

EPISODE SIX

Intimate

Scene: a dark room.

Sounds: a hand organ; footbeats, of passing feet.

Characters

MAN

YOUNG WOMAN

At rise: darkness. Nothing can be discerned. From the outside comes the sound of a hand organ, very faint, and the irregular rhythm of passing feet. The hand organ is playing Cielito Lindo, that Spanish song that has been on every hand organ lately.

MAN. You're awful still, honey. What you thinking about?

WOMAN. About sea shells. *(The sound of her voice is beautiful.)*

MAN. Sheshells? Gee! I can't say it!

WOMAN. When I was little my grandmother used to have a big pink sea shell on the mantle behind the stove. When we'd go to visit her they'd let me hold it, and listen. That's what I was thinking about now.

MAN. Yeah?

WOMAN. You can hear the sea in 'em, you know.

MAN. Yeah, I know.

WOMAN. I wonder why that is?

MAN. Search me. *(Pause.)*

WOMAN. You going? *(He has moved.)*

MAN. No. I just want a cigarette.

WOMAN *(glad, relieved)*. Oh.

MAN. Want one?

WOMAN. No. *(Taking the match.)* Let me light it for you.

MAN. You got mighty pretty hands, honey. (*The match is out.*)
This little pig went to market. This little pig stayed home. This
little pig went –

WOMAN (*laughs*). Diddle diddle dee. (*Laughs again.*)

MAN. You got awful pretty hands.

WOMAN. I used to have. But I haven't taken much care of them
lately. I will now – (*Pause. The music gets clearer.*) What's
that?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. That music?

MAN. A dago hand organ. I gave him two bits the first day I got
here – so he comes every day.

WOMAN. I mean – what's that he's playing?

MAN. *Cielito Lindo*.

WOMAN. What does that mean?

MAN. Little Heaven.

WOMAN. Little Heaven?

MAN. That's what lovers call each other in Spain.

WOMAN. Spain's where all the castles are, ain't it?

MAN. Yeah.

WOMAN. Little Heaven – sing it!

MAN (*singing to the music of the hand organ*). Da la sierra
morena viene, bajando viene, bajando; un par de ojitos negros –
cielito lindo – da contrabando.

WOMAN. What does it mean?

MAN. From the high dark mountains.

WOMAN. From the high dark mountains – ?

MAN. Oh it doesn't mean anything. It doesn't make sense. It's
love. (*Taking up the song.*) Ay-ay-ay-ay.

WOMAN. I know what that means.

MAN. What?

WOMAN. Ay-ay-ay-ay. (*They laugh.*)

MAN (*taking up the song*). Canta non llores – Sing don't cry –

WOMAN (*taking up song*). La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la – Little
Heaven!

MAN. You got a nice voice, honey.

WOMAN. Have I? (*Laughs – tickles him.*)

MAN. You bet you have – hey!

WOMAN (*laughing*). You ticklish?

MAN. Sure I am! Hey! (*They laugh.*) Go on, honey, sing something.

WOMAN. I couldn't.

MAN. Go on – you got a fine voice.

WOMAN (*laughs and sings*). Hey, diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, The cow jumped over the moon, The little dog laughed to see the sport, And the dish ran away with the spoon –

Both laugh.

I never thought that had any sense before – now I get it.

MAN. You got me beat.

WOMAN. It's you and me – La-lalalalalala – lalalalalalala – Little Heaven. You're the dish and I'm the spoon.

MAN. You're a little spoon all right.

WOMAN. And I guess I'm the little cow that jumped over the moon. (*A pause.*) Do you believe in sorta guardian angels?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. Guardian angels?

MAN. I don't know. Maybe.

WOMAN. I do. (*Taking up the song again.*) Lalalalala – lalalalala – lalalala – Little Heaven. (*Talking.*) There must be something that looks out for you and brings you your happiness, at last – look at us! How did we both happen to go to that place today if there wasn't something!

MAN. Maybe you're right.

WOMAN. Look at us!

MAN. Everything's us to you, kid – ain't it?

WOMAN. Ain't it?

MAN. All right with me.

WOMAN. We belong together! We belong together! And we're going to stick together, ain't we?

MAN. Sing something else.

WOMAN. I tell you I can't sing!

MAN. Sure you can!

WOMAN. I tell you I hadn't thought of singing since I was a little bit of a girl.

MAN. Well sing anyway.

WOMAN (*singing*). And every little wavelet had its night cap on – its night cap on – its night cap on – and every little wave had its night cap on – so very early in the morning. (*Talking*.) Did you used to sing that when you were a little kid?

MAN. Nope.

WOMAN. Didn't you? We used to – in the first grade – little kids – we used to go round and round in a ring – and flop our hands up and down – supposed to be the waves. I remember it used to confuse me – because we did just the same thing to be little angels.

MAN. Yeah?

WOMAN. You know why I came here?

MAN. I can make a good guess.

WOMAN. Because you told me I looked like an angel to you!
That's why I came.

MAN. Jeez, honey, all women look like angels to me – all white women. I ain't been seeing nothing but Indians, you know for the last couple a years. Gee, when I got off the boat here the other day – and saw all the women – gee I pretty near went crazy – talk about looking like angels – why –

WOMAN. You've had a lot of women, haven't you?

MAN. Not so many – real ones.

WOMAN. Did you – like any of 'em – better than me?

MAN. Nope – there wasn't one of 'em any sweeter than you, honey – not as sweet – no – not as sweet.

WOMAN. I like to hear you say it. Say it again –

MAN (*protesting good humoredly*). Oh –

WOMAN. Go on – tell me again!

MAN. Here! (*Kisses her*.) Does that tell you?

WOMAN. Yes. (*Pause*.) We're going to stick together – always – aren't we?

MAN (*honestly*). I'll have to be moving on, kid – some day, you know.

WOMAN. When?

MAN. Quien sabe?

WOMAN. What does that mean?

MAN. Quien sabe? You got to learn that, kid, if you're figuring on coming with me. It's the answer to everything – below the Rio Grande.

WOMAN. What does it mean?

MAN. It means – who knows?

WOMAN. Keen sabe?

MAN. Yep – don't forget it – now.

WOMAN. I'll never forget it!

MAN. Quien sabe?

WOMAN. And I'll never get to use it.

MAN. Quien sabe.

WOMAN. I'll never get – below the Rio Grande – I'll never get out of here.

MAN. Quien sabe.

WOMAN (*change of mood*). That's right! Keen sabe? Who knows?

MAN. That's the stuff.

WOMAN. You must like it down there.

MAN. I can't live anywhere else – for long.

WOMAN. Why not?

MAN. Oh – you're free down there! You're free!

A street light is lit outside. The outlines of a window take form against this light. There are bars across it, and from outside it, the sidewalk cuts across almost at the top. It is a basement room. The constant going and coming of passing feet, mostly feet of couples, can be dimly seen. Inside, on the ledge, there is a lily blooming in a bowl of rocks and water.

WOMAN. What's that?

MAN. Just the street light going on.

WOMAN. Is it as late as that?

MAN. Late as what?

WOMAN. Dark.

MAN. It's been dark for hours – didn't you know that?

WOMAN. No! – I must go! (*Rises.*)

MAN. Wait – the moon will be up in a little while – full moon.

WOMAN. It isn't that! I'm late! I must go!

She comes into the light. She wears a white chemise that might be the tunic of a dancer, and as she comes into the light she fastens about her waist a little skirt. She really wears almost exactly the clothes that women wear now, but the finesse of their cut, and the grace and ease with which she puts them on, must turn this episode of her dressing into a personification, an idealization of a woman clothing herself. All her gestures must be unconscious, innocent, relaxed, sure and full of natural grace. As she sits facing the window pulling on a stocking.

What's that?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. On the window ledge.

MAN. A flower.

WOMAN. Who gave it to you?

MAN. Nobody gave it to me. I bought it.

WOMAN. For yourself?

MAN. Yeah – Why not?

WOMAN. I don't know.

MAN. In Chinatown – made me think of Frisco where I was a kid – so I bought it.

WOMAN. Is that where you were born – Frisco?

MAN. Yep. Twin Peaks.

WOMAN. What's that?

MAN. A couple of hills – together.

WOMAN. One for you and one for me.

MAN. I bet you'd like Frisco.

WOMAN. I know a woman went out there once!

MAN. The bay and the hills! Jeez, that's the life! Every Saturday we used to cross the Bay – get a couple nags and just ride – over the hills. One would have a blanket on the saddle – the other, the grub. At night, we'd make a little fire and eat – and then roll up in the old blanket and –

WOMAN. Who? Who was with you?

MAN (*indifferently*). Anybody. (*Enthusiastically*.) Jeez, that dry old grass out there smells good at night – full of tar weed – you know –

WOMAN. Is that a good smell?

MAN. Tar weed? Didn't you ever smell it? (*She shakes her head 'No'.*) Sure it's a good smell! The Bay and the hills.

She goes to the mirror of the dresser, to finish dressing. She has only a dress to put on that is in one piece – with one fastening on the side. Before slipping it on, she stands before the mirror and stretches. Appreciatively but indifferently.

You look in good shape, kid. A couple of months riding over the mountains with me, you'd be great.

WOMAN. Can I?

MAN. What?

WOMAN. Some day – ride mountains with you?

MAN. Ride mountains? Ride donkeys!

WOMAN. It's the same thing! – with you! – Can I – some day?
The high dark mountains?

MAN. Who knows?

WOMAN. It must be great!

MAN. You ever been off like that, kid? – high up? On top of the world?

WOMAN. Yes.

MAN. When?

WOMAN. Today.

MAN. You're pretty sweet.

WOMAN. I never knew anything like this way! I never knew that I could feel like this! So, – so purified! Don't laugh at me!

MAN. I ain't laughing, honey.

WOMAN. Purified.

MAN. It's a hell of a word – but I know what you mean. That's the way it is – sometimes.

WOMAN (*she puts on a little hat, then turns to him*). Well – goodbye.

MAN. Aren't you forgetting something? (*Rises.*)

She looks toward him, then throws her head slowly back, lifts her right arm – this gesture that is in so many statues of women – Volupte. He comes out of the shadow, puts his arm around her, kisses her. Her head and arm go further back – then she brings her arm around with a wide encircling gesture,

her hand closes over his head, her fingers spread. Her fingers are protective, clutching. When he releases her, her eyes are shining with tears. She turns away. She looks back at him – and the room – and her eyes fasten on the lily.

WOMAN. Can I have that?

MAN. Sure – why not?

She takes it – goes. As she opens the door, the music is louder. The scene blacks out.

WOMAN. Goodbye. And – (*Hesitates.*) And – thank you.

Curtain

The music continues until the curtain goes up for Episode Seven. It goes up on silence.