

BO SIDES

Bo enters.

JAMISON

Afternoon, Bo. How's those calves coming on?

BO

They ... good, Mr. J, fine lookin animals. Be off the teat and causin trouble fore you know it. Everythin okay in here?

JAMISON

Yeah, it's fine, just fine. Oh, you mean him ... Boudreaux, my foreman, this is Piero, he may talk funny but I suspect there's a decent head on his shoulders.

BO

Yeah, we've ... met. But ain't he still ...

PIERO

Pee. Dubble-oo, *si*.

BO

Okay. Hmm. Bo Doucet.

PIERO

Piacere. Piero Alloca.

BO

It is powerful strange talkin to one of you fellas like we never had no problems. Especially with a drink in your hand.

PIERO

Mah, I got no problem with nobody, *Signore*, everybody good. *Salute*.

BO

I knew a bunch of Italian fellas in New Orleans, when I was on the docks. Don't know how they stand on this war business, but they hard workin people. If Mr. Jamison here say you good, then I suppose you might be good with me, too. We'll have to wait and see.

PIERO

Boo-droh ... this means "farmer". And you are a farmer, this is nice.

JAMISON

You speak French, too?

PIERO

We have schools in Italy, *Dottore. Scusi*, I ask you, *Signore* Boudreaux, I see you, the foreman, and *Signorina* Maggie, *Signorina* Bennie, important people, very good people...

BO

What are you tryin to say?

PIERO

In Italy, they say everybody in America like you is ... how you call, *lo schiavo* ... the slave?

BO

Now hold on—

JAMISON

That is out of line!

Bo menaces Piero

PIERO

Aspetta! This is what they say. People in *Roma*, very smart but ... *odioso* ... if you not like them, they hate. ... My family visit from Sicily, their face is very dark, almost like you. They are treated bad, much angry. But it is different here, *si?* But also, the same. I don't know, so I ask.

JAMISON

Nobody who ever worked on this ranch has ever been a slave!

Bo calms down, stares at Piero, stares at Jamison, points at Piero

BO

Nobody. Ever. What about before Mizz Jamison's kin got here? What about him?

JAMISON

That's ... look, I know what you're saying. The Army told me these, what they call "co-operators" ... could come and work here, that they *wanted* to help, well ... most of our boys are across the sea shooting somebody else's boys. It was take the help, or lose the ranch and nobody has anything.

BO

Look, I ain't sayin' people don't need to be punished, yeah? ... Yeah. But ... you know this feels all manner of wrong, don't it?

JAMISON

Maybe so. But we do what we have to do. I try to treat folks from that camp as good as anybody who works here. They get paid, get good food, I hear they even go to see movies in town. They, they took them to Daytona Beach last week.

BO

And while them enemy prisoners got to play on the beach, the Black soldiers who took em there has to wait somewhere else cause our kind ain't made for that pure white sand. And at the end of that beautiful day on that beautiful beach in the Florida sunshine, even Piero's folk still gets brought back to a camp, and put behind wire.

JAMISON

Bo. We do—

BO

What you have to do. I heard. How you get here?

PIERO

On a boat. In front of a gun. With my hands behind, like this.

BO

Put em in chains, throw em in a boat, make em work on a farm ... I have heard that song before. We was lucky in N'awlins, my Pops was born a free man. But I got all kinds of relations in the fields, lookin mighty like these folks out here right now. And me bein foreman don't mean nobody nowhere in the South would take one look at me and treat me no better, and that ain't none too good. And they not gonna treat you much different ... Mr. Alloca.

PIERO

Signore Bo, I am the one behind the wire.

BO

Well, then you better understand that you's a white man playin on a beach until you open your mouth. "Also, the same", yeah? That's life. My life. I don't know what wrong turnin brought you here, but I gonna try to go back to when he said you was an okay fella. But don't be sayin nothin like what you said, hear? I can see we maybe got somethin in common, don't mean I gotta like it. Don't mean you don't neither.

PIERO

Mi dispiace, my mouth is *stupido*.

BO

We all have stupid mouth sometimes. It's what we say after that counts.

JAMISON

You know if you have a problem you can come talk to me?

BO

If there some kind a problem I can't handle myself, Mr. J, you'll surely know about it. You done me some kindness in my life, and I appreciate that. I'm trustin it wasn't something you think you "have to do". Maybe we oughta get back to business and save this conversation for just you and me, when there ain't no liquor involved.