

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 needle-work. 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...

JEDEDIAH GANT cantors up on a fabulous pale horse, the *LONE RANGER'S BOHLIN SADDLE*; she's dressed for rugged, dusty business, not dowdy, tough/sexy; think *Sharon Stone* in *'The Quick And The Dead'*.

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

GANT

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?

GANT

How much further to Sulfer City?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

Gant tips her hat, spurs her horse.

EXT. RIM OF TOWN - DAY

Gant 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 Gant lustily)

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

GANT

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, Gant 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.

Gant 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?

GANT

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?

GANT

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?

GANT

Caesar.

SAWBONES

The name fits.

GANT

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

SAWBONES

One of the best. Doc Halladay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

Hotel in town?

SAWBONES

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

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

Gant strolls towards the front desk. Gator appears.

GATOR

Day, week, month, miss?

GANT

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.

GANT

I'll pay when I leave!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

DEKE

Is there a problem

GANT

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.

GANT

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 --

Her bullet hits him in the shoulder. His gun still in its holster. Deke goes down screaming and rolling.

GANT

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.

GANT

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

Gator gives a resigned shrug of the shoulders.

GANT

Gant! Jedediah Gant.

From the looks on their faces this is a woman to be avoided. Gant 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.

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE, 40, an icy blue-eyed blonde, sexy, flashing cleavage in a 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

Gant 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. MARY'S HOME - 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. MARY'S HOME - PARLOR - DAY

A splendidly decorated home/office, warm and comforting.

MARY HALLADAY, 30s, a gorgeous Southern Belle, warm and kind, places a letter in its envelope.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Shelves of medical books. A tiny hospital with beds.

MARSHAL JIM DUNCAN, a STAR on his vest, a hard-lived man of 50, with a salt and pepper handlebar mustache, sits in a chair with a crank handle to recline.

Deputy WILL SUNDAY, 20s, 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. Gant.

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATOR

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

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 Gant?

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. Gant is 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

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

Gant 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. Gant holsters..

RIVERS

Nice quite town you got here.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Marshal ain't had no prisoner in jail for four months.

RIVERS

Sounds like a law abiding town.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Depends on what law you're talkin' about. Most of us are abiding by the law of self preservation.

RIVERS

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I'll just lay it on the barrel-head -- S'pose you just tell us who you've come for, save us all some time and sleepless nights.

GANT

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. Gant sees a baby Lemat secreted between her succulent breasts.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

There's six hours left of daylight. Why don't you pack up and move on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

CORD

What's the matter with you? You got the heebie jeebies?

FLYNN

That woman's a hired killer. An executioner.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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."*

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

GANT

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

CORD

That's right.

GANT

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

CORD

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

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

CORD

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

*Cord's jaw tightens, decides he better not risk it, as
Gant 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 Gant as if she
were quicksand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HAL

You sound like you know Gant.

POKER FLATS

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

INT. MARY'S HOME/OFFICE - DAY

Mary finishes bandaging Deke's shoulder.

MARY

You're a pretty lucky man, Deke,
one more inch--

DEKE

And it would have killed me. Well
it was meant to.

MARY

No, if she wanted to kill you
you'd be dead.

DEKE

You know I don't often get a
doctor who is efficient and
attractive.

MARY

I suppose that's a nice way of
saying I'm efficient for a woman
doctor.

DEKE

No, not at all. I believe in
progress. You must've wanted to me
a doctor pretty badly.

MARY

I did. I had to make a choice
between that and marriage. I chose
medecine that's why I'm here.

DEKE

Well you'll find a good man.

MARY

I think you're being presumptuous.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Gant 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 Gant 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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 Gant stands there, takes off her hat.

GANT

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

MARY

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

Gant is bemused by Mary's bellicose demeanor.

GANT

Doc Mary "swan" Halladay. Is it?

MARY

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

GANT

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--

GANT

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 Gant enters.

Gant reaches into a JAR for some licorice.

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

GANT

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EARL (CONT'D)

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.

EARL

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

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Gant 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.

GANT

Miss, Mary. Where you off to?

MARY

No place. Thought I'd go for a
ride.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY (CONT'D)

I get stir crazy in this place.
Course if you wanna come along,
you're more'n welcome.

GANT

You know my reputation.

MARY

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

GANT

You're not afraid?

MARY

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

Gant smirks as Mary extends the reins to her.

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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.

POKER FLATS

Well how much time did you think you had?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Hmm, three days at the most. She
was quite a ways out of town, but
trouble rides a fast horse.

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....

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 Gant 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

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.

Gant 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.

GANT

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.

GANT

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 Gant, sits on a log, puts on her stockings.

GANT

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GANT

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

MARY

You can say that.

GANT

Well, I have a job to do to.

MARY

Why do you have to do it at all?

GANT

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 --

GANT

-- a killer?

MARY

You're awfully nosey, aren't you?

GANT

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.

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

GANT

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

A long beat. Gant, 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

Gant is in town.

MIRANDA

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

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 Gant 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.

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

GANT

Clint.

CLINT

How did you know my name?

GANT

I read it on a wall some place.

Clint backs away from Gant, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 Gant?

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

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

GATOR

Gant, more coffee?

GANT

Sure. Thank you.

GATOR

(pouring)
And how is everything?

GANT

Very good.

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

GANT

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

A group of men enter and cautiously approach Gant. 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.

GANT

Talks cheap. I can spare you some.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAL

You can drop this manhunt.

GANT

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.

GANT

I've already been paid.

FLYNN

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

GANT

Switching sides for money that's most unethical.

FLYNN

You're making a mistake.

GANT

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.

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

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Gant 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.

Gant 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 Gant; quickly feigns scorn. Duncan follows at a distance.

GANT

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I'm wearing one already.

GANT

You know you got to get used to sudden changes.

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I'm not that easy to rope.

Gant 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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
Gant?...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.

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
Gant been in town.

As he leaves Duncan enters...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I understand you took a ride with Gant. 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. 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.

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?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Gant.

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

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

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

She offers Gant the whiskey. Gant accepts. Sierra pours drinks.

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

GANT
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. 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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE (CONT'D)

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.

GANT

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

(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?

GANT

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

Sierra looks at Gant. Any civility has vanished.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

GANT

Your whiskey is still watered.

Gant 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GANT

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.

GANT

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

If it's action you want, the
game's open. The roof's the limit.
But, if you're really 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?

GANT

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 Gant.

TEX LAREDO

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Simmer down. She's just trying to
draw you into an inside straight
now don't you go giving her the
right cards.

CORD

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GANT

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.

GANT

He a friend of yours?

CORD

He runs errands for me.

GANT

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.

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

GANT

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

Gant wheels her gun into its holster. A stare down. Gant leaves. Cord helps a woozy Tex Laredo to his feet.

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. Gant 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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CORD (CONT'D)

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 not 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?

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 intensely.

POKER FLATS
Why you sticking up for that side
winder? Don't you want to see Gant
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..

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Here's a letter from Dulin Cain.

HAL
Who's Dulin Cain?

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 Gant?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
He'll earn this thousand by
rubbing Gant out.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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. Gant approaches him.

POKER FLATS

Poker Flats, at your service.

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

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.

GANT

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.

GANT

Those sir, are the devils
pasteboards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POKER FLATS

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

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Gant and Poker Flats, as Mary joins them.

POKER FLATS

Yes, siree, the finest doctor there is. Forsaken Run 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.
(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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is almost there before his gaze settles on Gant. 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 Gant.

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

Gant 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.

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?

GANT

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

REX

Don't push.

GANT

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mary grabs Gant, whispers to Gant.

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.

Gant 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 Gant 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.

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

Duncan glares at Gant.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN

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

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 Gant 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.

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

PREACHER

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

GANT

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.

GANT

So I'm not good enough to come to meeting! Just because I'm a hired gun. You miserable bunch of hypocrites!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GANT (CONT'D)

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!

Gant 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 Gant and Mary coming down the street.

Clint lifts the gun with a trembling hand, draws a bead
on Gant 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. Gant escorts Mary home. It's close and
intimate.

GANT

I don't know myself yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

GANT

That just about the size of it.

MARY

You expect me to believe that?

GANT

I don't care if you do or not.

MARY

You mean it could be anybody in
this town.

GANT

Could be.

MARY

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

GANT

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

Mary's expression changes, and she screams--

MARY

No, Clint.

Gant 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.

GANT

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

Gant holsters her gun...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GANT

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 Gant.

CLINT

Doc, you cut off my leg?

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

Gant 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

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

*Gant as she rolls her Samuel Colt .44 and holsters it.
She studies his gun hand, a slight tremor here and there.*

GANT

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.

GANT

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

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.

Five WHORES lounge around in sexy showgirl garments. They
smoke, drink beer, ready to be called.

TWO REBELS, grizzled vets of the Civil War in battle
tested uni's, sit at the bar drowning their sorrows.

In the corner, Sierra and Henryetta stand in the shadows,
watching everything that happens, not missing a thing

HENRYETTA

How long you gonna let Gant
interfere with our business?

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Some go on fighting a war forever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 Gant across the square.

Gant 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.

Gant, 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.

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

Her face unreadable.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - NIGHT

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

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Gant 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 gun 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 Gant.

GANT

You come to bed down here tonight?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Who you here for?

(Gant says nothing)

Have you ever been tortured?

Sticks the barrel of her smoking gun into her ribs. Gant 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 --

GANT

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

Gant helps Sierra out of her rain slicker to reveal our lovely near-naked Sierra in a sheer peignoir robe that flutters open revealing a small gunbelt strapped to her thigh. In it, she her Baby Lemat.

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

GANT

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Is that supposed to excite me?

GANT
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.

GANT
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 --

GANT
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.

GANT
So how long you been a sympathizer
to the Confederate cause? 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.
Of course there are a few
copperheads here, but they're
harmless. We know which side paid
you off?

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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

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

They wrestle into passion takes over.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Shh. The others.

Gant MOANS more, doesn't care. Sierra puts her hand over
Gant mouth. She moves on top of Gant, 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 Gant back and buttocks. They talk quietly, so as not
to wake the other guests.

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

GANT
There's a drifter in the jail.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

Gant starts to get up, Sierra grabs hers arm -

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Why? He some kin?

GANT
Judges interest me, especially a
professional executioner.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
That drifter has, one, two days at
the most.

GANT
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.*

GANT
Long time since I seen a gal
sproutin' hair like that.

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

*A wedding pic of Gant, 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)

GANT

Yes.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The war took him?

GANT

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.

GANT

You don't have to worry about me.

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.

Gant pulls Sierra toward her. They kiss an inevitable, passionate kiss. Both consumed by it. It becomes a fury of arousal on both sides. Her dress unzipped... With huge effort, she pulls away. Her dress down, breasts exposed.

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 Gant to identify you. What'd you do?

REV PROSPERO

Always with the goddamn questions.

EXT. BACK OF MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

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

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

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

Only a few customers. Early light streams in over gambling tables draped with dust covers. Clem is busy behind the bar.

Sierra pours Gant a fresh cup of coffee.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

GANT

Where you staying?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

My private suite. Second floor.

GANT

I'll pay my respects.

As Gant 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: (2)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Doc Mary's right? Go away in the mountains. Breathe 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 Gant. 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, Gant 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.

Gant 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. Gant turns to find Poker riding up on her rear.

GANT

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:

GANT

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 Gant, his alignment yet unclear.

POKER FLATS

I'm a gambler and I play the odds.

INT. LIVERLY STABLES - DAY

Gant 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:

GANT

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

Gant strikes a match on her boot heel. Lights a cheroot. Rebel and Yankee are playing chess 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 Gant eyes:

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

GANT

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.

Gant raises an eyebrow, crosses the street.

XT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

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

MIRANDA

I know who you are.

GANT

By reputation?

MIRANDA

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

GANT

We might talk bout it sometime.

She moves to her buggy, Gant 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)

(Gant 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 Gant helps Miranda into her buggy...

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

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

He holds up his pistol, aims it at Gant, 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 lunches, 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.

Gant can feel the townsfolk accusing eyes bore into her. Even Mary's. Gant 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?

GANT

I wasn't surprised.

Gant 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.

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

GANT

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 Gant 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 Gant 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

Gant 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.

GANT

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

GANT
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, Gant fires. Duncan's HAT FLIES OFF!

GANT
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?

GANT
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 Gant 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

Gant - 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

Gant 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 Gant.

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

GANT

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

DUTCH HENRY

You can't go around terrorizing the citizens.

GANT

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

DULIN CAIN 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

Gant 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.

GANT

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

Dutch Henry all but ignores Gant.

GANT

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.

GANT

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

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

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

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Dulin 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?

DULIN

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, Gant 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?

DULIN

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.

Gant 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?

GANT

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

Sierra smiles at Gant, 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.

Gant and Sierra ride up. Gant dismounts, Sierra stays in
the saddle, as if waiting. Gant 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

Gant 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.

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
No!

GANT
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 Gant by the hand, leads her back inside.

INT. RANCHERO - BEDROOM - DAY

Sierra lies with her hair cascading on a silk pillow,
wide awake, watching Gant. 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.

GANT
Where are you going?

Sierra freezes. Deliberates... Her back to Gant.

GANT
Come back to bed.

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

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--
Gant trots up on her horse.

PREACHER

You did this.

GANT

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 on Dutch Henry's shoulder.

POLLYANNA

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

DUTCH HENRY

Yea, what's that?

POLLYANNA

Lucky at card. Unlucky at love.

Gant pushes through batwing doors into the saloon.

GANT

Please, gentlemen. Don't get up.

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

The men stare at Gant. Beat. Beat.

DUTCH HENRY

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

GANT

Judges interest me.

HAL

Don't give Gant any excuses.

CORD

She's counting on you trying,
Judge.

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

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

Gant 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. Dulin comes in his face, hard now, looks straight at them.

DULIN

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

CORD

Old friend?

DULIN

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.

Gant lies down next to Sierra, adjusts the pillows so she's comfortable. Sierra hands Gant 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.

GANT

What you do rob the US Mint?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

GANT

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.

GANT

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.

GANT

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 Gant guns...

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

GANT

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. Dulin Cain. 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

Gant, 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.

Gant 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
Gant?!

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. FORSAKEN RUN - DAY

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

They are quiet for a few moments. Finally --

GANT

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?

GANT

A wounded man can still kill you.

MARY

You let Rex live.

GANT

He can't shoot with his left.

MARY

Clint? And what about the Marshal?

GANT

I felt in a charitable mood today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

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

GANT

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, Dulin appears, approaching Gant slowly and ominously.

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

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

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

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

DULIN

They say you're pretty good with a gun.

GANT

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

DULIN

My name's Dulin Cain. Maybe you've heard of me.

GANT

Can't say I have.

This remarks irks him, but he presses on.

DULIN

That's nice. I've heard of you to Gant. Seems like it's about time we met, don't it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DULIN (CONT'D)

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.

GANT

Mind telling me why you're after my scalp?

DULIN

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

He snorts with laughter...

GANT

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

DULIN

That's a gambler's bluff.

GANT

Call it.

Dulin draws his gun with great speed, but--

Gant draws faster and fires-- bang!

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

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

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.

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Well, go on -- speak up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You gonna shoot me?

GANT

Snakes like you usually die of
their own poison.

INT. MARY'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

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

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

MARY

I never kissed a gunslinger
before.

GANT

Any recoil?

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

MARY

They'll lynch us.

GANT

No one's lynching anybody.

Gant 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sawbones hurries in.

SAWBONES

Jim, you got to get back to the
land office at once! Preacher is
steaming up the crowd about Gant.
There's talk about burning him
out.

INT. MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE - NIGHT

About two dozen IRATE CITIZENS, embolden by alcohol, discussing, arguing, even fighting over themselves; most who've had one too many to drink.

Asa, Cord, and Hal stand back in a corner, watch Preacher rile up the crowd.

Frank, Hemp, and VERN, a shifty, beady-eyed rogue, checks their pistols.

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE (CONT'D)

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. Gant 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.

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.

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.

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARSHAL DUNCAN (CONT'D)

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.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

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

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.

EXT. FORSAKEN RUN - NIGHT

Streets empty. Ominous. Just then an angry mob exits the
MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE, lit lanterns, head towards
Mary's office.

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:

VERN (O.S.)

Hello in there!

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 Gant's hold up 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.

VERN

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

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

Poker pushes his way threw the MOB, handkerchief to his
mouth as he coughs up more blood. Nods to Mary.

POKER FLATS

...Evenin', doc.

(turns to the mob)

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

Poker coughs. It bends him over, getting violent. He's at
the end. Mary goes to him, bends him straight up.

ASA

Ain't no one gonna do no harm to
doc.

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

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

VERN

We're 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.

MAN

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.

VERN

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

Gant moves towards the mob, who steps back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The men, unwilling to pull their triggers, don't know what to do.

VERN

Guess I hafta do it my goddamn self!

Vern goes to fire. Gant shoots. BANG! Vern screams. Blood sprays. Vern's gun hand goes limp... his gun falls to the ground.

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

RIVERS

Get your hands off those guns your covered and my fingers might slip.

Gant takes in the MOB. Their angry, terrified faces from every angle.

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.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Hold it right there! And-and put away your weapons!

The mob turns to see... Duncan pushes his way to the front of the crowd. Pistol pointed. He shakes.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

I'm still Marshal 'round here!

The men swap unsure, resigned looks. Guns go away.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

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. 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.

Duncan can't look at her. Can't look at them, 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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RIVERS (CONT'D)

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.

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. And his
name was Abraham Lincoln."

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Only certain thing right now is
that Gant's days are numbered...
now go home you dang fools.

The crowd disperses.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. Gant 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 Gant you're a special case. I never known a gun to wear a woman before.

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

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, Gant. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gant takes her face and kisses her long and hard.

Mary throws herself against her, as if having leapt off a bridge, into Gant arms. She kisses Gant 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.

MARY

You're sick with hating, aren't you? Why don't you just get it over with.

GANT

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. Gant 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 -- Gant GRABS HER FROM BEHIND -- a pistol at her head.

GANT

You alone?

She shakes her head no, Rivers' hands still clamped over her mouth, the other cinched around her waist.

GANT

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 Gant standing there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Gun-thug raises the rifle... but before he gets it halfway up, Gant calmly... BLOWS him to Kingdom Come. Miranda screams.

The thug FLIES BACKWARDS, hits the wall. Dead on impact.

Gant puts her pistol back into its holster and turns to Miranda. Hands her a folded wanted poster.

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?

GANT

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 Gant approaches at a fast clip with her saddlebag and rifles.

GANT

I'm checking out.

She tosses several silver dollars on the counter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT

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
Gant. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Unless it was someone not in town.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The CROWD, sensing something, easing back from the gallows as Gant rides up.

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.

Gant draws. BAM--!

THE HANGMAN'S ROPE, CUT CLEAN. Hemp UNRAVELING, as -- Sam hits the ground with an ugly WOMP --! Begins sobbing.

GANT

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASA (CONT'D)

Booth was killed last night at Garrett's farm near Port Royal Virginia. 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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASA (CONT'D)

Why was it left open that far side of Garrett's barn? Hell, the trial of his accomplices a secret. 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 Gant. You can't give him to Gant or that mob.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

Gant 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. Gant 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.

GANT

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 Gant 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 -- Gant 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

Gant 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 Gant darts towards the rear of the Ranchero. His rifle blasts kick up the dirt around her feet.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

In back, Gant kicks open the door. Walks inside with her pistol drawn. Miranda comes running her way. Gant sees her bruises, ushers her outside.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Gant stalks in, finds Reverend Prospero. Rivers' breath snared. It's him! She scans for bushwhackers. Satisfied, holsters her pistol.

GANT

You should let that beard grow. A face like that should stay hidden.

Reverend Prospero smirks, then -

GANT

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.

GANT

Pride. Vanity. The very vicarious contempt of the criminal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANT (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?

GANT

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.

Gant wheels around in time to hear a rifle shot as the
bullet bites her in the shoulder -

Mary pointing a rifle dead at Gant, still smoking. A
beat, Gant uncocks her pistol, then holsters it.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Duncan, Dutch Henry, pulls up in a hurry.

Gant comes out, favoring her shoulder, shirt soaked red.
Escorting Prospero. Mary tends to Gant shoulder.

MARY

She didn't kill him, Jim.

GANT

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:

GANT

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

Gant 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.

GANT

Maybe, but luckily for me you were around.

Mary inserts a finger into her bullet wound, as Gant 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.

Gant 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. Gant 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, Gant comes out, fresh new shirt, laboring her shoulder, but her arms is not in a sling.

GANT

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 Gant in a passionate good-bye.

EXT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gant comes out, favoring her shoulder, followed by Mary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A small crowd has gathered. A moment of eye-contact between Gant and Sierra, then Gant turns and swings up into her saddle.

GANT

A lot of people would like to kill Jedediah Gant. But it took a healer with courage to make it easy for them.

MARY

Gant, I'm sorry I wished I could have done more for that shoulder.

GANT

Don't worry none, Doc. It all comes to a finish.

With that, Gant wheels her horse around, gallops off, slowly... *TOWARDS A SETTING SUN.....*

MARY

This town knows Rex'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

He 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.

FADE OUT.