

## Denim and distress (by Stefanie Giebert)

### Characters

Tom, Bill, Jim and Joe (cowboys)  
A woman and her teenage daughter  
A shop assistant

### Scene 1

*The American West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 2 cowboys, on a cattle trail, preparing to set up camp for the night.*

Tom: What a day. My back...

Bill: Hey, you're getting old, Tom. How many miles do you think we made today?

Tom: Hm. Not sure. Those yearling calves kept making trouble, so I guess we went slower than yesterday.

Bill: What's for dinner?

Tom: I don't know, ask Sam. Beans, I guess. As usual. Do you think we've passed the Kansas border yet?

Bill: Guess so. But we've only been away for one week. This trip is going to take 5 more weeks, so save your complaints for later.

Tom: I wasn't complaining.

Jim (*comes on stage, has a big hole in his jeans*): Shit, shit, shit!

Tom: But he is. What's hit you, Jim? Cow stepped on your foot or what?

Jim: If only it was just a bloody cow. My boots sure can take the weight of a cow. Naw, it was Joe's bloody horse!

Bill: Hey, you've got a hole in your pants.

Jim: (*sarcastically*) No, really? I never noticed. (*glares at them*) Yeah - Joe and his bloody horse got to answer for that.

Tom: Horse came and took a bite out of your jeans? Never knew horses ate denim.

Jim: No, they don't. But Joe must've been asleep on his horse, so one of them yearlings broke out and Joe's horse went crazy and I was there on foot and had throw myself down to the ground, otherwise I'd have a nice hoof-print on my head now. Landed on a rock, though...

Bill: Joe and that horse... They're bad luck I always say.

Jim: Yeah, and worse luck for me: 1.000 miles to go and no spare pair of pants. And I've only had this pair for 10 years.

Bill and Tom: Oh man, that's tough. Just 10 years....

Tom: What should we do about that?

Bill: Maybe.... we should shoot Joe.

Jim: Hey, okay, take it easy, man. I mean, I'm still alive, ain't I? Nothing broken, just my pants.  
*(laughs)*

Tom: Oh, you're too soft. You always were. Bill is right. It's the only solution.

Jim: But it was just-

Tom: Jimmy. Sometimes a man's got to do what a man's got to do.

Jim: Oh. Okay.

Bill: So, let's do it, let's kill the bastard.

Tom and Jim: Alright, let's do it.

*They draw their guns and go off. A triple shot and a scream are heard. Joe stumbles on stage and falls, dead. The other three come on, put their guns away, nod at each other. Jim takes off his jeans, while the others pull Joe's jeans off. Jim puts on Joe's jeans and leaves his own on the floor. They go off, taking Joe's corpse with them.*

## **Scene 2**

*Scene change to fashion store, 21<sup>st</sup> century. A shop assistant appears, busies herself with jeans on a clothes rack, notices jeans on the floor, picks up Jim's torn jeans and puts them on a hanger in between the other jeans. A woman and her teenage daughter enter the shop.*

Assistant *holding out a pair of jeans*: Can I help you? How about these?

Woman: Yes, I like them. What do you think?

Teenager: But I don't like them.

Woman: Okay, maybe not.

Assistant: How about those? We sell a lot of them, really.

Teenager: No, no, no! I don't want them.

Woman: But why not? I bet they'd look cute on you.

Teenager: I don't want cute jeans. I want something cool.

Woman: Okay, fine. And what's your idea of a cool pair of jeans?

Teenager *pulls out pair of jeans with holes*: These.

Woman: No, come on. You're kidding.

Teenager: I've got to like them. Not you.

Woman: But they're... broken. They look like rubbish! (*realises that there is still the shop assistant*)  
Oh, sorry, I mean, I...

Assistant: They are not broken. They are *distressed*. They've just come in. It's a very sophisticated procedure, you know, they are washed and treated with stones and then the holes are placed exactly where the designer said they should be. We have many different styles actually, we have holes and slashes and rips and tears and-

Woman: Yes, thank you. (*aside, to the teenager*) That's absolute trash. What do you want with jeans like that?

Teenager: Wear them?

Woman: But you'll get cold. All those holes... Don't complain to me if you catch pneumonia, wearing those.

Teenager: They're cool. I like them. And you promised.

Woman: Oh alright, I suppose I did. But they're much too big.

Teenager: No, they're boyfriend jeans.

Woman: Boyfriend?

Assistant: That's what the style is called. They are a loose fit, as if you borrowed them from your boyfriend.

Woman: But she doesn't have a-

Teenager: Mum!

Woman: Sorry. Okay, okay, if you want them so badly. But they will fall to pieces as soon as you wash them.

Teenager: Then I'll buy a new pair.

Assistant: She's right, in a few months this style will be out of fashion anyway. So, she would have to throw them away anyway. And it's easier to throw away something that's already *broken*, isn't it? (*laughs*)

Woman: This is crazy... But I guess if you keep growing at that rate I'll have to buy you a new pair in a few months anyway. But at least we could have donated your old pair if it had been a normal pair of jeans. I'd be ashamed to give these to charity -

Teenager (*clearly embarrassed*): Mum...

Woman: What?

Teenager: You're embarrassing.

Woman: What? I'm not -

Assistant (*smiling*): Will you be taking these, then?

Woman (*embarrassed*): We, we... (*sighs*) yeah, I guess we are. How much are they?

Assistant: That will be £130 please.

Woman: What??? For a bunch of rags?

Assistant: They're D&G. (*Pause*) Dolce & Gabbana?

Woman (*mumbling*): D&G? Demented and greedy, more like. (*to the shop assistant*) Thanks. Bye. (*Woman pays and goes out with daughter and shopping bag. Outside, to the teenager.*) Are you happy now? (*teenagers grins happily*)