

JOE BOOT - SCENE #1

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

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.

JOE BOOT - SCENE #2

INT. FLORENCE JAIL

Joe presses his face hard into the bars, trying to get as close to Pearl's as he can. They keep their voices low.

JOE BOOT

You tell these men the stagecoach
all my think. All Joe, no Pearl.

The sheriff watches from the corner, pretending not to pay attention. The reporter listens without much discretion from an open window, peaking through as often as he can to see and hear without drawing the sheriff's attention.

(CONTINUED)

PEARL

Joe. There's a good chance we might never see each other again.

He sees there are tears forming in her eyes, held back hard.

PEARL

I suppose we might see each other at the trial but... this pretty well could be goodbye.

JOE BOOT

Trial... yes.

He hadn't thought that far, realizing now the gravity of their actions.

JOE BOOT

I sorry I never got the money for your mother.

He sounds ashamed. She touches his scraggly face once more and his hand latches onto hers.

PEARL

Ya never did try to pull the wool over my eyes. And that's more than any other man can say.

Joe smiles. He knows what this means to her and he can see she's about to lose it.

JOE BOOT

Now you listen to what Joe say right now, Pearl.

She turns away, not wanting to look at him.

JOE BOOT

You start a screaming. Call Joe son of a... you know. Maybe they think we not partners. Think you not want to rob stagecoach. I make you do it.

PEARL

(voice breaking)
I don't know-

JOE BOOT

Yes, Pearl. You listen to Joe now-

PEARL

(sudden)

You goddamn son of a bitch!

The tears start flowing.

PEARL

I never would have got into this
mess if it wasn't for ya.

The sheriff springs up from his chair, startled by his shouting. As he rushes towards Pearl, the deputies burst through the door too.

PEARL

I hate your lyin' guts, Joe.

The sheriff grabs her as she struggles but with the help of the deputies, he's able to drag her out of there. The reporter, still watching through the window, scribbles furiously.

PEARL

You no good dirty bastard. I hope
you rot in hell...

It's the last thing Joe hears her say as they pull Pearl out of the jail and slam the door. Joe watches behind the bars. He smiles, a smile of love and sadness.

JOE BOOT

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

And now, it has an even different meaning to this German drifter.