

From Barbary Allen, by Gay H. Hammond

Act II, sc i

2 M

Style: Historical Drama (Unarmed)

[SWEET WILLIAM and the stranger, CULLEN, have faced off in front of almost the whole community, including BARBARY ALLEN, the girl to whom both are attracted. Barbary's brother-in-law – Jubal – has announced that his barn was burned down in the night, and the community is in an uproar to know the person responsible]

WILLIAM: Fancy's right. The Sullivans know better'n t'git into somebody's barn. They know folks'd take their heads off if they started in messin' with other folks' proppity.

[looking intently at CULLEN]

'Course, somebody else, who didn't know no better, somebody else here coulda been out last night, and mebbe took shelter in a barn that weren't his.

[belligerently]

Is that what happened, Cullen?

CULLEN: What? I wasn't in anybody's barn last night –

WILLIAM: Stranger like you, from the city, I kin see how y'might knock over a lantern or sich, and not know how to stop it from blazin' up in a dry barn. But . . .what kinda man leaves a barn on fire and don't say nothin' to nobody?

CULLEN: Wait a minute, I wasn't there –

WILLIAM: I kin see why you might be skeered to own on up to it now –

CULLEN: Shut up! What's the matter with you? I was with Coeey!

WILLIAM: Coeey says he weren't in Jubal's barn last night –

CULLEN: Neither was I! You know I was with you and Coeey last night, in the woods. Don't ask me where, 'cause I couldn't tell you, but there wasn't a barn around, I can tell you that.

WILLIAM: Not near the whole time, Cullen. You couldn't keep up, remember? We don't know where you got to, the rest o'the night. Ain't that right?

CULLEN: No –

WILLIAM: We had no idee where you got off to.

CULLEN: Yeah, thanks for the help, by the way. Real “neighborly.”

WILLIAM: You the tough guy from down-mountain. You the one think we all so ignorant. You flappin’ yer gums about how much you know, I didn’t reckon you wanted no help from us hillbillies.

CULLEN: You’re a piece of work, MacTier –

WILLIAM: You need to get off this mountain.

CULLEN: Gladly.

WILLIAM: But if’n you burnt down Jubal’s barn, we might ought to get the sheriff on up here --

CULLEN: The sheriff? Hold on, now –

WILLIAM: What’s the matter, Mr. City? Problems with the law?

CULLEN: I just . . . can’t talk to the police.

WILLIAM: Yeah? I think mebbe you oughta.

CULLEN: Listen, you know I had nothing to do with that barn –

WILLIAM: I know you’re a mighty squealy little piece of –

CULLEN: Let me go!

[decides to run out, but WILLIAM grabs him again]

WILLIAM: Where y’goin’, Cullen? I thought you didn’t do nothin’ wrong –

CULLEN: Let go, you sonofabitch!

[punches WILLIAM hard, taking him by surprise and then runs off; WILLIAM tries to follow CULLEN, but BARBARY stops HIM]