

PEARL HART - SCENE #1

INT. SMALL TENEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Fred looks passed out on the tiny bed as Pearl sits on its edge. She stares out the window through which the city light casts a pattern on her face.

Her husband isn't quite out, reaching for a glass with a sip left in it.

PEARL

Fred.

He tilts the glass back as far as it will go.

PEARL

What if we went out west?

She looks back at him and for a moment let's the idea get her excited.

PEARL

Live life like Bill and Annie
Oakley. We could find ourselves a
cabin in the Rockies, raise horses
and chickens...

His expression is blank. It's not even clear if he's listening until he suddenly starts to chuckle. Her excitement fades just as his laughter turns into a coughing fit.

FREDERICK HART

(between the coughs)

You sure would like that, wouldn't
ya? Get me scalped by some red man
or worse.

She looks back at the window.

FREDERICK HART

Hey. Ya might fit in there anyhow.
Be some injun's wife... what do
they call 'em?

Pearl gets up.

PEARL

I ain't tired yet.

She moves to the door.

(CONTINUED)

PEARL
I won't be gone but a little while.

FREDERICK HART
A squaw!
(cackles)
That's it. A goddamn squaw.

She shuts the door behind her.

PEARL HART - SCENE #2

INT. TENT - BUNKHOUSE - NIGHT

Pearl sits up in her bunk, sleepless. The bed above her rocks as Mary Allen pleases one of the miners. Soft moans fill the quiet and now mostly empty bunkhouse.

JOE BOOT (O.S.)
(whispers)
Miss Pearl.

It is not loud enough over the lovemaking right above her. Boot appears near the entrance to bunkhouse, sneaking his way in.

JOE BOOT
(a louder whisper)
Miss Pearl!

She turns to see Joe as he comes close, discreet. She figures she knows what he's come for and she might as well take it.

PEARL
That will be two dollars.

Joe kneels next to her.

JOE BOOT
I am happy I find you.

Pearl starts to undo the top buttons of her blouse.

PEARL
Pay's up front.

She puts out her hand. He stares at it blankly, his wide wild eyes shifting left and right. He notices her blouse, now revealing more than he's seen before.

(CONTINUED)

JOE BOOT
No. No. Miss Pearl.

He moves up and sits next to her on the bottom bunk, something she has to move over to let him do.

JOE BOOT
I come to tell you. Everyone go tomorrow.

PEARL
Tell me something I don't know.

She starts to take off her boots.

JOE BOOT
But I stay.

PEARL
Okay.

JOE BOOT
The mine. Not this mine. Another mine. My mine.

She regards him now as a crazy man. His smile fades as he can see her worried look. Joe reaches into his vest pocket and pulls out a heavily creased deed.

JOE BOOT
Two miles.

With one hand he hands the deed to Pearl and with the other he points in the direction of this mine. She takes it and looks off at the tent wall where he gestures and then studies the document once more. It seems authentic.

PEARL
Where'd you get this?

JOE BOOT
I purchase.
(beat)
My mine.

PEARL
What do you know about minin'?

He laughs to himself, taking the deed back and stashing it in his pocket.

JOE BOOT

We learn.

Her mouth hangs loose. It's quiet between them as the bed rocks a bit more, nearing a climax up above.

PEARL

What kind of damn fool are you?

His expression of optimism does not falter.

PEARL

I reckon you got this from another one of your dreams.

JOE BOOT

Miss Pearl-

PEARL

It's just Pearl, alright?!

He bows his head, obedient.

JOE BOOT

(choosing his words carefully,
slowly)

I ask that you make this business venture. With me.

Pearl stares deep into this crazy German's eyes. She searches for his reason.

PEARL

Why me? You ain't said nothing about that.

JOE BOOT

I see you work. Hard. Strong.

He nods his head to the laundry buckets and washboards in the corner of the bunkhouse.

JOE BOOT

I say to myself. This is the woman I want.

PEARL

Yeah... a woman, right? And I suppose you don't have other things on that mind of yours about this woman.

She thinks of Hart, of Bandman. It takes a moment for him to catch her drift.

(CONTINUED)

JOE BOOT

Mis-

(catches himself)

Pearl. I am a man of my word.

PEARL

I met plenty a men and most of them
say the same thing.

He sees her past and she sees the sympathy in his foreign
gaze.

JOE BOOT

What do you yanks say?

He puts his hand in front of his mouth and spits on it,
getting a little on his scraggly chin.

JOE BOOT

Spit and shake.

He holds the wet palm out for Pearl to take. She
conservatively spits on her own and shakes, soon wiping her
hand off on the bunk, which has stopped rocking, replaced by
heaving breathing from above.

JOE BOOT

I see you in the morning.

He gets up, practically giddy about his new partner.

PEARL

Joe.

She might say something more but her history keeps her from
it.

PEARL

Goodnight.

He takes off his hat and gives her a full bow before making
his exit.

PEARL HART - SCENE #3

EXT. DESERT RAVINE - NIGHT

Pearl and Joe have once again relocated, made camp in a
ravine. The horse and mule are tied off. The saddle bags are
lying in the dust now, their contents spread across the
sandy blue ground, lit only by the moon that also casts a

(CONTINUED)

blue hue on Pearl and Joe's faces as they rest their backs against side by side rocks.

Pearl raises the bottle. It now has no more than one gulp left in it. She wants to take it but after a moment's consideration she wants him to have it more.

PEARL

Finish it.

She swings the bottle, planting it against his chest.

JOE BOOT

All for you, Pearl.

Their speech is slow and slurred.

PEARL

I said, finish it.

She hits him with it. He looks at her with a bewildered drunken expression.

JOE BOOT

I take one sip and you take one sip.

Pearl grins, her jaw forgetting to close back up after she does.

PEARL

They call that a split. Right. Down. The middle.

JOE BOOT

We split good.

He takes the bottle and eases it back, trying to take his portion and no more. Some of it runs off his whiskers and down his chin. He hands the bottle back. Pearl holds it up and lets the last drops fall into her mouth. She licks her lips and suddenly throws the bottle hard across the ravine. It shatters but the animals do not move, expecting nothing less from their human counterparts.

PEARL

(sighs)

Sure wish we had a fire.

Joe looks over at some dead wood not far off.

JOE BOOT
We make small one.

Pearl's good sense perks up through the whiskey haze.

JOE BOOT
No one coming, Pearl.

He gestures up and down the ravine. She doesn't stop him as he gets up and gathers some of those dried branches. He tosses them down in front of her and drops to his knees, fiddling in his pockets to find a match. She smiles again; his clumsiness is endearing.

As Joe removes a broken match from his lent filled coat, the sound of a scratch pierces the night air and a soft glow of light touches his face. He gazes down to see Pearl with her own source of fire, keeping it close and still to the kindling as the flames take hold.

JOE BOOT
When I first see you...

She sits up and blows out the match just as the fire touches her fingertips.

JOE BOOT
I say to myself. Joe, this is the
woman I want.

Suddenly, these same words he said before mean something else with the flicker in their eyes, two outlaws lost somewhere in the dark night.

She reaches up and touches his bearded face. It isn't long before her lips touch it too.

PEARL HART - SCENE #4

INT. FLORENCE COURT ROOM

She sits in the wooden chair. It's a small courtroom. The SPECTATORS crowd no more than ten benches. The ones who can't find seats stand. The ones who can't fit into the buildings try to look through the cloudy windows.

Joe sits in the corner, waiting for Pearl to speak. It's good to see her. Pearl eyes him with affection, but one that has come and mostly gone.

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PROSECUTOR

Miss Hart. Will you tell the court why is it you and the man named Joe Boot decided to rob the stagecoach?

She looks from Joe to the JURY, overlooking the PROSECUTOR as he paces in front of her. She takes her time, stares at each one of them: ordinary folk.

JUDGE FLETCHER M. DOAN

Answer the question, ma'am.

She finishes look at the last two jurors before her lips part.

PEARL

We was between the devil and the deep blue sea.

She and we can see an immediate interest from this audience of twelve. She must woo them as she has been wooed before.

DISSOLVE TO:

PEARL

I was only twenty-two years old when I came this-a-way. I was good-looking. Desperate. Discouraged. And ready for anything that might come along.

The listeners are drawn in but not swayed into her favor yet.

DISSOLVE TO:

PEARL

That letter drove me crazy. No matter what I had been, my mother had been my dearest, truest friend, and I longed to see her again before she died. I had no money. I could get no money. From what I know now, I believe I became temporarily insane.

For every year in the room, she is spinning quite a yarn.

DISSOLVE TO:

PEARL

Joe Boot told me he had himself a mining claim and offered to go out
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PEARL (cont'd)
with me and try to dig up enough metal to get a passage home to Canada. We went out to the claim and both worked night and day. It was useless. The claim was no good. I handled pick and shovel like a man, and began wearing man's clothes while I was mining there. I have never worked so hard in my life, and I have had some pretty hard experiences too.

DISSOLVE TO:

PEARL
Joe told me to search the passengers for arms. I carefully went thorough them all. They had no pistols. Joe motioned toward the stage. I advanced and searched it, and foudn the brave passengers had left two of their guns behind them when ordered out of the stage.

She shakes her head, most of the folks in the room leaning forward to hear what comes next.

PEARL
Really, I can't see why men carry revolvers, because they almost invariably give them up at the very time they were made to be used.

This gets a laugh from both the spectators and most of the jury accept a couple staunch-looking men who Pearl focuses her attention on next.

DISSOLVE TO:

PEARL
... I did hate to leave Joe, who had been so considerate of me during all the ups and downs of the wild chase we had been through.

She looks to him as if this was all her fault and then back to her captive listeners.

PEARL
His entire trouble was brought on by trying to get money for me to reach mother.

(CONTINUED)

She lowers her head for dramatic effect.

PEARL

We took an oath at parting never to
serve out a term in the
penitentiary, but rather to find
that rest a tired soul seeks. It
is, of course, public that I tried
to kill myself the day they
separated me from Joe.

There are a couple gasps in the room. The judge rolls his
eyes.

PEARL

Today, I am sorry I didn't succeed.