

THAT MIDNIGHT RODEO

Mary Sue Price

THAT MIDNIGHT RODEO premiered at the Circle Repertory Company Lab in April 1990. Mary Beth Easley directed the following cast:

CINDY Colleen Quinn
BO Scott Rhymer

CAST

CINDY: 20s, national contender for the barrel racing championship at the National Finals Rodeo.

BO: 20s, her husband, calf roper, trainer.

SETTING

Present. Kitchen, with a screen door, in a small farmhouse near Wheaton, Missouri.

At Rise: Around dawn, summer, Monday morning.

BO and CINDY, both sleepy and the worse for wear, sit at the table drinking coffee.

CINDY: I've wanted this since I was nine.

BO: You shouldn't be drinkin that coffee.

CINDY: Nobody from Missouri ever won the National Finals.

BO: It's too strong.

CINDY: Not just barrels. Nothin. Is it six yet?

(Pause)

BO: It ain't gettin light.

CINDY: It will get light.

(Beat)

BO: Who's gonna run Sonny?

CINDY: You think I didn't ask somebody to see about Sonny? You think with the National Finals eleven weeks away and Fargo coming up ten days from now and Oklahoma City next weekend, I didn't make arrangements? You think it didn't cross my mind?

(Beat)

Did you want to run him?

BO: You want me to?

CINDY: You said he don't need to adjust to a man rider this close to the big money. Didn't we talk about this?

BO: All I asked was who, darlin'.

CINDY: Jannie said she'd do it. Till the weekend.

BO: She'll ruin his mouth.

CINDY: She's all right.

BO: You ever ride that bay?

CINDY: I finished in the money in Little Rock on that bay summer before last.

BO: How long did it take you to get him stopped? Memphis?

CINDY: That horse had a rock mouth before Jannie ever got a-hold of him.

BO: Sonny'll be just like that time you can ride him again.

CINDY: We've been out all summer and I don't even know who's doin' what around here right now. Who else can I get?

(Beat)

I'll have her use a hackamore.

BO: Sonny's too wild for a hackamore.

CINDY: I ran him with it when Chip had to pull his wolf teeth.

BO: Jannie ain't.

CINDY: All she has to do is work him on the first turn so he doesn't run it too wide and keep him from cutting in too close on the third barrel when he's coming home. You told me that yourself.

(Beat)

Do you want to run him?

(Beat)

We gotta go.

BO: It ain't light.

CINDY: It's almost six. They said they wanted me in there by seven-thirty.

BO: You weren't supposed to drink anything.

CINDY: They said food.

(CINDY checks a sheet of paper.)

BO: You aren't going to Springfield with a pot of coffee on your stomach.

CINDY: It says here, food.

BO: She told us liquids, too.

CINDY: She did not.

BO: Are you sure?

CINDY: Half a cup of coffee won't hurt.

BO: People choke on that anesthetic. Bob Mitchell's sister died right in the dentist's chair. Wisdom teeth. Never woke up.

(CINDY dumps out the coffee.)

CINDY: I'll drive in by myself.

(Pause)

BO: Maybe that'd be the best.

(Beat)

I'll run Sonny for you if you want me to.

CINDY: Just make sure Jannie uses the hackamore. And tell her to hold tight on that second barrel. I don't think she's been on him since he broke the record in Fort Worth.

BO: Why don't you wait till tomorrow and you can go in on an empty stomach?

CINDY: They don't even put you to sleep.

BO: Yes, they do.

CINDY: That lady explained the whole thing.

BO: They put you to sleep.

CINDY: You didn't pay a bit of attention.

BO: Do you think it's like a colt? All curled up inside you?

(Pause)

CINDY: I'll leave the truck at my sister's.

BO: Don't be that way.

CINDY: You can get a ride in with Ricky or somebody and pick it up.

BO: What are you going to tell your sister?

CINDY: If you want your truck, you know where it will be.

BO: It's our truck. This is our place. Sonny is as much mine as he is yours.

CINDY: I found him.

BO: I broke him in.

CINDY: I finished him off.

BO: I loaned you the three thousand dollars to buy him when everybody said you were crazy.

CINDY: I paid you back the first summer I took Sonny out.

BO: You don't have to pay somebody back after you marry them.

CINDY: Sonny is the best barrel horse I'll ever have. He'll never be this good again. I'll never be this good again. I'm already an old lady.

BO: Twenty-six ain't that old.

CINDY: Martha Long was eighteen when she won last year and there's little girls fourteen and fifteen coming right up behind me with their Daddies haulin them anywhere they want to go. Don't cost those kids a dime. I have to do this now.

BO: I know that.

CINDY: I can win.

BO: I know.

CINDY: I'll be goin into the National Finals a good two thousand dollars ahead of anybody else, if Sonny keeps winnin like he is now and if we win the Finals—\$125,000 is a lot of money. We can train. Maybe start a school. We already talked this out. Martha Long got those Tony Lama ads and that Wrangler's commercial. Maybe I could get something like that.

BO: I don't want your picture up all over the place.

CINDY: We need the money.

BO: I'll quit. I've lost money all summer.

CINDY: It just takes ropers longer to develop, Bo. We can get you a real good horse with the National Finals money.

BO: There ain't nothin wrong with my horse. Don't go.

CINDY: You said you'd hold my hand.

BO: I said I'd provide for my family, too. For better or worse.

CINDY: You said me for better or worse. Not family.

BO: This isn't right.

CINDY: Bye.

BO: Wait.

CINDY: Don't worry about it.

(BO grabs her arm, gently.)

BO: I said wait.

CINDY: You said a lot of things.

(BO holds her.)

BO: Come here.

(CINDY fights tears.)

CINDY: The last time I went to the dentist, the novocaine didn't work.

BO: OK.

CINDY: And once I got my finger stuck for a blood test and I swear to God it bled the rest of the day. I swear to God it did.

BO: It's OK.

CINDY: What if I can't have any more?

BO: Have this one.

(She pushes him away.)

CINDY: You said anything I thought was right.

BO: I didn't think it would be like this.

CINDY: I didn't even have to tell you about it. I could have just taken a little trip someplace.

BO: I want you to have it.

CINDY: You never said that before.

BO: You can run Sonny next year.

CINDY: You know I can't.

BO: We can figure something out.

CINDY: We'll lose everything.

BO: No we won't.

CINDY: We still owe money on every single thing we have, except Sonny.

BO: A lot of people have babies they can't afford.

CINDY: I don't want it.

BO: Don't say that.

CINDY: Not if it costs me the National Finals.

BO: Don't say that!

CINDY: I've spent my whole life getting to where I am now. We've spent our whole life together getting me and Sonny into the big money and now we're almost there and I'm not going to let a couple of nights in the back of the truck when we weren't careful at all keep me from having what I've worked for ever since I was a little girl.

(Beat)

BO: Where do you think it will go?

CINDY: I don't know.

CINDY: Do you think it's saved?

CINDY: You ain't stepped inside a church since we got married.

BO: Do you?

(She gets ready to leave.)

CINDY: Pick up your truck at my sister's.

BO: Do you think it's saved?

CINDY: They ain't takin it out of you. They ain't askin you to spread your legs and let them stick some cold metal in and scrape out the start of a life.

(Beat)

I don't know if I can go through with it or not, if you won't go with me. I don't know what I'll tell my sister. But I'll sure as hell find somebody to hold my hand.

(Beat)

I won't bring a child into this world when we don't have five hundred dollars between us. We've spent it all on me and Sonny and we can't back out now. I won't bring up a kid to be as broke as my family was all the time. Not if I can help it.

(Beat)

And I won't have a baby knowing that it kept me from doin the one thing I ever really wanted to do. I'm afraid I'll kill it.

BO: No.

CINDY: I'm afraid I won't love it.

BO: Stay here.

(BO kisses her.)

CINDY: Maybe I'm wrong. I've chose wrong before.

(CINDY steps through the door.)

BO: Wait! Cindy! Wait.

(CINDY turns around and looks at him. A long moment.)

END