

COLD MOUNTAIN

RUBY (O.S.)

That cow wants milking.

her
Ada looks up from her writing with a start. She covers
letter, guiltily, instinctively. In front of her, at the
gate, is A YOUNG RAWBONED, FERAL WOMAN, OF INDETERMINATE
ORIGINS. She is barefoot, and dressed in a hand-dye_
shift
of blue. Her name is RUBY.

RUBY

If that letter ain't urgent, the cow
is -- is what I'm saying.

ADA

I don't know you.

RUBY

Old Lady Swanger says you need some
help. Here I am.

Ada is instantly defensive, intimidated.

ADA

I need help, I need, I do need help,
but I need a laborer -- there's
plowing and rough work and -- I think
there's been a misunderstanding.

RUBY

What's the rake for?

ADA

The rake?

RUBY

Ain't for gardening, that's for sure.
Number one -- you got a horse I can
plow all day. I'm a worker. Number
two there's no man better than me
cause there's no man around who ain't
old or full of mischief. I know your
plight.

ADA

My plight?

RUBY

Am I hard to hear cause you keep
repeating everything. I'm not looking
for money, never cared for it and
now it ain't worth nothing. I expect
to board and eat at the same table.
I'm not a servant. Do you get my

meaning?

ADA

You're not a servant.

RUBY

People'll have to empty their own
night jars, that's my point.

ADA

Right.

RUBY

And I'm not planning to work while
you watch neither.

ADA

Right.

RUBY

Is that a yes or a no?

ADA

(looks at Ruby)

Yes.

RUBY

There's half the day yet. Let's make
a start. My name's Ruby. I know your
name.

ADA

The rake: there's a rooster devil,
I'm sure of it. He's Lucifer himself.
I go near him he's at me with his
spurs.

RUBY

I despise a flogging rooster. Where
is he?

Ada gets up, nods to the corner of the yard. Ruby goes
over.

The Rooster gathers himself up for a new opponent.

IN ONE MOVEMENT SHE PICKS UP THE BIRD AND TWISTS OFF ITS
HEAD.

RUBY

Let's put him in a pot.