes back to playing solitaire. Alec comes back in, takes off his slicker, and goes to the water bucket.)

ALEC: Bucket's empty. I filled it last time.

MONTY: I'll take care of it.



Same to you, Marie.

We'll give her a helluva ~~fight~~ try.

Will you shut the hell up? They'll lock you away in Deer Lodge until you rot.

Write mine out, too, Mike. I didn't hire out for this.  
never hired out

These times are not them times, Mike.

Last line of play, John to Monty: Will you shut the hell up?



instead of hay in bunkhouse, make it mower sickles for Alex to sharpen.

Act 2 - lengthen b-fast scene - men come in 1 by 1?

John jokes Marie

- lengthen Mike-Marie scene; change bank on ref to when

- move bear story to Act 2, Scene 1; ?

John to Pete: Alec rode 17 last trail drives

he returns in town  
Will set hay after  
piled to pay  
men

begin Act 2 b4 J+R come home - Monty reads aloud P's book

John writing letter to his daughter

showing

Monty & Marie b Act 2?

More between Mike & Monty

Christ on a raft.

"One's + than plenty."

those 2 hamsheds

Lemme ask u 1 thing.

Stirs up brains

More about Rudy

switch Rudy & Jm lines in opening card scene

Scene b Lannan b4 b-fast? betn John & Pete?

- talk o Mike

→ ~~lengthen~~ <sup>add</sup> scene<sup>3</sup> betn Monty & Marie

lengthen scene 2, Act 2, betn Mike & Marie

"Central"

/ Hung Lo

strained thru a sheet



J: Nope, I gotta writ a letr.

Jef: A letr? Who to,

J: No, to my daughter.

P: + did-' And u had kids, John.

J: Just 1 dtr. She lives to Albuquerque c her mother. Not much <sup>younger</sup> ~~older~~ than u are, Pete, Ho a damn sight prettier. (gently) I hav-' seen her for 2-3 yrs now, Ho I try write her every so often.

Monty: Write her to come o up here, + we'll set 'er up c Pete.

J: ~~She~~ Yeah, well, she cd do worse.

P: J, lemme ask u somthin'.

play idea - bunkhouse men - bid 1st job -  
Monty - Rudy - John - Jeff - Charles - ~~man~~ rancher  
named Russell -

rainy days - pitch game "his lo jic jack jokers  
o game" - score c matches - "Did you ever see  
such a SOB for winning every game?" - winner  
decides 2 keep total score duration 1 rain

1 tells bear story - 1 wins c bid to Jeff incident -  
choreboy, oldest injured in team runaway -

Bull Durham & snuff - whistling? - long underwear  
bear story: bunkhouse gradually quiet, cards quit: <sup>shuffle 1 cards</sup> ~~player~~ ends it.

bid sides aginst foreman, realizes mistake  
"little jessie" - "gutrobber"

foreman comes back from town, c mail, cigarets, gloves  
scissorbill ... raining like cow pissing  
on flat rock

Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled  
and rapped on table, lights come up on 3  
card players. Winner shuffles, cards are cut;  
deals, 1st man bids 2, next passes, dealer  
bids 3; takes all tricks, "High, Low, and  
game; puts me out." Reaches, adds 3 matches  
to his pile. "nd man to 1st bidder: "Did  
you ever see such a sonofabitch for winning  
every time?"

what is that got to do c me?  
- ~~He~~ ~~no~~ ~~has~~ got anything 2 do c me.  
"It's got 2 do c ..."

pounding drunk's heel



Walking thru horse's legs with big hats on;  
"horse kicked the hell out of him; put him  
in the hospital for 3 weeks."

brothel joke: "in the afternoon?"

go to town to get a haircut

song: When it's springtime in the ~~Smoky~~  
Rockies, I'll be coming back to you...

kid's surprising: Oh, to hell with it...

Review of Alan Bennett TV play, where rich  
girl on horse waited in vain to meet crippled  
boy on road: things that don't happen.

malcontent & coon-wife: puts hands on her hips.  
When he leaves ranch, says pointed g by 2 her, "no  
dis" give her away - just enough 2 raise suspicion  
husband can believe or - believe as he pleases.

get skunked

what's radio say (abt weather)

p. 2 - Jeff & Bill come in - rain in the cow  
Mike be along

see, I told a Jeff's a regular edgy edict.

Jim: Still, he's a gd ranch hand. Never ~~was~~ saw a  
harder worker.

M:

and more kid

'rain is a character - a force

Hungover Rudy at breakfast; jokes o  
his - getting haircut - "left it kinda long o  
- sides "

/reason 4 Mike 2 go to town; try 4 more help.

Dad chuckled tongue while thinking.

bunk house jokes?

geeyer

~~hang~~ "My dad was hangover farmer"

Monty disparages Alec: "Listen to old folks

Swede saw

get myself an education

it's only 30 mi of mud up to your ass

helluva good ranch hand, though



bales o' gold - bales to bunkhouse

give horse story to Mike, make him reformed drunk?

comes back from tn, bumps sitting to cookhouse, <sup>bedroom</sup>  
wife thinks he's drunk - "Mike?" - lights  
flip on, he's not. His quiet <sup>flat</sup> reply - "what?"

Monty wonders, is disappointed Mike not drunk  
cards - it's just a game

wife: is it raining? M: no, it's clearing off

Rudy getting haircut to bunk h's after drunk, cloth  
around him. Suml asks: That is got a haircut when?

Mike to all to bunk h's; he asks who Monty is,  
suml says in cks, Mike lks perturbed,  
Monty then cums to dr.

<sup>"suml of - was good on back of M" post</sup>  
no - we want a contract 4 pigs cause bales.

<sup>It's a contract - nothin'!</sup> <sup>I agree with you!</sup>

U no what nothin' means; will never get a  
job to 3mo valley agn. <sup>- was about?</sup>

<sup>introduce no plans. top</sup>  
Mike to Monty as bale pig starts: u want go to tn?

<sup>and story of gun thrown for him as plan a/c</sup>  
(Earlier, Monty bales out 7 going 2 tn, tells Mike  
to take Rudy to his place, which Mike plus want to do.

## Notes on Willie Rough:

Foreman Jake Adams and agitator Sam McGrath both start out as unsympathetic characters, both develop into likables; adds greatly to strength of play.

Leaving an offstage happening to audience's imagination: wife's rent strike seemed all the stronger for not being seen on stage.

Power of unexpected: Hughie, after great anguish, dies quietly with soft final lines.

Scots argot: <sup>(wears)</sup> wains for children, bairn for boy, windies for windows.

Good lines: bartender asks hanger-on Hughie, "Do ye want a drink?" They look at each other, then together chorus "aye" and bar-~~tdnxx~~ tender smoothly pours.

Very believable bar scenes, good sense of Hughie hanging around all the time.

Good minor touch: apprentice shoed away from men having lunch.



## Act I

scene 1 - bunk house: hired men

scene 2: cook house: Mike & Marie

Jesus, Mike, & I dunno. I hired on to  
drive a hay rake, not pile bales.

remise of I had a ruinous rain

Crews scarce because of Korean war

He ain't got brains God gave a crowbar.

Finigan

"You're like - fella..."

"Pat & Mike"

Monty & Pete play - Monty explains jick

rising tension in crew, erupting c bale piling  
Monty has guessed, feeds hints  
book keeping; lkg bale thru bills, 2 fil time as  
bear story unfolds. Figure hay tonnage?  
Mike: I can't pay them any more.

Weather too dry <sup>in spring,</sup> then 2 much rain. "Somethin'  
mudallin wud b nice."

Dutchman: Is die der middle?

Title: jick

clown

not worth a boot in hell

Grand Canyon: Scotsman lost down gopher hole

Marie: I left u once (make plain it was  
for another man as well as drink)

Mike: I remember.

stage end b benches & cooks linked. Make it  
easier to get Monte & Marie together?

Mike: (figuring dice wages) Monty hasn't drawn any \$.

scene shd be evng, after supper?



Alec: hell of a sorry

Marie: Be careful, won't u?

Mike: Don't take a drink, u mean.

pie-eyed

He has 2 spds, that fella. Stand still  
& sit down.

Mike: bank won't give us any +. I already  
tried.

Marie: u tried? when?

Mike: a cupla wks ago, when I went 2 t'n  
4 ~~money~~ parts 4. labor.

Mike to Marie: You tell me.

live like other people  
Marie wants him 2 get a job in t'n. Woman's  
loneliness. Story of her g'mother going mad &  
wind b. homestead cabin. <sup>wonders if she can</sup> take it any better.

Mike: It's hard country.

leaky bank's roof, b2 can?

Mike's passion to be his own boss

Monty to Jeff: Game of Pitch?

Jeff surely reply, What a goddam place.

A boss mo thinks he's sum kind of  
litle Jesus, & a card shark settin  
around o his ass all day. Place is a  
~~goddam Monte Carlo Las Vegas~~ (grumps off to shave)  
(uses last water in bucket)

John to Jeff: Gettin unself pretty for town?

Sharpen sickles. Mike: No, we're not cutting  
any more. We're gonna pile what we got o - ground.

Treat me like a motherless child

been in d me d anybody else, that horse would  
becked him into midl 7 next week.

Mike catches Monty near Marie: Monty says with grin,  
"Fillin' bucket." Mike: gettin 2 be a  
(moves aside to show regular water boy, an' in?  
it to Mike)

Carol o reading 1st draft of 1st scene: end o  
t card playing, for sake of action. Me: add hint of  
bale piling revolt.

Pete gutting cards: "I'd better study up some t."



Monty comes to kitchen to fill water bucket;  
scene c him & Marie; Mike comes in, Monty  
sees Rudy going to tm to his place.  
Next, alternate benches scenes of bear story &  
Mike-Marie

Possible stage design: bunkhouse walls  
wallpapered c newspapers or magazine pages.  
1 character read by wall?

When Mike says Monty has drawn no \$,  
Marie lks thoughtful, considering going c him.

Marie's "I left you once" should come soon after  
scene c Monty, as implicit threat.

Monty: didn't tell you yet, huh? I'm gonna have  
this crew do it.  
... what choice we got?

not till after 4 get some 2 walking sponges back  
from town

Rudy sneaks bottle back up in; Mike takes  
it away, is tempted; takes mchful, spits it out  
disposes of bottle by tossing outside?



*Insert B*

*some pitch*

MONTY: Pete, how about you? C'mon, you watched enough to know how.

(Pete hesitates, flattered to be asked but unsure of himself.) *To cover his embarrassment*

PETE: Sure.

(Moves to the table, Monty deals. Monty talks as he deals.)

MONTY: That's the spirit. Make a pitch player out of you yet. Now if there's anything you don't savvy, ask as we go along.

PETE (trying to seem to know more than he does): ~~What's the jick~~ Ah ... when you count up the tricks ... what's the jick again?

MONTY: (repeats Pete as a sort of recital) What's the jick. The jack of the same color as trump. Say spades is trump, jack of clubs counts as jick. It's higher than the ten of trump, but lower than the jack. Jack always takes the jick. All you gotta remember. On any trick, jack takes jick. Whatta you bid?

PETE: One.

MONTY: ONE? Christ, *amirgity* that's no kind of bid. Let's see your hand. (peers at Pete's cards) Hell, you can make two or maybe three on that. Go on and bid.

PETE (gratefully): Two.

MONTY: Three. (Pete is dismayed at brusque doublecross as Monty deftly plays his cards and wipes Pete out.)

MONTY: Le's see, I got High, jick, jack and the game, andx you got low. (Pete has leaned back from table with exasperated sigh.)

What, you quittin'?

PETE: That's enough for now.

(Monty shrugs, goes back to playing solitaire.)

Pete: When'd you start playin' cards, Monty?

Monty: Can't remember when I wasn't playin'. You heard that song, haven't you, about how a deck of cards is like life itself? (mock solemn tones as parody of soppy song, as he continues to play ~~and~~ winning game of solitaire.) There are 52 cards in a deck, one for every week of the year ... The four suits, hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades, represent the four seasons of the year ... Add up the spots and they come out to 365, one for every day of the year ...

PETE: But what do you get out of playing cards all the time?

MONTY: They're a game, like anything else.

*add: bale of hay, Monty comment a feeling sorry for piling crew.*

*Rudy wishing he cd go full only 20 miles.*

*Monty tells sum / not 2 bother, he'll fill bucket*



(Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled and rapped on table between shuffles. Lights come up on 5 men in bunkhouse: John, Rudy, and Monty playing cards, Alec mending bridle, Pete watching the cards. Monty shuffles, gives deck final hard rap, plunks it in front of John.)

MONTY: Cut?

(John cuts, Monty slickly deals each six cards)

RUDY: I'll say two.

JOHN: Goddamn cards. Pass.

MONTY: Three, in . . . spades.

(Plays first card with flourish as he says "spades".) Monty quickly leads out his cards. John disgustedly throws in his hand on third trick. Monty takes every trick.)

MONTY: High low, jick, jack, and the game. (Reaches to kitty, adds 5 matches to pile in front of him. Grins at John and Rudy.)

Puts me out again.

JOHN (to Rudy): Ever see such a sonofabitch for winnin' every time?

(John gets up, walks to stove, checks coffee-pot. Takes down can of MJB, dumps in 3 spoons on old grounds, ladles water into pot with dipper from nearly empty bucket. Sets pot near front of stove. Stands by stove. Rudy meanwhile has pushed his chair back from table and is rolling a cigarette.)

MONTY: (shuffling cards) Not givin' up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (Grins, flashes deck in mock invitation.)

JOHN: (shakes head at cards) Nope. Can't make hay, so might as well make coffee. Want a cup of mud, Alec?

ALEC: (looks up from mending) Nope thanks. I've gotta go put some longer rivets in this.

MONTY (has given Rudy an inquiring look and gesture with deck to ask if he wants to play more; Rudy shakes his head; Monty has started playing solitaire quickly and deftly): I'd hate to have to go out in weather like this. Grows moss on your back. You watch, Pete. Alec'll come back in here green and fuzzy.

(Pete smiles shyly and uncertainly, pleased to be addressed but aware of jibe in Monty's words about Alec.)

RUDY: Well, I wish to hell it'd stop. This settin' around and settin' around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to haying or go to town till it quits.

MONTY: Gettin' thirsty, Rudy?

RUDY (tetchy): I'd rather be puttin' up hay, that's all. Good God almighty, there's a half a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground. I never saw so goddam much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.

MONTY: (pauses with card in hand, looks at Rudy) I thought that's Mike's problem.

ALEC: (moves toward door, stops): You sure you ain't ordered up this rain? You seem pretty happy to be settin around listenin' to the pitty-pat. (Goes out in slicker with bridle.)



MONTY: Touchy, aint' he? Goes with bein' a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

JOHN: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bothers him to see Mike havin' all this rain, I suppose.

MONTY: Mmm. Speakin' of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out of here this morning cussin' a blue streak. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a l-o-n-g sheet of paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Improve your vocabulary.

JOHN (laughs): Jeff ain't happy unless he's bitchin' about Mike, but he comes back every summer and works for him. (pours cup of vile black coffee, sips contentedly). You think Mike was touchy this morning, you oughta been around him when he was drinkin. I worked with him one haying time down at Greybull, Wyoming, years ago before he bought this place. Rained a couple of days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howlin' drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, and next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ a mighty! Then when the boss got him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We were still usin' horses then, and Mike'd been working a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy hat he wore when he got dressed up, big wide brim on it. He puts that on -- still drunk as a lord -- and goes down to the barn, and he's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his his knees between that

horse's hind legs with his big hat on; show us how tame he's got that horse.

PETE (fascinated) Did he do it?

JOHN: Well, he starts goin' through there on his knees when the horse gives a big kick -- catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off, sails it plumb across the barn. Horse's hoof didn't miss his head by an inch. Mike looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then he yells: Whoa, you big pink sonofabitch, WHOA! Then you know, that goddam horse just stood there, and Mike went right through his hind legs like he said he would. (puases, swills the coffee pot a bit and pours more in his cup.) Been you or me or anybody else, that horse woulda kicked him into the middle of next week.

MONTY (to Pete): See, I told you the two of them are a regular education. You can learn from Mike how to get your brains kicked out, and from Jeff that you don't need any brains anyway.

(Sound of person climbing wooden porch, then door opens and Jeff comes in, with slicker ~~xx~~ wet and muddy boots.)

RUDY: 'Lo, Jeff. Rainin' just as hard?

JEFF: Like a cow pissin' on a flat rock.

JOHN: Mike comin' in?

JEFF: Stopped by the cookhouse. The goddamn sparrowhead.

MONTY (half-mocking) to Jeff): Game of pitch?

JEFF: (grumpy) What a goddamn place. A boss that thinks he's a little Jesus, and a card shark settin' around on his ass all day.

(clumps over to shave and wash, using last  
*water in the bucket.*)



Marie: Mike would take your head off.

Monty: Could be. Could be he might think I'm not the only one involved. <sup>it wasn't only my idea.</sup>

Marie: Why do you keep movin' around?

Monty: I like movin'.

Marie: I think u do- like a stat answer, <sup>do u?</sup> is it?

Monty: Did- no th us such a thing.  
What u? what kind of ans do u like?

Marie: Any kind. just answers.

Monty: I've seen 4 men trying to make it o th own.  
Takes \$ to make \$. Mike lks 2 me like he's  
shavin' his 7 bein' in over his head.

Marie: Shame to see u go d'n him. Maybe u oughta b like me,  
think o movin'.

Marie: Maybe. (flat)

(Kitchen of the cookhouse. Long table with linoleum cloth, cupboards, wood-burning range, sink where Marie is finishing noon dishes. She empties dishpan, wipes her hands on towel, lights a cigarette. Mike enters from outside)

MARIE: <sup>just</sup> Is it raining as hard?

MIKE (shedding wet slicker): ~~like~~ Like a cow ... (catches himself) Yeah, hard as ever. What's the radio say?

MARIE: (trying to be light about it, stresses "con" in "continued" ~~rain~~):  
Continued rain. Suppose I'd better sew us some water wings in my spare time?

MIKE: Too dry in the spring, then it rains all summer. Something middling would be nice for a change. Any ~~warmed-up~~ <sup>thing on the</sup> news from Korea?

MARIE: <sup>They started somewhere</sup> Peace talks have started, but there's still fighting.  
(she tries again to lighten the conversation.) What kind of humor was was Jeff in this afternoon?

MIKE: (small rueful grin) You know Jeff ~~wasn't~~ is an even-tempered man -- madder than hornet all the time. Ah, we got along okay. Jeff's not happy unless he's <sup>got something to gripe about</sup> griping. (pause) You got <sup>the</sup> a grocery list ready? <sup>I oughta get started in plenty of daylight</sup>

MARIE: I'll write it out now. Who's going in with you?

MIKE: Monty's asked to go, and Jeff. Only room for three of us in the pickup, so that'll give an excuse not to take Rudy. His tongue's starting to hang out pretty bad. (pause) You're sure you don't wanna come.

MARIE: No. The road'll be so bad you should have the men with you. I'll go in when it stops raining, if it ever does. Are you gonna see about a bale piling crew?

MIKE: (shortly, uneasily) Yeah, I'll see.

MARIE: How long do you think it'll take the hay to <sup>dry now</sup> dry when it quits raining?

MIKE: Couple a good hot days. The hell of it is, ~~all~~ those bales are all gonna have to be turned over so the bottoms will dry before they're piled.

<sup>Means handlin' everyone of 'em twice, & then - hauling & piling. Thousands of 'em, 80 or a hundred a piece.</sup>  
<sup>bastards</sup>

loosen up  
2nd scene?

strengthen  
cut

laurels -  
she looks  
in cupboards, etc.

damaged  
# of bales



Marie: (tentatively, but determined to say it) Mike, what are you going to do? If the rain doesn't quit...

MIKE: (impatiently) If, if. If there was pie in the sky, we'd all need real long forks.

MARIE: Mike! Damn it! (pause, then in a lower tone) What are you going to DO?

MIKE: Well... (still reluctant) You know we're in up to our necks at the bank. If we don't get this hay crop in, we're through. There ain't any money to buy any, and the price of cattle ain't worth a damn right now. (pause, continues almost musingly) Hell of a note, ain't it? We bought this place because it's the best hay ranch in the country, and now we can't get the hay in.

MARIE: And if we lose this place?

MIKE: [If we lose this place,] I guess we throw up our tail and try it again somewhere else. Hire on somewhere for a while till we get some money ahead again.

MARIE: Mike, we agreed there wouldn't be any more of that.

MIKE: Jesus, Marie, I don't want it any more than you do. You think I wanna go back to being somebody else's foreman? I worked for other people from the time I was 13 years old. Living in bunkhouses until hell wouldn't have it. Trying to keep stewbuns on the job, to raise somebody else's cattle and put up somebody else's hay. Always somebody else's.

MARIE: (intensely) And while you were doing that, I've been cooking for those crews. For a lot more years than I can stand to think about. (Mike makes gesture of pain and mollification, and she subsides.) Can't you try the bank for one more loan?

more  
more -  
strengthen  
2-5 sometimes to  
clayton men

universities and the business professions, frequently put out skillful publications which concentrate on information usually dispersed by the big media's coverage. For example, the Sierra Club Bulletin in February, 1971, listed the oil spills since the tanker Torrey Canyon broke up off the English coast and raised our awareness of this

LEE: \$20

MARIE: I guess you're going to try hire a bay piling crew?

Mike: Didn't tell you yet, huh? I'm gonna have this crew pile 'em.

Mike (quietly): I'm gonna have the crew pile the bales. (Marie looks stunned) You wanted to know.

Marie: ~~This crew?~~ Mike, a crew like this can't pile bales. They won't do it.

Mike: I've been running crews for 20 years; I've got them to do plenty of things they didn't want to.

Marie: But these men are drifters. Drifters and winoes and God knows what all.

Walt: I've seen whole crews quit & walk off - job over a lot less.

It's gonna be close no matter how we do it. We're out 1\$, & I'll have to sel sum 1. May want to pay 4. bale piling.

Monty  
has drawn #  
- til after I get  
some & walk  
sponges back  
ing th.



MIKE: I already tried.

Marie: You tried? When?

Mike: A couple weeks ago, when I went to town for parts for the <sup>hay</sup> baler.

Marie: Mike, we agreed we wouldn't go back to ranch work.

Mike: Well, what then? You tell me.

Marie: Get a job in town. Go to work at the sawmill.

Mike: We been through that before. <sup>too</sup> No town, no sawmill.

Marie: Other people do.

Mike: We ain't goddam other people.

Marie: We could try. You could try. (no response from Mike) My mother told me once about her mother. She raised five children in a homestead cabin the size of this kitchen. My mother said one summer they noticed my grandmother would stand in the middle of the cabin for a long time and just listen. Just listen to the wind. They she'd go to one of the windows where the dust was blowing in, and she'd take her hand like this, and pinch and brush away the dust. And the dust would blow in again right away. She died in the asylum. The wind drove her crazy. When something like this happens, I wonder if I'll end up like her.

Mike: It's hard country. (pause) Maybe ~~things~~ things'll be all right.

The rain quits, and a day or two of sunshine, and we'll get back to putting up hay.

Marie: (shakes her head) I'm tired of waiting for the rain to quit. I left you once, Mike. (pause)

Mike: (gives her a long hard look) I don't need any reminding. <sup>(pause)</sup> I gotta go put gas in pickup (he goes out on chore. Marie has minute or two of business in kitchen, then Monte comes in.)



lengthen  
Monty + Marie  
scene?

MONTY: Think the rain'll hurt the rhubarb?

makes joke → MARIE: (smiles a bit uneasily, looks away, deliberately busy)

MONTY: ~~Watching her put~~ (Fills water bucket, watching her. Stands watching her put away dishes) How many dishes you suppose you washed in your life? Do you see 'm in your dreams at night instead of countin' sheep?

MARIE: No, I sleep sound. At least the rain is good for that.

MONTY: A sound sleeper. Must have a clear conscience, <sup>huh?</sup> ~~hmm?~~

MARIE (steadily) Clear enough. (He still stands, she attempts to make conversation) Where do you go next if we ever get this hay put up?

MONTY: I go south. Los Angeles or Phoenix, haven't decided which. <sup>Someplace warm,</sup> ~~no snowdrifts.~~  
Maybe Mexico, <sup>city</sup> one of these winters.

MARIE: What do you work at, in the winter?

MONTY: Work at livin', what else? Lots of fellows waitin' to hand their money across a card table. You'd be surprised how many? Fellows who don't know enough to play a hand for all it's worth. (Moves closer to her) I kind of vacation among folks who don't savvy the spots on cards any too well. It's nice. <sup>B</sup> Does a person good to get out of bunkhouses ... and cookshacks. (He stands close behind her, lightly puts hands on her hips. They stand, Marie tense, Monty gauging. At last she moves away, but slightly, inconclusively.)

(B) (Mike comes in from bunkhouse, looks at them. Monty casually reaches hand to pail)

MONTY: Fillin' the <sup>old</sup> ~~bueket~~.

MIKE: You're gettin' to be a regular water boy.

MONTY: (turns as leaving slowly): Say, changed my mind about goin' to town. I got nothin really to go for, so <sup>I told</sup> ~~Rudy~~ <sup>he</sup> can go in my place. Says he wants to get a haircut pretty bad.



Marie: If he'd seen that, Mike would take your head off.

Monty: ~~Maybe~~ Could be. Could be he might think it wasn't all <sup>just</sup> my idea, too. (pause, considers here) Then again, maybe he wouldn't even notice at all. Got a lot on his mind these days, tryin' to make the rain stop. Takes quite a fellow to manage that.

Marie: How about being a bunkhouse lawyer? What does that take?

Monty: (mock wince) Mmmhh. I sure wouldn't know about that. I have heard fellows called that now and then. But about all it means usually is that they've got a smidgin of brains somebody else ~~doesn't~~ <sup>don't</sup>.

Marie: I thought it meant a troublemaker.

Monty: No, I'd say a troublemaker is somebody who makes trouble for himself. Gets himself over his head, you know. Like playin' cards, you wanta ~~know~~ have a good idea how many tricks you can take before you bid. Anybody who ~~doesn't~~ <sup>don't</sup> know that ~~doesn't~~ <sup>don't</sup> last long. Now you take Mike. <sup>A like Mike a whole hellum lot, but</sup> Looks to me like he's showin signs of bein in over his head.

I've seen foremen trying to make it on their own before. All of a sudden, it's their own responsibility. Buying cows, ....., the payroll. Most of em start without much, and it takes money to make money.

Marie: why do you keep movin around?

Monty: I like movin. Keeps the 00 circulating.

Marie: one thing you don't like is straight answers, do you?

Monty: Didn't know there was such a thing. And <sup>how</sup> ~~what~~ about you? What kind of answers do you like?

Marie: Any kind. Just answers.

Mike:

Marie: You ready to go?

MIKE; Take a few minutes yet. I got to figure <sup>up</sup> the time for Jeff and Rudy.

(he gets out daybook, sits at table. Marie sits there too, middle distance from him)

MIKE: Never saw a day book with so many rainy days. Well, let's see how much wages the gold dust twins got comin to them.

MARIE (looks at him, then away) You want a cup of coffee before you start?

MIKE: sure.   
 ~~part of members of U. of Wisconsin~~   
 ~~voices in the letter, Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press' copyright~~   
 ~~homestead' incorporated -- Frank H. Kessler (3700 words)~~

~~--At the same time, a branch of the Wisconsin Press~~   
 General excellence in the national membership association combined on.

~~--He was notified that the Oshkosh Press had placed that for~~   
 notices came to him:

weekly members in Wisconsin. One day in June, 1909, two kinds of   
 printer and publisher William F. Johnson Jr. owned three small   
 The Corporate Structure and Other Complexes

news agencies\



Post going out of business and others hurting badly. Even so, some of the most vigorous reporting still comes from reporters in a line.

John: My, you're lookin' slick, Jeff. What's that your usin' on your hair, bear grease?

ALEC: ~~Yeah~~ If it was, Jeff'd smell even riper than he <sup>already a</sup> does. Skinned bear <sup>really has a powerful st</sup> got a helluva smell to him?

Pete: You ever skin one, Alec?

ALEC: Lots of em. One almost skinned me in return, too.

PETE: ~~Why~~, what do you mean? What happened?

ALEC: It was when I was a lot younger. (has been self-deprecating. Glances at Pete, sees he is eager to hear. Begins the story.)

*Amorpha page*

news and with commentary and analysis. From the Munich crisis in 1938 until World War Two ended in 1945, radio probably was more effective than television could have been. Instead of the repetition of a living room war, listeners got nightly suspense from fixating hearing newsmen broadcast across the oceans; precisely because the audience can't see what is happening, the attention was sharpened, and master reporters such as Edward R. Murrow performed like actors. Here is Murrow, relating to his countrymen one of the first reports from the Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald:

It was about 40, 45 years ago now. Jobs was scarce in those days.

You had to take anything you could get. I was herdin sheep, livin with my wife at an old homestead <sup>Over</sup> near Copperopolis Creek. <sup>Well,</sup> This bear got to comin in there nights, killin <sup>one</sup> sheep. Boy, he'd kill em right and left. He'd always wait until after the moon went down, till it got good and dark. Then he'd prowl in and kill <sup>another</sup> 5 or 6 sheep.

All the neighbors, there'd be some of em there pretty near every night with me, to try get that bear. First we was gonna trap him.

*Pete* These sheep he'd kill, he'd just leave em lay. That's the way a bear <sup>see</sup> They don't like fresh meat. They like it after it decays, gets spoiled. <sup>a cutter</sup> does, ~~they kill some thing~~ they'll cover it with limbs or somethin to <sup>good</sup> and let it get spoiled. keep the other predators from gettin it.

*Comments from others - "Sounds like some ranch grub I've had."* There was an old brush roof shed there. It was pretty well fallen down and he'd drag some of this brush and put over his sheep. So we put some traps up there one night. We got 3 or 4 big coyote traps up there, we was gonna catch him. Got up the next mornin -- I had a nice big black and tan dog, oh he was a dandy -- bear tracks all around there, <sup>but what</sup> and we had the dog in the trap. <sup>was that dog.</sup> We could see where the bear had sure been there, it's a wonder he didn't eat that dog up.

<sup>an' shoot 'im.</sup> So next thing, we're gonna lay for him at night. The neighbor from the next ranch was a crack shot, <sup>q he came over & sunden</sup> he was down there. The two of us went up in a old log barn there, the loft end of it was open. We'd got one of the first sheep ~~the~~ the bear had killed, and drug it down under the loft, to <sup>coax</sup> entice him down there, <sup>so we cd get a shot at him</sup> Well, we both swore we never slept a wink, but that <sup>damn</sup> bear ate that whole sheep within 30 feet of us, and we never knew it. <sup>till morning</sup>



So, that's 2 this for me, ...

Marie (bringing his coffee): How's the arithmetic lesson?

MIKE: I'll see if they're satisfied with drawin \$35 each. That ought to be enough for 'em to get a snootful. (looks over daybook) Everybody's drawn some wages but Monte. Gonna have a full summer's pay comin. Wonder what he's savin' it for, poker games this winter?

MARIE: And you? How do you think we're gonna come out?

MIKE: Guess we'll either win or lose. I never ~~have~~ have  
seen much in between.

Max: Your soundin' like Monty.

The bear was about 60 feet from me. I cut down on him with that  
old rifle and he went WOOF.

insert  
under 4

MIKE: You're pretty quiet. Not lettin' all this get you down,  
are you?

MARIE: No more than I can help it.

MIKE: Yeah.

Alec:

I don't know if I hit him or not, but  
I changed his mind anyhow. Well, he either had to come toward me or  
go right back through the middle of the sheep, so here he comes toward  
me. He got oh, about 30 feet from me when I cut down on him again,  
and I know I hit him that time. He let another WOOF out of him, and  
he was mad now. Here he comes. He had his old head turned sideways.  
I could have counted his teeth there in the moonlight.

Marie

insert  
14 & 15



The bear got up pretty close, I'd say about the distance from me to you, Pete. I was tryin to shoot him between the eyes. He had his head turned a little bit, and I got him right -- you know how a bear's head is, his ears are up towards the top of his head -- I got him right the side of the ear there. The bullet went down through his neck and all the way into his lungs. That took the WOOF out of him. Set him back on his haunches, and he made a pass at me, and I ducked him as he come around he'd ripped me in four pieces. I jammed the ~~gun~~ rifle again his ribs, right behind his shoulder there, and pulled the trigger.

Mike: Well, I better collect those gobs + head for town

Marie: Be careful.

Mike: Mm. You too.  
Mike: Don't take a drink, you mean. (Marie looks hard at him, they lock glances; she puts out cigarette and leaves room; he sits and slowly drinks coffee as bear story ends.)

WOOF, he says, <sup>again</sup> and down he went. I'm right next to him now, I could reach out and touch him he's so close. I put the rifle up to him again and pull the trigger. Nothin happens. That was the last shell I had in the rifle when I put it again his shoulder there, I'm standin there by that bear with my rifle empty. I remember it was so quiet then I could hear the radio, still playin in the front room. The bear keeps laying there, right at my feet. He was dead.

Funny thing, I didn't get scared while it was happenin. Never gave it a thought to run when that bear was coming at me in the dark. But I shook all night afterwards, after it was all over.

(Mike gets up)

(end of act one)

(Monty comes into cookhouse, looks around, sits at table and shuffles cards. The riffle brings Marie into the room.)

Monty: You're not such a sound sleeper after all.



Act 2, Scene 1

(It is dark in the bunkhouse. The sound of the pickup returning from town is heard. Pickup doors slam, there is drunken cursing. Rudy's voice draws nearer, drunkenly singing in bad imitation of Gene Autry: "...I'm back in the saddle agin/Out where a frien' is a frien'/Where the longhorn cattle feed/On the lonely Jimson weed/I'm back in the saddle agimnn...") Pete, startled from sleep, sits bolt upright in bed. The rest of the bunkhouse awakes as Rudy and Jeff clatter in and flick on the lights:)

JEFF: Goddamn scissorbill Mike anyway.

JOHN: Oh, Jesus, the choirboys are back. Turn off those lights and get to bed.

RUDY: Gotta go back to th' ranch, he says. Hell with that. Can't hay anyway. Can we, John? Huh? Can't hay anyway? Huh? ~~What~~ Why can't we stay in town? Have a li'l fun?

(All are awake by now, Monty watching bemused, John exasperatedly trying to dig under covers, Alec sleepy but benign, Pete wide-eyed with interest.)

RUDY (spotting Monty) Hey, Monty, le's play pitch. Huh? Git out your cards. (singsong) Highlow, jickjack. C'mon, git out the cards, an' I'll cut 'em thin an'win.

JOHN: Cards, hell. Point your ass towards that bed and get in.

MONTY (leaning on one elbow casually, says to Jeff) How was the cathouse, Romeo? The afternoon sun didn't get in your eyes and bother you or anything, did it?

~~XXXX~~ (Jeff glowers for a moment, then begins to giggle, harder and harder. He sits down heavily on John's bed, to John's outrage.)

Rudy: Oh yeah, I know what I's gonna ask.



*clod dances*  
RUDY (singing) ...but the squaws along the Yukon/are good enough for me....

Hey, lemme ask you all a question.

JOHN: This ain't no schoolhouse. Goddam go to bed!

RUDY (laughs uproariously) This ain't no schoolhouse! Ain't that the  
*This ain't no goddamn schoolhouse!*  
truth! (laughs more, then:) But lemme ask you all a question. I ...

uh ... I ... (stops, puzzled; has completely lost what he meant to ask.)

JEFF (unsteady on his feet but glowering, sees Pete looking at him openmouthed) What the goddam hell you lookin' at? (Pete hurriedly turnin' in. looks away, stutters "Nothin'.") I'm ~~goin' to bed~~. (Clomps to his bed, falls full length on it.)

RUDY (alarmed) Hey, Jeff! Don't go yet, we're gonna play cards! Hey! (He stands looking at Jeff, becomes more and more vacant. Softly:)

Heeyyy... (Keels over heavily in middle of floor)

JOHN: Oh, goddam. Let the sonofabitch sleep it off there. Turn~~ne~~ out those lights, will ya, Pete?

(Pete, in BVDs and undershirt, uncertainly gets out of bed. He takes a step toward the light switch, then stops, ~~he~~ uncertain whether Rudy should be left in the middle of the floor.)

*had I oughta*  
Pete: Ahh, should I put a blanket on him?

ALEC (quietly, getting out of bed): Here, I got something to fix him up.

*in long john*  
(ALEC stands <sup>beside</sup> ~~straddling~~ Rudy's body, facing his feet. He lifts Rudy's <sup>right</sup> ~~left~~ leg, tucks it under his arm, and begins pounding Rudy's heel hard with the palm of his hand. Rudy's head jars with each impact. Each pounding produces an agonized "uhh" until Rudy says: "Hey, goddam it. Back of my head..." He sits up, hands tenderly on the back of his head. Groggily gets up, weaves to his bed and clumsily gets in. Alect watches quietly, turns back to bed, pauses:)

ALEC (to Monty) Old folks' trick.

JOHN (sinking back gratefully) Get those lights, will ya, Pete? (Pete does)

(Darkened cookhouse. Mike comes through door carrying box of groceries, stumbles into chair with loud racket. He stops, still in dark. From doorway, Marie's voice: "Mike?" He remains in same position. Sound of Marie coming to doorway. She flips on lights, again apprehensively says "Mike?" They look at each other for long pause, then Mike moves surely to put down box and pick up chair, and it becomes plain he isn't drunk.)

MIKE: Worried about me?

MARIE: I ... didn't know what to think. Can I fix you anything to eat?

(Mike shakes his head, still looking at her.)

MARIE: Did you get Jeff and Rudy to come home all right? (Sits at table. Mike sits too, facing her.)

MIKE: Yeah. Had to persuade 'em a little bit. Rudy's determined he's gonna stay in town overnight and hire somebody to bring him out in the morning. Like hell he would.

*more: ends c quit raining*



Breakfast table:

Marie: More hotcakes, anybody?

John: Nice to see that sunshine

Murmurs of "nope", "got all I can handle". Rudy comes in. *"take some + coffee, though"*

Monty: Well, you're lookin a bit peaked this mornin, Rudy? Feelin all right? *Got a touch of Chinese crop, maybe.*

John: That barber left it a little long behind the ears, didn't he?

Rudy mumbles "ahh", shakily drinks coffee.

John: Well, what's ~~one~~ for today, Mike? Want me to sharpen some sickles so the mower'll be ready to start cuttin tomorrow?

Mike: No, we got too much hay on the ground as it is. We're gonna let the standing stuff go until the bales get piled.

Silence among the crew.

John: You got a bale piling crew comin out?

Mike: No, I'm gonna have to ask you fellas to do some piling. <sup>I</sup> Hate to, but there's just no bale pilers to be had. I figure about ten days, maybe a week, we can clean it up and go back to ~~the ranch~~ cuttin. We'll get two crews going; I'll take Pete and Jeff, and John can take Monty and Rudy. First thing we gotta do is turn those bales on their sides so the bottoms won't mold.

(More silence. Monty eyes the others.)

Jeff: Didn't know I was signin' on to be a Bale stiff.

John: Yeah, Mike, that's kind of tough. Some of us are gettin' along in years to be muckin bales. Kinda more than we bargained for, you know?

Mike: Feel that way myself. Thought my days of bale-humpin were behind me.  
all the young bucks  
But men are hard to find nowadays, with everybody bein drafted for Korea.

Like I say, it'll only be a week or so.

Monty: (sarcastically) Well, that's somethin.

*pay* I'll make it right & you. Start payin' in all piler's wages from today.

*worked our way up from that*

*Marie - cold Rudy - just coffee*

Reaches under his chair, pulls out 4 hooks. Found some hooks in back of pickup, & I'll round up some +. How many we gonna need?

Mike: Well, we'll give the ground a little time to start dryin. I'll round up some bale hooks and come by the bunkhouse. How many hooks we gonna need?

I like one in each hand. How about you, John?

John: I just use one.

Pete: Two, I guess. Mike: Here's 1, & I'll get you another, full?

+ 2 men  
hands out hooks. Men  
hook them w/ 2 belts (John  
does, Pete looks & copies)

Jeff: I don't give a damn. ~~either one~~ Either one.

Mike: Rudy? Rudy: One. Huh? Oh, uh...

Monty. One's <sup>a great</sup> plenty.

Mike: Okay, I'll be along to the bunkhouse, and we'll start making hay.

The men file out.

Marie: Do you think they'll do it?

Mike: I dunno. The only thing I know for sure about a haying crew is not to count on what they are or aren't gonna do. I'll try hang on to enough of them to get this hay in.

Marie: How many do you need?

Mike: In a pinch, you can drive one tractor and Alec the other, so I can get by with four of them. Three on each piling crew and an extra man on the bale stack. But if we can't keep two <sup>full</sup> crews going, we're goners. That hay'll not to hell.



bunkhouse:

John: Well, you never know what's gonna happen when you get up in the mornin,  
*Anybody see my leather gloves?*  
do you? (digging out leather gloves from his soogan)

Jeff: Specially on this haywire outfit. Shoulda stayed at the cathouse.

Pete: I never piled bales before. (asks question)

John: Ah, it'll burn some of the lard off our butts, *I suppose.* How you feelin', Rudy?  
*good, about*  
You're lookin like death warmed over.  
*I cold*

*I feel worse in that*  
Rudy: ~~That's how I feel.~~

(Monty starts bunkhouse lawyering, finally countered by Alec)

RUDY: I feel worse 'n that.

JEFF: Them bales will straighten you out. God damn, two weeks of green bales.

MONTY: Nobody's makin you stay. Nobody's making any of us stay. So I'm leaving.

(all stop and look at him as he starts to pack his soogan.)

John: You quittin'.

Monty: your damn betcha. Any of you got anything in your heads, you'll quit too. Mike's playing us for a fool.

(silence. Finally, Pete) How do you mean, Monty?

Monty: Did you hire on to pile bales? I didn't. Mike's tryin to save his ass by workin ours off. Well, I ain't piled bales for 15 years, and I sure as hell ain't now, especially at these wages.

Alec: Mike's payin the best he can.

Monty: then it ~~ain't~~ ain't enough. If I'm gonna break my butt, I might as well do it in better climate. (glances at Pete) Know a fella in Denver who

Rudy: Denver. I always wanted to go to Denver.

Monty: Chances are always there for the fellow th at takes them.

Pete: What kind of work?

Monty: (describes it, entices more)

*Rudy  
sneaks  
drink*  
→  
*Monty to A:  
do. want to  
hear any  
best time stories*



John: Walkin Off the job when a man's in a bind is bad business.

Make it hard to get any kind of a<sup>again</sup> job in this valley.

Monty: This ain't much of a valley, and it ain't the only valley.

Rudy: By god, he's right. I'm going.

Mike (has come in door behind him) How you feelin?

Rudy: Better. Lots better.

Mike: Wonder why that is? Didn't happen to bring a bottle back with you, did you?

Rudy: Huh? No, no.

Mike sweeps overshoes from under Rudy's bed with his foot, reaches down and picks up pint.)

Mike: You want to leave that stuff in town, Rudy.

Monty: Rudy's got something to tell you, Mike. He ain't in no mood for pilin bales. Neither am I, and there might be some others around here.

Mike: Goddam it, you know the fix I'm in.

also warns  
Mike, "you  
got trouble"

Mike: Christ, I'm not askin you to rebuild the <sup>goddam</sup> world. It's only about a <sup>couple</sup> week's worth of pilin bales.

Monty: That's some "Only". If we wanted to pile bales, ~~don't you think~~ we'd <sup>have</sup> hire out as bale pilers~~x~~.

Mike: Look, there ain't a piling crew anywhere, and we've only got a few days to get that hay off the ground before it molds.

Monty: That ain't our problem.

Mike: I said I'd give you pilers' wages, didn't I?

Monty: We ain't so sure you got the money anyway. Story <sup>is</sup> goin' around that you might be busted before this summer's over.

Mike: <sup>have</sup> Goddam, I never shorted a man on his wages. I'll have the money.

Monty: First time for everything, as the tall lady says to the midget. No,

Mike, I don't think you do have the money. Or maybe you do right now. But what if it starts rainin' again? What if it takes an extra week or two to get these bales piled? Or what if a bunch of em rot in the field? That's like money drizzlin' out of your poeket. You're askin us to gamble on the weather and you both. I like my odds better than that.

Mike: Then get your goddamn bedroll together. I'll have you in town so fast it'll make your head swim.

Monty: Maybe you oughta ask around, see if I got any ~~rid~~ company for that ride to town. (pause; mockingly) I mean among my fellow bale pilers, of course.



Mike: D'you want me to recite it all? That I'm an alky -- a drunk? That  
when I took the cure they told me just one drink would set me off again?  
How much of my own puke do you want me to swallow?

bunkhouse debate:

Mike to Rudy: You've stuck it out this long.

Rudy: That's all I can, Mike. Take me to town.

~~Pete~~ Mike: Pete?

Monty: We can make us a stake together in OO.

Pete: <sup>The hell with it,</sup> I <sup>playin'</sup> an't very good at pitch yet. I'll stay.

All look at Jeff.

Jeff: Stayin'. (sees surprise all around; louder) STAYING!

~~John~~ Mike (with satisfaction): I'll go write out the money for you two.

John: Write mine out too, Mike. I don't like bein in the middle. I know  
you got a ranch you're tryin to save. But I got rights not to be ...

*To do job I was  
hired for. I'm  
a maver man*

Monty: Looks to me like you're a little shorthanded.

Mike stares at him, takes two hooks from his belt, tosses one on the table  
by Monty.

Mike: You son of a bitch. (starts for Monty)

Marie hears commotion, comes into bunkhouse. Alec stops fight after Mike wings Monty in the hand. Marie goes from Mike to check Monty's hand, wraps wash towel around it.

Mike: You're so concerned about him, maybe you ought to leave with him.

Marie: Maybe I will.

Mike: I'll write out the checks and take you to town.

Monty: What about that. Wanna head south?

Marie: I'm used to snow by now.

(she leaves bunkhouse, goes to cookhouse, enters door Mike has left open. He has Rudy's bottle on table, staring at it. Rips off cap, drinks -- pauses, spews it out of his mouth, throws bottle into corner of room, or onto stove. Or empties in into sink? Sees Marie.)

~~Mike~~ Marie: That's the best thing that's happened around here all summer.

Mike: You goin' with him?

Marie: No.



## PROBLEMS WITH SCRIPT SO FAR:

--Marie: she is afraid and upset at Mike's decision to make crew pile bales, but what are his choices? What can account for her upset? Portray her as fraying away under ranch life? How make her a whole character? She must be fearful of Mike's decision; want him to move to town if they lose the ranch; and toy with idea of going with Monty.

--Mike: Make him sympathetic, have more dimensions. Lines about having been a drunk, perhaps. Lines which show he is shrewd, but in over his head.

--Monty: most interesting character so far. Ever the gambler, seeing how far he can go.

John: Make him right in his decision not to stay, as Mike is right in his attempt to make them stay. He should be a good man, interesting, but unwilling to be in the middle, to field hard decisions.

JEFF: developing okay; should be mean and gruff, but come down on Mike's side, even though he'd never admit to helping a man out in a pinch.

ALEC: wise head but aging, devoted to Mike, would have done whatever Mike asked if he were a younger man.

PETE: use his youth as comic foil, but have him mature a bit by staying. Give him more lines, or no?

RUDY: A man beaten by drink, and knows it. Make him tragic.

Themes of the play: a fragile community falls apart, not because of right or wrong but because purposes are different. Mike tries to pull off his greatest job yet as a handler of men -- and fails because of John, not Monty. Monty gambles to break Mike and win Marie -- and narrowly misses. Marie looks at the chance to shed the ranch and cookhouse life -- and passes it up.

Put as much humor and detail in as possible: the balehooks, for instance.

### Shifts of action:

#### ACT ONE

bunkhouse crew  
Mike and Marie  
Marie and Monty  
bunkhouse story/  
Mike and Marie

#### ACT TWO

all in kitchen  
Mike and Marie  
Bunkhouse crew  
Mike and crew  
Fight; Marie to bunkhouse  
Mike  
Mike and Marie

*Mike, to part table: raises their pay.*

*More between Marie & Mike*



Act 1  
Scene 1

*Thunder and rain*  
(Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled and rapped on table between shuffles. Lights come up on 5 men in bunkhouse: John, Rudy, and Monty playing cards; Pete watching the card game; Alec ~~darning socks~~ <sup>darning socks</sup> ~~Monty is shuffling~~. Monty is shuffling. He gives the deck a final hard rap on the table, plunks it in front of John.)

MONTY: Cut?

(John cuts; Monty slickly deals each six cards.)

RUDY: I'll bid two.

JOHN: <sup>the goddamn</sup> Goddamn cards. Pass.

MONTY: Three, in . . . spades.

(Monty plays first card with flourish as he says "spades". He quickly leads out his cards. John disgustedly throws in his hand on the third trick. Monty takes every trick.)

MONTY: Don't much like them spades, huh? I'll just take high, low, jick,

*spread tricks* → jack and game. (He reaches to the kitty -- a box of Diamond kitchen matches -- and takes out five matches while counting loudly:) One, two, three, four,

five -- as many as the thumbs <sup>on</sup> to the end of me hand, as the Irish carpenter *says*

*expressed* <sup>Dutchman</sup> said to the ~~bricklayer~~. (He grins at John and Rudy) Puts me out again.

JOHN: (to Rudy) Ever see such a sonofabitch for winning every time?

*they put matches back in kitty*  
(John gets up, walks to stove, checks coffee pot. Takes down can of MJB, dumps in 3 spoonfuls on old grounds, ladles water into pot with dipper from nearly empty bucket. Sets pot near front of stove. Stands by stove. Rudy meanwhile has pushed his chair back from table and is rolling a cigarette.)

*business to keep M busy*  
MONTY: (shuffling cards) Not givin' up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (Grins, flashes deck in mock invitation.)

*(5 thatches, yawns)*  
~~XXXXX~~JOHN: (shakes head at cards) Nope. Can't make hay, so might as well <sup>(stretches, yawns:)</sup> Oh, Keenist Katy! make coffee. Want a cup of mud, Alec?

*"Oh, Keenist Katy!"*  
ALEC: (looks up from darning sock) No thanks. I gotta go give that orphan calf some hay.

(Monty has given Rudy an inquiring look and gesture with deck to ask if he wants to play more. Rudy shakes his head. Monty ~~has~~ started playing solitaire quickly and deftly.)



(in mocking tone)

MONTY: Ain't it bad enough we work our guts out in the hayfield without havin' the damn stuff in here too, Alec? Whyn't you keep your damn bales somewheres else? Reminds me of livin' in a cow shed.

ALEC: You know this wind and rain tore holes in the <sup>barn</sup> roof of the barn, and I gotta keep some bales dry somewhere for that calf. Mike asked you all a week ago if it's okay to use that corner. Them bales don't take up much room anyway.

MONTY: Yeah, well . . . That green hay makes me ache all over just lookin' at it. I don't envy the piling crew all them bales to be stacked. (He glances at Alec putting on slicker.) Anyway, I'd sure hate to have to go out in weather like this. <sup>just to feed a shin-milks calf</sup> Grows moss on your back. You watch 'im, Pete. Alec'll come back in here all green and fuzzy.

(Pete smiles shyly and uncertainly, pleased to be addressed but aware of jibe in Monty's words about Alec.)

RUDY: Well, I wish to hell it'd quit. This settin' around and settin' around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to haying or go to town till it quits.

MONTY: Gettin' thirsty, Rudy?

RUDY: (tetchily) I'd rather be puttin' up hay, that's all. Good Godalmighty, there's a half ~~of~~ a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground. I never saw so goddamn much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.

MONTY: (Pauses with card in hand ready to play, looks at Rudy) I thought that's Mike's problem. It's his ranch, his hay.

You're startin to sound like old folks over there in the corner. slicker coats

ALEC: (moves toward door, stops) You sure you ain't ordered up this rain? You seem pretty content to be settin' around listenin' to the pitty-pat. (He ~~exits~~ takes 1/4 bale of hay in his arms, exits.)



MONTY: Touchy, ain't he? Goes with bein' a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

JOHN: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bothers him to see Mike havin' all *this* rain in the middle of haying season, I suppose.

MONTY: Mmm. Speakin' of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out of here this morning cussin' a blue streak. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a l-o-n-g sheet of paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Improve your vocabulary.

JOHN: (chuckles) Jeff ain't happy unless he's bitching about Mike, but he comes back every summer and works for him. (Pours cup of vile black coffee, sips contentedly.) You think Mike was touchy this morning, you oughta been around him when he was drinking. I worked with him one haying time down at Greybull, Wyoming, years ago before he bought this place. Rained a couple of days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howling drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, and next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ a mighty! Then when the boss finally got him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We were still using horses then, and Mike'd been working a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He's the only one in the crew could handle them. He gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got ~~this~~ this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy hat he wore whenever he got dressed up, *out to here (holds hand a foot from his head)*. He puts that on -- still drunk as a lord -- and goes down to the barn, everybody on the place following him. He's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his knees between that horse's hind legs with his big hat on; show us how tame he's got that <sup>roan</sup> horse.

PETE: (listening with fascination) Did he do it?

*Show what  
Mike &  
Jeff are doing*

*stronger*



JOHN: Well, he starts going through there on his knees when the horse gives a big kick -- catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off, sails it plumb across the barn. That horse's hoof didn't miss his head by an inch. Mike looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then he yells: Whoa, you big pink sonofabitch, WHOA! Then you know, that goddamn horse just stood there, and Mike went right through his hind legs like he said he would. (John pauses, swills the coffee pot a bit and pours more in his cup.) Been you or me or anybody else, that horse would have kicked him into the middle of next week.

MONTY: (to Pete) See, I told you the two of them are a regular education.

~~You can learn from Mike~~ <sup>it show you</sup> how to get your brains kicked out, and ~~from~~ Jeff's <sup>living proof</sup> that you don't need any brains anyhow.

(Sound of person climbing the ~~from~~ wooden porch; door opens and Jeff comes in, with slicker wet and muddy boots.)

RUDY: 'Lo, Jeff. Rainin' just as hard?

JEFF: Like a cow pissin' on a flat rock.

JOHN: Mike coming in now?

JEFF: Stopped by the cookhouse first. The goddamn sparrowhead, makin' a man work in this kind of weather.

MONTY: (half-mockingly to Jeff) Game of pitch?

JEFF: (even more grumpy now) What a goddamn <sup>spread</sup> place. A boss that thinks he's a little Jesus, and a card shark settin' around on his ass all day.

(Jeff clomps over to shave and wash, using last water in the bucket.)

JOHN: (to Monty) Who's going to town with Mike, you and Jeff?

MONTY: (glances at Rudy, says contentedly:) Yup.

RUDY: (He has been watching Jeff get ready for town; clears his throat.)

Kinda wish I was goin' in myself. Need a haircut pretty bad.

JEFF: (crushingly) Why doncha set out walkin'? It's only 20 miles of mud up to your ass..

JOHN: Jess<sup>ff</sup>, that what you got in mind, too? Going in to get a haircut?

JEFF: Haircut, hell. First place I'm <sup>thing down' is hittin'</sup> goin' is the whorehouse.

PETE: (blurts incredulously) In the afternoon!?

(They all stare and laugh Pete into mortification.)

*we better get your mind off of cat houses;*  
MONTY: Pete, <sup>we</sup> how about some pitch? C'mon, you watched enough to know how. *by now,*

(Pete hesitates, flattered to be asked but unsure of himself. Decides to go go ahead to cover his embarrassment.)

*strengthen?*  
PETE: Sure, okay.

(Pete moves to the table. Monty deals, talking as he does.)

MONTY: That's the <sup>stuff</sup> spirit. Make a pitch player out of you yet. Now if there's anything you don't savvy, you just ask as we go along.

PETE: (trying to seem to know more than he does) Ah . . . when you count up the tricks . . . what's the jick again?

~~XXXXXXXX~~ MONTY: (Repeats Pete as a sort of recital.) What's the jick.

The jack of the same ~~aka~~ color as trump. Say spades is trump, jack of clubs counts as jick. It's higher than the ten of trump, but lower than the jack. Jack always takes the jick. All you gotta remember. On any trick, jack takes jick. Whatta you bid?

PETE: One.

MONTY: ONE? Christawmighty, that's no kind of bid. <sup>Lemme</sup> ~~Let's~~ see your hand.

(He peers at Pete's cards.) Hell, ~~ya~~ you can make two or maybe three on that. Go on and bid.

PETE (gratefully) Two!



MONTY: Three. (Pete is dismayed at brusque doublecross as Monty deftly plays his cards and wipes Pete out.)

MONTY: Le's see, I got high, jick, jack and the game, and you got low. Four to one so far. (Monty divvies out matches from the kitty. Pete has leaned back from table with exasperated sigh.) What, you <sup>aint</sup> quittin'?

PETE: I better study up on this game some more.

(Monty shrugs, goes back to playing solitaire.) Alec comes back in, takes off slicker, goes to water bucket.)

ALEC; Bucket's empty. I filled it last time.

MONTY: I'll take care of it.

JEFF: Jesus, a miracle. The card slick's ~~gonna~~ actually gonna tote a bucket of water.

MONTY: (shakes head in mock sorrow) Jeff, you treat me like a motherless child. And after I stuck up for you the other day, too. Fellow said you didn't have the brains God give a crowbar. But I told him he was wrong, you sure did.

(Jeff pauses, ~~looks~~ glowers at Monty, begins struggling into brand-new pair of blue jeans as he dresses up for town.

*John  
laughs  
at Pete?*  
PETE: (watching <sup>Monty</sup> ~~him~~ at solitaire) When'd you start playin' cards, Monty?

I mean, how old was you?

*laughs  
soppy?*  
*Heavy  
Texas Tyler  
country music  
accent*  
MONTY: Can't remember when I wasn't playin'. <sup>pause</sup> You heard that song, havn't you, about how a deck of cards is like life itself? (Mock solemn tones to parody the soppy song, as he continues to play winning game of solitaire.) There are 52 cards in a deck, one for every week of the year . . . The four suits, hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades, represent the four seasons of the year . . . Add up the spots and they come out to 365, one for every day of the year . . . (chuckles/smarts, keeps playing)

PETE: But what do you get out of playing cards all the time?

MONTY: They're a game, like anything else.

been dealt  
Monty: I <sup>was</sup> had bad hands before.

final scene: Mike takes drink from Rudy's bottle; holds it in mouth for second, spouts it out & hurls bottle.  
When Marie comes in, she picks up broken bottle neck.

Monty invites bunkhouse crew; Mike comes in; argument & vote: Stay - Jeff, Alec, Pat  
Go - Monty, Rudy, John

Monty & Mike fight & bottle breaks: Mike puts him into it, Alec breaks it up?

Mike has taken bottle up Rudy?

Marie's role: show she turns in chance to go & Monty

← Rudy sneaks drink  
Mike to Rudy: how you feelin'?

R: better.

M: Wonder y mo' it? Didn't keep n 2 bring a bott back up to, did u?

R: Huh?  
No, no.

M finds it inside boat

Alec about IWW

Monty always seeing how far he can go.

Somebody vs Monty & mixed hand: Sko up in dealin for awhile.

Monty's final line: How o somebody pickin' up a 1-handed man & a cigarette.

Monty in bunkhouse debate scorns Alec, sthng like "good for only tellin bedtime stories"



MARIE: Mike, we agreed we wouldn't go back to ranch work.

MIKE: Well, what then? You tell me.

MARIE: Get a job in town. Go to work at the sawmill.

MIKE: We been through that before. No town, no sawmill.

MARIE: Other People do.

MIKE: We ain't other people.

MARIE: We could try. You could try. (no response from Mike) My mother told me once about her mother. She raised five children in a homestead cabin the size of this kitchen. My mother said one summer they noticed my grandmother would stand in the middle of the cabin for a long time and just listen. Just listen to the wind. Then she'd go to one of the windows where the dust was blowing in, and she'd take her hand like this, and pinch and brush away the dust. And the dust would blow in again right away. She died in the asylum. The wind drove her crazy. When something like this happens, I wonder if I'll end up like her.

MIKE: It's hard country. (pause) Maybe it'll be all right. <sup>things</sup>

MIKE: If we lose this place, I guess we throw up our tail and try it again somewhere else... hire on somewhere.

MARIE: We agreed there wouldn't be any more of that.

MIKE: Jesus, Marie, I don't want it any more than you do. You think I wanna go back to being somebody else's foreman? I worked for other people from the time I was 13 years old. Livin in bunkhouses until hell wouldn't have it. Tryin to keep stewbums on the job, to raise somebody else's cattle and put up somebody else's hay. Always somebody else's.

MARIE: Can't you try the bank for another loan?

MIKE: I already tried.

MARIE: You tried? When?

MIKE: A couple weeks ago, when I went to town for parts for the baler.



It was about 40, 45 years ago now. Jobs was scarce in those days. You had to take anything you could get, so I was herdin sheep. My wife was alive then. We was livin at an old homestead over near Copperopolis Creek. This bear got to comin in there nights, ~~it~~ killin sheep. Boy, he'd kill em right and left. He'd always wait <sup>till</sup> until after the moon went down, <sup>when</sup> till it got good and dark. Then he'd prowel in and kill another 5 or 6 sheep.

All the neighbors, there'd be some of em there pretty near every night with me, to try get that bear. But we never could. We'd generally see his eyes gleamin as he'd take off into the dark, but we could never get him, never even get a shot at him. And every night he'd come in and kill those sheep.

This one evening we're alone there. My wife and I are sittin there in the front room of the house, the radio playin. All of a sudden I heard the sheep bells ringing <sup>and a big commotion</sup> and I looked out the window and here comes the whole band of sheep, right towards the house. I grabbed the rifle and went back through the dining room, through the kitchen and sneaked out the back door. There's a bunkhouse there and I got behind it. There's a creek there with heavy willows, I was gonna get on the edge of them and sneak around behind that bear. I thought I'd sure fix that boy this time. I got about halfway to the brush and I looked up and I see these eyes gleamin, watchin my every step.....

*back in saddle again*  
(Dark in bunkhouse. Sound of pickup returning. Pete sits up sleeping in bed, noise gets louder and louder. Racket as Jeff and Rudy stagger in. Pete watches astonished. Lights flick on as rest of bunkhouse wakes.)

JEFF: Goddam scissorbill Mike anyway.

JOHN: Oh, Jesus. *the choirboys are back* Turn off those lights and get to bed.

RUDY: Gotta go back to 'uh ranch, he says.

Hell with that. Can't hay anyway. Can we, John? Huh? Can't hay anyway? Huh? *why can't we stay in town? Have a little fun?*

(All are awake, Monty watching bemused, John exasperated trying to dig under covers, Alec sleepy but benign, Pete with boyish interest)

RUDY (spots Monty): Heym, Monty, le's play pitch. Huh? Git out your cards.

JEFF (unsteady on feet but glowering, sees Pete looking at him) What *are you* lookin' at? (Pete hurriedly looks away) I'm goin' to bed. (Clomps to his bed, falls full-length on it.) *turn in*

RUDY (alarmed): Hey, Jeff! Don't go yet, we're gonna play cards! Hey! (stands looking at Jeff, becomes more and more vacant. softly heeyyy... (Keels over heavily in middle of floor)

JOHN: Oh, goddam. Let the sonofabitch sleep it off there. Turn out those lights, will you, Pete?

(Pete uncertain, doesn't want to leave Rudy there) *(dialogue for Pete)*

*Ah, won't he get stiff/ layin' there? over should I put a blanket on him?*



ALEC (quietly, getting out of bed) Here, I got something to fix him up.

(Alec pounds Rudy's heel hard, Rudy's head jarring with impact. Each pounding produces agonized "uhh" until Rudy says: "Hey, goddam it. Back of my head..." Sits up, hands tenderly on back of head. Groggily gets up, weaves to bed. George watches quietly, turns back to bed.)

ALEC  
GEORGE (to Monty) Old folks' trick.

JOHN (sinking back after watching): Get those lights, will you, Pete?

MARIE: Is it raining as hard?

MIKE: like a cow ... (catches himself) Yeah, hard as ever. You got the grocery list ready?

MARIE: I'll write it out now. Who's going in with you?

MIKE: Monty's asked to go in, and Jeff. Only room for three of us in the pickup, so that'll give an excuse not to take Rudy. His tongue's startin' to hang out pretty bad. (pause) You're sure you don't wanna come.

MARIE: No. The road'll be so bad you should have the men with you. Are you gonna see about a bale piling crew?

MIKE (uneasily) Yeah, I'll see.

MARIE: How long do you think it'll take the hay to dry when it quits raining?

MIKE: Couple a good hot days. The hell of it is, all those bales are gonna have to be turned over so the bottoms will dry before they're piled.

MARIE: Mike, what are you going to do? If the rain doesn't quit...

MIKE: If, if. If there was pie in the sky, we'd all need real long forks.

MARIE: Mike! Damn it! (pause) What are you going to DO?

MIKE: Well...You know we're in up to our necks at the bank. If we don't get this hay in, we're through. There isn't any money to buy any, and the price of cattle isn't worth a damn right now. (pause)

MARIE: And if we lose this place?



52 Egerton Cresd

are you going to do? If the rain

If there was pie in the sky, we'd all need  
ks.

are you going to DO?

side of room, lifts bale, lugs it on knee  
own. All look at it.

like that'll weigh 80 pounds. Green  
en out in the rain -- a bale will go  
nds. There's tones of them out there.  
guts out liftin them?

old days crew would have done it.

folks there. Yesterday was yesterday.

sock): No thanks. I gotta go give that

inquiring look and gesture with deck to ask if

y shakes his head; Monty has started playing

y): Aint ~~am~~ it bad enough we work our guts out  
too

rin' the damn stuff in here ~~as well~~? Whyn't

*Reminds me of*  
somewheres else? It's like livin' in a cow shed.

d rain tore holes in the roof of the barn, and

y somewhere for that calf. Mike asked you all

use that corner. Them bales don't take up much

nces at Alec putting on slicker) Anyway, I'd

t in weather like this. Grows moss on your

. Alec'll come back in here all green and

ay makes me ache all over just lookin at it.

ll them bales to be stacked.

ady for town); clears throat) *Kinda wish I was*  
~~Wouldn't mind~~



that song, haven't you, about how a  
is like life itself? (mockingly) There  
in a deck, one for every week of the year...  
represent the four seasons... add the  
come out to 365, one for every day of

you get out of playing cards all the time?  
a game, like anything else.

Monty: Three, in . . . spades. (Trin  
as h

Monty quickly plays out cards, taking

Monty: High, low and game. (reaches  
a get a haircut too; Jeff?

hell. I'm goin' to the whorehouse.

John to Rudy: Ever see such a sonof-a-  
ternoon?

(John gets up, walks to  
takes down can of Hill  
on old grounds, ladies  
bucket, sets pot near  
stove.

Monty, shuffling cards: Not giving up  
hay in this kind of weather. (grin  
inv

John (shakes his head at cards) Nope  
might as well make coffee. Want

George (looks up from mending): No t  
get some longer rivets for this.

Monty (playing solitaire quickly and  
to go out in weather like this. (G  
You watch, Pete. George'll come  
lousy.

balehook —

Alic uses in 1st scene,

Monty grabs later



## ACT ONE

Opens in bunkhouse, five hired men onstage; Jeff comes in later. Sketch characters: Monty bunkhouse lawyer, Pete the Kid, George the loyal chorehand, Rudy a drinker, John equable, Jeff surly. Mounting discontent. Monty asks Jeff where Mike is, reply that he's stopped at cookhouse, will be in shortly. Shift to Mike and Marie in cookhouse, talk about losing ranch and his plan to have crew pile bales. He goes on chore with one of crew, Monty goes to cookhouse to fill water bucket. Scene with Monty and Marie. Shift to bunkhouse, where Mike and hand come back in. Monty returns from cookhouse. Mike says he's going to town, Monty gives Rudy his place. Mike returns to cookhouse. Scene alternates between <sup>also</sup> George telling bear story and tension between Mike and Marie, perhaps four scenes apiece. Act ends with end of bear story.

*puts mt in back of pickup*

*have Monty come to same scene after Mike*

## ACT TWO

Scene 1, night. Bunkhouse, where Jeff and Rudy come back from town. Next, cookhouse, Mike back from town, tension with Marie.

Scene 2, morning. Cookhouse, crew at breakfast; Mike tells them about bale piling.

*Make it strong & Mike apply winning*

Scene 3, afternoon. Bunkhouse. Monty stirs trouble. Men ~~choose~~ <sup>ride</sup> Mike loses. Shift to final scene between Mike and Marie.

(Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled and rapped on table between shuffles. Lights come up on 5 men in bunkhouse -- 3 card players, Alec mending bridle, ~~hi~~ Pete watching the cards. Monty shuffles, gives deck final hard rap, plunks it in front of John:)

Monty: Cut? (John cuts, Monty slickly deals each six cards.)

Rudy: I'll say two.

John: Goddamn cards. Pass.

Monty: Three, in . . . spades. (Triumphantly plays first card as he says "spades".)

(Monty quickly plays out cards; John disgustedly throws in hand on third trick; Monty takes every trick.)

Monty: High, low, jack and the game. (Reaches to kitty, adds 4 matches to pile in front of him. Beams at other two.)

Puts me out.

John (to Rudy): Ever see such a sonofabitch for winnin' every time?

(John gets up, walks to stove, checks coffeepot. Takes down can of MJB, dumps in 3 spoons on old grounds, ladles water into pot with dipper from nearly empty bucket. Sets pot near front of stove. Stands by stove.)

Monty (shuffling cards): Not givin up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (Grins, flashes deck in mock invitation.)

John (shakes head at cards): Nope. Can't make hay, so might as well make coffee. Want some, Alec?

Alec (looks up from mending): No thanks. I've gotta go put some longer rivets in this.

Monty (playing solitaire quickly and deftly): I'd hate to have to go out in weather like this. Grows moss on your back. You watch, Pete. Alec'll come back in here green and ~~messy~~ fuzzy. (Pete smiles uncertainly)

Rudy: Well, I wish to hell it'd stop. This sittin around and sittin around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to haying or go to town till it quits.

Monty: Gettin thirsty, Rudy? You don't get paid in town, but you're drawing bunkhouse money here as long as this rain lasts. Can't beat that.

Rudy: I'd rather be puttin up hay. Good Godalmighty, there's a half a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground. I never saw so goddam much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.



*change*  
 Monty (pauses with card in hand, looks at Rudy): That's Mike's problem, isn't it? ~~That ain't my alfalfa out there, and I don't remember it's yours either.~~

*change*  
 Alec (moves toward door, stops): You sure that ain't your rain out there? You seem pretty happy to be gettin paid for doin nothin. (goes out in slicker with bridle)

Monty: Touchy, ain't he? Goes with bein a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

John: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bothers him to see Mike havin all this rain, I suppose.

Monty: Mmmm. Speakin of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out here this morning cussin a blue streak. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a l-ong sheet of paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Improve your vocabulary.

John: You think Mike was touchy this morning, you oughta been around him when he was drinkin. I worked with him one ~~time~~ haying time down at Greybull, Wyoming. Rained for a couple of days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howlin drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, and next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ amight! Then when the boss finally got him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We were still usin horses then, and Mike'd been working a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy hat he wore when he got dressed up, with a big wide brim. He puts that on -- still drunk -- and goes down to the barn, and he's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his knees between that horse's back legs with his big hat on; show us how tame he's got that horse.

*years ago before he bought this ranch. place*

Pete: Did he do it?

John. Yeah. Horse woulda kicked the hell out of anybody else, but Mike did it.

*Whoa, in SOB*  
 Monty (to Pete): See, I told you the two of them are a regular education. You can learn from Mike how to get your brains kicked out, and from Jeff that you don't need any brains anyway.

Rainin just as hard?

Rudy: Still rainin? as hard?

Jeff: Like a cow pissin on a flat rock.

Monty: Where's Mike? comin in?

Jeff: He stopped by the cookhouse. (pause) Goddamn sparrowed

Is it

Marie: Still raining as hard?

Mike: Like a cow ... yeah, just as hard. You got the grocery list ready?

Marie: Just a minute (begins working on list)

Mike: Monty's asked to go in, and Jeff. ~~fix~~ Only room for three of us in the pickup, so that'll give an excuse not to take Rudy. (pause) Your're sure you don't wanna come.

Marie: No.

Marie: ... if we lose this place

Mike: If we lose the place, we throw up our tail and try it again somewhere else.

Marie: You told me there wouldn't be any more of that.

Mike: Jesus, Marie, I don't want it any more than you do. You think I wanna go back to being ~~xx~~ somebody else's foreman? I worked for other people from the time I was 13 years old. Livin in bunkhouses till hell wouldn't have it. Tryin to keep stewbums on the job, to raise somebody else's cattle and put up somebody else's hay. Always somebody else's.

We're in up to our necks at the bank. If we don't get this hay in, we're through. There isn't any money to buy any, and the price of cattle isn't worth a damn right now.

Bookkeeping: Mike: More rainy days. This daybook looks like ...

Marie: Mike, I won't do that again. I'm through cooking.

Monty and e  
Monty & Rudy  
playing cards.



rider. Noon Creek is the next drainage north of English Creek, swale  
country without as much cottonwood and willow along the stream banks.

Cattle not needing as much shelter as sheep to winter through, Noon

Creek was cow territory

John (to Pete, half-joshing): You and Jeff finish makin those corral panels yesterday?

John: Well, he starts walkin along on his knees

*sends it plumb  
across. damn*  
Well, he starts goin' through there on his knees when the horse gives a big kick -- catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off his head. Didn't miss his head by an inch. Mike looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then heyells: Whoa, you big pink sonofabitch! The horse just stood there, and Mike walked through his legs like he said he ~~would~~ would.

Monty to Pete:

*Then w no, goddamn*

Christ, that's no kind of bid.

Monty: ONE? Let's see your hand. Hell, you can make two or maybe three on that. Go on and bid.

Pete: Two.

Monty: Three (plays card simultaneously, wipes Pete out.)

Pete: what's the jick?

Monty: The jack of the same color astrump. If spades is trump, jack of clubs is jick. It's higher than the ten, but lower than the jack. Jack always takes the jick. All you gotta remember. On any trick

*. jick is . bastard jack, . odd card out.*



It was along about 1931...

Jobs was scarce in those days. You had to take anything you could get.

...a darn bear got to comin in there nights, killin sheep. Boy, he'd kill em right and left. He'd always wait until after the moon went down, till it got good and dark. All the neighbors, there'd be some of em there pretty near almost every night with me, to try get that bear....

Her oldest boy, he was down there. The two of us was sleepin in a old log barn there, the loft end of it was open. He'd just kill his sheep and leave em lay, that's the way a bear does. They don't like fresh meat. They like it after it decays, gets spoiled. So we got one of the first ones he'd killed, up on the hill, and drug it down there, to entice him down there, you know... We both never slept a wink, but that bear ate that whole sheep within 30 feet of us ... an we never knew it.

Anyhow, we'd generally see his eyes, as he'd take off in the dark there. So this evening we's alone there. Didn't have a very good gun either, had two old broken-down rifles. I had em both loaded and sittin there in the house.... We's sittin there in the front room of the house. It had big windows, and the house sat up on a knoll. The sheep was just bedded in down below, and there's a lot of old buildings down there. We didn't corral em, we didn't dare; that bear'd get into em and pile em up, and kill half of em. So I heard the sheep bells a ringin~~ing~~ and I looked out the window and here comes the whole band, right towards the house. I grabbed the rifle and went back through the dining room -- it was a big house, my uncle's house there -- through the kitchen and sneaked out the back door. There's a bunkhouse there and I got behind it... There's a creek there with heavy willows, I was gonna get on the edge of them and sneak around



behind him. I thought I'd sure fix that boy this time. I got about halfway to the brush there and I looked up and here he had a sheep cut out... right again the house wall. There's a pole fence come up and nailed right onto the corner of the house, and that sheep was tryin to dodge him to get away from him, and he was trying to catch her there. The radio was agoin, and Berneta and Mrs. Christiansen were standing there in the window just like that, awatchin...

I cut down on him with that old rifle and he went WOOF. I don't know if I hit him or not, but I changed his mind anyhow. Well, he either had to come toward me or go right back through the middle of the sheep, so here he comes toward me. He got oh, about 60 feet from me, and he was gonna cut around the edge of the sheep then. I cut down on him again, and I know I hit him that time. He let another WOOF out of him, and he was MAD now. Here he comes. He had his old head turned sideways. I could have counted his teeth there in the moonlight. We measured his steps, the boss and I, the next day, and he was jumpin 22 feet at a jump comin at me there.

I never give it a thought to run. Anyhow, he got up, oh, pretty close, to I'd say about from here from that window (6 feet? 6 or 7 feet). I's tryin to shoot him between the eyes. He had his head turned a little bit, and I got him right -- you know how a bear's head is, his ears are up towards the top of his head -- I got him right the side of the ear there. It went down through his neck and all the way into his lungs. That took the WOOF out of him. Set him back on his hanches, and he made a pass at me., and I ducked him as he come around or he'd ripped me in four pieces. Just as he went by I jammed the gun again his ribs,



right behind his shoulder there, and pulled her off. WOOF, he says, and away he went. That took the fight out of him. He had to go about 30 feet there till he hit a brand-new four-wire fence, cedar posts. He tore out about a hundred yards of that fence when he hit it.

He went across the creek into the brush, and oh boy, he was acuttin up in there, groanin and growlin and tearin up the brush. I looked up and here's Mrs. Christiansen and Berneta standing right on the bank above me. They were right there all the time while I was shootin at him. And one of em had a lantern. I don't know what they were gonna do with that....

(562 -- skipping Mrs. Christiansen and the other gun)

Mrs. Christiansen had this other gun that was in the house. She says, you got any shells left? I says, yeah, I got some in my pocket. That was the last shell I had in the gun when I put it again him there. I loaded this old 30-30 up out of the shells I had in my pocket. Well, she says, Mrs. Christianesen says, let's go in and get him. You can go after him, I said, I've had enough of him.

So we waited a little bit. It was all quieted down in there and I knew he's either dead or gone. So we went down the creek a little ways, there's a bridge there, and come up where the brush wasn't so thick. He's laying there, he was dead....

(570 -- skpping the cat Pete Olsen)

I didn't get scared; never gave it a thought to run when that bear was comin at me. I shook all night afterwards, after it was all over.

(585 -- more about efforts to trap him)

Chapter : THE BEHOLDERS: QUBDZWN3  
VDAOCVLE3  
MEZCECEB3

We was gonna trap him, too. We had some traps set out. Some of these sheep he'd killed before, he'd kill 5 or 6 every night and he'd just leave em lay or he'd... There was an old brush roof shed there. It was pretty well fallen down and he'd drag some of this brush and put over his sheep. That's the way a bear does, they kill a cow or a steer out in the timber they'll cover it with limbs or somethin to keep the other predators from gettin it. He'd cover them sheep up with the old brush off the top of that shed. So we put some traps up there one night.... We got 3 or 4 big coyote traps up there, we's gonna catch him. Got up the next mornin, I had a nice big black and tan dog, ~~oh~~ he was a dandy... Tracks all around there, and we had the dog in the trap. We could see where the bear had sure been there, it's a wonder he didn't eat that dog up....