

TWO WOMEN

VI

Honey, why don't you set the table.

ARIEL

I'm not really hungry. Mother, if you are angry with me, please tell me.

VI

I'm not angry. I'm concerned.

ARIEL

Get to the point. You and Dad speak and speak and speak and nothing gets said.

VI

Okay. Your father saw you with Chuck Cranston. He walked in on the two of you.

ARIEL

I know, he told me.

VI

The boy has a record of arrests, Ariel. And the more we object, the more intrigued you seem with him.

ARIEL

Chuck Cranston is not a delinquent.

VI

Ariel, what am I going to do with you?

ARIEL

Lately all you and daddy do is look for the worst in a person and then, of course, you find it.

VI

My, my, where did that come from?

ARIEL

Daddy! From today's sermon: the world is evil, and Ariel is going to be locked away in a ivory tower.

VI

That's a little melodramatic, don't you think?

ARIEL

No, I do not.

VI

Let's stop this conversation right now.

ARIEL

Conversation?

VI

Ariel!

ARIEL

It's just like I walked in on one of father's sermons.

VI

Please, let's not say anything that we might regret.

TWO MEN

Hey, mister! You bumped me!

WILLARD

Sorry.

REN

Don't you ever look where you're goin'?

WILLARD

I said I was sorry.

REN

Hey! You're that new guy from Chicago, ain'tcha?

WILLARD

Perhaps.

REN

Listen, fella, around here you push somebody... they push back. Next thing you know, you got...

WILLARD

(Gets confused; forges ahead.)

...two people pushing. Get it?

REN

Got it. Lemme ask you something. They sell men's clothes where you got that hat?

(Pause.)

WILLARD

(Suspiciously.)
What is that, some kind of stupid joke?

REN

No. That's a really good joke.

WILLARD

That's it, man. I'm gonna kill you!

(He raises his dukes to REN, who throws himself at WILLARD's fists.)

REN

Oh, please! Kill me!

WILLARD

(Pulls away, startled.)

Huh?

REN

Kill me! KILL ME! That's the most exciting thing I've heard since I hit town!

(Sticks out his hand.)

Ren McCormack. And you are...?

WILLARD

(Wary.)

Willard. Willard Hewitt.

REN

Willard, what do you do around here for a good time?

(WILLARD hesitates, then makes a lewd gesture.)

Yeah. Besides that. You have any clubs?

WILLARD

Nope.

REN

What about movies?

WILLARD

Nope.

REN

What about malls?

WILLARD

Nope.

REN

What about...

WILLARD

Nope. Nope. And nope.

(Pause.)

MAN AND WOMAN

REN
What are you doing?

ARIEL
I'm answering the train. I'm saying, "I can't wait for the day when I get onboard and leave Bomont!" Try it.

REN
No, thanks. I just ate. You are really something.

ARIEL
Whaddya mean?

REN
I mean the whole package. Minister's kid, Chuck Cranston's girlfriend.

ARIEL
Guilty.

REN
Just a church goin' gal with some bad-ass red cowboy boots.

ARIEL
My daddy hates me wearing these boots.

(REN sits on the ground; ARIEL eventually sits nearby.)

REN
And you love that, don't you? Getting up in his face?

ARIEL
That way he'll notice when I'm gone.

REN
Where're you gonna go?

ARIEL
College, for starters. I've applied to some places my daddy doesn't even know about. I wanna speak five languages and see the world. He wants me to teach English Lit in Baylor County.

(Beat.)
They don't even speak English in Baylor County.

REN
I can't picture you as a teacher.

ARIEL
Thank you. Neither can I. I'll leave that to my daddy.

REN
He's a preacher, not a teacher.

ARIEL
When you're good at it, it's the same thing. And he used to be real good.

REN
What changed?

ARIEL
His mind. He closed it.

REN
I noticed.

ARIEL
He used to be so open, so inspiring. I've seen him give people hope when hope was gone. I've watched him change lives.

REN
If you love him so much, why do you wanna tick him off?

ARIEL
I didn't say I love him.

REN
Boy, do I know what you mean! My dad...

(He shakes his head.)

ARIEL
Yeah, what happened there?

REN
He walked out. One day he just walked out the door. No 'good-bye'. Nothing.