

BLUE NOTE RUN

(3M, 1W)

Edgar Mendoza

Aurelio, a Filipino farm laborer in Depression-era California, is homesick for the Philippines. Against his strict brother Perfeccion's advice, he visits the taxi-dance hall looking to fulfill his expectations for the country he heard was paved with gold and opportunity. There he meets Cassandra, a hard-shelled American taxi-dancer. Aurelio is instantly intrigued by her outspoken honesty, warmth and blue eyes. Cassandra is struck by his sincere charm, positive energy and enthusiasm for American jazz music, but remains cautious about starting a relationship.

Perfeccion crushes him by revealing the American law forbidding a male non-citizen from marrying an American woman. Aurelio, still determined, returns to the dance hall after hours. He pursues Cassandra and helps her see the positive qualities that she has forgotten as they slow dance in the empty dance hall. Aurelio has no idea that she is recently divorced from Red, his current farm boss. Once Red learns of Aurelio's courtship of Cassandra, his attempts to win back his former wife grow stronger. Red plays upon Cassandra's fears about being involved with a non-American and all the consequences that come with it, including losing her citizenship, and the vulnerability her future children will face. Cassandra gives in to her fears and leaves Aurelio at the train station as they are about to leave for Mexico to be married. Red lures Cassandra back by selling his farm and promising to build a dance school where she can teach.

Aurelio confronts Cassandra inside the dance hall to find out if she still loves him, but she refuses to dance. Red kills Aurelio's brother after he sees Aurelio and Cassandra at the dance hall. Aurelio plans to avenge his brother's death and leave America for good. Aurelio says good-bye to Cassandra. Aurelio engages Red in a knife fight. Cassandra searches for Aurelio to confess her desire to leave with him and finds them struggling. Cassandra stops Aurelio before he can kill Red. Red attempts to kill Aurelio but fails. Red retreats for the moment but Aurelio and Cassandra know he will be back. They decide to leave for Mexico to be married, to escape Red and the unjust law, hoping the laws and the country will someday change.