

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT (1930)

A 1930's Black Pontiac idles at a gas pump. A WOMAN, '20s, gets out of the driver's seat. She wears a pink cashmere coat and tight curls, her eyes betray a placid self-assuredness.

The woman pops the gas cap and pumps the gas. Nothing comes. She grips the pump tighter. Nothing.

She returns the pump and sighs, stuffing her hands in her pocket. She heads for the store.

INT. GAS STATION - STORE - NIGHT

The woman enters the crowded space. Stacks of cans, trinkets, toys, and bottles of coke line the shelves and fill the room. A RECORD PLAYER PLAYS QUIETLY in the background. There's a friendly atmosphere about this place: the warmth of a home.

She walks up to the counter. There's no one there. She rings the bell. Silence.

The woman notices a room behind the counter. The light is on. She goes behind the desk to enter. EMERSON, a little girl about 9, comes out, startling her. The girl stands behind the counter and points to the customer's side.

LITTLE GIRL

Are you an egg?! You're supposed to be over there.

The woman backs up to the other side of the counter.

WOMAN

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to-

LITTLE GIRL

It's okay. Even if you are an egg or a dindy fem. I still like ya.

The woman returns to her side of the counter.

WOMAN

Oh.

LITTLE GIRL

Yeah, you're a real pip. I like your coat. I just got snappy cause my mamma likes to keep things skippy.

WOMAN

Where's your mamma?

LITTLE GIRL

She had some business. But don't worry. I can take care of ya.

WOMAN

(endeared)

Well, I'm sure you can but-

LITTLE GIRL

(holding a pack of cigarettes)

Would you like a snipe? They're all here for a checker.

The little girl gestures to the display of cigarettes on the counter. It reads: "Cigarettes - \$1."

WOMAN

That's swell kid, but no thanks. My flivver is on empty. The pump is broke. You got a horn?

LITTLE GIRL

It doesn't work anymore. Mama's trying to get it fixed.

WOMAN

What does work here?

LITTLE GIRL

Well, we don't got a lot of suds. But mama says it'll be better in the summer. It's been empty for a while. Haven't seen a soul in months.

WOMAN

Don't you go to school?

LITTLE GIRL

No, mama says she wants me to be a workin' girl. She says that's what's important. The kids at school make fun of me anyway-

WOMAN

That's very sad. You're a very friendly girl. Why do they bully you?

LITTLE GIRL
They don't like my friends.

WOMAN
Why's that?

The little girl leans forward.

LITTLE GIRL
Here I'll tell ya. It's a secret
though.

The woman gets close to listen.

LITTLE GIRL
They say they're imaginary. But I see
them clear as day. Mama says I can see
ghosts.

A BELL RINGS. The door of the store opens. An OLDER WOMAN,
40s, enters.

LITTLE GIRL
Mama!

OLDER WOMAN
Who're you rambling to, Emerson?

LITTLE GIRL
A nice lady.

OLDER WOMAN
I don't see one here. But there's a
woman in the car out there. She's been
shot.

The woman looks at the girl's mother, struck. She runs past
the mother and out the door.

The woman sees the car, pecked with bullet holes. Gas leaks
from the side. She sees herself in the driver's seat, a
bullet in her head, eyes open.