

July 20, 1937

Dear Diary,

I've been getting so bored just hanging by the house. So earlier today I went to the bunkhouse to see if I might get to take one of the horses out for a ride. I tried calling for the stable buck but he did not respond, so I went into the bunkhouse to see if I could track him down. There, I saw these two new hires, one that was little and mean-faced and the other one huge but simple-looking. Just then, I knew that I was not welcome there and what Curley might say if he found out that I had gone into the bunkhouse without him knowing about it. So when the little bindle stiff gave me this suspicious look, I immediately told him that I had been looking for Curley. I got so nervous, I reckon I must have looked down at my fingernails twenty times. He told me that Curley left a minute before, and as I made my way out Slim stopped me saying "Hi, good-lookin'." I hate it when Slim tries to make passes at me. I tried to keep up my excuse for being in the bunkhouse, so I asked Slim if he had seen Curley. And he says, "Well you ain't tryin' very hard. I seen him goin' in your house." The nerve of him to assume that I have to be in my house all the time! I was so embarrassed that I must have turned as red as my nail polish. So I hurried away back to the house, worried about what Curley would think, because he expected me home whenever he arrived. Would he scream and yell at me again? If I could just get on that horse I would ride him all the way to the coast and disappear forever. Maybe I'd even try to be an actress again. That would be the dream. Anyway, Curley must not have thought much of me being gone because he was fast asleep upstairs when I got back. I am writing this downstairs now before I get started on the supper. So I better put this away before Curley wakes up. Until next time.

- Jean

July 21, 1937

Dear Diary,

Last night I was just about ready to get on that horse and ride as far as it could take me. I tip-toed over to the bunkhouse to find the stable buck while the men went out to get drunk and gamble all their money away at the saloon. As I went into the stable buck's quarters, though, I saw that he was joined by Candy and the enormous new hire who keeps staring at me like he never seen a woman before. So since I couldn't get the horse with those two boys witnessing and such, I thought I might try to deflect the conversation somewhere else. I asked 'em where Curley was and that old geezer, Candy, responded so hatefully that he hadn't been there. I was really angry, but instead of storming away I thought I'd have a little fun with them. "They left all the weak ones here," I said and watched as their delicate male egos twisted their faces into several different looks of contempt. I continued to tease them. I said, "Think I don't know where they all went? Even Curley. I know where they all went." Then I knew I really had them because they figured out that I hadn't really come in there to ask about Curley's whereabouts.

The next thing I remember saying probably never should have come out of my mouth. But as they was questioning me about why I was in there foolin' around even though I had a husband and all, I said, "Sure, I gotta husband. You all seen him ... Spends all his time sayin' what he's gonna do to guys he don't like, and he don't like nobody." And I know all too well what those hands would do if Curley had found out I had been saying those things about him. He's such a fool, gettin' himself into fights he can't finish. I even asked those little bindles about what they knew about Curley's hand, and they said that he claims he got it caught in a machine. What a bunch of baloney! Again with the poor little male ego, too delicate to admit that he picked a fight with the wrong bindle

And when I said that I had no reason to be stuck inside the house every Saturday night when my husband is going out all around the town doing who

knows what and talking to a couple of bindle stiffs and a stable buck, Candy starts yellin' at me to go ahead and tell Curley and get him fired because he had a dream and he was goin' to get a ranch of his own someday with chicken and fruit trees. Chickens and fruit trees! I have never heard anything so foolish from a bindle before. So then I say to them that I know how you bindles are, drinking all your money away. They threatened to tell Curley I was there and I told him to do it. I said I liked that the big one busts up Curley a little bit; I'd like to bust him up myself. And that was the greatest feeling ever to say that, and I walked back to the house feeling as though I had won even though I never got a chance to take the horse and run away. I sat right down when I got home and wrote this journal so that Curley wouldn't see me do it as he got back.

- Jean

July 22, 1937

Dear Diary,

As I was writing last night I forgot to mention how I told the two bindles and the stable buck about the guy who told me he could make me a famous actress. Said I had the looks for it, and he thought so much of me that he almost got me into shows! Just think about how different my life would be today if he hadn't split and never returned my letters. I wouldn't have to be stuck on this ranch with that buffoon I call my husband. I wouldn't have to tiptoe around so that the other men don't get suspicious, or jealous. I could be free. But I should know better than to trust any man. They just want a piece of you and then they leave. That man from Hollywood was never gon' get me an acting job. I'm not a foolish child. In the time, though, that I was sitting around and hoping that he would right me a letter back saying I got the big part, I remember being so excited. I had a dream about something, I had something to look forward to. I need to get that back. I need to wake up each day and feel like I'm livin' for myself and not for my husband. I need to feel like I'm not being watched over by men all the time. Now that would be a dream.

- Jean

