

CONTRARY TO HEART AND MIND

A play in two acts

By Laren Grey

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## CHARACTERS

JANICE                    A girl in her late twenties. High walls. Blonde hair. Midwest girl.

LAWRENCE                A sarcastic country boy who thinks too much. Early thirties. Texas accent.

SHERIFF                 A Texas Sheriff. Older man. Texas accent. Wide brim hat.

BORDER PATROL         A US Customs agent at border. Latino.

## SETTING

A Texas highway.

## TIME

Evening. 1980s.

ACT ISCENES

Scene 1	A Texas Highway	Evening
Scene 2	A Texas Roadside	Later Evening
Scene 3	A Texas Highway	Later Evening
Scene 4	Roadside exterior	Later Evening
Scene 5	Roadside interior truck	Later Evening
Scene 6	Texas Highway	Later Evening
Scene 7	Desert	Later Evening
Scene 8	Roadside	Later Evening

Scene 1

*(Lights illuminate LAWRENCE and JANICE from the dashboard of a truck. Their setting occupies center stage with some mock up representing sitting in a truck. The mock up only needs to imply a truck. Lawrence is driving. Behind them is a projector screen with video of a moving highway at night from rear window perspective, black and white preferably.)*

*(A popular 80s song plays on the radio. Janice turns it off.)*

JANICE

I don't normally go on first dates like this, but I had a nice time.

LAWRENCE

First dates like what?

JANICE

You know, late night excursions with a stranger. Usually a first date is just a coffee meet up.

LAWRENCE

Why is that?

JANICE

In case you are a serial killer or something.

LAWRENCE

Maybe you are a serial killer.

JANICE

The chance of you being a serial killer is higher, being a guy and all.

LAWRENCE

That's true. And the setting.

JANICE

The setting?

LAWRENCE

Yeah. A dark highway at night in the middle of nowhere.

JANICE

I kinda like the setting. It's romantic. It's a good place for falling in love or fleeing from a crime, but not good for murder.

LAWRENCE

Is there ever a good setting for a murder?

JANICE

If it's self-defense.

LAWRENCE

Self-defense isn't murder.

JANICE

Yes it is. All killing is murder. All killing is bad.

LAWRENCE

Not all killing is bad. Some killing is good.

JANICE

When is killing ever good?

LAWRENCE

Like if you come home and find a robber in your house.

JANICE

That's true. They kill bank robbers too. But only the ones who aren't smart about how they do it.

LAWRENCE

The smart way? Ha! I only know of one way to rob a bank.

JANICE

How's that?

LAWRENCE

The dumb way.

JANICE

That's why I think women would be better bank robbers. Too many of them are men. Too aggressive. Not cunning enough.

LAWRENCE

I bet I could rob a bank better than you.

JANICE

Maybe.

*(pause)*

I had a good time today, and you talk about interesting stuff. Not the usual football and fishing. But most of all, you aren't a serial killer... so far.

LAWRENCE

You're one of the lucky survivors. I made my final decision not to kill you, about three miles back. Lucky for you I don't have a trunk, and I need you all in one working piece. But you are right, there's a lot of crazies out there.

JANICE

That's why I don't like first dates. Too many crazies. I like to think of this as more like our third date.

LAWRENCE

What did we do on our first date?

JANICE

Nothing. That's the beauty of it.

LAWRENCE

*(smiling)*

I like you.

JANICE

But you don't even know me.

LAWRENCE

Ugh. Never say that when a guy says he likes you.

JANICE

Why not?

LAWRENCE

Because every girl says that. It's cliché.

JANICE

But it's true. How can you like me if you don't even know me?

LAWRENCE

Well, you have to like someone first in order to want to get to know them, right?

JANICE

I suppose.

LAWRENCE

Wouldn't make no sense to get to know somebody if you don't like 'em first.

JANICE

So you go out with a lot of girls?

LAWRENCE

Why do you ask that?

JANICE

Because you said every girl says "But you don't even know me", and because you are so good looking.

LAWRENCE

Ah, so you do like me!

JANICE

I do.

LAWRENCE

But you don't even know me.

*(As they laugh, red and blue lights flash from behind.)*

JANICE

Oh, hell. The cops! *She fidgets and looks back repeatedly.*

LAWRENCE

You wanted, or something? Just relax.

(END SCENE)



Scene 2

*(A Texas roadside. Projector goes black. Red and blue lights flash behind them. The police lights are hidden upstage in shadows and are only seen when on. A Sheriff walks up next to the truck, studies the back truck bed and the cab interior with a flashlight. Soft light illuminates the Sheriff from overhead.)*

SHERIFF

*(shining flashlight into the cab of the truck)*

License and registration please.

LAWRENCE

Have I broken a law?

SHERIFF

I don't know yet. You were driving a little fast.

LAWRENCE

*(handing his license to the Sheriff)*

Hey Sheriff, I was wondering, how can a person break a law if they don't know any laws?

SHERIFF

You don't know any laws?

LAWRENCE

No sir, I don't. Most people don't. What about you? Do you know any laws?

SHERIFF

What did you say, boy?

LAWRENCE

Do you know any laws?

SHERIFF

Don't be a smart ass. Stay in your vehicle. I'll be right back.

*(The Sheriff walks back to his car, towards lights and off stage.)*

JANICE

Why are you messing with him like that? You trying to get us in trouble?

LAWRENCE

What do you mean? It is a legitimate question.

JANICE

Bad timing, don't you think?

LAWRENCE

It was just a question.

JANICE

What about you, Lawrence? Do you obey the law?

LAWRENCE

Obey the law? Hell, I don't even know any laws. By the way, do you like flowers? I think I'm gonna get you some flowers.

JANICE

Flowers?

LAWRENCE

Yeah, it's our third date and I never got you flowers.

JANICE

It isn't really our third date. It is just our first date.

LAWRENCE

Feels like our third date. That's what you said.

*(pause)*

JANICE

You really don't know any laws?

LAWRENCE

The laws of dating? Like, on what date is a guy supposed to bring flowers?

JANICE

No. I mean the laws of the law. You really don't know any?

LAWRENCE

No. Do you?

JANICE

Of course I do.

LAWRENCE

Okay. Name one.

JANICE

That's easy.

LAWRENCE

Okay.

JANICE

This is stupid.

LAWRENCE

A dozen red roses, maybe.

JANICE

Are you going to bring them or have them delivered?

LAWRENCE

I'm going to bring them, on our fourth date.

JANICE

Do you mean our next date or three dates from now?

LAWRENCE

Which date is this? First or third?

JANICE

This is our first, and third.

LAWRENCE

Like the bank.

JANICE

Huh?

LAWRENCE

Like the name of the bank in town, the FIRST THIRD NATIONAL BANK. Makes no damn sense.

JANICE

Yeah, that doesn't make sense. Is it the first bank or the third bank?

LAWRENCE

Is this our first date or our third date?

JANICE

It's both, like the bank.

LAWRENCE

So that means I have to bring you flowers on the next date and three dates from now.

JANICE

*(looking back)*

What's taking this cop so long?

LAWRENCE

He's not a cop, he's a Sheriff.

JANICE

What's the difference?

LAWRENCE

Not sure.

JANICE

Well, what's taking him so long?

LAWRENCE

Dunno. Maybe he thinks we are axe murderers and he's calling for back up.

JANICE

Or maybe he thinks we are bank robbers. But did we rob the first bank or the third bank? Or is this our first bank

robbery or our third bank robbery? Would you ever rob a bank?

LAWRENCE

No. What kind of question is that?

JANICE

Just asking, jeez.

LAWRENCE

Well, you sure do talk about bank robberies a lot. Must be one.

JANICE

I am not a bank robber. I would never just rob a bank.

LAWRENCE

Not even the FIRST THIRD NATIONAL BANK?

JANICE

Cute.

LAWRENCE

You win.

JANICE

Huh?

LAWRENCE

I said, you win.

JANICE

What do I win?

LAWRENCE

Just name a law and you win.

JANICE

What do I win?

LAWRENCE

An award.

JANICE

What award?

LAWRENCE

The award of victory. Satisfaction. Bragging rights. Just name a law. Just say one. Any law. Quick. Name one before the Sheriff returns.

JANICE

Tell me what I win. Is it the flowers? It better not be the flowers. I should get flowers anyway, win or lose.

LAWRENCE

Come on, Janice. Just name a law.

JANICE

I can't think of one right now.

LAWRENCE

So you don't know any laws? Can you name a car?

JANICE

Sure. Pontiac, Camaro, Audi, a getaway car..

LAWRENCE

A getaway car?

JANICE

Yes. A brown getaway car, like in the movies.

LAWRENCE

Can you name all three members of ZZ Top?

JANICE

No.

LAWRENCE

Okay. Okay. Can you name a bird?

JANICE

Of course I can.

LAWRENCE

But you can't name a law? Not even one law?

JANICE

(counting on her fingertips)

Finches, sparrows, bluebirds, crows, eagles, jail birds...

LAWRENCE

Those aren't laws.

JANICE

I know, but you said to name birds.

LAWRENCE

I said name a bird. One bird. You named like five or six birds.

JANICE

(sticks up her middle finger at him)

Here's one bird.

LAWRENCE

Just admit that you don't know any laws.

JANICE

I suppose I don't.

LAWRENCE

I don't either. How can you obey the law if you don't know any laws?

JANICE

Cardinals are my favorite birds. Red like flying roses. Red's my favorite color. What's your... What about - what about red lights? It's illegal to fly through a red light.

LAWRENCE

I suppose there is a law about not running through a red light, but I don't know that law, and my reason for stopping at red lights has nothing to do with the law. I stop so I don't hurt other people or damage their property, or my own. So even when I stop at a red light I'm not obeying the law.

JANICE

But if you do go through a red light you have broken the law.

LAWRENCE

Maybe.

*(The Sheriff returns and gives the license back to Lawrence.)*

SHERIFF

First date?

*(LAWRENCE and JANICE simultaneously)*

LAWRENCE

JANICE

Third.

First.

SHERIFF

Well, which is it? The first or the third?

JANICE

It's our first date.

SHERIFF

Have you two seen anything unusual out here tonight?

LAWRENCE

No sir, like what?

SHERIFF

We were chasing a suspect earlier this afternoon. Robbed a bank. If you see anything suspicious, get to the nearest pay phone and call 911.

LAWRENCE

What did they look like?

SHERIFF

They were wearing a ski mask.

LAWRENCE

Was anybody hurt?

SHERIFF

Just a whole bunch of feelings.



LAWRENCE

Oh.

SHERIFF

Be safe out there, you two.

LAWRENCE

Thank you, Sheriff. We will.

*(The Sheriff returns to his car. The red and blue lights shut off. Stage goes dark.)*

*(END SCENE)*

Scene 3

*(LAWRENCE and JANICE continue down the highway. The projector screen continues showing movement of the highway behind them.)*

JANICE

Wow. Imagine that. A bank robbery around here.

LAWRENCE

Yeah. Hard to imagine. Why would anybody rob anything in Texas? Everybody's got guns. Too risky.

JANICE

Isn't it weird how if a person steals a dollar from a cash register at their job, they get in trouble a little bit, but if they steal even one dollar from a bank they can get shot?

LAWRENCE

Hey, it is our first date. We don't really know each other. Maybe you are the bank robber.

JANICE

It's our third date.

LAWRENCE

Oh, I'm so confused. For all you know, I could be the bank robber.

JANICE

Maybe you are. Do you have a gun?

LAWRENCE

Hell yeah, I do. It's in the glove box.

JANICE

Ah hah! So, you are the bank robber!

LAWRENCE

No. Just cause I have a gun don't mean I'm a bank robber. This is Texas, everybody has guns. Besides, if I robbed a bank I would be long gone outta here.

JANICE

Would you?

LAWRENCE

I would. Would you?

JANICE

Maybe. Maybe not. Might be smarter to stay nearby. Go on a date maybe. It's less suspicious.

LAWRENCE

Is that what this is? A cover story? An alibi?

JANICE

Where's the money, Lawrence?

LAWRENCE

Funny. Only thing I'm trying to steal is your heart. I wanted to for a long time. I would see you around town sometimes. I used to see you coming out of that beauty salon in the town square. You and your friend would go look at puppies in the window at the pet store while trying to eat ice cream real fast before it melted in the summer heat.

JANICE

Wow. You noticed all that?

LAWRENCE

Yeah. I'm smart. I notice things.

JANICE

Maybe you're smart enough to steal the money and steal my heart.

LAWRENCE

Or steal your heart and get the money you stole. Hey, we just passed the FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH. Why do they say it's the first? I doubt the first ever Lutheran church was right here in the middle of nowhere Texas.

JANICE

It's probably really the third.

LAWRENCE

Ha. The THIRD LUTHERAN CHURCH doesn't really have a ring to it.

JANICE

What if it was called the FIRST THIRD LUTHERAN CHURCH?

LAWRENCE

Oh, easy. Then I would rob it.

JANICE

You better be joking. It is bad karma to rob a church.

LAWRENCE

And it isn't bad karma to rob a bank?

JANICE

Not really. Banks are insured by the FDIC.

LAWRENCE

The FDIC?

JANICE

The FDIC. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Don't you know nothing about nothing?

LAWRENCE

What the hell is the F-D-I-C-K? Does the "F" stand for "Free"?

JANICE

It's some branch of government or something. It insures each bank up to eight million dollars, but most local banks don't even carry that much cash.

LAWRENCE

So, it was you. You are the bank robber.

JANICE

No, silly.

LAWRENCE

Then how do you know so much about banks?

JANICE

My aunt works at the bank. She told me all about it.

LAWRENCE

Which bank? The first one or the third one?

JANICE

Being cute might get you a first kiss.

LAWRENCE

And hopefully a confession. What else did she tell you?

JANICE

Who?

LAWRENCE

Your aunt!

JANICE

About what?

LAWRENCE

About banks! About robbing banks!

JANICE

She didn't say anything about robbing banks. She was telling me all about banks because I was gonna apply for a job there. Why do you want to know so much about bank robbing?

LAWRENCE

Because until today I ain't never met a bank robber.

JANICE

You met a bank robber today?

LAWRENCE

Sure did.

JANICE

That's cute. That's real cute. I met a bank robber once. He had brown eyes and a sharp brain.

LAWRENCE

Is that who you learned bank robbing from?

JANICE

I am not a bank robber.

LAWRENCE

Didn't say you was.

JANICE

But you implied it.

LAWRENCE

How did you meet him?

JANICE

We were sitting in the lobby of Junction Inn. He turned around and I spilled my coffee all over him. So he took me to get another coffee. A real gentleman. We hung out for a couple of days.

LAWRENCE

What happened to him?

JANICE

He went to prison.

LAWRENCE

For what?

JANICE

I told you he was a bank robber!

LAWRENCE

And you were his accomplice, weren't you?

JANICE

I didn't know he was a bank robber until they arrested him.

LAWRENCE

So he didn't teach you about bank robbing?

JANICE

Ooh, he taught me way more than bank robbing.

LAWRENCE

You want me to pull over and let you out right here?

JANICE

You would do that, wouldn't you?

*(She turns on the music. He turns off the music.)*

LAWRENCE

*(teasing)*

So, tell me, you got like a bank robber nick name? Like "Cold-eyed Judy" or "Stick Em Up Sally" or something like that?

JANICE

*(She takes his hat off his head and swats him with it)*

No!

LAWRENCE

*(teasing)*

Wait a minute. Is Janice even your real name?

JANICE

For the last time, I am not a bank robber!

LAWRENCE

Sure you aren't.

*(He turns the music back on. She turns it off.)*

JANICE

Supposing you did rob that bank, what would you do with the money?

LAWRENCE

Depends on how much it is.

JANICE

A million dollars.

LAWRENCE

Is that a confession?

JANICE

Come on, be serious. What would you do with a million dollars?

LAWRENCE

Well, a million dollars is a lot of money, but it's not enough to do anything with here in America. It takes a million dollars today to do what Thoreau did for free one hundred and fifty years ago. Plus, it would be suspicious.

JANICE

What, then? Mexico?

LAWRENCE

Mexico's nice. Do you speak Spanish?

JANICE

No. But I can learn.

*(sticks her head out the window and stretches out her arms to imagine the coastal breeze)*

Just imagine a seaside villa somewhere on the coast of Mexico. We could afford a personal chef. Oh, now I wish we did have that million dollars.

*(pause, awkward silence)*

LAWRENCE

Would we get married?

JANICE

I don't know. You didn't ask me yet.

LAWRENCE

It's only our third date.

JANICE

*(perks up in seat)*

Hey, what's that up there on the side of the road?

LAWRENCE

I don't see anything.



JANICE

Pull over here.

(END SCENE)

Scene 4

*(LAWRENCE and JANICE pull over and get out of the truck. The projector displays stars in the night sky. They stand in front of headlights. There is a large canvas duffle bag in front of them.)*

JANICE

What's in it?

LAWRENCE

How am I supposed to know?

JANICE

*(looking away)*

It better not be a body. It better be a million dollars. It better not be a body.

*(Lawrence kicks the bag, then quickly looks inside. He picks it up and throws it into the back of the truck.)*

LAWRENCE

*(looking up and down the highway)*

Get in the truck. Let's get the hell out of here.

JANICE

Hold on. Hold on. What's in the bag?

LAWRENCE

If it was a body, I wouldn't put it in the truck.

*(They talk to each other through the cab from opposite sides of the truck.)*

JANICE

I already know it's a million dollars.

LAWRENCE

How do you know that?

JANICE

Obviously it's from the bank robbery the Sheriff told us about. Why else would a bag of money be out here?

LAWRENCE

How did you see it out here? I didn't see it.

JANICE

(facetious)

Maybe I robbed the bank and dumped it here, knowing that we would find it. That's what you probably think.

LAWRENCE

That's ridiculous.

JANICE

Maybe you robbed the bank and dumped it out here.

*(Red and blue lights flash behind them.)*

LAWRENCE

Shit. Shit. Do not say a word about the bag.

JANICE

Well, duh. You think I want this date to end with us losing a million dollars?

(END SCENE)

Scene 5

*(The Sheriff walks up to the truck. He scans the truck with his flashlight.)*

SHERIFF

What are you two still doing out here?

LAWRENCE

Oh, hello again, Sheriff. We, uh, had a flat tire and had to change it.

SHERIFF

A flat tire, huh?

LAWRENCE

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF

Hmm. Have either of you seen anything suspicious? Been doing anything suspicious?

*(The Sheriff starts looking towards the back bed of the truck.)*

JANICE

Sheriff, we are just heading home. It has been a long night.

*(The Sheriff pauses and stares at them)*

SHERIFF

You two, get back in the truck and hurry on outta here. I don't want to see you out here anymore.

LAWRENCE

Thanks Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Hang on.

*(looks in the back of the truck)*

Where's the flat tire? I don't see it in the back.

LAWRENCE

Umm. Uh.

*(The Sheriff shines his flashlight into the back of the truck.)*

JANICE

Hey Sheriff. We didn't really have a flat tire. We just stopped for a little bit to... uh, talk. You know. Just talk.

SHERIFF

On a first date? You trying to get yourselves arrested for indecency in public?

JANICE

Sheriff, it's our third date.

SHERIFF

You need to get your asses to church on Sunday.

*(The Sheriff walks away. The police lights shut off. They get in the truck and drive away.)*

*(END SCENE)*

Scene 6

*(Driving down the highway.)*

LAWRENCE

I have an idea.

JANICE

I have an idea too.

LAWRENCE

What's your idea?

JANICE

My idea is that you robbed that bank, didn't you? We just happen to stumble into each other, both of us alone, chewing on chicken fried steak in some lonely roadside diner somewhere. Mid-afternoon, nothing passing but time and puffy cotton in a clear blue sky. No one else there, just a waitress kissing her boyfriend in the parking lot. They couldn't even hear Bob Seger playing on the juke box, but they were kissing like it was their last good bye. All this, right around the same time the Sheriff said they were chasing a bank robber. Turns into a date. Charming laughter. Ramblin' on and on about bank robbing. Spendin' the rest of the evening together. Then by pure fate we come across a bag of money conveniently left in a ditch by somebody. I wonder who that happened to be.

LAWRENCE

A bag you happened to see. You found it. A bag hidden in a dark ditch, right next to a mile marker. You'd have to be looking for it to see it.

JANICE

*(staring out at the sky)*

I know you are the bank robber. I've seen this movie before. It's exhilarating and romantic, really. Girl meets boy in a golden temple, a dusty chrome diner in this case. A kind of ringing happens in their ears, an angelic ringing, like a crystal bell. It's supposed to be a warning, but we hear it as a calling. Like trumpets of rapture. The whole world ends all around the two of 'em. Only boy and girl remain, running away from a handful of devils. Divine intervention causing a mess. Girl and boy

JANICE (con't)

fall in love, first sight, right in the middle of Texas...  
contrary to heart and mind. They flee to some far away  
land. They have to, because boy is a bank robber. A  
worthless, beautiful, criminal, angel, bank robber.

LAWRENCE

Funny. I'm thinking the same thing about you, since you are  
the one rambling on and on about bank robbing. Now crawl  
your ass through the back window and throw that bag off the  
road at mile marker 5-1-9.

JANICE

Screw that! Why don't you climb back there?

LAWRENCE

Because I'm driving, and I can't fit through that tiny  
window.

JANICE

Then pull over.

LAWRENCE

*(looking in rear view mirror)*

Not with that Sheriff a half a mile behind us. The last  
thing we need is that guy pulling us over again. We have to  
get off the road for a while, and in case he pulls us over  
again, we can't have the money in this truck. Just get back  
there. When I yell "Five nineteen", you throw that bag as  
far off the road as you can, okay?

JANICE

Okay. Fine. Then what? Why are we throwing away a million  
dollars?

LAWRENCE

How do you know it's a million dollars?

JANICE

I don't.

LAWRENCE

We will circle back for it on foot. We will pull off the  
road, park the truck out of sight, and then walk back to

LAWRENCE (con't)

the bag, so that damn Sheriff doesn't see us or get his grubby fingers on our money.

JANICE

Our money? That's romantic. Are we gonna get a joint bank account?

LAWRENCE

No, but we are going to get that money outta here without bumping into that piggy Sheriff again.

JANICE

Then what?

LAWRENCE

We get a hotel for the night.

JANICE

I'm not staying in a hotel with a stranger!

LAWRENCE

I'm not a stranger. It's our third date, remember? And, it is for a million dollars.

JANICE

How do you know it's a million dollars?

LAWRENCE

I don't.

JANICE

Are we gonna count it?

LAWRENCE

That's what the hotel is for, honey. I saw stacks of hundred dollar bills in there. Very well could be a million dollars in that bag. We're gonna be counting til the sun comes up.

*(Janice squeezes to the back bed of the truck, and picks up the bag.)*

LAWRENCE

You got it?



JANICE

Yeah!

LAWRENCE

All right. When I yell "FIVE NINETEEN" you throw that bag as far into the darkness as you can.

JANICE

I know. I know. I ain't stupid!

LAWRENCE

Get ready, it's coming up.

(pause)

Five nineteen! Throw it now!

*(She slings the bag into the darkness.)*

*(BLACKOUT)*

*(END SCENE)*

Scene 7

*(Lawrence and Janice walk through the desert at night, circling back to mile marker 519 to retrieve the bag of money. They stop to take a break. The rear wall projector screen shows a sky full of stars. A soft light illuminates them from overhead. The sounds of the night desert -night birds, coyotes in the distance- are heard.)*

JANICE

This is the weirdest first third date I've ever been on.

LAWRENCE

It is the only first third date we've ever been on.

JANICE

*(looking up)*

The stars are beautiful out here.

LAWRENCE

Romantic business, ain't it?

JANICE

What?

*(She sits to re-tie her shoes. He remains standing.)*

LAWRENCE

Bank robbing. It's a romantic business.

JANICE

Yep. Here we are, just a couple of bank robbers walking through the desert at night. Do you think this is a good way to meet a soulmate?

LAWRENCE

I'm not a bank robber.

JANICE

Neither am I. We are just two souls on a romantic date who happen to be on a hunt for a bag of money.

LAWRENCE

Well, one of us is the bank robber. It's just too much coincidence. It ain't me, so it's gotta be you.

JANICE

That's exactly what you would say if you were the bank robber.

LAWRENCE

Either way, one of us is the bank robber, and one of us is now an accomplice. So, however you want to put it, we're both bank robbers now.

JANICE

Shouldn't we have at least already kissed by our third date?

LAWRENCE

It's our first date. Come on, let's keep walking.

JANICE

How much longer?

LAWRENCE

Almost there.

JANICE

That's what you said a mile ago.

*(She stands and brushes off her dress.)*

And there's nothing wrong with kissing on the first date, either.

LAWRENCE

Is a hike under the stars to retrieve a million dollars not romantic enough for you? If it isn't, then west is that way.

*(He points west)*

JANICE

I'm just sayin'.

LAWRENCE

Look, just think of it as love at first hike, okay?

JANICE

How do you know it's love?

*(They pause and listen to the sounds of the night desert.)*

LAWRENCE

How do I know it's love? Because no other girl in the world would follow me on foot through the desert, at night, with snakes and scorpions everywhere, dodging the law, to retrieve a bag full of money that she robbed from a bank while wearing a ski mask.

JANICE

Snakes and scorpions?

LAWRENCE

That's right, snakes and scorpions, all over the damn place, and if we ain't careful we'll come across a pig too.

JANICE

But seriously, how do you know it's love?

LAWRENCE

*(looks out into the distant night)*

Because I'm not only out here for the million dollars.

*(She is speechless for a moment, then turns to him.)*

JANICE

Do you know how I know it's love?

LAWRENCE

How?

JANICE

*(stepping up to him face to face)*

Because I would never trust a guy on a first date or a third date or any date to take me into the desert at night to retrieve a bag full of money that he robbed from a bank while wearing a ski mask.

*(She jumps on him and wraps her legs around him and starts kissing him while dragging him down to the ground. The stage goes dark. She screams.)*

JANICE

OUWWWWCH!!!

LAWRENCE

What? What happened?

JANICE

I fell down on a cactus!

(END SCENE)

Scene 8

*(Red and blue lights flashing. The Sheriff picks up the bag from the roadside. Lawrence emerges from the shadows pointing a gun at the Sheriff.)*

LAWRENCE

*(To sheriff)*

Sheriff. I'm gonna need you to stop right there. Drop the bag, and put your hands up on your head. *(To Janice)* Janice, go get his gun, and handcuff his arms together behind his back.

SHERIFF

*(drops bag)*

Don't do this, boy.

LAWRENCE

I ain't done nothing but find a bag of money. Sheriff, listen carefully. You're gonna start walking due west until you don't remember anything about any of this. You hear?

SHERIFF

Yeah. I hear you. Truth is, I can't blame you. That's a lot of money. Wanna know the real truth, boy? I was thinking about it myself. It occurred to me what I could do with all that money.

LAWRENCE

Don't do anything stupid, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Looks like you're the one doing all the stupid from here on, boy. You're about to drag a big ol' bag full of stupid into the dark of night.

LAWRENCE

Sheriff, you didn't answer my question.

SHERIFF

What question is that?

LAWRENCE

Do you know any laws?

SHERIFF

*(pauses before he answers)*

I reckon I don't, or maybe I know too many.

*(The Sheriff, handcuffed, walks away into the darkness. Lawrence picks up the bag. They stand in the flashing lights, listening to the sounds of the desert night. Stage goes dark.)*

*(BLACKOUT)*

*(END SCENE)*

ACT II

SCENES

Scene 1            US/Mexico Border Evening  
                         Station

Scene 1

*(Lawrence and Janice sit in the truck stopped at a US/Mexico Border crossing. This is implied by a still photo of a border crossing station on the backdrop projector (or alternately by a set design, if in the budget). The dashboard light is not on. They are backlit to show their silhouettes to the audience. The border patrol officer is lit from overhead, with a barn door on the overhead light to prevent light from spilling onto Lawrence or Janice.)*

BORDER OFFICER

Hello. I'm Officer Martinez with the US Border Patrol. Are you an American citizen?

LAWRENCE

Yes.

BORDER OFFICER

Ma'am?

JANICE

What?



BORDER OFFICER

Are you an American citizen?

JANICE

Yes, but we live in Mexico.

BORDER OFFICER

What's your purpose for visiting the United States today?

LAWRENCE

Hey, Officer...

*(pauses)*

Do you know any laws?

JANICE

*(to Lawrence)*

Oh, don't start that nonsense.

*(to the Officer)*

Don't listen to him. He asks every law enforcement officer that. One time it got him two nights in jail in Torreón.

LAWRENCE

Okay. We don't have to bring that up.

JANICE

Oh yes we do. The details were awful. We are happy to be back in the good old U-S-of-A. He always said he would write a book about it. Said the questions were just research. Never did write the book.

BORDER OFFICER

Do you have any ID on you, sir?

LAWRENCE

Sure.

*(Lawrence hands him a passport.)*

BORDER OFFICER

Sit tight. I will be right back.

*(The Officer leaves with the passport.)*

JANICE

Why did you have to go bothering him with those kinds of questions?

LAWRENCE

It's a reasonable question. Why did you have to go tell him I was in jail in Torreón? Now he is all suspicious.

JANICE

You always mess with the law every chance you get.

LAWRENCE

Don't forget that you're the hardcore bank robber here. I'm just the innocent sucker who got roped in to being an accomplice.

JANICE

Ha! I've been telling you for years that it wasn't me.

LAWRENCE

Why don't you just admit it?

JANICE

Either way, one of us was the bank robber, and one of us is an accomplice.

LAWRENCE

What if neither one of us was the bank robber? Ever thought about that?

JANICE

Only a million times.

JANICE

A million. Ha! What if it was just a freak occurrence that we found that money?

JANICE

Impossible. It had to be you.

LAWRENCE

Sometimes I think about that Sheriff, on our first date, all those years ago.

JANICE

It was our third date.

LAWRENCE

I wonder if he knew.

JANICE

If he knew what? That one of us was the bank robber?

LAWRENCE

No, no. I wonder if he knew we were in love.

JANICE

Maybe. He taught you a thing or two.

LAWRENCE

Yeah, he sure did.

JANICE

We took off to Mexico anyway, like a couple of bandits on the run.

LAWRENCE

He was smart. That old Sheriff probably spent his years relaxing in the sun somewhere in the south of France or in Bali. All we got was a bag full of old newspapers.

JANICE

And each other. Maybe he did know we were in love. Maybe that's why he took the money, because he knew we were in love.

LAWRENCE

That's worth more than a million dollars to me.

