

NAME ON THE BULLET

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&

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It might sound like the stuff of alternate history, but is loosely based on a real-life event.

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

In the distance lush rolling hills rise out of the horizon...

A small HOMESTEAD. MRS. STANTON (60s) Runs in a chair and crochets. A plow is stuck in muddy earth.

Mr. STANTON (60s), in a hat and filthy chaps pushes and strains to un-stick it.

A DOG, a mean-looking mutt of indeterminate lineage, barks furiously.

Sensing something, Mrs. Stanton looks up from her needlework. Both peer across the endless Prairie. Not a soul. But after a moment...

A RIDER appears over the horizon. Too far to know for certain...but whoever they think it is, fills them with dread... as the rider draws closer...

THE RIDER cantors up on a pale horse, the *LONE RANGER'S BOHLIN SADDLE*; dressed for rugged, dusty business, not dowdy, sexy; think *Sharon Stone in 'The Quick And The Dead'* whom will come to know as *RIVERS*.

She purses her dry, blistered lips, sun-leathered face...

RIVERS

Your dog's a mite unfriendly.

MR. STANTON

He doesn't take too kindly to strangers.

MRS. STANTON

Here boy...here!

The dog wines, obeys --

She brushes aside her embroidered duster coat with capelet, *Samuel Colt .44 dual action pistols in each holster*. Tucks lace mitts over her gun belt.

MR. STANTON

What can I do fer ya?

RIVERS

How much further to Sulfer City?

(CONTINUED)

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MR. STANTON

Ten miles thataway. Only it's
Forsaken Run now. That's a polite
name fer it. The devil himself
even have contacts there and the
air smells of brimstone.

Rivers tips her hat, spurs her horse.

EXT. RIM OF TOWN - DAY

Rivers reins in shy of the main road into town. A sign;
STRANGER; Don't Let The Sun Go Down On You Here.

A CHURCH at the mouth of the main street. STEEPLE, with
bell. And in the shadow of the bell tower -- a GRAVEYARD.

No neat rows. Instead, the graves seem randomly arranged,
many unmarked. Like gopher holes.

A PREACHER -- 40s, cadaverous -- sweltering in his tunic
as a campfire burns amidst stones, he fires up beans.

PREACHER

Then he said also "*when thou
makest the feast...call the poor,
the maimed, the lame, and the
blind... and thou shall be
blessed.*" Luke 15.

(eyes Rivers lustily)

He should have mentioned a pretty
girl gives a man an appetite.

RIVERS

Save your sermons, Father--

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

All the prerequisites of a frontier town: The town's
epicenter; *THE SILVER SPUR*; a fancy saloon of gambling
and drinking and pleasure.

INT. THE UNTERRIFIED EPITAPH - DAY

ASA JONES, the editor, sets type for the next issue.
ELMER, a young APPRENTICE works the press in the b.g.

Asa moves to the window, Rivers ride past.

ELMER

What's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASA

A vulture just rode into town.

EXT. BLACKSMITH SHOP/LIVERY STABLES - DAY

SAWBONES, 50s, an emotionally scarred Civil War Vet in a leather apron stands at the forge in which he is heating a horseshoe while pumping the bellows.

Rivers grabs her saddlebag and rifle. He spots a 'Texas Longhorn' engraved on her holsters..

SAWBONES

I'll be doggone. Your reputation got here long before you did. Willie "sawbones" Pardon. Fought at Gettysburg and my leg is cut up real bad. Yep. I can have a new one tomorrow. Come far?

RIVERS

Far enough. If it's alright -- I'll settle up with you in the mornin'.

SAWBONES

How do I know you'll be in town?

RIVERS

Would you leave a horse like that behind?

SAWBONES

Yea, see what you mean. Sure is a beautiful hunk of horseflesh you got there. He's Arabian isn't he?
(she nods)

Look at that nose like a Roman soldier. What's his name?

RIVERS

Caesar.

SAWBONES

The name fits.

RIVERS

Fastest horse in these parts. By chance, is there a doctor in this town?

SAWBONES

One of the best. Doc Halladay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

Hotel in town?

SAWBONES

Such as it is. Can't miss it,
though you might want to.

RIVERS

Who's got the best grub?

SAWBONES

Are you religious? There's a
place. The Ponderosa that might
not kill you. But if you tell me
you're going to eat there, I might
want payment in advance.

RIVERS

Well, Sawbones, keep Caesar if I
don't come back.

SAWBONES

That'd be fair.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

It has seen better days. At the bar, GATOR, 30s, a portly clerk wipes down the counter.

At a table, four men dressed a bit more professionally than most of the folks, playing poker.

CORD MCLYNTOCK, 40, a tough-as-nails cattlemen, FLYNN QUIGBY, 35, the town banker, DEKE, a rough-hewn man, and Mayor HAL MERCER, 40s, an air of authority to him.

Rivers strolls towards the front desk. Gator appears.

GATOR

Day, week, month, miss?

RIVERS

I'll let you know.

GATOR

Then it's eight bucks, cash in
advance.

He jingles the key, plays with it while he considers her. She snatches it away.

RIVERS

I'll pay when I leave!

(CONTINUED)

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What Gator sees in her eyes truly disturbs him. The others' notice the conflict. Deke rises up.

DEKE

Is there a problem

RIVERS

You wanna yell for help? Why you
horning in?

Deke, flummoxed by this woman standing up to him, scowls in red-faced fury. His righthand is inches from his gun.

RIVERS

Can't keep your eyes off that gun
can you. Win lots of arguments
that way?

DEKE

Some.

He jerks for his gun, she pulls her pistol so quick most don't notice until she fires the Samuel Colt .44 --

Deke FLIES BACKWARDS and hits the wall. Dead on impact.

RIVERS

You only have to lose one.

Wheels her gun back into its holster and scans the crowd. Terrified, Gator spins a registry around, extends a pen.

GATOR

Uh, you have to sign. It's a
formality.

RIVERS

What's to keep me from signing a
false name?

Gator gives a resigned shrug of the shoulders.

RIVERS

Rivers. A good way to remember is
think of something you have yet to
cross.

From the looks on their faces this is a woman to be avoided. Rivers bounds up the steps.

CORD

Gator, inform the Marshal.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

A large, well-lit saloon. Ceiling frescoes. Venetian glass. No expense or luxury has been spared.

Scantily-clad prostitutes, one black, are passed around.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE, 40, watches like a hawk. She wears a sexy and elegant Courtesan wardrobe. A neck chain with a KEY dangling from it.

A MINOR rises, defeated--as POKER FLATS RAKES in the pot; a professional gambler/flamboyant dresser, a bit on the chubby side, but by no means soft.

POKER FLATS

(toasting...)

Here's to an easy saddle and good
riding, friend. May your boots
never get dusty and your guns
never rusty.

Sierra locks eyes with Poker. A subtle nod: then --

EXT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Sierra exits through batwing doors of the saloon where she sees Gator, running, shouting unintelligible.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Gator, what in tarnation are you
gibbering on about?

GATOR

Rivers in town.

Poker crosses towards Sierra, slowly rolling a cigarette.

POKER FLATS

Gator say why she blew into town?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No, but you can bet she's not here
to pick strawberries.

EXT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME/OFFICE - DAY

A two-story home at the edge of town, with a white picket fence. A sign sways out front; "MARY "swan" HALLADAY MD."

INT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME - PARLOR - DAY

A splendidly decorated home/office, warm and comforting.

MARY HALLADAY, 30s, a Southern Belle, weathered face, still very pretty, places a letter in its envelope.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Shelves of medical books. A tiny hospital with beds.

MARSHAL JIM DUNCAN, a hard-lived 50 sits in a chair with a crank handle to recline. Deputy WILL SUNDAY, 20s, is a bit wet behind the ears.

MARY

I heard back from that physician in New York who specializes in palsy and described your symptoms. Mentioned an old article from 1807 by a man named Parkinson about a shaking disease.

Duncan grabs his arm to stop the trembling but no dice.

MARY

The symptoms seem familiar to what you're experiencing. Not much can be done for it. Sorry. I'll give you something for the pain.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

(rolls up a sleeve)

Thanks, Doc. It's getting worse.

Mary searches a cabinet - bottles of chemicals for dispensing. Grabs one, then a syringe.

THE DOOR BUSTS OPEN - Gator rushes in, out of breath.

GATOR

Jim, she's here! Right here in town. Rivers.

Duncan pauses, unsure of how to respond... tentative.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

You're just full of good news', ain't ya? She just get in?

GATOR

Just this minute. You've got to do something. Cord said --

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MARSHAL DUNCAN

I don't care what Cord said. If she's in town. Nothing I can do about it.

DEPUTY SUNDAY

Who's this Rivers?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

She's a hired killer.

DEPUTY SUNDAY

So. We've had some good ones. We've been able to handle 'em."

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Oh, no. A gunslinger is one thing. Rivers' another altogether. A professional killer, an arbiter of fate.

DEPUTY SUNDAY

How come she's still loose?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

No one's been able to jail her. She shoots in self-defense. Goads the other fella into drawing first. Gator, did she say how long she was going to stay?

GATOR

Nope. Who you suppose she's after?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Maybe she's not after anyone.

GATOR

She booked a room. That all?

MARY

What do you want, him to whistle six bars of "Dixie"?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

(grabs his hat)

I've always been a lawman better than half of my life and I can think of a few people who'd like to see me dead. Everybody steps on somebody's toes sometime.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Rivers in a crisp white shirt, black string tie, fitted black trousers, straps on her guns. Even wearing men's clothes she's breathtaking.

Hikes up a pants leg, puts on spurs. We glimpse a tiny holster. In it, a gun(Boothe's derringer, the one used to shoot Lincoln).

She adjusts. A key rattles in the lock. She draws a pistol. Her caller is Sierra. Rivers holsters..

RIVERS

I'd be obliged if you'd get to-the-point.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I'll just lay it on the barrel-head -- there's three hours left of daylight. Why don't you pack up and move on.

RIVERS

Well, like the bear said to the trap I'll stay because of my foot.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Do me a favor? Next time we have a conversation stay ten feet away. Some people in this town ain't very accurate shooters.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Our MEN, mid-game, including Poker now. Cord is dealing. There is an atmosphere of tension around the table, and it is obvious that Flynn has been losing.

Poker picks up his cards. Hal makes a bet. Asa folds immediately. Cord eyes Flynn who looks pale in the face.

CORD

Place your bet or throw in your cards.

POKER FLATS

Know what, Cord, your poker playing and disposition seems to have two things in common, they're both bad.

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CORD

Spit it out, what's bothering you?

FLYNN

That woman's a hired killer. An executioner. She gets paid three thousand a head.

HAL

I know but do you really think you can get away if it's you she wants?

CORD

Guilty conscious.

FLYNN

Ain't we all.

CORD

You think she's after you, Hal?

HAL

What would she want with me?

CORD

I wouldn't know. I thought maybe you would.

HAL

Could be anyone. Why are you ridin' me? Maybe she's after you.

CORD

Maybe. You don't build a cattle empire without making enemies.

HAL

She sure don't look like what you'd expect.

POKER FLATS

The avenging angel they call her yet the Lord said "*vengeance is mine.*"

Rivers descends the stairs. She approaches their table. Flynn nearly wets himself.

RIVERS

Seems like nothing happens around here without your say-so.

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CORD

That's right.

RIVERS

Any stray bullets come my way I
know who to look for.

CORD

Careful, Miss. We don't believe in
chivalry.

Rivers tosses a drink in his face. Then, all of a sudden—
Cord lunges at Rivers who calmly draws her gun.

CORD

You're pretty tough with those
guns strapped around your waist. I
wonder how tough you'd be without
them.

*Cord's jaw tightens, decides he better not risk it, as
Rivers walks off...*

POKER FLATS

You know, Cord. You underestimate
the advantage of brute force. You
don't seem to realize when you're
pressing you're luck. If I were
you I'd walk around Rivers as if
she were quicksand.

HAL

You sound like you know Rivers.

POKER FLATS

Well I've never crossed trails
with her, but I knew a few who did
-- they're all dead.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Rivers takes in the town— making mental notes of her
surroundings, people stare. Hushed whispers. Every
window, a snapshot of a frightened face.

More faces on the street. Shadowed in the doorways.

Cord, and two cowboys. One seems calm, the other jumpy.
FRANK GENTRY and HEMP REEGER, respectively. These are not
law-abiding men. They're outside the land office.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

The barber, WADE, sits in his barber's chair reading the paper. A bearded man dressed as a PARSON enters.

Rev JOHN WILLIS PROSPERO walks slowly. Deliberately. A limp to his gait; curled jet black hair, athlete's build.

WADE

Parson, says here there's a fellow by the name of Jack Ripper on the loose over in England. Evidently, he's butchered half a dozen folks with a knife. It goes on to say...

Rev Prospero takes a seat. Wade gets to work. Rev sees Rivers walk past the large window. Recognition, shock, fills his face.

REV PROSPERO

"Hell is empty and all the devils are here." You know that's Shakespeare but you're not a fan of literature are you?

He hops up, wipes his lathered face with the sheet, tosses it at a flummoxed Wade, heads out.

WADE

I find it all boring.

INT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME/PARLOR - DAY

Mary pulls a pill box from a cabinet, and hands it to a nervous GRAM LOWERY, 20s, baby-faced handsome.

GRAM

What's this? Pills?

MARY

No, gumdrops.

GRAM

Gumdrops?

MARY

Finest thing in the world for expectant fathers. Now, when you get to worryin', just pop one of these in your mouth and start chewin' on it. Worries will disappear just like that.

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CONTINUED:

Gram smiles and leaves. Mary checks the clock, in a hurry, grabs her black bag. As she turns to leave --

Mary can't hide the fear and surprise on her face as Rivers stands there, takes off her hat.

RIVERS

Didn't mean to scare you. The door was open. My apologies?

MARY

Don't quibble any fine line with me, Rivers. You're as dishonest as any common road bandit.

Rivers is bemused by Mary's bellicose demeanor.

RIVERS

Doc Mary "swan" Halladay. Is it?

MARY

Please call me Mary. Although I'd be happier if I knew what this was about.

RIVERS

Physicians interest me. They have the power of life and death.

Mary considers her, her guns, the whole damn situation. But, nevertheless, she ain't cruel (just lonely). So--

RIVERS

Just one minute. Doctor. Have you got anything in that black bag that's good for a headache?

MARY

You might try goin' to church. It's the best relief I know.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

HENRYETTA, 40s, the proprietor, stocking shelves, looks terrified as Rivers enters.

Rivers reaches into a JAR for some licorice.

Henryetta moves behind the counter, a .36 caliber Confederate six shooter is a within reach. Rivers lays a silver dollar on the counter.

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RIVERS

You're a Johnny Reb, aren't you?
I could tell by that Griswold
you're reaching for.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

At hitching rail. Mary watches as EARL makes his
saddlebags and books secure.

EARL

I hear there's a lot of new
territory out Arizona way.

He gives the strap a final tug, Marshal Duncan appears.

EARL

Jim, I was just telling Doc I'm
pulling out.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Oh, it wouldn't 'cause of what
happened to Bill Staley in Three
Graves?

EARL

When you ride into town you'll
notice three graves that gives the
place its name now. Three men are
buried there. We thought they
burnt out some settlers, murdered
seven people.

MARY

Interesting. A town honoring
killers.

EARL

They were innocent. We lynched
them by mistake. Everyone in town
had a hand in it, it was shameful.
Bill hung the youngest. We took a
good look at ourselves didn't like
what we saw. That's when Skeleton
Tusk became Three Graves. Everyone
in town hung up their guns.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

They'd have strung him up anyway,
she probably did him a favor.

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CONTINUED:

EARL

Well, I'm pulling out before she
do me any favors.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Rivers sits, feet kicked up. Two OLD GEEZERS approach,
one wears a worn rebel hat on his head, the other a ratty
Union army uniform.

REBEL

Ahhmm, move it, or lose it.

(she obliges)

As I was sayin', I didn't
understand half of that flowery
talk especially that last
'libation' part. What the hell is
that?

YANKEE

Establishment of libation, house
of bibulous concoctions, a, a...
what do you people call it? Oh
yes, a saloon, a place where I may
moisten these withering lips and
quench my parched cords for I'm
afraid my vocals are beginning to
fail me and that will not do.

REBEL

Yee Haa!

Rebel spits out a jet of brown tobacco juice and smiles,
revealing a set of crud-coated teeth.

Mary pulls up in her fancy ONE-HORSE CARRIAGE.

RIVERS

Miss, Mary. Where you off to?

MARY

No place. Thought I'd go for a
ride. I get stir crazy in this
place. Course if you wanna come
along, you're more'n welcome.

RIVERS

You know my reputation.

MARY

But I don't know you. Besides,
I'm trying to cure what's ailing
this town.

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CONTINUED:

RIVERS

You're not afraid?

MARY

Outlaws don't bother me. I've known plenty of ornery characters in my time.

Rivers smirks as Mary extends the reins to Rivers.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

The office occupies the front of the building. A barred door leading into a corridor which gives access the cells in the rear of the building.

Sunday sits with a shotgun across his legs. Duncan cleans his pistol, concern evident on his face.

DEPUTY SUNDAY

Well, If she's as bad as the reports say -- the whole town's gonna sweat 'til she gets her hands on the man she's come for.

A moment, Gator, Cord, Hal, and Asa file in.

GATOR

Jim, she just left town with Mary. You think it's her?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Mary? No.

CORD

You gonna pick her up?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

On what charge?

ASA

Why don't you deputize a posse.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

They're not gettin' paid to do a job, keepin' the peace is part of it.

HAL

Look, she'll be gone in a day or two. You got to be reasonable. What's the use of risking our lives and property.

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CONTINUED:

GATOR

Why sure. Besides she's only come
for one man.

ASA

That's what the Romans said when
the vandals were at the gates,
just before they burned Rome.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

There's two kinds of sheriff's,
the ones like me you think with
there head and those like Jeb
Walker who lets their guns do the
thinking for them. And that's why
he's out there on boot hill
waiting for Gabriel's trumpet. Why
I'm down here trying to put her
outta town.

A beat, then -- Marshal Duncan sits at his desk.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

If I can pick her up on something
I will. If I can. 'Til than we
just have to wait her out.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - SIERRA'S OFFICE - DAY

A spacious corner room, the windows of which look out
over the main street. Sierra looks even nicer in her show
garments of the night.

Poker sits, the inevitable dice in his fingers, two this
time. There is a silence except the rattle of the cubes.

Sierra pours drinks from a decanter and hands Poker one.

POKER FLATS

Ladies first.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

So you wanna play farmer in the
dell. And the farmer takes a wife.

Poker gulps his in an ominous silence - remembering...

POKER FLATS

Oh, here this new deck of marked
cards you asked me to bring back.

He retrieves a new deck from inside his jacket and hands
them to Sierra. As she examines them....

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CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Good as the last ones.

POKER FLATS

The latest in readers. Those suckers never will catch on to those.

Sierra holds them up to a light, grins.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Watermarks. The house will clean up with them.

EXT. LAKE STREAM - DAY

River takes in the stunning scenery. Dramatic, grass covered bluff.

Mary bathes in a secluded pool in the river, protected by trees. She can barely make out Rivers through the trees.

MARY

So yes, I'm leaving. And I'd be glad to see the end of the country, outlaws, Indians, drunks, gamblers, saloon girls, bad roads and bad food.

RIVERS

We need doctor's out here. In fact, we need them a little more worse than they do back east.

MARY

That's what I thought we I came out here. I've become an expert on gunshot wounds and broken heads. I learned to stitch up a knife slash as neat as a handkerchief hem. I've saved the life of a half a dozen worthless murders and couldn't save my husbands life.

Rivers studies Mary who exits the pool naked, dripping we, gathers her clothes and dresses behind bushes-

MARY

I'm going straight to Boston. I don't care if I hear of this part of the country again.

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RIVERS

Then it has occurred to you that your wasting your life.

MARY

Doctors take an oath, it has to do with saving lives - no matter who.

RIVERS

Maybe it's for the best. You leavin'. They're going to die anyway. Best thing you can do is drag out their miserable lives.

MARY

Death is inevitable for all of us but we try and put it off as long as possible.

Mary joins Rivers, sits on a log, puts on her stockings.

RIVERS

I envy you being a doctor. You got a faith, something to go by like a religion. With you it's medicine.

MARY

It means a great deal to me.

RIVERS

Well, kinda puts us on different sides of that fence I was talking about, don't it?

MARY

You can say that.

RIVERS

Well, I have a job to do to.

MARY

Why do you have to do it at all?

RIVERS

Because I took an oath too. In my line of work, often the real sickness is seldom physical. I think I've had more experience with those than you have.

MARY

You sound like a shrink than --

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CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

-- a killer?

MARY

You're awfully nosey, aren't you?

RIVERS

Just professionally. Kinda like a doctor in that respect.

Mary gestures towards her pistols.

MARY

I wouldn't quite call that a stethoscope...

Suddenly, a snake rattles and rears up just a couple of feet from Mary, ready to strike.

Rivers quick draws. The bullet blasts the head off the rattler, and the dead snake collapses.

RIVERS

No, but properly used it can be good for the human race.

A long beat. Rivers, gun still in her hand, exchanges a look with Mary - in which many things can be read.

INT. RANCH HOME - DAY

Spartan interior of a lovely homestead. Reverend Prospero grabs a bottle and glass.

His seriously hot wife, MIRANDA, 30s, exits the bedroom. Her hair, face a bit unkept, straightens her clothes.

MIRANDA

I didn't expect you back so soon.

REV PROSPERO

You never do.

MIRANDA

What happened? They run out of whiskey at the saloon?

REV PROSPERO

Rivers is in town.

MIRANDA

I've heard the name but never anything good connected with it.

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The two of them lock eyes, a volcano of unspoken emotions.

MIRANDA

That's your way, isn't it? Back away from anything tougher than a steak.

REV PROSPERO

I'm sure you think I'm a coward, like everyone else 'round here.

He stares hard at Miranda, pours himself another drink.

MIRANDA

That's right, pour yourself some courage. What would she want with you? You're not worth killing. Let alone a roll in the hay.

REV PROSPERO

What do you want? A punch in the nose?

MIRANDA

Instead of fighting with me, why don't go over and tangle with her.

INT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Flynn tears his attention away from the ACCOUNTING LEDGER to stare through a window as Rivers heads for the hotel.

Flynn stands there, trembling. Sweating. Hal joins him.

FLYNN

Why do Jim let her hang around?

HAL

He wasn't much of a soldier, come to think of it, not much of a marshal, either.

FLYNN

If she can execute a man for money maybe we can pay her to go away.

Hal and Flynn exchange a look - Not a bad idea, but...

INT. HOTEL - DAY

A shaky hand pours a glass of whiskey. The hand belongs to CLINT, 30, not sober, which makes him all the meaner.

Rivers crosses to the bar, makes eye-contact with Clint.

RIVERS

Clint.

CLINT

How did you know my name?

RIVERS

I read it on a wall some place.

Clint backs away from Rivers, scared shitless.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - THOROUGHFARE - DAY

Clint stumbles arounds the thoroughfare, drunk. Most of the Townsfolk know him, and so they also know to stay the hell out of his way.

CLINT

Who does she think she is, roaming the town like she was an honored guest or... or something.

He turns and see Mary standing there, looking at him.

MARY

Clint, I just want to remind you that you have a bad lung. Getting liquored up ain't going to help it none.

CLINT

Isn't there anybody in this town that ain't afraid of Rivers?

Sawbones spits. No time for this --

SAWBONES

Sure! Graveyard's full of 'em.

Clint scoffs, gets on his horse and rides away.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Rivers sits alone in the almost empty lobby. Gator approaches with a fresh pot of coffee.

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GATOR
Rivers, more coffee?

RIVERS
Sure. Thank you.

GATOR
(pouring)
And how is everything?

RIVERS
Very good.

She sips coffee, winces. Would spit it out if she could.

RIVERS
Sweet Jesus, that's strong enough
to float a pistol.

A group of men enter and cautiously approach Rivers. In the bunch, Hal, Flynn, and several other gentlemen.

She studies their grim faces, her own, unreadable.

HAL
I'm Mayor Hal mercer, and these gentlemen are members of the city council. I wanna speak with you.

RIVERS
Talks cheap. I can spare you some.

HAL
You can drop this manhunt.

RIVERS
Now why would I want to do that?

FAT COUNCILMAN
For the good of the town. This is an old town. Just bare bones until Sierra Nevada Rose resurrected it. Then people came here from a lot of different places. And we don't ask questions about there past. All we're interested in is how they behave here.

FLYNN
Whoever you're looking for ain't doing anyone harm now.

RIVERS
I've already been paid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLYNN

We're prepared to offer you two thousand dollars out of the town treasury.

RIVERS

Switching sides for money that's most unethical.

FLYNN

You're making a mistake.

RIVERS

Could be, but you'll never know unless I've come for you, banker.

Flynn, shaken. Him and the disgruntled men follow.

EXT. COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY

A tall gallows is being constructed. It doesn't look too sturdy, not well-maintained.

Rivers looks it over as she strides past. The workmen pause in their labors to look at Rivers.

Frank and Hemp approach, lay hands on their pistol grips. JASPER joins them, a shifty, beady-eyed rogue.

FRANK

I'm ordering you out of town.

RIVERS

You getting tired of living?

HEMP

The town don't want no trouble here. Just get out of town. You're not welcomed here.

FRANK

And you can tell your friends to keep out of town. We don't want gunfighters here. We'll fight 'em two-to-one or shoot 'em in the back. So if you know what's good for them they'll stay away. Not get along.

All this commotion has attracted some attention and amusement from passersby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rivers draws, almost faster than the eye can follow - her GUNSHOT bites Frank in the shoulder. He grabs at it, goes down screaming and rolling in the dirt.

She eyes the other two, now discouraged by the speed with which that pistol appeared in River's hand.

RIVERS

Get your hands off that gun your covered and my fingers might slip.

Duncan and Sunday run over. She studies his gun hand, a slight tremor here and there.

RIVERS

You cold or scared, Marshal?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Got to be cold, 'cause there ain't nothing frightening around here. Don't want no trouble here.

RIVERS

Then we want the same thing but I'm not running from it either.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Rivers heads down the street. As she passes the General store, she sees Mary in the window. She can't take her eyes off Mary.

Suddenly, feeling Rivers' presence, she looks up, sees her. Mary holds Rivers' look, then turns as a customer enters the store.

Rivers stands for a moment, watching her, then crosses the street, and heads to the saloon.

Marshal Duncan follows at a distance...

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Sierra exits the batwing doors, surprised to see Rivers; quickly feigns scorn. Duncan follows at a distance.

RIVERS

You're one of the prettiest little maverick's I ever did see. How about letting me put my brand on you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
I'm wearing one already.

RIVERS
You know you got to get used to sudden changes.

Sierra slaps Rivers, nearly knocks her out of her boots.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
I'm not that easy to rope.

Rivers tips her hat, heads inside. Sierra greets Duncan.

MARSHAL DUNCAN
If you're smart, Sierra. You'll throw her outta there.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
While she's spending her money? You know me better than that, Marshal. Personally I think you got a bum steer. But since I got thousands of dollars working in the opposite direction I'll keep an eye on her.

MARSHAL DUNCAN
Now you're talking sense.

INT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME/OFFICE - DAY

Rev Prospero paces - strain and tension on his face. Mary searches a medical cabinet, retrieves a bottle of pills.

MARY
This is a small town you can't sneeze with a half a dozen people given you cold remedies. I thought you put that iron away for good.

REV PROSPERO
Things change.

MARY
Rivers?...you're not figuring on mixing with her, are you?

REV PROSPERO
I've done a lot of riding. Sometimes in the wrong places. Sooner or later it's bound to catch up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Maybe you're going out of your way to look for trouble.

REV PROSPERO

As long as she's in town I don't have to look.

MARY

These pills will take care of your indigestion. Take one after every meal.

REV PROSPERO

Much obliged Doc. What I owe you?

MARY

I'll send you a bill.

REV PROSPERO

Well, don't make it too steep, business has been kinda slow since Rivers been in town.

As he leaves Duncan enters...

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I understand you took a ride with Rivers. Did she say anything? Any hint of who she's after?

MARY

No. You're awfully sure she's after someone here.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

She rides into a town, checks into a hotel. Sits around for a day taking stock of the situation. Sizing up her next victim known only to her. Baits and needles him until there's nothing left to do but draw on her. Shoots him down in front of witnesses.

MARY

You can't hang someone on their reputation.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Every lawman in the west knows her reputation.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARSHAL DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Here, half the town is afraid
she's going to kill them. And
you're riding around with her.

MARY

She seems friendly enough.

He chuckles, "yeah, right." Grabs his hat, heading out.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

When I was a kid, I had a pet
rattlesnake. I was fond of it, but
I wouldn't turn my back on it.

MARY

Let's see how things develop.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

You surprise me Doc, Never thought
you were one to sit round and let
the flu develop into Pneumonia.

MARY

You can't cure the flu, but
sometimes you can cure Pneumonia.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

The saloon is alive with an almost holiday like
atmosphere, music, card-playing, and dancing girls.

A saloon girl -- a lovely, young, black woman --
POLLYANNA is passing around drinks.

She moves to a FARO TABLE where Sierra deals. Three MEN,
mid-game, leave as Rivers exchanges cash for chips.

Their faces remain placid to anyone watching, but their
low voices fire with intensity --

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

*S'pose you just tell us who you've
come for, save us all some time
and sleepless nights.*

RIVERS

*You call that a business
proposition? Like askin' a pack of
coyotes to keep quiet about a dead
horse.*

Sierra's look hardens; she'll need another tack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 (lays down cards...)
 Betting's closed. Ten not part of
 the action. Eight loses. Four
 wins...six of hearts...six of
 spades...King of spades.

RIVERS
 Well, looks like I beat the lady.

Sierra pays her off.

RIVERS
 A little short there ain't you?
 It's four to one when you call a
 turn.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Not on a cat hop.

RIVERS
 A cat hop?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 A cat hop happens when two of the
 last three cards are paired
 calling a turn in that situation
 pays two-to-one.

RIVERS
 I'm sure those cards will start to
 fall the other way.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Surely you're well enough
 acquainted with faro to know it's
 a game of pure chance. Luck isn't
 with you.
 (opens a fresh deck)
 Perhaps you'd like me to tell you
 your fortune.

Sierra shuffles. There's an intimacy to it. Tosses three
 cards face down, turns a forth face-up; Queen of Hearts.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Love.

Sierra repeats the process, turns over; the Ace of Spade.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Death. Uh, are you feeling lucky
 tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

Your place doesn't come with the best recommendations. Crimped cards, loaded dice, fixed wheels.

Sierra looks at Rivers. Any civility has vanished.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I run honest games now because it pays in the long run.

RIVERS

Your whiskey is still watered.

Rivers pounds her glass on the table. Sierra gestures --

DONNA JUANITA, a descendant of Spanish Conquistadors in sexy *showgirl garments*, hustles over.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Beers...two cervezas.

RIVERS

No thanks. It makes one careless. I like to be able to tell my friends from my enemies.

Sierra dismisses Donna Juanita. A croupier places a paper before her. A beat, finally, Sierra initials it.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

That's his limit.

RIVERS

It's a fair gamble, especially if the house will take off the limit.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

There's no limit for you. Anything you can win, you can collect. But, if you're still playful, I'll take that off too.

Cord approaches. A dog-step behind him is TEX LAREDO, a mean-looking hombre with a penchant for violence.

CORD

Any trouble?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No trouble t'all.

CORD

You don't like me much, do ya?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RIVERS

I was once bitten by a rattlesnake
that I liked better.

He flares at the insult - Sierra places a hand on his arm
to stop him from striking Rivers.

TEX LAREDO

You're gonna talk yourself right
into a box, lady.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Simmer down. If there's gonna be
any kind of fracas, let the Boss
decide where she wants it.

CORD

Some day, Rivers, someone's gonna
fill you so full of lead, they'll
stake a claim on ya.

RIVERS

Seeing you ain't wearing a gun
I'll ignore that.

TEX LAREDO

Maybe you can hear me better.

Tex lays a hand on his pistol's grip.

RIVERS

He a friend of yours?

CORD

He runs errands for me.

RIVERS

You best keep him out of my way or
you may have to run them yourself.

Tex draws his gun to coldly blow Rivers' head off. Sierra
quickly slaps it away - his GUNSHOT goes wild.

Rivers SLAMS her pistol upside Tex's face, knocking him
unconscious. She cocks her gun to finish Cord off.

RIVERS

Next time you try to run me out of
town play your own hand. Maybe
you'd like to try right now.

Rivers wheels her gun into its holster.

A tense moment... a stare down. Cord's distressed:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Instead, Cord helps a struggling Tex Laredo to his feet. Rivers exits.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Easy, Tex. Let's not go off half-cocked. You're too quick tempered.

TEX LAREDO
I've got a right to think.

CORD
I'm not denying you that, but Sierra's right. Rivers reputation isn't founded on thin air.

TEX LAREDO
I haven't found a gun yet I don't mind drawing against. I reckon I'll be doing what I think needs to be done.

CORD
It want do a bit of harm to let her get one day older. We've gotta move two thousand head of cattle north in a few days, at twenty dollars a head, and I can't afford you to me messing with my money. Now after that it's a different story.

TEX LAREDO
Well I'll be telling it to her.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
You may mot like how it ends.

Tex bristles at the challenge to his competence.

INT. MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE - DAY

Cord presides over a meeting between Hal, Asa, and a COUNCILMAN. Snifters of brandy. The air heavy with cigar smoke. The proverbial "smoke-filled" room.

Nearby, Poker dazzlingly manipulates a deck of cards with one hand. Switches to the other and resumes throughout.

HAL
Why'd you let her get away with it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORD

She wanted me to draw. I wonder why.

From Sierra's expression she's wondering too.

HAL

I don't mean to criticize Jim, but I think he should bring in some outside help.

CORD

What do you got to worry about?

HAL

I'm thinking back. Same as all of us. I shot a man once. In the back Maybe he had kinfolk.

CORD

You have strange friends, Sierra.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Maybe it's the way she slings her artillery. Texas style, low and handy.

Jaw clenched in anger, he knocks back rest of his drink.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Sometimes I think you stir up trouble when there isn't any.

Sierra lights Cord's cigar, studies him intently.

POKER FLATS

Why you sticking up for that side winder? Don't you want to see Rivers out of town?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The devil will get her some day.

POKER FLATS

I'd like to help.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The devil does plenty of business in this town. It don't need you.

Sierra reaches into a drawer and retrieves a letter..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Here's a letter from Jebediah
Gant.

HAL
Who's Jebediah Gant?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
He's from Salt flats. He use to be
a Faro dealer for me. He's broke
and wants to borrow a thousand
dollars from me.

HAL
What's that got to do with Rivers?

CORD
He'll earn this thousand by
rubbing Rivers out.

HAL
I didn't know the Kid was a
killer.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
He never had to be. He's the
fastest man with a six shooter I
ever saw.

CORD
Maybe he won't go for it.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
He'll go for anything when he's
broke. And if we have to we'll up
the ante.

A beat, hands the letter to Hal.

SIERRS NEVADA ROSE
There's his address. Wire him five
hundred and have him come runnin'.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

At a corner table, Poker plays solitaire, cheating at it,
to. A bottle of whiskey nearby. Rivers approaches him.

POKER FLATS
Poker Flats, at your service.

He drains his glass of whiskey, pours two more. Slides
one towards Rivers. Holds up his shot...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POKER FLATS

There is a Code of the West. Mind you, nothing written, merely a gentleman's agreement to certain rules of conduct for survival, and are respected. Like drink your whiskey with your gun hand, to show your friendly intentions.

RIVERS

I'm not a gentlemen.

Poker Flats smirks, resumes cheating at solitaire.

POKER FLATS

So, care for a friendly game? It'll help pass the time.

RIVERS

Those sir, are the devils pasteboards.

POKER FLATS

No, their mine. It's provided me with a very good lively hood. Interesting business you got there. Gun for hire.

RIVERS

In a sense I'm a gambler. But I don't gamble for money. I gamble for higher table stakes. My life and I don't shoot people in the back. Every man I've faced as had an even chance.

POKER FLATS

From what I hear not with your speed.

RIVERS

You never know when you'll meet a faster one. It might be today. It might be tomorrow.

POKER FLATS

I had another profession once. Up in Kansas. Wasn't much of one though. A man of medicine. Not a dentist. Sellin' fake snake oil... You'd be surprised how gullible some folks are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Suddenly grabs a crumbled ball of silk. A coughing fit. His entire body goes into spasms. Finally it ends.

He pulls the handkerchief from his mouth that's peppered in blood. Folds his silk, tucks it back into his pocket.

POKER FLATS

Got a pair of bad lungs. All that smoke made 'em twitch. A draft of whiskey will cut the dust.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DRESSING AREA - DAY

Mary wraps the ankle of DELTA, an older but attractive saloon girl. Sierra nearby, having summons Mary here.

MARY

It's just a sprain, not broke.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Told ya Doc would fix ya up.

MARY

Yep, a few days, you'll be able to run away from this place.

Sierra holds her hard glare on Mary.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Rivers and Poker Flats, as Mary joins them.

POKER FLATS

Yes, siree, the finest doctor there is. Purgatory Gulch was a mighty sick town. Doc operated on it. Patient lost a lot of blood - but lived.

MARY

I thought you were running for state senate on the reform party ticket. They don't mind if the other's drink and gamble, but you must be above such things.

POKER FLATS

And give up poker playing?

MARY

Well, of course not. There's always solitaire and old maid.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY (CONT'D)

(re: his drink)

You s'pose to have that stuff?

POKER FLATS

Why not? We all have to die
sometime. Me. You. The whole
cockeyed world. Doesn't make much
difference what kills us.

Poker can't help but laugh. But the laugh turns into a
coughing spasm. A horrible, racking cough with no end.

She takes out a bottle of laudanum. Reluctant, Poker lets
Mary spoon some into his mouths until the coughing abate.

Poker counts drops five silver dollars into Mary's palm.

REX and SKEETER, grizzled veterans of the War enter, rex,
a hook for a right hand, looks around with a proprietary
air as they walk to the bar.

He is almost there before his gaze settles on Rivers. His
reaction is deep and mixed, a whole chapter in his life
coming back at him.

REX

WHAT KIND OF MEN ARE YOU? PAYING
COURT TO HER? DON'T YOU KNOW WHO
SHE IS? Don't you know Susanna
Cushman when you see her? Don't
you know the Yankee spy who
brought death to your friends and
kinfolks.

The customers look round uneasily and gradually leave
Sierra's mad eyes bore in on the Rivers.

POKER FLATS

Want a gun hand?

(off Rivers' glare)

I do handle them pretty well. The
only trouble is, those best able
to testify to my aim aren't around
for comment

Rivers offers a bottle of whiskey to Rex - Rex slaps it
away, shattering it.

Poker eases a hand inside his jacket... puts a hand on
his Ruger Old Army .44 cap, ready to draw.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARY

There's no hiding place for what ails you son. We are all under one flag now!

REX

I lost a brother in Shelbyville thanks to you. Guess they gave you a medal for that, didn't they?

RIVERS

Oh they did better than that, they commissioned me as a Lieutenant in the Union Army.

REX

Don't push.

RIVERS

Don't push? Why you Rebs ought to be used to bein' pushed. Well, we pushed you clear from Gettysburg through Georgia. You gotta admit you been pushed real good.

Mary grabs Rivers, whispers to Rivers.

MARY

Don't call him out. Don't make him draw. He's drunk and not a fast gun and it would be like shooting him in cold blood. It'll be just like murder.

Rivers escorts Mary out...

REX

Susanna Cushman!

Rex jerks for his gun, but Rivers' GUNSHOT bites him in the shoulder. He grabs at it, turns, looks at Rivers as --

His Drunk's COMPANIONS leap up, going for their guns-- POKER wields a brace of pistols, holding off the men -

POKER FLATS

Settle down boys. Don't try it.

SKEETER

Yankees always hide behind women.

Poker shoots Skeeter dead, then tucks his gun into its shoulder holster.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Duncan and Sunday rush in, guns out. Stare at the dead Skeeter and Rex being attended to by Mary.

Duncan glares at Rivers.

POKER FLATS

I'm afraid I did that one, Jim.

EXT/INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

It's a festive scene all around: tables are laden with food near a large bonfire. Fiddler and banjo-player are playing a lively square dance for townsfolk.

Marshal Duncan and Mary in mid-conversation.

MARY

Like Frank, he won't be able to use his gun hand again. The slug severed his nerves and tendon. His fingers will have no grip.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

There's been talk around town. About you and Rivers.

MARY

Tongues wag no matter what I do --

Mary looks sympathetically at Flynn hunched unhappily in a chair, picking at his plate of food.

MARY

You figure someone sent Rivers after you?

FLYNN

More or less. Look, some of my investors lost money during the panic. I was a little more astute myself, I got away with a few dollars. Now how do I know some dissatisfied investor didn't send her out here to kill me.

MARY

There's an easier way to stay alive. Take off that gun.

Rivers enters, can sense the collective intake of breath. A brittle silence as their eyes flash with anger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PREACHER

"Behold, your God will come with a vengeance, even with a recompense."

RIVERS

Don't psalm sing me -- I don't believe any of those stories. All that holy mumbo jumbo about prophecies don't ruffle my feathers one bit -- even God couldn't protect himself against a .44 Fired point blank into his gut.

HENRYETTA

Your beneath contempt and beyond redemption.

RIVERS

So I'm not good enough to come to meeting! Just because I'm a hired gun. You miserable bunch of hypocrites! Do you know why I'm an assassin? Because you good people pay me to do it, that's why! You can't do your own dirty work, but you can't wait to spit on the one who does it for you!

Rivers walks out, Mary grabs her shawl to follow.

HENRYETTA

All she brought is fear and suspicion. Everybody's jumpy and distrustful. Flying off the handle, starting feuds. Somethin' got to be done, doc.

MARY

It's going to take a lot of nerve from me who spent most of her life helping other people. You'll know that, just ask anyone around. It needs a woman with courage and a steady hand. One that others can put faith in. This whole town is my patient. It's a sick town with a festering growth that needs to be cut away. And that's what my conscience is telling me.

A murmur goes through the room as Mary hurries off.

EXT. ALLEY/STREETS OF FORSAKEN RUN - NIGHT

Clint hovers, anxious... makes his way cautiously through the gloom to the end of the alley.

He looks over at the saloon and Marshal's office, windows aglow -- spots Rivers and Mary coming down the street.

Clint lifts the gun with a trembling hand, draws a bead on Rivers in the short distance. Closes one eye, sights down the barrel. Pause. Pause....

EXT. FORSAKEN RUN - NIGHT

The gas lights of town glow a dim orange, like stars through a mist. Rivers escorts Mary home. It's close and intimate.

RIVERS

I don't know myself yet.

MARY

You mean you come all the way after someone and you know he's in this town, but you don't know who it is?

RIVERS

That just about the size of it.

MARY

You expect me to believe that?

RIVERS

I don't care if you do or not.

MARY

You mean it could be anybody in this town.

RIVERS

Could be.

MARY

But this is ridiculous you're putting everyone in this town under suspicion.

RIVERS

A man's tongue can work like a shovel sometimes it can dig his own grave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mary's expression changes, and she screams--

MARY

No, Clint.

Rivers is already in motion, spins, drawing her pistol.

BLAMM--! The report is deafening. The color drains from Clint's face as he looks down at his exploded knee cap. He CORKSCREWS. Collapses into the dirt.

Clint COUGHS and sputters, pain blasting through him. He claws through the dirt, wheezes, breathless with pain:

Mary checks on Clint, Duncan approaches.

RIVERS

Are you paid to take care of trouble, Marshal, or are you itching to start some?

Rivers holsters her gun...

RIVERS

I came here to kill one man. I don't mind killing a couple of others if I have to.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

THE SOUND of a SAW gnawing through BONE - IN LAMPLIGHT...

Mary amputates the LEG of a thankfully UNCONSCIOUS Clint. Drops the pale, mangled limb in a bloody bucket.

Duncan walks in as Mary turns with the bloody saw...

Clint comes to, convulses violently.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

(re: clint)

Are you some kinda half-wit idiot or just plain, goddamn stupid?

CLINT

When a man has his neck in a noose he'll do anything.

He grips Rivers.

CLINT

Doc, you cut off my leg?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Sepsis set in, if I hadn't, you'd
died a slow, miserable death.

Clint goes limp, then WAILS, lapsing into the most awful,
shuddering display of pain and grief.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

The next time you come into town
to pull a stunt like this I'll
lock you up for so long you can
set up housekeeping.

EXT. FORSAKEN RUN - NIGHT

Rivers strides toward the hotel, the streets empty, but
she has the feeling that eyes are watching her.

She draws, whirls around, aims at a man in the shadows.
It's Marshal Duncan on his nightly rounds.

RIVERS

You not bein' real smart. I
usually shoot first and bury my
mistakes.

Rivers as she rolls her Samuel Colt .44 and holsters it.

EXT. HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN - NIGHT

Behind the saloon, a run down two-story cottage that's
crumbling on the exterior.

INT. HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN - MAIN FLOOR - NIGHT

Stark contrast from the exterior. Luxury brothel done in
an Oriental decor. Jade, gold, and hardwood. No expense
or luxury has been spared.

Half-a-dozen WHORES lounge around in sexy showgirl
garments. They smoke, drink beer, ready to be called

Sierra and Henryetta wander through crowded tables.

Sierra nods now and again to *HARD 'N' READY MEN*, all
grizzled vets of the Civil War in battle tested uni's -
who either nod back or tip their hat to her.

HENRYETTA

How long you gonna let Rivers
interfere with our business?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Not any longer than it take me to
find a way to get rid of her.

HENRYETTA

It's high time. Our boys can
handle her.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No, we'll need them all for the
train robbery. Don't fuss -- I
followed my husband to his grave.

HENRYETTA

I followed my brother to his.
Told you the day we left New
Orleans I'd follow you to the ends
of the earth.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - SIERRA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sierra counts her money from the night at a large oak
desk, her thin black cigarette resting in a crystal
ashtray in front of her.

She hears someone enter without knocking and quick as a
flash grabs her .36 caliber Griswold and Gunnison
Confederate six shooter, training it at the "intruder" --
Rev Prospero.

She lays down her gun. He can see she's upset.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You were told to lie low, you
moron! You wanna get your head
blown off?

REV PROSPERO

Touche. You given orders?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Yes, the ones I gave Cord. He
spent ten years in Yuma State
prison fore killing someone for
not taking them.

REV PROSPERO

He shoot him in the back?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No, with his bare hands. Your
neck's bout the same size as his
was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Without warning, Sierra slaps him across the face --
HARD.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Some go on fighting a war forever.

REV PROSPERO
Eternity is a long time. Even
hatred and prejudice pass away.
Sometimes in a generations.
Sometimes in a moment. The only
thing that endures is guilt.

EXT. THE SILVER SPUR - NIGHT

Illuminating the darkness, smoke and tinny music drift
through the night air. Rev Prospero EXITS the saloon --
then STOPS when he sees Rivers across the square.

Rivers steps into view. She's been here the whole time,
hiding in the shadows. She can't be sure.

Rev Prospero limps at full speed around the side of the
building and down a dark alley.

Rivers, up and running. After Rev Prospero.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Sees him far ahead, riding full gallop out of town.

She makes no move to follow. Instead, lights a match off
her thumbnail, kneels down, then holds the flame to the
hoofprints left by his horse.

For the first time, the closest thing to a grin appears
on Rivers' face.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - SIERRA'S SUITE - NIGHT

Lavishly furnished, richly decorated in pastels and lace.
Doors lead to adjoining rooms. A CONFEDERATE FLAG hangs.

As our lovely near-naked Sierra saunters to the
GRANDFATHER CLOCK, her sheer peignoir robe she wears
flutters open revealing a small gunbelt strapped to her
thigh. In it, a Baby Lemat presses against her flesh.

Sierra finds a FALSE BOTTOM in a memento box. She pulls
it up, unfolds a faded wanted poster, which we don't see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her face unreadable.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - NIGHT

*Rain hammers down outside. Off an ominous **THUNDERSTRIKE**.*

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Rivers sleeps on her belly, naked, sheets around her knees. Her back and ass SLASHED TO RIBBONS by Bull Whip beatings.

A beat. Then suddenly, right next to Rivers' ear, the click of a revolver being cocked. She opens her eyes and looks at Sierra in a rain slicker.

Above her, a .36 caliber Griswold and Gunnison Confederate six shooter is aimed at Rivers.

RIVERS

You come to bed down here tonight?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Who you here for?

(Rivers says nothing)

Have you ever been tortured?

Sticks the barrel of her smoking gun into her ribs. Rivers grimaces.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Even cattle squeal when a hot iron sinks into their flash.

In a flash she wrestles the gun away, then backhands Sierra viciously before wrestling Sierra beneath her --

RIVERS

Don't let the fact that you're a woman make you think I won't kill you. A shoot at the hand that holds the gun.

Beat. Beat. Rivers hands Sierra back her gun, then gets into a revealing purple silk nightie with Mexican-style embroidery that barely covers her ass.

Rivers helps Sierra out of her rain slicker to expose her revealing tight, sexy evening gown.

Sierra moves to the window, looks out. The weather matching her mood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

You know, Sierra, I've known a lot of women. Been with a lot.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Is that supposed to excite me?

RIVERS

I usually figure my women. You come harder.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I'm not your women.

(then)

I've never figured you to go much for barnyard hens. I thought you like your chicks wild and gamey.

RIVERS

Just wasn't makin' any sense to me? A smart gal like winding up in this - cemetery of a town? All it needs is flowers and a headstone.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I couldn't face another season at the old places. Faro Dealer on the Louisiana Riverboats, a saloon girl singing and dancing in Dodge City. Missouri --

RIVERS

The Rose of the Rio Bravo.

The air between them is so charged it seems they might fight or fuck right there.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

My what big ears you have.

RIVERS

So how long you been a sympathizer to the Confederate cause?

(then)

Ain't you a bit off your range? Forsaken Run seems to be quite a Union stronghold.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Yes, red, white and blue all over. Of course there are a few copperheads here, but they're harmless. We know which side paid you off?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

I did not fight for money. I tried to be of use for a cause and a man.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I assume you're not referring to the Confederacy and General Beauregard?

RIVERS

I am referring to Mr. Lincoln who spoke of the birthright of freedom and the abomination of slavery.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The north had no cause they fabricated one to justify another. And the man who talk about was a tyrant and a fool.

Sierra slaps her. Rivers slaps Sierra back. She throws Sierra down on the bed. Sierra tries to slug her, but Rivers grabs her arms.

They wrestle into passion takes over.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Rivers and Sierra are making love. Rivers is on top of Sierra. Their bodies glisten with sweat. Rivers MOANS.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Shh. The others.

Rivers MOANS more, doesn't care. Sierra puts her hand over Rivers mouth. She moves on top of Rivers, Sierra's muffled moans barely audible.

Now Sierra moans. Rivers' hand shoots to Sierra's mouth. She bites down on Rivers' hand. They cum, together.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

They lie naked in bed - together. Sierra traces the scars on Rivers back and buttocks. They talk quietly, so as not to wake the other guests.

Sierra kisses her scars. Rivers starts to get up, Sierra grabs her arm--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

There's a drifter in the jail.

A beat, as Sierra looks at Rivers, searches her face...

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

He killed a fellow. After he went on a tear in Maricopa, stole a bunch of guns we no more needed than a man on the moon. Judge Dutch Henry "the hangman" Brown, is coming to do the honors. He's a preacher and circuit rider. A God-fearing man who packs a bible in one pocket and a six shooter in the other just to balance the law. And fights with the Devil wherever he finds him.

Rivers starts to get up, Sierra grabs hers arm -

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Why? He some kin?

RIVERS

Judges interest me, especially a professional executioner.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

That drifter has, one, two days at the most.

RIVERS

A man's last hours cannot be measured by the clock.

They look at one another, see each other, then Sierra releases her arm...

A freshly-FUCKED Sierra, wrapped up in a blanket, clearly naked beneath it, gets out of bed.

The oil lamp illuminates a 5x7 photo lying conspicuously on a small table. Sierra moves quickly for the picture -

A wedding pic of Rivers, 17, and a young, handsome CONFEDERATE SOLDIER in a cadet grey field uniform. Kepi hat. Gold stars.

Sierra is stymied for a beat, starts to dress...

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Your husband?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

Yes.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The war took him?

RIVERS

No, the fever.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You know how Cord got a scar on his forearm? From a cougar. You know how he got even? He killed that cougar with his bare hands. So don't rile him up.

RIVERS

You don't have to worry about me.

A beat, as Rivers looks at Sierra, searches her face...

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No, I don't have to. You know it's funny, we just met, you just bed me, many men have but I'm worried about you. I know your reputation. Don't bury it here.

She grabs Sierra, kisses her face. They struggle and Sierra returns her kisses, both swept up in their need and longing -- holding tight to one another, as if holding on for dear life...

INT. RANCH HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rev Prospero lathers his face for a shave. Miranda lies naked on the bed, watching him. Their eyes meet in the mirror, their likeness to one another undeniable.

REV PROSPERO

What?

MIRANDA

Why save it now?

REV PROSPERO

It's time for a change.

MIRANDA

Maybe it'll be harder for Rivers to identify you. What'd you do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REV PROSPERO
Always with the goddamn questions.

EXT. BACK OF MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

THE GALLOWS loom ominously against a pre-dawn sky -- seen through the iron-barred window of a JAIL CELL.

Rivers looks it over, workmen pause in their labors to watch Rivers.

INT. CELLBLOCK - DAY

Dark, claustrophobic, set in brick. Shafts of light strike through dank must, finding --

SAM TALBORT, an arrogant, unlikable man looks at the hangman's platform. Stoic.

A KEY works a lock. A door opens, more light stabs in. Duncan moves to Sam's cell. Sam turns to Duncan.

SAM
That judge said I was supposed to hang, Marshal, not starve to death!

MARSHAL DUNCAN
Is there anything special you want?

SAM
Yeah - a hacksaw and a gun!

MARSHAL DUNCAN
Will you settle for a steak?

EXT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Sierra wanders through crowded tables. The saloon is packed. She nods now and again to some cowboys.

She makes her way over to the bar, takes a drink, knocks it back. She turns to Clem.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Give me a bottle of our best whiskey.

CLEM
Who's the lucky sonofabitch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Rivers.

Clem raises his eyebrows but puts a bottle on the bar.

Sierra grabs it, making small talk, playing up to Rivers and with unmistakable effect.

A lecherous RANCHHAND grabs her ass, growls like a bear, Sierra playfully brushes his hand away, and joins Rivers.

She offers Rivers the whiskey. Rivers accepts. Sierra pours them drinks.

RIVERS

How you get to be come a saloon girl with men's hands pawing you?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Which story you want to here. The one I fascinated with the life, did someone push me through the singing doors. My father was a preacher, sort of. No church. I mean he never been ordained or anything. But he somehow got the idea in his head that the whole world was wrong and it was his job to set them right again. So he went around preaching to anyone who would listen, sometimes even those who wouldn't listen. Oh I'm not trying to give you this with a piano. You asked and I'm telling you.

RIVERS

I've met some. Hell, fire, and brimstone shouters. And find sin everywhere.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

A saloon always makes money. When people are happy they drink to celebrate. When they're unhappy, they drink to forget.

Poker sit in a secluded corner in the nearly empty saloon. There is an empty bottle of whiskey on the table.

Poker eyes senses the awkwardness. He sees that these two have become too close for their comfort.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

Where you staying?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

My private suite. Second floor.

RIVERS

I'll pay my respects.

As Rivers leaves.... Sierra sees Poker. Their eyes meet, but Poker goes to the bar and orders a drink.

Sierra saunters over there. Poker throws back a shot and turns to her, upset.

POKER FLATS

First New Orleans. Now here. This deck has had so much bottom-dealing that it's dog-eared. Too many jokers keep turning up.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

What are you driving at?

POKER FLATS

I wanna know why you're entertaining a hired assassin, a fire breathing southerner like you?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Oh, just showing her a little of my Southern hospitality.

A beat. Sierra looks at him with a strange smile. Poker is almost embarrassed.

POKER FLATS

Dynamite comes in small packages.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Dynamite can be useful if properly handled.

POKER FLATS

This is like smoking a loaded cigar -- one you know will go off in your face.

Poker starts COUGHING, his bloody handkerchief falls from his pocket. Sierra picks it up and hands it to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Doc Mary's right? Go away in the mountains. Breath some fresh air, eat three meals a day. Get plenty of sleep and you'll live long enough to see a lot more sun sets. But you'll probably stay and I'll have to say something pleasant at your funeral...

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Sunday hangs the keys on a hook besides a poster;

The BLACK TERROR - 'WANTED FOR ROBBERY, MURDER - REWARD \$10,000 DEAD or ALIVE. A black hood covering his face.

Sunday seems to be lost in his thoughts for a moment, then turns back to Duncan.

DEPUTY SUNDAY
 Do you think he's still alive?

MARSHAL DUNCAN
 I don't know what to think, but I know there couldn't be two men like John Wilkes Booth. Even the devil couldn't stomach that.

Both barely look up as Sierra saunters in.

DEPUTY SUNDAY
 She's still out there.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Whadja expect?

MARSHAL DUNCAN
 She's just buying her time, waiting for circumstances to become more favorable to her.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 She's not after doc.

MARSHAL DUNCAN
 Is she now?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 A woman's intuition.

Duncan pulls out a pipe - a match - Lights it. Puffs...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Well, I wish you'd use a little more of that woman's intuition and tell me who's she's after.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Been asking questions about Dutch Henry.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

The Judge? You sure?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Can't be sure of anything with Rivers. She plays her cards smart.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

We should warn him.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

How? He'll be here today.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

On horseback, Rivers stare at a set of hoofprints left in the rusty dirt at an outlet spur off the main drag.

EXT. HIGH DESERT COUNTRY - (SERIES OF SHOTS) - DAY

The terrain is not hospitable here.

Rivers and Caesar make their way through the wide desert plains. She retrieves a spyglass - scans the canyons, the hills. She has no idea where she is.

The sound of horses hooves from behind. Rivers turns to find Poker riding up on her rear.

RIVERS

You're quite a tracker, Poker. You been in the military?

POKER FLATS

I've done my time.

He withdraws a flask and takes a drink as they move on, cantering down the canyon together.

POKER FLATS

I was with the 118th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers. That ring a bell?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

Yes, Ne'er-do-well slacker Pvt. Hemp Johnson. A "winter soldier," one who joins the Army in winter to enjoy the warm barracks, and then deserts when the weather improves. Who side are you own?

Poker looks back at Rivers, his alignment yet unclear.

POKER FLATS

I'm a gambler and I play the odds.

INT. LIVERLY STABLES - DAY

Rivers enters the stable, goes to Caesar in one of the stalls. She strokes his face.

SAWBONES (O.S.)

I shoed and fed him.

She turns to Sawbones, nods her appreciation. Hands him several silver dollars, then:

RIVERS

Seeing your the only blacksmith within miles -- if you happen to come across a horse with a broken left shoe I'd be much obliged.

Sawbones nods...

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Rivers strikes a match on her boot heel. Lights a cheroot. Rebel and Yankee are playing chees out front. She watches them:

REBEL

I got a bullet in my chest from one of you Union men. Doctors said it missed my heart by a penny.

YANKEE

Wasn't me.

REBEL

How do I know that?

YANKEE

I wouldn't have missed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rebel chuckles. Then something catches Rivers eyes:

Mirandae heading for the bank. She wears a purple crepe dress, promenade hat, and a parasol. Her eyes are on Rivers, and vice versa.

REBEL

Sure is purty, ain't she?

YANKEE

Ha, what you see in the little sage hens more than I'll ever know.

RIVERS

Old timer. She got a name?

REBEL

Ya know, I'm getting plum forgetful.

YANKEE

Miranda, you old fart. Married to that Rev Prospero. The one with the limp.

Rivers raises an eyebrow, crosses the street.

XT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Miranda and Rivers exit the bank -- they talk barely above a whisper.

MIRANDA

I know who you are.

RIVERS

By reputation?

MIRANDA

No, by your notoriety. Truth is I've been wanting to talk to you.

RIVERS

We might talk bout it sometime.

She moves to her buggy, Rivers helps her up. Mirandae forces a smile at a PASSERBY...

MIRANDA

Oh, not down main street too many eyes on ya. Too many tongues start wagging.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
 (Rivers tips her hat)
 If you happen to be riding down by
 snake canyon road I might be
 swimming there.

INT. SIERRA'S OFFICE - DAY

At the window, Sierra, stands there, looking displeased to say the least. Poker follows her gaze out the window-- where Rivers helps Miranda into her buggy...

INT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - FLYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

Flynn is looking out the window. Then catches sight of Rivers, loitering nearby. His face, tense.

He holds up his pistol, aims it at Rivers, and it is an easy shot and Flynn is sweating, his hand is shaking.

A beat. Flynn snatches the bottle of Tequila and pours it down his throat.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - MAIN STREET - DAY

Hal and Cord walk towards the bank.

Then hear Flynn's threats from inside - a vague roar.

INT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - FLYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

A frantic Flynn looks ill, stares at his gun, places the barrel against his temple. Contemplates the benefits of a quick, merciful, self-inflicted death.

He pulls the trigger but the safety catch is on. The sound of the door opening, Flynn looks up in awareness as Cord, Hal, and Asa walk in.

Now wildly pointing his gun at them. Flynn stumbles backwards. In the b.g., townsfolk doing bank business look on.

CORD
 Put that gun down, Flynn.

FLYNN
 What for? To go on living like them? To be ridiculed. To be insulted? Naw, I had enough, Cord. I've had all a man can stand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORD

Enough, now put that gun down.

FLYNN

Why? Are you afraid, Cord? Are you afraid to hear a dying man's confession? Of course you are. You know why? I'll tell ya because the mark of Cain is on you'll heads too. Tell them what you done, Cord. How you robbed that payroll on the stagecoach. Remember --

CORD

-- you're talking nonsense, get that gun away from him...

Suddenly Hal lunges, but Flynn doesn't aim it at him. Instead, turns it on himself, and... a shot rings out!

Flynn's body clatters into view, falling to the floor, the smoking gun in his hand.

INT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - FLYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

A solemn Mary examines Flynn's body, half his face is missing. She covers it with a blanket.

Duncan and Sunday look on. She puts her stethoscope away.

EXT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Gator and Henryetta come out, emotional, doing his best to keep it together, addresses the horrified crowd.

HENRYETTA

It's awful seeing a man kill himself. One minute he's there... alive... then he's dead. Blood and the smell of powder smoke. And it's all over and done with. It's awful!

GATOR

Ain't seen nuthin' like it.

Rivers can feel the townsfolk accusing eyes bore into her. Even Mary's. Rivers heads towards the hotel.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Mary enters. Their eyes meet and hold. The silent tension grows, seemingly to fill the room as if explosive gas.

Finally, Mary breaks the silence.

MARY

You knew it was going to happen,
didn't you?

RIVERS

I wasn't surprised.

Rivers goes to the basin to wash her hands.

MARY

You are a killer! I'm surprised
you bother to wash your hands.
That kind of blood won't come off.

RIVERS

Aren't you a little careless with
your words, Miss Mary? Yes, I kill
when I have to. But I've never
killed a man who wasn't trying to
kill me.

MARY

And that makes it all right.

RIVERS

I like you, Miss Mary. You're like
me. You and I may well be the only
two honest people in town.

MARY

Don't compare us. We've got
nothing in common.

RIVERS

Take two men. Say they have robbed
and lied, and have never paid. The
man whom one of them has robbed
comes to me and says, "Kill that
man who's robbed me." And I kill
him. The other man becomes ill and
would die, except for a physician
who returns him to health to rob
and lie again. Who's the villain
in this piece? Me or the
physician?

Mary just looks at her, emotional, torn.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Cord, Hal, Asa, and a few other townsfolk, seething.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Oh, I'll tell her you haven't been sleeping nights. That outta do it.

CORD

You got a cute answer for everything.

HAL

We've in acted us some laws, Jim --

Duncan takes the book from him and reads, then looks up - as Sierra hurries inside.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Why this is crazy, Hal. How so many fools can get together in one place, just pouring powder on a fire to put it out.

HAL

Well anyway, that's better than getting roasted one at a time.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

(reading...)

Forbidden guns in town. Extending the town limits so I got to protect all the farmers grass.

CORD

Afraid you can't make our laws stick?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Nobody could. Marshaling a town is not like a doctor's practice. When I start carving, my customers fight back.

(turns to Mary)

No offence, doc.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

In case you hadn't heard, there's been some pretty bad cases of lead poisonin' around here - regular epidemic!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

You've certainly made me aware of that, Sierra. But I don't believe in operations till you've tried all the cures.

(then)

A man's burden is his own sins. You can't blame Rivers for that.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Doc's right. Pass an ordinance. No guns allowed.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No. It'll cut into our revenue.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Then my hands are tied. Now I've kept this town safe up 'til Rivers got in town. And I'll continue to do so my way.

HAL

Some of us got a notion that ain't good enough.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

There's a middle road in anything. That's the one I ride. Okay, Will, let's see how we make out.

Duncan moves to the gun rack and grabs a COLT DOUBLE-BARREL SHOTGUN and sets it on the desk.

DEPUTY SUNDAY

That talk's easy, but were dealin' with a killer that'll gun you down as fast as she'd look at ya.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

Rivers bounds down the stairs -- runs into Duncan and Sunday coming towards her.

She eyes his gun hand, a tremor or two. The tremors stop.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I come to tell you to get out of town.

RIVERS

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN

New city ordinance. A public nuisance. Spittin' on a sidewalk.

RIVERS

I don't think so. I like it fine right here. Saloons, women, whiskey...No, I think I'll just have to enjoy the hospitality a little while longer.

Duncan raises the shotgun... but before he gets it halfway up, Rivers fires. Duncan's HAT FLIES OFF!

RIVERS

You've got two ways to move, deputy. Run or take me!

Sunday eases his gun back in its holster.

Duncan seems surprised, lifts his hat, pokes a finger through the smoking hole.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Why didn't you kill me?

RIVERS

Your name's not on the bullet.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Duncan's at his desk. Mary presses a cold compress on the top of his head. He runs a finger through the hole in his hat.

MARY

At least she ain't here for you.

Sunday pauses as he glances at Duncan.

DEPUTY SUNDAY

I've got a wife and a body, Jim.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I understand. Go home, kid.

Sunday unpins his badge, promptly lays it on his desk.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Hell, I'm half tempted to turn in mine too. That idea has been running through my head. And I'm not a bit proud of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Henryetta hurries in, concerned.

HENRYETTA

You all right, Jim?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Oh sure, I got a new part in my hair, but I'm all right.

(then)

There's just the quick and the dead with Rivers in between. The jackals will inherit the Earth - at least this part of it - and they're welcome to it.

MARY

It's opium, Jim...for the pain.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

A quart of whiskey works just as well.

Mary borrows a bullet from Duncan's gun belt, then --

MARY

Have you'll ever really seen one of these up close? Know what makes it work? This is the cap, the percussion cap. When struck by the firing pin, it explodes. The powder burns and forms powerful gases that force the slug out through the gun barrel at a very high velocity. Now if the gun is aimed right, it'll kill what it hits.

HENRYETTA

Now what's all that supposed to mean?

MARY

Rivers - this town is priming her. She's being pushed and sooner or later she's going to explode.

HENRYETTA

Now why are you telling us this? Where do I fit in?

MARY

Somewhere between the firing pin and the percussion cap.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Rivers strides up the boardwalk. Townsfolk nod respectfully, as --

A horse with spools of rope and a stern-looking man in his 40s canters up. He wears a black coat and PREACHER'S COLLAR. This is JUDGE DUTCH HENRY 'The Hangman' BROWN.

But Dutch Henry fixes his steely gaze on Rivers.

RIVERS

Well, if it isn't the honorable Judge Dutch Henry Brown. Heard you was some kind of preacher as well as being a hangman.

DUTCH HENRY

Executioner.

RIVERS

None of my business, but what do you charge for a hanging, Judge?

DUTCH HENRY

You're right, it isn't your business but I'll tell you. I was to be paid one thousand dollars to hang this man Rawlings.

RIVERS

A thousand dollars. You're sure right when you said your fee was substantial.

DUTCH HENRY

You can't go around terrorizing the citizens.

RIVERS

Who's going to stop me. You?

DUTCH HENRY

The law, public opinion, decency.

He continues on towards the Marshal's office.

INT. CELLBLOCK - DAY

Dutch Henry curses bitterly as Duncan who leads him towards the prisoner's cell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Stay out of it. I'll handle her.

DUTCH HENRY

I'm holding you responsible for this carnage -- and yes, the territory's compensation is more than adequate.

SAM

You're wasting a lot of good lumber. A tree does just as well.

DUTCH HENRY

You were sentenced to be hanged - not lynched!

He pulls out a piece of paper and pencil.

DUTCH HENRY

Now all I need from you, Sam Talbort, is your age, your height and your weight.

SAM

I tell ya' they got it wrong.

DUTCH HENRY

There's a saying, if you hang an innocent man the rope turns him around clockwise when the wind blows so if we make a mistake about you we'll apologize later.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

JEBEDIAH GANT rides along the dark street, drawn irresistibly toward the tinkling MUSIC, lights, and hubbub of the Silver Spur.

He's young, vain. A pretty boy. A Colt Peacemaker with pearl handle glinting at his hip.

EXT. COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY

Rivers strides towards Dutch Henry, his sleeves rolled up, inspects the gallows with a fine tooth and comb.

Not pleased one bit, as he confronts several townsfolk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUTCH HENRY

An expert is one who knows more about less and less. I only know one thing. That scaffold might do for hanging laundry perhaps, but a man, never.

A beat, he grabs a hammer and some nails.

DUTCH HENRY

Just as dead, yes, but not just as fast. To a man with a noose around his neck, a second could be a lifetime. And a minute can be an eternity. Now it is our job to make this execution just as professional, just as merciful as possible. Do I make myself clear?

The men nod.

DUTCH HENRY

Now bring some more lumber.

RIVERS

There's nothing like a good hanging to take your mind off your troubles.

Dutch Henry all but ignores Rivers.

RIVERS

Pretty wife, you got there.

DUTCH HENRY

Why, you dirty...

He goes for his gun, but he's not wearing it. A beat, Dutch Henry looks ashamed for almost taking the bait.

RIVERS

Nothing scarier than a man with a gun. And nothing so helpless as a man without one.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Gant and Sierra come out into the saloon, which is not yet crowded. Sierra moves behind the bar as Gant walks along in front of it.

Poker is standing at the bar. Gant settles in next to him. They nod at each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gant turns to Sierra, who has put a bottle before him and is pouring Poker and herself drinks.

Gant quick draws, puts it back in his holster, draws again and proceeds with gun tricks. He is impressive.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Does killing mean that much to you?

GANT

That's part of it. You ever heard of Wild Bill Hickock? John Wesley Harding. Luke Short? You know why you heard of them because they made a reputation for themselves. By the number of men they kill. People write books about 'em. They even write songs about 'em. The Ballet of Jebediah Gant. That's what they'll be writtin' about me one of these days.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You came at a very opportune moment, Rivers is here.

(off his grin)

I don't want to see you getting gun crazy now. We're going to do it the way I have it set up. You understand?

GANT

You know, she's outsmarting all of you --

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Maybe but I'm paying for your guns and I want you to leave them right where they are until I tell you to use them.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The sun is beating down.

Rivers in the shade of the trees. Just the sound of insects and the river. No Miranda.

Sierra rides up, in fine riding gauchos and a button-down blouse, showing cleavage. They take each other in for a long moment...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

What brought you here?

RIVERS

Same thing that brought the bear
over the mountain. I like to
wonder the wasteland to see what I
can see.

Sierra smiles at Rivers, she's about to leave, when --

EXT. RANCHERO - DAY

Dying light and lanterns illuminates this fabulous
Ranchero. Smoke rises from the chimney. Trees sway with
hanging Spanish moss.

Nearby there's a corral and bunkhouse.

GUADALUPE (40s), a strong, capable Mexican woman hovers
over a cookfire, dicing potatoes, carrots, and onions, a
gutted DEER hanging next to her.

Rivers and Sierra ride up. Rivers dismounts, Sierra stays
in the saddle, as if waiting. Rivers helps her down.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Guadalupe,

GUADALUPE

Señorita -- the boys a be here
soon.

INT. RANCHERO - DINING/SITTING ROOM - DAY

It's lavish and expensive, fit for a queen. A weather
beaten Quantrill flag hangs on a wall. A *Confederate*, but
the canton displays a fist.

EXT. THE RANCHERO - NIGHT

Rivers goes out onto a small balcony that overlooks the
Ranchero. Sierra follows, closing the French doors behind
them.

Sounds of GALLOPING HORSES and GUNFIRE alerts them -

In the mid-distance, GREYCOATS gallop towards the
RANCHERO, battle tested uni's - HOOPING and HOLLARING - a
black flag aloft.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

My own personal regiment. Well, one of them. The other's are scattered in Kansas. We started off with Quantrill, Bloody Bill Anderson, then... just us.

RIVERS

You with Quantrill when he raided Lawrence? You murder all those innocent women and children?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No!

RIVERS

The war is over.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Well, there's different kinds of wars. There's wars that don't end just 'cause a white flag goes up or somebody signs a piece of paper? There's wars that go on inside.

Sierra grab Rivers by the hand, leads her back inside.

INT. RANCHERO - BEDROOM - DAY

Sierra lies with her hair cascading on a silk pillow, wide awake, watching Rivers. She strokes her cheek to test if she's sleeping soundly.

A beat, Sierra slips out of bed, her naked form in silhouette from a soft lamp beaming. She walks to the armoire where she pulls a Confederate six shooter.

She quietly loads it.

RIVERS

Where are you going?

Sierra freezes. Deliberates... Her back to Rivers.

RIVERS

Come back to bed.

Rivers opens the covers, beseeching her. Sierra closes her eyes in frustration...then turns to Rivers with a beaming smile and discreetly puts the gun away to re-join Rivers.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Foreboding darkness...wind rustles the trees..an eerie silence.

A CRUDELY-BUILT CABIN - Raw cedar posts form a corral for livestock. Crop fields stand in weeds, surrounded by an impenetrable OAK THICKET. Wykoff climbs off their wagon.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Rev Prospero's eyes pop open. Careful not to wake the naked Pollyanna in bed with him, he gets up, grabs his rifle - listens - eases the shutter open on his gun port, and scans his surroundings.

Rev Prospero looks out - the twitch of an oak limb, a covey of QUAIL FLUSH. His HORSE WHINNY, prance nervously.

He waits. Watches. All is still.

He closes the shutters, bolts them tight. Checks the beams behind the front door - rests his rifle against the wall by his bed.

Two loaded pistols set nearby on a shelf.

EXT. RANCHERO - DAY

Guadalupe and Henryetta dish out a meager meal of biscuits and fatback grease as Sierra's tired men stand around them holding out empty tins.

Sierra appears. With their leader, JEB CLAUFIELD, ragged scar across his face, soulless black eyes.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You are to appropriate I don't like the word steal -- that two million shipment of gold bullion from the Clark Gruber and company private mint of Denver, Colorado territory. Gold that belongs to the army of the north. It's a hard three day's ride.

JEB

We best get a move-on...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLBY

I don't see why a man can't have
no breakfast. Me, I hate riding on
an empty stomach.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Don't worry, after this job you'll
have so much money you've eaten
breakfast in bed.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

The wind blows, and townspeople are gathered by the big
tree, for a memorial service for Flynn.

Dutch Henry addresses the mourners, doesn't mince words.

DUTCH HENRY

If anyone wishes to say
something...

A beat, his remarks gives the townspeople pause, then--
Rivers trots up on her horse.

PREACHER

You did this.

RIVERS

I've done nothing. A man's guilt
is his own burden. Nothing you can
do about that.

With that, she spurs her horse and rides off.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

A bit farther off, Poker Flats. He has a PRETTY WHORE on
his lap. She giggles.

At a poker table, Dutch Henry, Cords, Hal, mid-game.

DUTCH HENRY

Black aces and eights.

CORD

Your luck's changed. Three queens.
I'm afraid you lose judge.

DUTCH HENRY

A man's bound to lose - sooner or
later.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pollyanna puts a hand of Dutch Henry's shoulder.

POLLYANNA

From the look of that stack Judge
there much be some truth to the
old adage about gamblers.

DUTCH HENRY

Yea, what's that?

POLLYANNA

Lucky at card. Unlucky at love.

Rivers pushes through batwing doors into the saloon.

RIVERS

Please, gentlemen. Don't get up.

Rivers moves towards the poker table, pulls a chair from
the next table and sits opposite Dutch Henry.

The men stare at Rivers. Beat. Beat.

DUTCH HENRY

So what brings you here, besides
interrupting my leisure time?

RIVERS

Judges interest me.

HAL

Don't give Rivers any excuses.

CORD

She's counting on you trying,
Judge.

Cord takes a puff of cigar: Rivers turns to him.

RIVERS

I don't think you two are savvy,
you're about a second from gettin'
dealt outta the game.

A beat, Dutch Henry dismisses Cord and Hal.

DUTCH HENRY

You and I are nothing alike. What
I do is fair and legal according
to the law.

RIVERS

And how I operate isn't?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DUTCH HENRY

You're wasting your time. All the men who wish me dead I hanged them.

RIVERS

Sometimes dead men leave ghost's behind.

DUTCH HENRY

You're a dangerous woman. You know how to kill and you're not afraid of dying. The moment I saw you I could see that you are lost, and pain and suffering follow where you lead.

RIVERS

Save the sermon for church.

DUTCH HENRY

In the end, I'll see that the law gets you. And it won't be just to run you out of town. It'll be at the end of a rope.

Dutch Henry pulls out a pencil and paper.

DUTCH HENRY

Your height, weight, and age is all I want from you.

Rivers studies him a long moment, then --

DUTCH HENRY

You want the reasons, fine. I need your age to tell me how long it will be before your heart stops beating. I need your height in order to know the position of the noose above the cervical vertebrae and whether to use 10 or 13 wraps in the knot. I need your weight in order to know the length of the drop. Too high and your head will be separated from your shoulders. And too short then I run the risk of a long strangulation, the worst possible type of execution. It's medieval and barbaric. So ladies and gentlemen, call me a fool, call me a liar, call me nothing at all. The facts remain the same.

INT. MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE - DAY

Cord sits himself in a chair. Gant comes in his face, hard now, looks straight at them.

GANT

No need to get your blood in a boil, Cord. Just because your woman pays a call on an old friend.

CORD

Old friend?

GANT

That news to you. Imagine a smart operator like you missing out on a fact like that. They've been hitched a longtime ever since New Orleans...

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - SIERRA'S SUITE - DAY

It's dark in here with the curtains drawn. They fuck as if their lives depended on it-- passionate, intense, nothing held back.

Both are silent so as not to wake the hotel guest. Locked in a struggle, it's THAT personal-- as if any sound would be an admission.

Rivers lies down next to Sierra, adjusts the pillows so she's comfortable. Sierra hands Rivers a pouch of coins.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Thought you might like to pick up a little stray business? You'll be glad you did for thirty-thousand in gold.

RIVERS

What you do rob the US Mint?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No, the train carrying U.S. Army gold shipment. Up near Fort Abraham Lincoln.

RIVERS

How far does this partnership go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

As far as the land office, and the cattle business. And all the money they make.

RIVERS

You stand to gain to see a man hang for full interest in his cattle empire?

Sierra turns from her look, as if she's just been caught.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

If you expect me to sit around and watch him tear down everything I've built up, you're crazier than I think. I've worked hard to get where I am... and done everything a man could do. I've lied, cheated and stolen. I've even killed to build this set-up I've got now. And I'm not going to let anyone destroy it. Least of all him!

She sees River's conflicted position, leans to her, an aside-

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I tried it. That I had enough. I can't go on like this anymore. I want to start over again - a new town, new faces... a new me.

RIVERS

What happened, Sierra? You try to fill an inside straight with an honest deck.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Just don't give me no lectures. A woman like you can't change anymore than I could. We're cut from the same deck, you and I.

A beat, Sierra gestures towards Rivers guns...

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Chances are you'll end up with more lead than gold.

RIVERS

Well that would be unethical. I can't take another job until I finish this one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Then don't be surprised if it remains unfinished permanently. There's a gunfighter from Salts Flat in town. Jebediah Gant. Cord hired him to kill you.

There's a commotion from down the hall, then someone pounds on the door relentlessly.

Sierra hops up, grabs her nickers and Courtesan wardrobe.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Just a minute, I am not yet decent.

INT. SIERRA'S SUITE - DAY

Rivers, back in her corset, garters, and stockings, searches the room, the drawers, lots of lingerie.

She finds a FALSE BOTTOM in a memento box. Excited, she pulls it up, revealing a FADED FOLDED POSTER.

Rivers unfolds it; *JOHN WILKES BOOTH - 'WANTED FOR MURDER - REWARD \$100,000 DEAD OR ALIVE. A crude likeness to the Reverend Prospero, much younger, minus the beard.*

INT. HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN - DAY

Room of S&M and bondage. A naked Pollyanna in heels is screaming while an IRATE LARS, 40s, equally exposed, beats her with a bullwhip.

Her back is bleeding, and she is throwing shit at him

LARS

Go on, piss y'self, you scrofulous piece of Yankee shit.

Sierra barges in, her .36 caliber Griswold and Gunnison Confederate six shooter to coldly blow his head off.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Lars!

LARS

(brandishes his whip)
Get on, before I give you some of this.

She fires. A LOUD ASS CONCUSSIVE BANG, HIS HEAD VANISHES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A PLUME of blood and gray matter... then -- the headless body crumples to the ground, deadweight -

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - CORRIDORS - DAY

Pleasure suites lining both sides of the hall. Some doors are open with a key protruding from the lock. Other's are closed and locked.

The sounds of PASSION emanating from its pleasure rooms.

Sierra saunters along, dog-step behind her is Donna Juanita.

DONNA JUANITA
Señora, she searched your room.

Off Sierra's bemused expression.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sierra, long cape and hat covering her attractive robe, searches the room. Poker stands by the window as a look-out. Nothing yet.

Sierra looks under the mattress, lifts a Deringer, *it's Booth's Deringer*. Sierra shows it to Poker:

POKER FLATS
It's just an ordinary Deringer.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Look again.

POKER FLATS
Hmm a presentation model.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
That's right. .44 caliber pistol.
A duplicate of the one Booth used
to kill Lincoln. They don't make
them anymore.

Sierra checks the load.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
One round to. She's probably going
for a head shot.

POKER FLATS
She's more old testament than new
testament. An eye for an eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Anyway, one thing's for sure, we
 know who she's come for.

POKER FLATS
 Have it ever occurred to you that
 she engineered this whole thing
 and she wanted you to find it?

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Gator is strumming his guitar as Cord strides in.
 A nervous Gator looks up.

CORD
 What room is Sierra in?

GATOR
 She said she'd shoot me if I told.

Suddenly - a DERRINGER POPS into Cord's hand from a metal
 sliding apparatus concealed under his jacket sleeve.

CORD
 I'll shoot you! Now is she with
 Rivers?!

He makes eye contact with Sierra, coming down the stairs,
 who registers surprise and suspicion at Cord's presence.

Off Cord's glare, Sierra regards him with equal contempt.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - SIERRA'S OFFICE - DAY

Cord paces as Sierra enters. Cord promptly confronts her.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Overtures bore me. If this is
 gonna be an opera than sing!

Now Sierra in pain because Cord is twisting her arm
 behind her back. He's furious.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 That's an unhealthy habit. You
 ain't got no antlers on your head
 you wouldn't look good mounted
 over a fireplace.

CORD
 Maybe you hired her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He backs right into a pistol pointed at the back of his head. Held by Poker.

POKER FLATS

Release the Rose of Rio Bravo.

(he complies)

All right, take that derringer out real nice and easy, and drop it on the floor.

His gun falls from his sleeve and on to the floor. Sierra picks it up.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You know, for a smart man you ain't got a lick of sense! Not a speck!

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You had an ace up your sleeve. Why if you had the guts of a grasshopper you'd call her hand. You're better off dying then sweating every time a door opens.

CORD

Rio Bravo?

POKER FLATS

Mexican's name the Rio Grande below the border.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The Rose of Rio bravo wanted for crimes of from rustling to robbery, with a record of countless love affairs and daredevil escapes.

(Off Cord's look)

During the war I drove rifles across the Bravo for the Confederates. I fought, I lied, I cheated. I rolled around in the hay with men just because I hated them so they'd talk. Yes, I was willing to do anything to help us fight them damn Yankees.

Sierra, a subtle manipulator, hesitates before moving on,

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Maybe you heard of us --
Beauregard's bushwhackers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CORD

You run that outfit of thieves and murderers? The war has been over for quite a spell.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

There use to be quite a few of us. We all fought on the side of the raiders. Of course all of us on the wrong side was mighty poor about time the war was done, but for some reason or other most Yankees were pretty well off. And here, and all along the south we haven't forgotten it. And we still got scores to settle with you damn Yankees.

(then)

One more thing, you pull a stunt like this again, I'll be settling up with you.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - SIERRA'S SUITE - DAY

In the gray afternoon light, Gant sitting on the edge of the bed, pulling on his boots. A nearly empty bottle of rye whiskey stands on the night table.

Sierra watches idly from the bed, her head propped on her hand. The hint of a smile.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

It's your neck, Gant. If you want a Christian funeral, you'd better leave some money with the undertaker.

INT. FORSAKEN RUN - DAY

Rivers and Mary walk along the sparsely populated sidewalk. Sierra jealously watches their interaction.

They are quiet for a few moments. Finally --

RIVERS

You say he didn't have a chance. Deke went for his gun first. When he does that, he uses up all his chances.

MARY

How about hittin' them in the arm?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

A wounded man can still kill you.

MARY

You let Rex live.

RIVERS

He can't shoot with his left.

MARY

Clint? And what about the Marshal?

RIVERS

I felt in a charitable mood today.

MARY

He's got a bad hand, he just lost his deputy, and now he's losing his sight.

RIVERS

I notice he wears his guns too low. Tell him to raise it. At night, tell him to walk in the shadows - you can see better. In the daytime, walk away from the sun - he'll live longer.

MARY

You're the most peculiar hired gun I've seen yet.

Suddenly, Gant appears, approaching Rivers slowly and ominously.

Sensing a gun fight, purely instincts, Rivers whispers to Mary, who leaves, eyeing them both. A crowd forms.

Rivers and Gant face each other across the clearing. Their eyes locked onto each other. Neither moves for what seems like forever. Gant smiles...

Sierra steps off the boardwalk and puts her hand on a post. She looks back and forth between the two.

Rivers sees her, but her only real concern is Gant. Poker sees Sierra, too.

GANT

They say you're pretty good with a gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

I won't miss a target as big as you.

GANT

My name's Jebediah Gant. Maybe you've heard of me.

RIVERS

Can't say I have.

This remarks irks Gant, but he presses on.

GANT

That's nice. I've heard of you to Rivers. Seems like it's about time we met, don't it. Especially since I'm gonna kill ya. That's right. I'm gonna put a bullet in your hide that they can't dig out.

RIVERS

Mind telling me why you're after my scalp?

GANT

Folks have been talking about you more than they do me. Let's just say I don't like your looks.

Gant snorts with laughter...

RIVERS

Such fine clothes - it would be a pity to put a hole in the fabric.

GANT

That's a gambler's bluff.

RIVERS

Call it.

Gant draws his gun with great speed, but--

Rivers draws faster and fires-- bang!

A stunned, wide-eyed Gant drops, weezing, BLOOD oozing from his chest. Mary goes to him, nothing she can do for Gant.

Duncan pushes through the gathering crowd. The others' are in silent disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARY

This town knows Gant's been
bucking for this for a longtime.
Six times, six times I've dug lead
out of men who weren't fast enough
for him. Six times I told you it
had to end, just like this.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Gant was trying to cut another
notch in his ivory handle. I told
him once, I told him fifty times.
Well it don't matter much now, I
guess he's been encouraged so long
to cut the deck any other way.

Rivers starts away. Mary runs after Rivers.

INT. SIERRA'S SUITE - DAY

Sierra shuts the door, stands there a moment, thinking.
She looks at the clock. She comes to a decision, then
saunters hurriedly to her BEDROOM.

PAN WITH HER, reflected in her dresser mirror, we can see
her beginning to change into riding pants.

Rivers barges in, sits stiffly as she eyes Sierra coldly.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Well, go on -- speak up.

RIVERS

I know there ain't a dirty trick
you wouldn't play to get what you
want.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You gonna shoot me?

RIVERS

Snakes like you usually die of
their own poison.

INT. MARY'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Rivers and Mary are finishing a southern meal with all
the fixings in the kitchen/sitting room.

Rivers grabs her, kisses Mary. They struggle and Mary
kisses back, both swept up in their need and longing,
holding on for dear life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

I never kissed a gunslinger
before.

RIVERS

Any recoil?

They kiss again. Mary is scared yet thrilled at the same
time.

MARY

They'll lynch us.

RIVERS

No one's lynching anybody.

Rivers kisses her again, as they begin doing what they've
both wanted to do for sometime..

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - NIGHT

Prostitutes are serving drinks at all tables in the noisy
saloon. Sierra emerges from a backroom. Clem lifts her up
onto the bar's counter top.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Everybody thirsty?! Drinks are on
the house.

The raucous crowd cheers.

There is a little pause, with Clem still bewildered.

CLEM

I don't seem to get your play,
Sierra. What is it?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

It should be clear.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Henryetta, Sierra, and Donna Juanita works at the spigots
of some large kegs, filling empty bottles with a portion
of whiskey, diluting them with water, and corking them.

Poker comes in and watches her. She hands him a bottle to
cork and starts the process again.

POKER FLATS

I smell something burning. Could
it be a torch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Maybe a two days ago but now I got
 it down to the size of a match.

INT. MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE - NIGHT

Townsfolk have fallen into tight knots, discussing, arguing, even fighting over themselves; most who've had one too many to drink.

Asa, Cord, Hal and Preacher watching this and the other signs of a community beginning to unravel.

PREACHER
 The wrath of the Lord must move
 through his servants. Evil has
 come to us and it must be driven
 out.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Are you just gonna stand there and
 let your spine's turn to jelly.
 Why don't you do something, stop
 her. There's not enough guts among
 you to make one man.

RANCHHAND
 Well I don't believe in jumping
 into anything without giving it
 some thought. Rivers haven't
 bothered me so why should I hunt
 for trouble.

PREACHER
 She's imposed on our town long
 enough.
 (then)
 Folks, *"be not afraid of sudden
 fear...neither of the desolation
 of the wicked, when it cometh."*
 Proverbs, uh, 3:25.

They exchange looks between themselves. No they're even more fired up, hooping and hollering.

Sierra pops a crate to reveal a cache of rifles. Folks pass them out. Henryetta hands one to Sawbones, but he doesn't take it.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Never figured a war hero for a
 coward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAWBONES

I'll go with you, but I won't
throw lead. I swore thirteen years
ago I'd never shoot at another man
again. I ain't startin' now.

Sierra nods, hands out badges.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

We'll make it legal.

HAL

Now don't go antagonizing her -
she's meaner than a rattle snake.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Oh shuddup! You're so chicken
hearted I don't know how you had
guts enough to ask people to vote
for ya.

(then)

Deputize 'em. And be quick about
it.

EXT. FORSAKEN RUN - NIGHT

Streets empty. Ominous. Just then an angry mob exits the
MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE, head towards the jailhouse.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Marshal Duncan writes in a diary.

The Preacher, Hal, Cord, and IRATE CITIZENS BURST INTO
THE OFFICE. Some with guns, embolden by alcohol.

All of them panicked. Duncan tries to establish order.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Now just wait a minute don't
stampede. Crowds can get unruly,
Preacher. Our common problem is a
matter for the law. Let's all keep
calm, and talk about this like
civilized folks.

CORD

Since you've seen fit to neglect
your duties. We've taken it upon
ourselves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN

With guns? Look at ya, this is that liquored courage talkin'. You gonna get this folks killed. Rivers will take plenty. We're not vigilantes!

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Like anyone else as long as she doesn't commit no crime she's entitled to the same rights as all of you. And she's committed no crime. These are the rules set forth in a civilized west. And like wise, if she gives me a reason to treat her as a criminal than I will. But she's not going to be shot down or strung up just because this town is afraid of her.

Sierra pushes through the crowd, moves to the front.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Look, Jim, no lawman can wolf it alone. I don't like it any more than you do, but what's the alternative?

HAL

Jim, we're down arguing. It's up to them now to handle this.

INT. MARY'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Their passion PEAKED...Rivers, sweating, panting, rolls off Mary, who, cuddles with her, soothing Rivers to rest...to sleep..

MARY

You stand for everything I've always hated. Violence, bloodshed. You kill and I love you. I have from the first moment I met you. I can't help it. I knew you wanted me too.

They hear POUNDING on the front door.

A naked Mary gets up, nipples erect, tresses wild, rushes to the window, sees the MOB. Alarmed. Rivers joins her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Stay in bed. Doctor's orders.

Mary shrugs on an attractive robe, quickly brushes her hair with dubious results.

EXT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME - NIGHT

Mary steps on the porch, SEEING the lynch mob out front. About two dozen or so. Lit torches burning hot.

MARY

What can I do for you.

VERN

That depends. I hear that Rivers is in there with you.

HENRYETTA

You didn't expect to keep a thing like that quiet, did ya' now?

MARY

Vigilantism strikes me as bad medicine sometimes worse than the disease it sets out to cure.

VERN

You get in our way you're liable to find out.

HAL

Go easy, Vern. No reason why we can't do this peacefully.

(then)

Now just turn Rivers over to us and we'll be on our way, Doc.

MARY

Well in that case, you better start riding.

CORD

Don't play no games with me, Doc, you start protecting a killer and you're liable to hang on a rope yourself.

MARY

She really got you sweatin', hasn't she? It couldn't be you're afraid she's after you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally, Rivers emerges, wearing absolutely nothing but a Mexican poncho, and her guns. Our *own little Raquel Welch moment in HANNIE CAULDER.*

RIVERS

If you harm one hair on her head.
You'll have to play high cards win
to see who I kill first.

Several men, who are clearly frightened, rifles in hand, take a few steps towards Rivers.

VERN

There's enough guns behind me to
take care of you.

Rivers is unfazed. She speaks calmly.

It is a tense face-off. The other men, very unwilling to pull their triggers, don't know what to do. They look at one another, then Rivers.

Vern can't take it anymore. He pulls out his gun in order to shoot Rivers.

She's quicker on the draw, shoots him - snatches the unfired pistol from the limp hand of the stunned, wide-eyed Vern who drops dead, then--

Rivers swiftly draws her other gun.

RIVERS

Now stay where you are and listen
before you start shooting, make
sure your draw is fast and your
aim is straight cause I'll shoot
back and keep shooting as long as
I'm able.

Duncan rushes over, snatches a rifle from one cowpoke, then signals the men - they lower their rifles.

Rivers moves towards the mob, who steps back. In the bunch, Sierra glares at the townsfolk, keeping her temper in check.

RIVERS

You surprise me, preacher -- a man
of cloth, using your pulpit to
teach the wrath of God - hell and
damnation, the vengeance of the
Lord.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS (CONT'D)

You took an oath to teach folks to love God and to cherish his words to face evil and rise above it. Why, you're no better than me. There's gotta be a special place in hell for one's like you.

Preachers says nothing. The men glances about, then...

RIVERS

Though I can't say I'm surprised to see you in the pack, Asa. You could be more accurate.

ASA

I print the truth as I see it.

RIVERS

Now that's where you're wrong. There was a lynching not far from here. Three Graves they call it now. A newspaper is a voice and you raised that voice against those boys and hammered away and made the town think they was guilty even before a trial.

ASA

The whole town was responsible. Why pick on one man.

RIVERS

Two. Sheriff locked in his own jail. He let the mob get to him.

A collective gasps! Duncan looks almost saddened, guilt etched in his features.

RIVERS

So one word out of you Asa, and you're seconds from being nothing but an obituary notice in your own paper!

RIVERS

Now I'll stay here until I'm ready to leave. Now I warn you: If you come against me again, you'll dress light. I hear it's warm down there.

Dutch Henry stands quietly, after hearing it all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DUTCH HENRY

There have been words of great bitterness tonight...hatred, incrimination. Echoes of the anguish of pain and the past. And perhaps their were ghost here too who are listening to us. And if they were -- one might have had on his lips...a verse that he quoted often in his life. From the bible; *"if the house be divided against itself it cannot stand. Ands his name was Abraham Lincoln."*

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Go home you dang fools.

The crowd disperses. Rivers escorts Mary back inside.

INT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

Mary enters a cell. There are two cots.

Consumed with guilt and self disgust, Duncan cleans the dust off one of the cots, sits on the edge, motions for Mary to sit on the other cot.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I apologize in advance for the accommodations. Please.

He pours himself a full whiskey and drinks it down, then pours another. He barely looks up as Mary comes in.

MARY

You fall off the wagon already?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I was more mad at myself than anything for letting it get this far.

MARY

You're a good man, Jim. You've done a good job with this town. I guess when you're a doctor folks think you can fix everything, tired sore hands an bullet holes but that's not true I'm scared to death sometimes.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The rain comes down hard. Lightening followed by thunder. Rivers follows, but as she passes a storefront alcove --

Mary in a long cape and hat, covering her courtesan wardrobe, REACHES from the shadows and pulls her around the side of the building.

Rivers' gun, pressed squarely to her ABDOMEN. Shit. She holsters her gun.

Pelted by the rain, Mary's back is pressed against another building to shield her from view...

MARY

You know Rivers you're a special case. I never known a gun to wear a woman before.

A silent moment. Mary looks away, then at Rivers.

MARY

I don't know how I got the idea in my pretty little head that you could change. You wouldn't last long without those guns, Rivers. Even if you want to throw your gun away, you can't, you'll always be looking over your shoulder because you know that just around the bend there's someone that will kill you. You're branded clean to the bone.

Their faces are this close. They are both soaked from the rain. They search each other's eyes for a beat, then--

MARY

You have to go! You have to leave here now! Can't you see what you've done to this town. I want you to go. Please.

Rivers takes her face and kisses her long and hard.

Mary throws herself against her, as if having leapt off a bridge, into Rivers arms. She kisses Rivers back with all her force.

The sounds of their ardor are drowned out by the storm-- they push and pull at each other, lost in lust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

You're sick with hating, aren't you? Why don't you just get it over with.

RIVERS

I'll finish it a little everyday.

A flash of lightening illuminates Sierra, in the distance, watching them.

Mary breaks the kiss, overwhelmed with sadness, runs off. Rivers watches her go.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

The rain has ceased. Water drips off leaves.

Miranda walks between the barn and the house, but before she reaches it -- Rivers GRABS HER FROM BEHIND -- a pistol at her head.

RIVERS

You alone?

She shakes her head no, Rivers' hands still clamped over her mouth, the other cinched around her waist.

RIVERS

Lady, I ain't no fiddle, so why are you playing me? You weren't at the River yesterday.

MIRANDA

Two of Sierra's bushwhackers have been holding me captive.

INT. RANCH HOME - NIGHT

Miranda walks in to observe a GUN-THUG stationed at a window, holding a rifle.

The DOOR is kicked OPEN to Rivers standing there.

The Gun-thug raises the rifle... but before he gets it halfway up, Rivers calmly... BLOWS him to Kingdom Come. Miranda screams.

The thug FLIES BACKWARDS, hits the wall. Dead on impact.

Rivers puts her pistol back into its holster and turns to Miranda. Hands her a folded wanted poster.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She unfolds it; JOHN WILKES BOOTH - 'WANTED FOR MURDER - REWARD \$100,000 DEAD OR ALIVE. A crude likeness to the Reverend Prospero, much younger, minus the beard.

She gasps!

MIRANDA

I thought he was dead.

MIRANDA

I was a Copperhead before the war. I got no hard feelings towards gray backs. They did what they had to do.

(switching gears)

The reward?

RIVERS

All yours. Just tell me where.

MIRANDA

They're keeping him out in Rustler's Canyon. The trail will be hard to find in that vast rocky country at night. It's also Apache territory.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - NIGHT

The place is nearly deserted. Sierra sits alone at a table killing a bottle of the good stuff. Donna Juanita watches her pour another drink

INT. HOTEL - DAY

With Gator, who sits behind the desk, strumming on a guitar, as Rivers approaches at a fast clip with her saddlebag and rifles.

RIVERS

I'm checking out.

She tosses several silver dollars on the counter.

RIVERS

Keep the change.

EXT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

In the alley behind the Silver Spur, Donna Juanita in her Mexican Rurales uniform, waits with horses. Even wearing men's clothes she's breathtaking.

Sierra suddenly races out, riding pants, hot.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Now remember, If you flush her,
 don't try to shoot it out with
 Rivers. She's quicker than a black-
 headed snake. And don't go
 gallivanting 'round, get back to
 town. Your father would never
 forgive me if something were to
 happen to ya.

Donna Juanita expresses her displeasure. Sierra brandishes a gun belt.

DONNA JUANITA
 He bed many women.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Yes, but he only loved one. Now
 you do what your mother tells ya.
 Or I'll take a willow switch to
 ya.

Both women leap onto the horses mid-stride. With no further delay, the two wheels about and takes off.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Duncan sits with his boots up on his desk. Mary pours coffee for Dutch Henry. Gator bursts through the door.

GATOR
 Jim, she's leavin'. Just checked
 out now.

MARSHAL DUNCAN
 That right?

GATOR
 Yep. I guess she was passing
 through. Just like you said.

MARY
 Unless it was someone not in town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Like who?

MARY

Reverend Prospero.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Doc, how much to you know about him?

MARY

A quiet man, usually keeps to himself. Sort of a recluse.

GATOR

I wonder why?

MARY

A few months back he came down with yellow fever so I kept him overnight at my office. He fell asleep with a book of poems by Shakespeare. I went to put it aside. An article fell out on Lincoln's death. Didn't think much of it at the time. But I thought it was odd he'd keep such a thing.

EXT. COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY

On the platform, Sam stands near a hanging noose, in restraints. Judge Dutch Henry by the trapdoor lever. And, at the base of the gallows:

THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF THE TOWN stands watching the proceedings like a crowd at a carnival.

Judge Dutch Henry grabs a black hood. Sam laughs at the absurdity.

SAM

The suns setting for me. It'd be a shame to miss it.

Sam spits out his tobacco.

Judge Dutch Henry loops the noose around the condemned man's neck, then tightens the knot so it's snug.

He retreats to the lever and closes the Bible.

The CROWD, sensing something, easing back from the gallows as Rivers rides up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her and Judge Dutch Henry make eye contact --

Judge Dutch Henry YANKS THE LEVER.

The trap SPRINGS OPEN, Sam PLUMMETS. But instead of his neck breaking, the rope is short -- and WE SEE him choke helplessly as he jerks and dangles.

Sam continues to KICK and swing, struggling to put himself out of his misery. The crowd gasps! Horrified.

Rivers draws. BAM--!

THE HANGMAN'S ROPE, CUT CLEAN. Hemp UNRAVELING, as -- Sam hits the ground with an ugly WOMP --! Begins sobbing.

RIVERS

The law states that if a criminal survives an execution and there is no proof of criminal conspiracy he is absolved of all the crimes with which he was charged. You can't hang a man twice, Dutchie, that's the law.

COWPOKE

We're turning loose a murderer?

INT. EPITAPH - DAY

Duncan, Gator, and Mary stand with Asa, covered in ink, checks dates on some binders and takes out the one he's looking for.

They search through articles come across a big headline:
'**LINCOLN'S MURDER.**'

MARY

That one?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I remember reading this report when I was Sheriff of Deadwood. It was thirteen days of the greatest manhunt in the nation's history.

ASA

All lies. Listen to this. Report of death of John Wilkes Booth. April 24, 1865. Booth was killed last night at Garrett's farm near Port Royal Virginia.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASA (CONT'D)

Booth and two armed accomplices took refuge in a barn where authorities ignited after vainly calling on the assassin to surrender. Booth permitted his villainous accomplices to surrender then either shot himself or was wounded by one of the federal agents. The circumstances are not definitely ascertained. He died several hours later.

Asa sets the press for the next addition -

ASA

By an odd coincidence the location of the fatal wound was identical to the martyred President's. The man that was captured at Garretts barn was never proven to be Booth. To this day the authorities haven't revealed where the body was buried.

MARY

Why not?

ASA

Because the whole thing was trumped up by men hand and glove with Booth and his gang. Men in high places. Still in power.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Northerners?

ASA

In cohorts with the leaders of the Confederacy. Lincoln's murder was a treacherous conspiracy to rob us of the fruits of victory. Why'd they leave him unguarded? Why was the telegraph shut off?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I don't rightly know.

ASA

By official order. Note -- the Potomac bridge. The only bridge by way Booth could escape. Why was it left open that far side of Garrett's barn? Hell, the trial of his accomplices a secret.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASA (CONT'D)

Mouths gagged then hung with hoods
over their heads.

MARY

And Booth?

ASA

Still alive. There's been reports
of him from Boston to California.
Places in Philadelphia.

DUTCH HENRY

Hold your horses... can't hang a
man on that alone. We need proof.

ASA

Try to keep up, Judge. He's got a
limp. The assassin caught one of
his spurs on the flag draped over
the President's box when he jumped
from it to the stage at Ford's
theatre. Broke his darn leg. Hell,
Dr. Mudd was sent to prison for
setting it. He testified he'd be
maimed for life.

MARY

I know he was a man of the
theatre, did some acting back
east. Boston I believe. Always
quoting Shakespeare too.

ASA

Got to admit, the name John Willis
is similar to John Wilkes. Not to
mention Prospero and Miranda are
Shakespearean characters. What
more do you want?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Why, if this man is Booth, this
would start a Civil war right
here. The Yankees will want to
lynch him and the Rebels would
fight to the death to protect him.

GATOR

I'll be damned. A lotta fuss about
this fella Booth. We've all heard
the rumors about him being alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARY

I suppose... but we've also heard talk about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Fenn's Fortune. The Fountain of Youth. They've been looking for it for a long time and I don't think they've found it. What if Booth is really dead?

MARY

Jim, doctors take an oath, as well as Sheriff's. And there's a reason for both. One has to do with saving lives - no matter what I think about a person. The other binds you to uphold the law, by due process. To protect an accused man against illegal violence no matter what you think of him. It's a principle that's more important than that man, or Rivers. You can't give him to Rivers or that mob.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

Rivers gallops at full speed. A wide, flat landscape.

GUNSHOTS split the air. Rivers' reacts. One of her pistols' already out and cocked --

A SILHOUETTE, atop a small cliff, blotting out the sun. Rivers aims, but doesn't pull the trigger.

It's Donna Juanita, clutching the smoking gun.

Donna Juanita's voice echoing down from the cliff.

DONNA JUANITA

Well you hightail right back from where you came from, savvy.

Donna Juanita mounts her horse, rides down the cliff. The two face off squarely. The tension draws tight... as

DONNA JUANITA

This climate ain't healthy for saddle tramps. Someone's likely to pick you for a target.

RIVERS

Thanks for the warning. Which way to Rustler's canyon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA JUANITA

Just keep straight ahead stranger
and when you feel the blood
running down your shirt, you're
there.

Donna Juanita spurs her horse, rides back towards town.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Sierra and Poker ride up and looks around at the cactus,
hills in the short distance. Makes sure she's alone.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Mirandae takes off her ring and throws it in his face.

REVEREND PROSPERO

You seem to go for this about five
years ago. Somethin' wrong with it
now?

MIRANDA

There's plenty wrong with it.

REVEREND PROSPERO

I'm sorry to hear that.

MIRANDA

Don't be slick about it. When I
heard about the Lincoln murder it
became clear as day.

REVEREND PROSPERO

I hope I'm wrong, Miranda, about
what I think you're tryin' to say.
Suppose you come right out with
it.

MIRANDA

Alright, you killed Lincoln.

REVEREND PROSPERO

That's what I thought you meant.

MIRANDA

I thought I knew what I was doing
when I took up with you. A card
shark and a cheat. Sure, so what.
I'm no Angel. The things I've done
in my time would make a girls hair
stand up on its end.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

But cold bloodied killing is not one of them. Even I draw the line someplace. Get out of my sight, you and I are through.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Is that the way you want it?

MIRANDA

You bet I'm sure.

REVEREND PROSPERO

You could be wrong you know.

MIRANDA

Am I? With the beard - you're a dead ringer for him. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen that poster.

REVEREND PROSPERO

I underestimated you, Miranda. That's a very shrewd deduction.

MIRANDA

I'm shrewd alright, just about in every department except when it comes to picking the right man. A Draw a deuce every time. But that one hundred thousand dollar reward will sure come in handy.

The enraged Rev backhands Miranda, sends her reeling to the floor. He snatches her by the throat, pulling her up.

REVEREND PROSPERO

You greedy little tramp. You shouldn't have said that. There's nothing I detest more than taking your troubles to the law.

She chokes, claws at his hand - he smacks her again.

Sierra rushes in, so does Poker.

Miranda, an expression we've never seen before - composed, smiling through bloody teeth, her eyes burn with hatred.

MIRANDA

Well this is your finish John Wilkes Booth.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Because if the Yankees don't hang ya, the rebels will...and when they put that rope around her neck I want to be there. Right in the front row.

Sierra looks at him and for a second we see something we've yet to see in him -- real fear -- even desperation.

REVEREND PROSPERO

There always will be a Rivers someplace, somewhere. Keeping the tragedy of Lincoln alive. The name of Booth an infamous thing.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No man or woman has the right to become another man's conscience.

REVEREND PROSPERO

No, the Devil takes care of that. I've had my share of him.

(then)

"Like a dull actor now, I have forgot my part, and I am out. Even to a full disgrace."

POKER FLATS

Shakespeare.

REVEREND PROSPERO

The tragedy of Coriolanus. A man can't go in hiding forever while his debts accumulate.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

We had a deal. We made a bargain. And we kept our end. We've covered your trail all these years, lost a lot of good men doing it, too. And we'll continue to do so.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Ah, that southerner honor!

Sierra tosses that holster on a table with a heavy sound and lots of sawdust. Poker Flats coughs up a storm.

POKER FLATS

Damn it, Sierra. You tryin' to kill me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Put it on -- Rivers doesn't have to goad you. The poster says dead or alive. Put it on.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Hardly matters now. That holster or mine. Rivers' gun hand is quicker than the eye.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I swear, sometimes you're so slow witted I wonder why you don't break a leg in a gopher hole.

She throws on the gun belt, swivels the holster to a 90 degree angle -- fires -- the slugs RICOCHET off a wall.

It startles Poker and Reverend Prospero. The smoking gun primed, levelled, and still in its holster.

POKER FLATS

Dang all the luck. A swivel holster. Yep, your odds just went up. I'll give ten to one... and I don't even like your chances, but I'm a gambler and I play the odds.

She hands it at him. Finally--

Reverend Prospero puts it on, adjust the belt. Grabs his *.36 caliber Griswold and Gunnison*, holsters it.

A beat, Reverend Prospero swivels the holster at them.

COUGHING harder, Poker turns away to spit bloody mucus in his whiskey glass. Sierra waits, watches with concern.

Poker pulls out another handkerchief to wipe his clammy sweat.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

We best git 'fore they spot us--

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - DAY

A bad bit of road. Mary fast, handling the reins expertly, despite showing the effects of the rough ride.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Rivers rides up, dismounts and has to duck as bullets hit around her, fired by the lone gunman in the water tower.

She breaks out from behind the well, firing as she goes as bullets slam all around her until her bullets EXPLODE through the planks beneath the Gunman's feet...

The bullet ridden Gunman falls from the tower and hits the dirt - dead on arrival.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Reverend is by the window, firing out at Rivers darts towards the rear of the Rancho. His rifle blasts kick up the dirt around her feet.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

In back, Rivers kicks open the door. Walks inside with her pistol drawn. Miranda comes running her way. Rivers sees her bruises, ushers her outside.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Rivers stalks in, finds Reverend Prospero. Rivers' breath snared. It's him! She scans for bushwhackers. Satisfied, holsters her pistol.

RIVERS

You should let that beard grow. A face like that should stay hidden.

Reverend Prospero smirks, then -

RIVERS

What's the matter play actor you forget your lines.

REVEREND PROSPERO

If I were the fugitive you clam me to be would I call myself John Willis. A name so similar to the other? Or would had been wiser for a desperate hunted man to assume a name completely different.

RIVERS

Pride. Vanity. The very vicarious contempt of the criminal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS (CONT'D)

Does that answer your question?
Explain that limp?

REVEREND PROSPERO

Congenital defect, childhood
accident. I could give you many
explanations but I'm sure you
wouldn't accept any of them. What
leg did he limp on?

RIVERS

Your right. You can't shoot your
way out of this one.

REVEREND PROSPERO

You're gonna talk yourself right
into a box, lady.

In one fluid motion he swivels his holster, but Rivers' faster. The color drains from his face as he looks down at his exploded knee cap.

He CORKSCREWS. Collapses into the floor.

Rivers wheels around in time to hear a rifle shot as the bullet bites her in the shoulder -

Mary pointing a rifle dead at Rivers, still smoking. A beat, Rivers uncocks her pistol, then holsters it.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Duncan, Dutch Henry, pulls up in a hurry.

Rivers comes out, favoring her shoulder, shirt soaked red. Escorting Prospero. Mary tends to Rivers shoulder.

MARY

She didn't kill him, Jim.

RIVERS

Tell 'em.

REVEREND PROSPERO

I'm John Wilkes Booth.

DUTCH HENRY

I wouldn't have believed it if I
hadn't seen it myself.

She hands him over to Duncan, then turns to Dutch Henry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

You can hang him.

DUTCH HENRY

Why did you jumped instead of going back out the way you came? No one could have identified you. Jumping down to the stage you could have broken more than just an ankle -- impaired you from running away.

REV PROSPERO

I jumped for two reasons: If I had turned back the way I came, the ENTIRE AUDIENCE was between ME and the door! I wouldn't have made it out the theater alive! Secondly, I had left my horse in the alley for a quick getaway at the side entrance. Plus, being an actor, I couldn't resist the drama of leaping to the stage and yelling "*Sic Semper Tyrannis!*"

EXT. RIDGE - DAY

The sun is beating down on the canyon. Sierra and Poker stands on the ridge looking down towards the Rancho in the short distance.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Rivers lies on the bed, sweaty, feverish. Mary lays down a bowl of hot water and towels.

MARY

Doctoring you was a waste of time a bullet will get you eventually.

RIVERS

Maybe, but luckily for me you were around.

Mary inserts a finger into her bullet wound, as Rivers arches away from Mary in pain.

She grabs her medical bag, uncaps a bottle and packs Rivers' wound with gunpowder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

I can give you something for the pain. Or a shot of whiskey.

Rivers declines. Mary hands her a bullet.

MARY

Then bite on this if it tinkles.

Mary strikes a match and we briefly see Mary's face before she lights the wound on fire. Rivers upright.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mary washes her bloody hands and forearms in a porcelain bowl. She pulls a towel from a peg, turns to Marshal Duncan.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Will she make it?

MARY

You can toss a coin. The bullet was too close to her heart. Couldn't get at it. I gave her a shot of morphine. It deadens pain, makes the patient feel fine, but as soon as this dose wears off, she's going to start coughing. Each cough's going to rip the lungs a little bit more.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Did you tell her?

MARY

I didn't have to.

As Duncan leaves, Rivers comes out, fresh new shirt, laboring her shoulder, but her arms is not in a sling.

RIVERS

I reckon God ain't wantin' me much, Mary, but when I look at you, I feel I've been ridin' the wrong trail.

Mary kisses Rivers in a passionate good-bye.

EXT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Rivers comes out, favoring her shoulder, followed by Mary.

A small crowd has gathered. A moment of eye-contact between Rivers and Sierra, then Rivers turns and swings up into her saddle.

RIVERS

A lot of people would like to kill Denver Rivers. But it took a healer with courage to make it easy for them.

MARY

Rivers, I'm sorry I wished I could have done more for that shoulder.

RIVERS

Don't worry none, Doc. It all comes to a finish.

With that, Rivers wheels her horse around, gallops off, slowly... *TOWARDS A SETTING SUN.....*

FADE OUT.