

*Casino*

A Ten-Minute Play

By

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**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:**

- BOY, twenties.
- GIRL, twenties.

**TIME & PLACE:**

- A cabin in Vermont. The present.

**SYNOPSIS:** A young, would-be couple escape to Vermont for a week in the Girl's family cabin to decide the fate of their romance.

**PRODUCTION HISTORY:** This play has neither been produced nor had any sort of staged reading.

A LOG CABIN in the Vermont wilderness. A rustic WOODEN DINING TABLE is situated FRONT CENTER. It is about SIX FEET LONG; one CHAIR at each end (equally wooden and rustic).

LEFT CENTER is a DOORWAY.

FRONT LEFT there is a small, CIRCULAR TOP TABLE. A life-size LOON FIGURINE sits on top of it, along with some other KNICK-KNACKS. A COAT RACK beside it.

BACK LEFT, a BOOKSHELF faces the audience; stacked with books and board games.

BACK CENTER is another doorway that leads to a darkened hallway.

BACK RIGHT is a KITCHENETTE; mostly eclipsed by the BAR COUNTER that separates it from the dining area.

**NOTE: while they are actively playing a hand of casino, they voice each move as they make it (thus, each move will not be described) except for when they simply place a card in the middle.**

BOY and GIRL enter from doorway FRONT LEFT. Boy takes off his JACKET and hangs it up.

BOY- ...logging... chipping. More simply, even, just chopping. Chop it in the backyard by yourself. Instead of buying a cord--What would you call that? Wholesale...? You just buy the rounds, and you're saving another common man from missing an evening under these stars in his own backyard. Isn't that the way to live?

Pause. Girl takes her COAT off and hangs it up.

BOY- Wouldn't you agree that's the way to live?

GIRL- Or you're depriving him.

BOY- W--what?

GIRL- Maybe it's not the stars that are on his mind, but a couple mouths to feed.

BOY- Just because a man is... Sure, you know, life is simple up here. You would know, having come up for as many winters-- but the point is everybody looks to the stars. (Pause) The simpler the man, the more they mean to him.

Girl goes into the kitchenette and starts going through some of the drawers.

BOY- That's why I like it up here so much. The green mountains, the lesser the light pollution, you see, these are the things that, to the village folk--

GIRL- Townie...

BOY- Are commensurate to the sports car. The ivy-league ballyhoo. The furnished cabin.

Girl shuts one of the drawers and comes back around holding a DECK OF CARDS.

GIRL- Casino?

BOY- Maybe not even. Something that exceeds-- I mean, who-what would be so compelled to create them? If you believe in a God...whatever. The far loftier...

Girl sits at the left end of the table. Boy pulls the chair on the right side over so they are seated across each other at the front left corner.

BOY- (Pause) Eh...blackjack?

Girl opens the deck, shuffles the cards once, and deals out according to the rules of Casino. She deals out one card to Boy, one FACE-UP in the middle, and one to herself. She repeats these steps until there are four cards for each of them, and four in the middle.

GIRL- You move first.

Pause. Boy takes one of his cards, places it atop one of the middle cards, and pulls both of them aside.

GIRL- You need to say your move.

BOY- You just saw it.

GIRL- You need to verbalize it. (Pause).

BOY- Why...?

GIRL- It's a rule of the game. Don't you want to play by the rules?

BOY- (Pause) Two kings.

GIRL- Building nine.

BOY- Two eights.

GIRL- Nine.

Boy places a card in the middle.

GIRL- Building tens.

Boy places his last card in the middle.

GIRL- Ten. Clearing.

Girl swipes all of the middle cards off to her side.

BOY- Whoa--wha--hol-- what are you doing?

GIRL- Last one to move clears the table.

BOY- No it's not.

GIRL- It is. I'll bet it is.

BOY- Fine, sure...

Girl deals four more cards to each of them.

BOY- (Pause) So.

GIRL- Yeah.

BOY- It's rather romantic up here.

GIRL- Rather.

BOY- Hmm?

GIRL- It's just...rather.

BOY- Mmm, quite.

Girl giggles.

Long Pause.

BOY- Oh, uhm...

Boy puts one of his cards into the middle.

GIRL- Two sevens.

BOY- So, as in...have you given any thought to--oh, oh, building ten.

GIRL- You can only put one of your cards down at a time.

BOY- But you--

GIRL- I put one down, then made a move in the middle.

BOY- Doesn't that count...?

GIRL- It's not putting one down.

BOY- Okay, okay, here, just take my five.

Girl puts one of her cards in the middle.

BOY- I was just trying to ask, had you given any thought to what we talked about?

GIRL- Which thing?

BOY- Before we came up here?

GIRL- Your turn.

BOY- Building and taking ten, the reason we came up--

GIRL- That's against--

BOY- What. Now...?

GIRL- You don't have a ten.

BOY- (points to the middle) It's right there!

GIRL- It has to be in your hand.

Long Pause.

GIRL- You can take your second five and your first five and put it in your pile.

Boy does this.

GIRL- Two queens.

BOY- And...?

GIRL- (Pause) I've thought about it.

BOY- Yeah...?

GIRL- Or, actually, I didn't...

BOY- Come on--

GIRL- Your move.

BOY- No, I want to talk. We've been up here four days. The mountain air-- I don't know, I thought it would clear our heads. I don't know about you, but, for me, the poetic scenery does something. Brings me back to the basics. To what I want. Thoreau's cabin at Walden. That kind of thing...I know what I want, and it's you. Can you not at least reciprocate? I thought the consensus was this trip would bring it out in us. Our qualities and, in turn, bring our answers out for us. I mean, drag me up here, why don't you. Like you don't already know--

GIRL- I didn't need to think about it. (Pause)

BOY- No...No. Of course not. Cause we've been so busy here this past week. (Pause) What is it, babe?

GIRL- It's not babe.

BOY- (Pause) I--it's--

GIRL- If you can't stay calm, cool, or collected enough to beat me at a simple card game, how do you think you'd fare in a relationship...?

BOY- I think you're looking into things a bit too deep.

GIRL- I'm not lost up in the stars. Here there are rules, you clearly don't know. Worse. You don't care to learn or abide by. How do you expect to navigate the fluid channels of someone else's emotions? (Pause) If you remember me so coarse...Just remember it's an honest concern.

Girl begins to collect the cards from the table and put them back in their pack.

BOY- (Pause) I'm sorry. (Pause) You know...(Pause) My parents never taught me any card games.

Girl gets up and goes into the kitchen to put the cards back in the drawer.

BOY- The stars were all I had. Those intellectualizations...If a lifeboat's there, do you not let it save you...? You don't think about the status quo. (Pause) I'm to blame. (Pause) Yeah. Sure.

LIGHTS DIM.

THE END.