

A NAME ON THE BULLET

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THIRD DRAFT
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FADE IN:

EXT. PRARIE - DAY

Lush rolling hills rise out of the horizon...

Looking steeply up, a pale horse, *The Lone Ranger's* Bohlin Saddle; A horsewoman, she's dressed for dusty, rugged business, not dowdy, sexy; Think Sharon STONE in the *Quick And The Dead*; whom will come to know as RIVERS.

EXT. A SMALL HOMESTEAD - DAY

MRS. STANTON (60s) crochets on the porch. Mr. STANTON (60s), in a hat and filthy chaps pushes and strains to unstick a plow muddy earth.

A mean-looking MUTT of indeterminate lineage, barks furiously. Mrs. Stanton looks up from her needle-work.

Mr. Stanton is absently staring, as Rivers cantors up.

RIVERS

Your dog's a mite unfriendly.

MR. STANTON

He doesn't take too kindly to strangers.

MRS. STANTON

Here boy...here!

The dog wines, obeys --

Rivers brushes aside her embroidered duster coat with capelet, tucks fingerless lace gloves over her gun belt.

A Samuel Colt .44 dual action pistol in one holster, in the other, a .42 Caliber LeMat percussion pistol.

MR. STANTON

What can I do fer ya?

RIVERS

How much further to Sulfer City?

MR. STANTON

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

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Rivers tips her hat, spurs her horse.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

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

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

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

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

All the prerequisites of a frontier town: general store, barber, hotel, church, bank, newspaper, telegraph office:

The town's epicenter; *THE SILVER SPUR*; a fancy saloon of gambling and drinking and pleasure.

EXT. COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY

THE GALLOWS doesn't look too sturdy, not well-maintained.

A PREACHER -- 40s, cadaverous -- sweltering in his tunic as he shaves the sides of a new-built coffin.

As Rivers rides past, Preacher reacts, startled.

INT. THE UNTERRIFIED EPITAPH - DAY

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

Asa moves to the window, Rivers ride past.

ELMER

What's wrong?

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.

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

SAWBONES

Willie "sawbones" Pardon. Fought at Gettysburg and my leg is cut up real bad. But I'm still here. Yep. I can have a new one tomorrow. Come far?

RIVERS

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

SAWBONES

How do I know you'll be in town?

RIVERS

Would you leave a horse like that behind?

SAWBONES

Yea, see what you mean. Sure is a beautiful hunk of horseflesh you got there. He's Arabia isn't he?

RIVERS

It took six months to buy him.

SAWBONES

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

RIVERS

Caesar.

SAWBONES

The name fits.

RIVERS

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

SAWBONES

One of the best. Doc Halladay.

RIVERS

Hotel in town?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAWBONES

Such as it is. Other side of the street. Can't miss it, though you might want to.

RIVERS

Who's got the best grub?

SAWBONES

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

RIVERS

Well, Sawbones, keep the Philly 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, with FLYNN QUIGBY, 35, the town BANKER, possessing the face of a shady past, DEKE HARRIGAN, a beefy redneck rancher, and the Mayor, HAL MERCER, 40s.

Rivers strolls towards the front desk. Gator appears.

RIVERS

A room.

GATOR

Day, week, month, miss?

RIVERS

I'll let you know.

GATOR

Then it's eight bucks, cash in advance.

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

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CONTINUED:

RIVERS

I'll pay when I leave!

What Gator sees in her eyes truly disturbs him. Now the others' noticed the conflict. Get up from their seats.

DEKE

Is there a problem

RIVERS

You wanna yell for help? Why you
horning in?

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

RIVERS

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

DEKE

Some.

He draws, she pulls her pistol so quick most don't notice until the barrel is staring Deke in the face. Rivers is a quick draw and deadly.

RIVERS

You only have to lose one.

Deke re-calibrates his perceptions, takes a his seat.

Wheels her gun back into its holster and scans the crowd.

Terrified, Gator spins a registry around, extends a pen.

GATOR

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

RIVERS

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

(Gator shrugs)

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

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

CORD

Gator, inform the Marshal.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

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

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

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

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

POKER FLATS

Unfortunate, my friend. It's been a pleasure... as always. Perhaps your luck will be better tomorrow.
(toasting...)

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

A beat, Sierra studies Poker quizzically, then --

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I thought you you're 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 card playing?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

EXT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Gator, what in tarnation are you gibbering on about?

GATOR

Rivers in town.

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SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Son of a bitch.

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.

Heading for the saloon,

POKER FLATS

Well how much time did you think we had?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

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 Southern Belle, weathered face, still pretty, places a letter to its envelope.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Shelves of medical books. A tiny hospital with beds.

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

MARY

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

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CONTINUED:

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

MARY

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN

(rolls up a sleeve)

Thanks, Doc. It's getting worse.

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

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

GATOR

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

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN

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

GATOR

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN

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

DEPUTY SUNDAY

Who's this Rivers?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

She's a hired killer.

DEPUTY SUNDAY

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN

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

DEPUTY SUNDAY

How come she's still loose?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARSHAL DUNCAN

She goads them. You can make any man draw first if you try hard enough. 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 took a room. She's not just passing through.

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Could be anyone.

GATOR

That all?

MARY

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN

(grabs his hat)

Doc, you just watch some of our respected citizens from now on. You'll learn something. I'll tell you 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. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Our MEN, mid-game. Poker Flats has joined them, racking up the chips.

HAL

Fortune seems to be smiling on you today.

POKER FLATS

Today she smiles, tomorrow she --

FLYNN

Well she's downright laughing at me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORD

Place your bet or throw in your cards.

POKER FLATS

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

CORD

Spit it out, what's bothering you?

FLYNN

You know mighty well what's bothering me.

HAL

But do you really think you can get away if it's you she wants.

CORD

You think she's after you, Hal?

HAL

What would she want with me?

CORD

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

HAL

Could be anyone. Why are you pushing me, Cord? 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

Boot Hills across the west are filled with men she's killed -- more than there were Union soldiers in the Battle of Bull Run.

Sierra strides in. They look up to see Rivers descending the stairs. She confronts Rivers.

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CONTINUED: (2)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The name's Sierra Nevada Rose.

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.

RIVERS

That's my business.

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

They're about three hours of daylight left. Why don't you just pack up and move on.

RIVERS

Well, like the bear said to the trap I'll stay because of my foot. And in the meantime it would be an extremely prudent idea if everybody here paid strict attention to their own business.

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.*

Rivers nods, approaches Cord. Flynn takes one look at Rivers and nearly wets himself.

RIVERS

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

CORD

That's right.

RIVERS

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

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

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

As Rivers takes in the town- making mental notes of her surroundings, people stop and stare. Hushed whispers.

Every window, a snapshot of a frightened face. More faces on the street. Shadowed in the doorways.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

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

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

WADE

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

REVEREND PROSPERO

Why Wade, where did you pick up such a habit like reading-some girl's school back East?

He gets up. The Reverend sits. Wade gets to work.

Through a huge window, Rivers strolls along. Recognition, shock, fills Reverend Prospero's face.

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

WADE

What's wrong, Reverend? You look as though you've seen a ghost.

INT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME/PARLOR - DAY

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

GRAM

What's this? Pills?

MARY

No, gumdrops.

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CONTINUED:

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.

Grams smiles and leaves. Mary, in a hurry, grabs her bag. She turns to go, runs into someone, who breaks her fall.

Mary registers surprise and suspicion as she finds herself in Rivers' arms. Rivers tips her hat.

RIVERS

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

MARY

No. I...I wasn't paying any attention. Walking too fast I guess. Lucky for me you were there. Thank you.

RIVERS

You're welcome. Although maybe I should thank you. It's not every day a pretty lady drops into my arms. In fact, I can't ever remember it happening. They are usually tripping over themselves to get away from me.

MARY

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

Rivers is bemused by Mary's bellicose demeanor.

RIVERS

Doc Mary "swan" Halladay. Is it?

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

MARY

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

Have their been any other doctor's
in the past four years?

Mary hesitates, weighs her responses. Always so careful.

MARY

No, the relationship between
doctor and patient is privileged
as you know. And now it will be my
privilege to ask you to excuse me
so I can get on with my work.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

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

Rivers reaches into a JAR for some licorice.

Henryetta moves behind the counter, a .36 caliber
Confederate six shooter is a within reach.

Lays a silver dollar on the counter.

RIVERS

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

A COWPOKE enters. He freezes when he sees Rivers about to
leave Rivers knocks his hat off his head --

RIVERS

Show some respect.

INT. RANCH HOME - DAY

A lovely frontier home. The room is comfortable in a
simple way. Reverend Prospero grabs a bottle and glass,
then pours himself a drink.

His wife DOTTIE MIRANDA, 30s, wildly attractive, but worn
out former whore, exits a back room.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

I didn't expect you back so soon.

REVEREND PROSPERO

You never do.

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CONTINUED:

DOTTIE MIRANDA

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

REVEREND PROSPERO

I thought you might like know that assassin Rivers is in town.

He pours himself another drink.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

That's right, pour yourself some courage.

(off his glare)

Oh, fer cryin' out loud. What would she want with you? Besides, you're not even worth killing. Let alone a roll in the hay.

He stares hard at Dottie, then -

REVEREND PROSPERO

We gotta get outta here.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

We just can't toss a few things into a suitcase and take off.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Why not?

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Well what happens to all this? The ranch?

REVEREND PROSPERO

Once we're clear we'll have someone sell it for us and send us the money.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Not what I put into it. I've got six years wrapped in this place. A lot more than that. I've been fighting for this place since I was ten. When a scrawny kid spit on me and called me sharecroppers trash.

REVEREND PROSPERO

I know that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOTTIE MIRANDA

And all those years I was destined to those saloons being pawed at by drunks. I put up with it because someday, somehow I knew I would have all this. Well I'm not going to throw it away and rot.

REVEREND PROSPERO

I know how you feel about this place. I've been playing second fiddle to it all these years.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

That isn't true.

REVEREND PROSPERO

It's never been our ranch, our home, it's been yours. Little Dottie Miranda's proved to herself in the world of sharecroppers kids as good as the people who use to spit on them. Maybe you're willing to die for this place but I'm not.

Someone knocks on the front door. She moves to answer.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

No, I will not start over. Why should I? I've got everything I want right here. And I'm going to keep it, no matter what it cost me, or you.

John rummages through a drawer for a Confederate six shooter, and clumsily spins the chamber. He straps it on.

Dottie opens the door and steps back as Mary enters.

MARY

Dottie. Reverend.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Doc.

John flops down in a chair, strips off his shirt.

As they talk, Mary checks his pulse, listens to his heart, checks his eyes, ears, taps his back, the usual, rudimentary tests.

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CONTINUED: (3)

MARY

This is a small town you can't
sneeze with a half a dozen people
given you cold remedies.

(off his look)

I thought you put that iron away
for good.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Things change.

MARY

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

REVEREND 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.

REVEREND PROSPERO

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

MARY

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

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

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

REBEL

Ahmmm, 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Mary pulls up in her fancy ONE-HORSE CARRIAGE.

RIVERS

Miss, Mary. Where you off to?

MARY

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

RIVERS

You know my reputation.

MARY

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

RIVERS

You're not afraid?

MARY

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

Rivers smirks as Mary extends the reins to Rivers.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

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

Sunday sits there with a shotgun across his legs. Duncan cleans his six-shooter, concern evident on his face.

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CONTINUED:

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

GATOR

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

DUNCAN

Mary? No.

CORD

You gonna pick her up?

DUNCAN

On what charge?

ASA

Why don't you deputize a posse.

DUNCAN

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

ASA

The town has been taken over by a
criminal, doesn't that mean
anything to you?

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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

DUNCAN

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

EXT. LAKE STREAM - DAY

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

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

MARY

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

RIVERS

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

MARY

That's what I thought we I came
out here last year. 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. I'm going straight
to Boston. I don't care if I hear
of this part of the country again.

RIVERS

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

MARY

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

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

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CONTINUED:

RIVERS

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

MARY

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

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

RIVERS

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

MARY

It means a great deal to me.

RIVERS

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

MARY

You can say that.

RIVERS

Well, I have a job to do to.

MARY

Why do you have to do it at all?

RIVERS

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

MARY

You sound like a shrink than --

RIVERS

-- a killer?

MARY

You're awfully noseey, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

Just professionally. Kinda like a doctor in that respect.

Mary gestures towards her pistols.

MARY

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

RIVERS

No, but properly used it can be good for the human race. Don't move.

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

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

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

INT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

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

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

FLYNN

Why do Jim let her hang out around town?

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.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

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

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

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CONTINUED:

RIVERS

Clint.

CLINT

How did you know my name?

RIVERS

I read it on a wall some place.

Clint backs away from Rivers, scared shitless.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - THOROUGHFARE - DAY

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

CLINT

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

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

MARY

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

CLINT

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

Sawbones spits. No time for this --

SAWBONES

Sure! Graveyard's full of 'em.

Clint scoffs, gets on his horse and rides away.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

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

GATOR

Rivers, more coffee?

RIVERS

Sure. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATOR

(pouring)
And how is everything?

RIVERS

Very good.

GATOR

If there's anything you need
during your stay don't hesitate to
ask.

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

RIVERS

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

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

She studies their grim faces, her own, unreadable.

HAL

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

RIVERS

Talks cheap. I can spare you some.

HAL

You can drop this manhunt.

RIVERS

Now why would I want to do that?

FAT COUNCILMAN

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

FLYNN

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

RIVERS

I've already been paid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLYNN

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

RIVERS

Switching sides for money that's most unethical.

FLYNN

You're making a mistake.

RIVERS

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

Flynn, shaken. Him and the disgruntled men follow.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

The curtains are closed. In the semi-darkness we FIND, Marshal Duncan slumped in a chair.

Mary adjust a head mirror, catching light from a brightly illuminated oil lamp. She aims her light at his cornea.

DUNCAN

Anything be done, Doc?

MARY

Not much, thick glasses, maybe. But I'd say your marshaling days are over.

DUNCAN

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

MARY

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

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. Bait and needles him until there's nothing left to do but draw on her. Shoots him down in front of witnesses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

You can't hang someone on their reputation.

DUNCAN

In this case, the reputation is the woman. 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.

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.

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.

EXT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Rivers crosses the street, and heads to the saloon. Duncan follows at a safe distance.

Sierra comes out. She makes eye contact with Rivers -

RIVERS

Nice quite town you got here.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

RIVERS

Sounds like a law abiding town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

As Rivers heads inside, Sierra greets Duncan.

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

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN
Now you're talking sense.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

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

Rivers is knocking off her tequila and looking at Sierra,
moving among gaming tables, making small talk, playing up
to Rivers and with unmistakable effect.

A lecherous RANHHAND grabs her ass, growls like a bear,
Sierra playfully brushes his hand away.

RIVERS
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
Thanks, I'm wearing one already.

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. You feeling lucky tonight?

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

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

RIVERS
 Your whiskey is still watered.

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

DONNA JUANITA, a descendant of Spanish Conquistadors,
 crosses to their table; *slit in her showgirl garments, a
 holstered pistol strapped to her thigh. It's sexy.*

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
 Beers...two cervezas.

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

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

Both become aware of the sexual tension between them.
 Cord notices them together and is not happy about it.

Donna Juanita sets down the beers and leaves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

There's a drifter in the jail.

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. Why? He some kin?

RIVERS

Judges interest me, especially a professional executioner.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

RIVERS

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

Cord and two deputies approach. One seems jumpy, the other calm. FRANK GENTRY and HEMP REEGER, respectively.

CORD

Any trouble?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No trouble t'all.

CORD

You don't like me much, do ya?

RIVERS

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

FRANK GENTRY

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

RIVERS

He a friend of yours?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

He runs errands for me.

RIVERS

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

Frank lunges at Rivers. She grabs his cock with one hand,
her pistol with the other, and shoves it under his chin.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

Rivers un-cocks the pistol and then lets go of his balls.
Frank folds up slightly, hands to his aching nuts.

As Rivers goes, Sierra turns to Frank.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You're too quick tempered.

FRANK GENTRY

I've got a right to think.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

FRANK GENTRY

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.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

It want do a bit of harm to let
her get one day older. You got
that big bank job. Now after that
it's a different story.

FRANK GENTRY

Well I'll be telling it to her.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You won't like how it ends.

Frank bristles at the challenge to his competence.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Townspeople stop and pause as three GREYCOATS, faces caked with a mask of grey ash, long coats trailing behind them - - gallop into town.

REX, a tough-as-nails son-of-a-bitch with a shock of shoulder length hair. He has a hook for a left hand.

SKEETER, waves a black flag on a pole.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Rivers focus on a table where Poker plays solitaire, cheating at it, too. She approaches him.

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

POKER FLATS

...to your very good health.

RIVERS

And to yours --

POKER FLATS

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

RIVERS

I'm not a gentlemen.

Poker Flats smirks, resumes cheating at solitaire.

POKER FLATS

Poker Flats, at your service.

RIVERS

I know you from somewhere.

POKER FLATS

I don't think so.

RIVERS

No, I do, I know I do. I swear it's on the tip of my tongue...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A slight of hand, his pocket pistol slides out of his sleeve pointed at Rivers. Then, a CLICK!

Under the table. Rivers' pistol pointed at Poker.

POKER FLATS

Hah! Slippery one, ain't you.

Slowly his fingers tap the trigger - a locking mechanism slides open, a flame appears. Amused, he lights a cigar.

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.

MARY

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

Sierra holds her hard glare on Mary.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Rivers and Poker Flats, as Mary joins them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POKER FLATS

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

MARY

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.

Across the way, Rex sits with Skeeter and one other man at a table in the corner. A bottle of whiskey stands in the middle of the table.

Rex eye Rivers; burning with hatred in their eyes. The other's follow his gaze. They amble towards the table.

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 is not one to be caught off guard, but this news turns her so white that the next shade would be invisibility.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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

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

MARY

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

REX

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

RIVERS

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

REX

Don't push.

RIVERS

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

Mary gets between them, Rivers escorts Mary out...

REX

Susanna Cushman!

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

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

POKER FLATS

Settle down boys. Don't try it.

SKEETER

Yankees always hide behind women.

Poker shoots Skeeter in the forehead.

REX

That's all well and good, but you'd better kill me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

REX (CONT'D)

Because if I ever see you again,
I'm gonna put a bullet in your
little tiny head and blow your
brains from here to the Dakotas.

RIVERS

Reb, if I ever see you again, I'll
be sure'n give you a chance.

Poker chuckles, 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 Rivers.

POKER FLATS

I'm afraid I did that one, Jim.

Rivers turns, and heads out.

EXT/INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

CHURCH SUPPER. Much of the town has gathered. Fiddler and
banjo-player are playing a lively square dance for
dancers -- ranchers.

At the far end of the room is a table with punch bowl set
up, buffet of food, and a cluster of men and women about.

Duncan and Mary in mid-conversation.

MARY

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

DUNCAN

There's been talk around town.

MARY

People talk, it's what they do.

DUNCAN

About Rivers and you. What if
Henryetta's right? What if Rivers
is after you?

Mary stares, grows suspicious. Paranoid.

MARY

Why would she be after me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

MARY

You figure someone sent Rivers after you?

FLYNN

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

MARY

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

Rivers appears quietly, so as not to disrupt the proceedings. The townsfolk stop whatever they're doing.

PREACHER

Thou may be a woman here that thinks the book of judgment don't apply. That she can take pleasures in falsehoods, pleasures in exploiting her brothers, and sisters' sorrows. Well, to her, comes damnation a thousand fold! To her comes the devil's branding irons, heated to her tortured flesh.

HENRYETTA

Your beneath contempt and beyond redemption.

RIVERS

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

Rivers grins, walks out, Mary grabs her shawl to follow.

HENRYETTA

All she brought is fear and suspicion.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HENRYETTA (CONT'D)

Everybody's jumpy and distrustful.
Flying off the handle, starting
feuds. Somethin' got to be done,
doc.

Off Mary, concern dually noted.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - NIGHT

Torchlit streets. Rivers escorts Mary home. It's close and intimate, silence hanging over them like a fine mist.

Both become aware of the sexual tension between them.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - NIGHT

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

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

RIVERS

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

His POV: blurry vision finally comes to focus on Rivers as she rolls her Samuel Colt .44 and holsters it.

RESUME SCENE

DUNCAN

You remind some of everything they
come out West to git away from.

RIVERS

Then I reckon their quarrel's with
their past -- not me.

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

Lavishly furnished, richly decorated in pastels and lace.

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

She opens it, revealing a HIDDEN STAIRCASE inside. Donna Juanita emerges.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Search her room.

Donna Juanita nods - vanishes inside the clock.

Moments later, the door opens.

Rivers holds Sierra's look. No surprise in either face. She steps aside to let Rivers in.

Sierra takes Rivers' gunbelt, boots, hat, hangs them up. Rivers strips down to her corset, garters and stockings.

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.

The couple SLAM on top of the bed. She looks up at Rivers, her lips part, ready to be ravaged.

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

Rivers and Sierra, naked, in the throes of sweaty, slippery, body-grinding, bed-squeaking lesbian sex.

Rivers' back and ass *SLASHED TO RIBBONS* by Bull Whip beatings. Sierra's mouth open in climax.

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

A lit oil lamp slashes the blackness. Rivers asleep.

Suddenly, right next to Rivers' ear, the click of a revolver being cocked. She opens her eyes and looks at the freshly-fucked face of Sierra.

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

RIVERS

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

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

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

A beat, Rivers let's Sierra up, hands her the pistol.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

How long you been a union spy?

RIVERS

News travels fast In Purgatory Gulch.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

It's the only thing that does.

RIVERS

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Is that supposed to excite me?

RIVERS

I usually figure my women. You come harder.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I'm not your women.

RIVERS

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

RIVERS

The Rose of the Rio Bravo.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

My what big ears you have.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

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

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

RIVERS

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Yes, red, white and blue all over.

RIVERS

All over?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Of course there are a few
copperheads here, but they're
harmless. We know which side paid
you off?

RIVERS

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

RIVERS

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

Sierra tries to slug her, but Rivers grabs her arms. They
wrestle until passion takes over.

There's a commotion from down the hall. A beat, Sierra
hops up, slips into an attractive robe,

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - A BROTHEL ROOM - DAY

Room of S&M and bondage.

A naked PROSTITUTE 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.

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

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

Rivers searches the room, the drawers, lots of lingerie.

In the b.g., the Grandfather clock opens, Donna Juanita emerges from the hidden staircase, watching Rivers.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

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 Donna Juanita.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Señora, nothing. She searched
yours.

Off Sierra, not surprised.

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

Sierra lies naked in bed, staring at the ceiling, counting the seconds. She turns her head, looks at Rivers, sleeping.

She runs a finger across Rivers' cheek.

She carefully extracts herself from bed, her naked form in silhouette from the dying embers of an oil lamp.

Sierra retrieves Rivers lacy corset, searches it. A hidden zipper, which she undoes, tucked inside is a 5x7 photo.

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

It stuns Sierra. She eyes Rivers, walks to her armoire where she pulls her confederate six-shooter.

RIVERS

Come back to bed.

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

Rivers opens the covers, beseeching her. Sierra returns it, then turns to Rivers with a smile to re-join her.

Sierra still has the photo in hand.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Your husband?

RIVERS

Yes.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The war took him?

RIVERS

No, the fever.

EXT. BACK OF MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

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

INT. JAILHOUSE - 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!

DUNCAN

Is there anything special you want?

SAM

Yeah - a hacksaw and a gun!

DUNCAN

Will you settle for a steak?

INT. LIVERLY STABLES - DAY

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

SAWBONES (O.S.)

I shoed and fed him.

Rivers turns to Sawbones, nods her appreciation.

JEBEDIAH GANT walks his horse in. He's young, vain. A pretty boy. A Colt Peacemaker with pearl handle glinting at his hip.

GANT

They say you're pretty good with a gun.

RIVERS

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

GANT

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

I may have seen your name of a poster somewhere.

GANT

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

RIVERS

Mind telling me why you're after my scalp?

GANT

Folks have been talking about you more than they do me. Let's just say I don't want to see you hang from a rope.

Gant sneers, rides off.

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - DAY

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

INT. CAVE OF OUTLAWS - DAY

A spacious cave, lit by oil lamps hanging on the walls, along with Quantrill's black flag. Bedrolls laid out.

Two hard-bitten outlaws, RUBE MAMERUN, and JEP KESLER, squat over a pan-roasted rabbit, which they eat with cloth napkins and silverware.

Sierra and Poker join them. Jep pulls out a horse-choke wad of cash starts ticking off hundreds and handing them to Sierra.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Any trouble?

RUBE MANERUN

Yeah, with the sheriff. They need a new one now.

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - DAY

A series of caves on the edge of a rocky slope.

Donna Juanita, wearing a sexy riding outfit, and six shooter, looks down a dark smudge on the plains.

Below, a SINGLE RIDER appears. Donna Juanita puts her spyglass to her eye:

POV: It's Rivers searching tracks.

RESUME SCENE.

Donna Juanita pockets the spyglass, hefts the Henry repeater. From off screen, a VOICE abruptly intrudes:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE (O.S.)

No!

Donna Juanita spins, GUN UP -- SEES Sierra and Poker standing behind her.

Sierra sees Rivers below. No panic in her eyes.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The terrain's too rocky. She'll never pick up my trail.

POKER FLATS

So it's the judge she's after. How do you know this isn't a trap for the Rev. That she's using the Judge for bait to catch the Rev?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

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.

Donna Juanita turns back around, draws a bead on Rivers in the distance. Shuts one eye, sights down the barrel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA JUANITA
(cocks her Henry)
Señora, best place for a clean
shot.

Pause. Pause. Sierra grabs the barrel and lowers it.

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - DAY

Rivers rides into the canyon, reins in her horse, checking her perimeter. She has no idea where she is.

She dismount, walks around. Looks up at the hills. The sound of horses hooves from behind. A rider approaches.

Rivers turns to find Poker riding up on her rear.

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

POKER FLATS
I've done my time.

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

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

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

Poker looks back at Rivers, his alignment yet unclear.

POKER FLATS
I'm a gambler and I play the odds.

In the distance, Rivers notices smoke signals.

POKER FLATS
The second one today. What do you
think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

We better get to some high ground.
If there's a way up there...

POKER FLATS

I'll find it. I like a barber for
my haircuts.

INT. RANCH HOME - DAY

The Rev stuffs clothes into a bag as Dottie looks on.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Sierra thinks it's a good idea.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

That's your way, isn't it? Back
away from anything tougher than a
steak. Fall down and play dead
when a man tells you to.

REVEREND PROSPERO

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

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Seeing's how she's the one with
those notches on her belt, I'd say
that makes her more of a man than
any of you.

REVEREND PROSPERO

What do you want? A punch in the
nose?

DOTTIE MIRANDA

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

Fed up, the Rev grabs his bag and storms out.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - BORDELLO - DAY

In a dimly-lit room, an expensive velvet love nest.

WHORES of various ages and ethnicities. Some wear
dresses, others sexy lingerie. Schmooze in subdued tones
to a few MEN who, are being invited to choose between
them.

POLLYANNA, black, beautiful, her arms around Gant.
Moments later, Sierra bustles in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You were told to stay out of town!

GANT

You given orders?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Yes! The one I gave to Cord. He spent ten years in Yuma State prison fore killing someone for not taking'em.

GANT

He shoot him in the back?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

GANT

I need a place to hold up.

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

A spacious corner room, the windows of which look out over the main street. There is a roll-top desk in the corner, framed photos on the wall.

Sierra sits at her desk. Donna Juanita and Poker Flats nearby. Gant stands front and center.

GANT

How much is this costing me?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

That depends on how much your worth. Dead or alive.

GANT

Why?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I sell insurance. If you're wanted for a robbery, say a thousand reward dead or alive you pay me the one thousand in cash. In return I provide you protection from the law, a good place to hide out, good men to work with you when needed, and a freebie.

GANT

Don't sound too bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I have rules. I get half of whatever you take. You don't leave without seeing me first, and I get paid in advance. What's the price on you?

GANT

Ten thousand.

Reaches into his saddle-bag, pulls out a bundle of cash.

GANT

A carpet bag full of Yankee money.

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

GANT

Don't you want to see Rivers out of town?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

The devil will get her some day.

GANT

I'd like to help.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

Sierra takes her cut, she turns to Donna Juanita.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Take'em. Get him settled.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

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

REBEL

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

YANKEE

Wasn't me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REBEL

How do I know that?

YANKEE

I wouldn't have missed.

Yankee's dead serious. Rebel chuckles. Then something catches Rivers eyes:

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

REBEL

Sure is purty, ain't she?

YANKEE

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

RIVERS

Old timer. You got a name?

REBEL

Ya know I'm getting plum forgetful.

YANKEE

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

Rivers raises an eyebrow, crosses the street.

EXT. BANK OF PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Dottie comes out, heads for her buggy.

RIVERS

Allow me to introduce myself.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

I know who you are.

RIVERS

By reputation?

DOTTIE MIRANDA

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

We might talk bout it sometime.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

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

As Rivers helps her up into her buggy...

DOTTIE MIRANDA

If you happen to be riding down by the river road I might be swimming there.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Duncan and Sunday play checkers. Both barely look up as Sierra saunters in.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

She's not after doc.

DUNCAN

Is she now?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

A woman's intuition.

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

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

Dutch Henry. That's who she's waiting on.

(off his look)

She stays in town, one, no more than two. Things get complicated after that and Rivers don't like complications.

DUNCAN

So either who she come for is not here yet, or don't live in town. That would make sense. I better warn him.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

How? He'll be here today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat, then Duncan turns to Sunday --

DUNCAN

Will, see if you can intercept
him.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Rivers walks towards the hotel. She sees Duncan coming out of the TELEGRAPH OFFICE. He lights a match, burns a TELEGRAM in his hand.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY

O'HENRY, the Telegraph operator snaps awake as a message comes over the wire. As the machine clicks he diligently writes the message.

A bell rings above the door as Rivers saunters in. Without looking up...

O'HENRY

Gimmie a minute I've got an
important message.

Rivers watches him closely, listening deliberately, soaking in the key strokes.

Over this we hear her thoughts...

RIVERS(V.O.)

In answer to your inquiry; Judge
Dutch Henry Brown departed
Deadwood two days ago. Should be
in your area sometime today. US
Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves has
been dispatched from Fort Smith,
Arkansas. End of message.

Beat, O'Henry looks up, shocked to see that its' Rivers.

RIVERS

You know now that contraption
fascinates me, can you take a
douses as fast as it comes over
the wire?

O'HENRY

Of course that's why I'm here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

Well if it isn't too much of a secret what did it just say?

O'HENRY

It's against company regulations to give out that information. But being that you're so curious it told about the stagecoach being delayed alright. Satisfied?

RIVERS

I got the message.

EXT. THE SILVER SPUR/ DINING AREA - DAY

O'Henry hurries in with a telegram, hands it to Duncan finishing up his meal. Sierra joins them.

DUNCAN

Did you tell anyone else about this?

O'HENRY

No, it's addressed to you. But Rivers came in, asking about the message. But I didn't tell her --

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You didn't have to, she's former union spy, well acquainted with the Morse code.

INT. BANK - FLYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

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

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

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

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - MAIN STREET - DAY

Hal and Cord walk towards the bank.

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

INT. BANK - 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 pistol at them... Flynn stumbles backwards...

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.

In the background, townsfolk doing bank business look on.

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 afraid. You know why? I'll tell ya because the mark of Cain is on you'll heads too. Tell them what you done, Cord. How you robbed that payroll on the stagecoach. Remember --

CORD

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

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

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

INT. BANK - FLYNN'S OFFICE - DAY

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

EXT. BANK - DAY

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

HENRYETTA

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

GATOR

Ain't seen nuthin' like it.

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

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - DAY

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

Finally, Mary breaks the silence.

MARY

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

RIVERS

I wasn't surprised.

Rivers goes to the basin to wash her hands.

MARY

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

RIVERS

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

MARY

And that makes it all right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

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

MARY

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

RIVERS

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

Mary just looks at her, emotional, torn.

Rivers kisses her. Mary recovers right quick from her startled state and kisses back, scared yet thrilled at the same time.

MARY

They'll lynch us.

RIVERS

No one's lynching anybody.

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

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - DAY

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

MARY

Shh. The others.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She lies next to Rivers, traces the scars on Rivers body. Kisses them tenderly.

MARY

Do you think they heard us?

RIVERS

Who cares.

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.

Rivers kisses her. Mary returns it with equal passion.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Cord, Hal, and a few other townsfolk, seething in anger.

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 -

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.

DUNCAN

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORD

Afraid you can't make our laws
stick?

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.

(then)

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

HAL

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

DUNCAN

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

CORD

Jim, do what you have to do. I'll
make sure the town council backs
you up and make it official.

DUNCAN

Well it gives me an idea.

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

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.

HAL

Now what's all that supposed to
mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARY

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

ASA

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

MARY

Somewhere between the firing pin
and the percussion cap.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

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

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

RIVERS

You cold or scared, Marshal?

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Got to be cold, 'cause there ain't
nothing frightening around here.

RIVERS

Something I can do for you?

DUNCAN

I come to tell you to get out of
town.

RIVERS

Why?

DUNCAN

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

RIVERS

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

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

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

On second thought, Sunday eases his gun back in its
holster.

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

DUNCAN

Why didn't you kill me?

RIVERS

Your name's not on the bullet.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Duncan sits at his desk. Mary uses 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.

DUNCAN

I understand. Go home, kid.

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

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.

As he leaves... Sierra hurries in, concerned.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You all right, Jim?

DUNCAN

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

MARY

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

Duncan gets between them both, something deeper at play.

DUNCAN

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

MARY

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

DUNCAN

A quart of whiskey works just as well.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

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

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

But Dutch Henry fixes his steely gaze on Rivers.

RIVERS

Well, if it isn't the honorable Judge Dutch Henry "the hangman" Brown, beloved chairman of the city council complete with his assortment of housebroken ringtail puppets.

DUTCH HENRY

You can't go around terrorizing the citizens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

You didn't expect a Sunday school outing when I showed up, did you?

RIVERS

Who's going to stop me. You?

DUTCH HENRY

The law, public opinion, decency.

He continues on towards the Marshal's office.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - JAILHOUSE - DAY

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

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.

They turn towards Sam standing before them.

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUTCH HENRY

The bible tells us that it is a grievous sin to die by one's own hand. For that alone, Flynn will never feel the closeness, love, and warmth of our Heavenly father. May the Lord have mercy upon his soul.

A beat, his remarks gives the townspeople pause, then--

TOWNSPEOPLE

Amen.

DUTCH HENRY

If anyone wishes to say something...

Rivers trots up on her horse.

DUTCH HENRY

You did this.

RIVERS

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

With that, she spurs her horse and rides off.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Most of the town is deserted, still at the funeral.

INT. CHURCH - BELL TOWER - DAY

Clint, a Henry rifle in hand, flings himself into the spiral stairway leading UP -- to the steeple... and the bell tower. High ground, as

Down below - with Rivers heading towards the hotel.

Clint blows a shot in her direction, kicks splinters from a hitching post.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

A second shot splitters wood but miss, Clint's a terrible shot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An inaudible whistle, Caesar lays down. Rivers rips her .405 Winchester from its saddle-holster, forts up behind Caesar, and lays her rifle across his belly.

She LOOKS UP in the direction the shots came from --

The BELL TOWER. Smoke curls as Clint lines up the Henry.

A window in the saloon. And Sierra, peering from behind a lace curtain at the unfolding retribution.

Donna Juanita comes over and whispers in Sierra's ear, Sierra's expression darkening as she listens.

INT. CHURCH - BELL TOWER - DAY

Clint's vengefully tracking Rivers as he fires again --

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - DAY

Rivers measures her shot through a WITHERING FUSILLADE--
!! Glass SHATTERS. Wood POPS and SPLINTERS around her--!

And, a loud BOOOOOM. Rivers' round drills Clint in the shoulder, SPINS him. Clint screams, tumbles backwards out the side of the damn turret.

But not before his booted foot is CAUGHT IN THE BELL ROPE, and the rope YANKS TAUT, and --

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Clint jerks in mid-fall, dangling upside down on the side of the church as the bell PEALS DEAFENINGLY above him.

He kicks and swings in a desperate bid to right himself.

Bleeding from a wound, blood rushes to his head, as he tries to aim his gun at the rope and shoot himself free.

He fires. Misses.

Rivers up, stalks toward him. Face flushed with anger.

A group of townsfolk hurrying back from the funeral. Mute. Stunned into silence.

In the bunch, Duncan and Mary eye Clint dangling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

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

Rivers shoots.

The ROPE, CUT CLEAN. Hemp UNRAVELING, as Clint hits the ground with a sickening crunch. His leg broken. He's in excruciating pain.

Mary nods to some men to carry him to her office.

EXT. COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY

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

Not pleased one bit, as he confronts several townsfolk.

DUTCH HENRY

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

A beat, he grabs a hammer and some nails.

DUTCH HENRY

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

The men nod.

DUTCH HENRY

Now bring some more lumber.

RIVERS

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

Dutch Henry all but ignores Rivers.

RIVERS

Pretty wife, you got there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUTCH HENRY

Why, you dirty...

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

RIVERS

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

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The sun is beating down.

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

INT. RANCH HOME - DAY

Hemp grabs Dottie roughly by her arm, as she struggles to break free. Fights to no avail.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Get your hand off of me ya barrel boardin', slumguzzling screw!

HEMP REEGER

Whoa, filly, you sure do have spunk.

Sierra stands there. Hemp lets go of her. Dottie gets in Sierra's face.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

You think you're such a big woman in this town, Sierra Nevada Rose. Just cuz you own everything don't give ya the right to treat people liker ya do! Ya should be ashamed of yourself.

Sierra backhands Dottie viciously.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Shut your chatterbox. If she tries to leave throw some lead at her.

INT. THE SILVER SPUR - DAY

Whores are passed around. Rivers moves to 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.

Sierra puts a hand of Dutch Henry's shoulder.

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

DUTCH HENRY
Yea, what's that?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Lucky at card. Unlucky at love.

RIVERS
Please, gentlemen. Don't get up.

Reeves pulls a chair from the next table and sits opposite Dutch Henry.

The men stare at Rivers. Beat. Beat.

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

RIVERS
Judges interest me.

HAL
Don't give Rivers any excuses.

CORD
She's counting on you trying,
Judge.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

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

CORD

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

Rivers tosses a drink in his face.

Then, all of a sudden— Cord flies into a rage at Rivers,
charging her.

She swiftly aims her Samuel colt .45 at Cord.

CORD

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

RIVERS

You ain't never going to find out,
I'm never going to take it off.

A beat, he straightens his nice suit and sits back down.

DUTCH HENRY

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

RIVERS

And how I operate isn't?

DUTCH HENRY

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

RIVERS

Sometimes dead men leave ghost's
behind.

Dutch Henry raises an eyebrow.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

Save the sermon for church.

DUTCH HENRY

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

Dutch Henry pulls out a pencil and paper.

DUTCH HENRY

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

Rivers studies him a long moment, then --

DUTCH HENRY

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

INT. MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE - DAY

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

HAL

Why did you let her get away with that?

CORD

She wanted me to draw. I wonder why?

Cord sits himself in a chair. Asa does not look at him; his face, hard now, looks straight at them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASA

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

Cord's surprised by this revelation.

ASA

That news to you. Imagine a smart
operator like you missing out on a
fact like that.

INT. HOTEL WASHROOM - DAY

Rivers relaxes a nice size tub, shaving her naughty bits
with a straight razor. A sharp RAP on the door.

She quickly replaces the razor in its leather pouch.
Reaches for the Henry, and --

She OPENS the door, wrapped in a perilously short towel,
holding the Henry at waist level.

Her caller is Gator, a bit skittish staring down the
barrel of that rifle, holding two buckets of hot water.

Rivers gestures with her Henry for him to go ahead. Gator
dumps the water into the tube.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Poker stands by the door, watches the hall, as Sierra
searches the room.

Once again, Sierra grabs Rivers' sexy corset, open the
hidden zipper, pulls out a piece of paper neatly tucked
inside. Sierra unfolds it,

*JOHN WILKES BOOTH - 'WANTED FOR MURDER - REWARD \$100,000
DEAD OR ALIVE. A crude likeness to Reverend Prospero, if
not for the beard.*

Sierra shows the poster to Poker,

POKER FLATS

Check for a boot pistol.

Meanwhile she resumes her quest, grabs Rivers' boots,
lifts a Deringer, *it's Booth's Deringer, the one he used
to kill Lincoln.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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?

Poker shuts the door, makes his escape through the window. Sierra shuts it. Disappears off-screen.

A long beat. A key turns in the lock.

Rivers enters, wears no undergarments, just a sexy silk and lace chemise with Mexican-style embroidery, holding her Henry.

Not surprised to find Sierra, who lies on the bed, naked, except for an ornate steel CHASTITY BELT with a padlock.

RIVERS

I thought this room was private.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

It is, isn't it.

She holds out her neck chain with a key dangling from it and secures it around Rivers' neck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

For you. Anything. Anytime.

RIVERS

It doesn't pay to declare
yourself.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I've declared myself. Now you know
where I stand.

Sierra reaches over and turns Rivers' face to hers and
then leans over gives her a long sweet kiss.

RIVERS

It just wouldn't work. That's all.

Pause... as this sets in. Sierra nods slowly: unreadable.
Sierra gets back into her Courtesan wardrobe.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

She tosses a pouch of coins to Rivers.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

RIVERS

What you do rob the US Mint?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No, the train carrying U.S. Army
gold shipment. Up near Fort
Abraham Lincoln last year. My boys
pulled that job.

Sierra studies Rivers who hesitates.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

RIVERS

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

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.

(gestures to her guns)

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

RIVERS

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

Sierra locks eyes with Rivers. Fierce.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Then don't be surprised if it remains unfinished permanently.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

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

CORD

What room is Sierra in?

GATOR

She said she'd shoot me if I told.

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

CORD

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

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

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

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

Cord paces as Sierra enters. Cord promptly confronts her.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORD

I'd like to know how we stand.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Same way we always stood.

CORD

That's not good enough.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

What's wrong with it?

CORD

You have strange friends, Sierra.

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.

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

POKER FLATS

Release the Rose of Rio Bravo.
Please.

(he complies,
startled)

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 than sweating every time a door opens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CORD

Rio Bravo?

POKER FLATS

Mexican's name the Rio Grande
below the border.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You don't know what I did in the
war. I've been an outlaw. I drove
thousands of cattle across the
Bravo and rifles 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. Once, a
General's wife. 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

When you start playing cards with
the devil, Cord, there's no limit.
Maybe you heard of us --
Beauregard's bushwhackers.

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. I got more
men than the US Army. And we still
got scores to settle with you damn
Yankees.

(then)

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

INT. MARY'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Rivers and Mary have just finishing a southern meal with all the fixings and are carrying their dishes to the kitchen. Mary, ample cleavage.

RIVERS

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

MARY

Tell me something...did you have to kill him? How about hittin' them in the arm?

RIVERS

A wounded man can still kill you.

MARY

You let Rex live.

RIVERS

He can't shoot with his left.

MARY

And what about the marshal?

RIVERS

He would have been, but I felt in a charitable mood today.

MARY

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

RIVERS

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

This surprises Mary.

MARY

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

INT. MCLYNTOCK'S LAND OFFICE - NIGHT

Crammed in the office space, Sierra and the Preacher are getting a dozen or so townsfolk riled up, most who've had one too many to drink.

PREACHER

She's imposed on our town long
enough.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

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

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

In the back room, there isn't much light as a nervous Hal holds up a lantern. Sierra nearby.

Henryetta pulls back a rug, to reveal a hidden trap door in the floor, which Frank and Hemp open.

They descend the steps, pop open a crate of rifles.

As the mob pours in, they start passing out the rifles.

Henryetta holds out a rifle. Sawbones eyes it. But doesn't take it.

HENRYETTA

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.

Sierra nods, hands out badges.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

We'll make it legal.

HAL

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE
Deputize 'em. And be quick about
it.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - NIGHT

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

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Duncan writes in a diary.

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

All of them panicked. Duncan tries to establish order.

DUNCAN
Let's all keep calm, and talk
about this like civilized folks.

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

DUNCAN
Crowds can get unruly, Preacher.
Our common problem is a matter for
the law.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNCAN

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

Sierra pushes through the crowd, *just a dog-step behind her* -- Frank, Hemp, Jep, and Rube.

CORD

Jim, I don't like it any more than you do, but what's the alternative?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

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

EXT. MARY'S HOME - NIGHT

Frank and his henchmen are dismounting. At a hand signal from Frank, they fan out a foot.

In the b.g., the mob hangs back, some carrying torches.

INT. MARY'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rivers and Mary sit in warm water and suds in a nice bathtub. Mary leans back into Rivers.

Mary takes a sponge and washes her legs seductively.

RIVERS

Why they throw you out?

MARY

They didn't like the company I was keeping. And I don't blame them.

RIVERS

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Long story. Sometimes your get in so deep you can't get out. Maybe you never get in that deep.

RIVERS

I try not to.

MARY

Yea, I noticed that. I wonder why.

RIVERS

Maybe I want people to stay on the other side of the table. This fella you were talkin about. What he do?

MARY

He robbed a bank and shot a couple of people.

RIVERS

He then ran out on you?

MARY

No, but I might run out on him.

RIVERS

You scared?

MARY

I'm getting unscared. I've been scared the last two years. Getting up in the morning, going to bed at night. Getting beat up. Scared of being alive.

RIVERS

Why didn't you pull out?

MARY

I don't know. I just couldn't. It got to be like a bad habit, drinking too much. You know it's no good for you but you want it just the same.

RIVERS

Were you in love with him?

MARY

I guess it always starts that way. Pretty soon the train is going so fast you're afraid to jump off.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARY (CONT'D)

So you can't scare me. Only one thing could scare me again and I'm going to run so far he'll never catch me. Oh I'm not trying to give you this with a piano. You asked and I'm telling you.

A POUNDING on front door. Both trade nervous glances.

Mary RISES, soapsuds clinging to her body. Mesmerized, Rivers watches her step out of the tub--

Mary peeks out the window sees the ANGRY MOB outside her home. Alarmed. Rivers joins her.

RIVERS

A posse feels safe because it's big. They only make a big target. I can pick off a handful The rest of them will lose their guts and go home.

MARY

Stay in bed. Doctor's orders.

Our near-naked Mary in her sheer peignoir, shrugs on a silk robe, quickly brushes her hair with dubious results.

EXT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME - NIGHT

Mary opens the door and steps on the porch, SEEING the lynch mob out front. Lit torches in hand.

MARY

What can I do for you.

FRANK GENTRY

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

MARY

Word travels fast.

FRANK GENTRY

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

MARY

No one was trying to. That any of your business?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEP KESLER

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

FRANK GENTRY

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

(then)

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

MARY

Well in that case, you better
start riding.

FRANK GENTRY

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

MARY

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

JEP KESLER

Look, were through talkin'

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

RIVERS

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

Rivers sees their tin stars on their coats.

FRANK GENTRY

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

JEP KESSLER

And you can tell your friends to
keep out of Purgatory Glutch. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIVERS

You gettin' tired of living?

FRANK GENTRY

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

Rivers walks right up to Frank.

RIVERS

I sure wish you'd draw those guns
instead of shootin' off at the
mouth.

Lightning fast - Frank draws, Rivers snags his hand,
twists it, wrapping his arm backward around her waist.
With him still gripping his revolver,

She FANS THE HAMMER as she turns, shooting the gun-thugs
as they try and rush her.

With a final yank, Rivers pulls the pistol from Frank's
hand and crashes it down on his skull

RIVERS

Give my regards to those below.

Rivers draws her LeMat Revolver, flicks a lever, BLASTS
Frank to kingdom com with its 20 gauge barrel.

Rivers comes towards the angry mob, who steps back.

RIVERS

This is a rotten town with a lot
of rotten people in it.

They all just stare back at her, terrified.

RIVERS

You surprise me, preacher. I
expected the other's to run with
the wolves, but you -- 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
about 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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

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. Skeleton Tusk. A newspaper is a voice and you raised that voice against that kid and hammered away and made the town think he was guilty even before a trial.

ASA

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

RIVERS

Three. Sheriff locked in his own jail. He let the mob get to him. Ain't that right, Marshal? Hal mercer led the mob. So one word out of you Asa, and you're seconds from being nothing but an obituary notice in your own paper!

A COLLECTIVE GASP! This visibly discomforts Duncan.

RIVERS

Now there are many of you! I can hit a lot more of you before I go down. But it's only fair to warn you that I'll kill you, Asa, Hal, the Marshal, preacher, and a few more of you. Now I'll stay here until I'm ready to leave. Now I warn you: If you come against me again, you'll dress light. I hear it's warm down there.

Dutch Henry stands quietly, after hearing it all.

DUNCAN

Go home you fools.

The crowd disperses. Rivers escorts Mary back inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RIVERS

The crowd won't collect again. Mob courage is a temporary thing. Once it's gone, it's gone for good.

MARY

If they were scared as I was they're still running.

INT. DOC HALLADAY'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Rivers in her corset, garters and stockings, grabs her pants and shirt, and dresses.

Mary's silhouette behind a wardrobe screen. She's in the midst of changing clothes, it's hot. Pokes her head out.

Mary comes out in a blouse and skirt, steps into her heels. They search each other's eyes for a beat, then - -

MARY

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

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

MARY

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

Rivers takes her face and kisses her long and hard.

Mary throws herself against her, as if having leapt off a bridge, into Rivers arms. She kisses Rivers back with all her force.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

I don't believe that.

Mary finally breaks the kiss, then--

MARY

I said leave.

Mary grabs her gun belt and hat and hands it to Rivers. Mary watches her go, suddenly overwhelmed with sadness.

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.

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?

DUNCAN

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

MARY

You're a good man, Jim Duncan. You've done a good job with this town.

EXT. PURGATORY GULCH - NIGHT

Thunder rumbles, the threat of rain.

Rivers follows, but as she passes a storefront alcove --

Dottie Miranda in a long cape and hat, covering her courtesan wardrobe, REACHES from the shadows and pulls her into the alcove. WHISPERS urgently:

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIVERS

Lady, I ain't no fiddle, so why are you playing me? You weren't at the River yesterday.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Sierra's gun-thug had me locked away. Once I snuck out, I came as fast as I could.

A flash of lightening illuminates Sierra, in the distance, watching them.

INT. RIVERS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Rivers enters, locks the door. Pulls the shade at the window, as Dottie Miranda gets comfortable.

RIVERS

That's rather foolish, don't you think? Using Shakespearean names. Dottie Miranda and Reverend Prospero

DOTTIE MIRANDA

His idea. I didn't care much. By the way, it's Pillar. Pillar Wilcox.

Rivers takes out a folded poster and shows it to Dottie Miranda.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

I was a Copperhead before the war. I got no hard feelings towards gray backs. They did what they had to do.

Rivers digs into her saddle bag, retrieves the pouch of gold given to her by Sierra, hands it to Dottie Miranda.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

They're keeping him out in Rustler's Canyon.

RIVERS

What's this Cave of Outlaws?

DOTTIE MIRANDA

A place she keeps for thieves and murderer's alike to lie low.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOTTIE MIRANDA (CONT'D)

They pay her the bounty on their heads and she keeps half of what they take in.

(off Rivers' look)

But he ain't there. You'll find him at Sierra's Rancho. The trail will be hard to find in that vast rocky country at night. It's also Apache territory.

INT. CAVE OF OUTLAWS - NIGHT

Dark now. The fire on which they've cooked food is dying down.

On a makeshift bedroll, Gant, his passion PEAKED, panting, sweaty, rolls off Sierra, who, cuddles with him, soothing him to rest...to sleep.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Does killing mean that much to you?

GANT

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Then get going.

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - NIGHT

Just before dawn, not a cloud in the sky.

Rivers rides up into the hills, finds a spot and dismounts.

She reaches into her saddle bag, pulls out some binoculars and glasses the Rancho and the surrounding area.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A couple of SENTRIES with rifles, guarding the entrance into the Rancho.

EXT. COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY

On the platform, Sam stands near a hanging noose, in restraints. Judge Dutch Henry by the trapdoor lever. And, at the base of the gallows:

THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF THE TOWN stands watching the proceedings like a crowd at a carnival.

Judge Dutch Henry grabs a black hood. Sam laughs at the absurdity.

SAM

The suns setting for me. It'd be a shame to miss it.

Sam spits out his tobacco.

Judge Dutch Henry loops the noose around the condemned man's neck, then tightens the knot so it's snug.

He retreats to the lever and closes the Bible.

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

Her and Judge Dutch Henry make eye contact --

Judge Dutch Henry YANKS THE LEVER.

The trap SPRINGS OPEN, Sam PLUMMETS. But instead of his neck breaking, the rope is short -- and WE SEE him choke helplessly as he jerks and dangles.

Sam continues to KICK and swing, struggling to put himself out of his misery. The crowd gasps! Horrified.

Rivers draws. BAM--!

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

RIVERS

The law states that if a criminal survives an execution and there is no proof of criminal conspiracy he is absolved of all the crimes with which he was charged. You can't hang a man twice, Dutchie, that's the law.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COWPOKE

We're turning loose a murderer?

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Rivers rides up, dismounts, tethers her horse. Gant steps off the boardwalk and calls Rivers out.

The two face off squarely. The tension draws tight...
Gant smiles.

GANT

I can take you, Rivers.

RIVERS

Don't try it.

GANT

I can drop you with one shot.

RIVERS

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

Mary hurries up the street to them, accompanied by
Duncan. Townspeople start dispersing, expecting trouble.

RIVERS

*I can shoot the venom out of a
snake's fang at 30 feet. Come any
closer and I'll kill ya.*

GANT

That's a gambler's bluff.

Gant draws with great speed, but Rivers' faster. Blam!

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

MARY

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

MARSHAL DUNCAN

Gant was trying to cut another
notch in his ivory handle. I told
him once, I told him fifty times.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHAL DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Well it don't matter much now, I
guess he's been encouraged so long
to cut the deck any other way.

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.

The door to the office opens and Rivers barges in, stares
hard at Sierra. Sierra, all pretenses gone.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Someone seems to have gotten out
of the wrong side of the bed this
mornin'. Lets drink to her
recovery.

Sierra grabs glasses and a decanter. She pours drinks.

RIVERS

You and I both know why I'm here.

Sierra throws Whiskey in Rivers face. Rivers SLAPS her
hard. She draws her gun to coldly blow Rivers head off.

Rivers quickly slaps it away - Sierra's GUNSHOT goes
wild. Rivers draws her pistol, quiet but firm.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

You gonna shoot me?

RIVERS

Snakes like you usually die of
their own poison.

(heading out...)

When you see Mr. Booth. You tell
him I'll pay my respects.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA JUANITA

I've got the men waiting.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

If she gets past you, just let her ride in.

Donna Juanita expresses her displeasure. Sierra brandishes a gun belt.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I can explain more, but for now you'll just have to trust me.

Both women leap onto the horses mid-stride. With no further delay, the two wheels about and takes off.

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - DAY

The noonday sun beating down. Merciless. The CRY of a hawk. Sierra and Donna Juanita ride hard.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

With Gator, who sits behind the desk, strumming on a guitar, as Rivers approaches at a fast clip with her saddlebag and rifles.

RIVERS

I'm checking out.

She tosses several silver dollars on the counter.

RIVERS

Keep the change.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Gator burst through the door...

GATOR

Jim, she's leavin'. Just checked out now.

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.

DUNCAN

Like who?

MARY

Reverend Prospero.

DUNCAN

Doc, how much to you know about him?

MARY

A quiet man, usually keeps to himself. Sort of a recluse. But he flew off the handle when he seen Rivers was in town.

GATOR

I wonder why?

MARY

A few months back he came down with yellow fever so I kept him in my office to watch him closely. He'd read Shakespeare. He fell asleep with it, so I went to put it aside. This article fell out. I didn't think much about it at the time. I thought it was odd he'd keep something like that.

DUNCAN

Do you remember the article?

MARY

Something about Lincoln's murder.

INT. EPITAPH - DAY

Duncan, Gator, and Mary stand with Asa, covered in ink, and doing his best to keep it all casual-

DUNCAN

Asa, I need to see your old files.

ASA

Any special year?

MUNCY

Eighteen sixty-five. Anything on Lincoln's assassination.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASA

Oh, any particular reason?

DUNCAN

That remains to be seen.

Asa 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?

ASA

All lies. Listen to this. Report of death of John Wilkes Booth. April 24, 1865. Reports have been received of the assassination of President Lincoln...John Wilkes Booth was killed last night at Garrett's farm near Port Royal Virginia.

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

(reading)

Booth and two armed accomplices took refuge in a barn where federal agents 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 men surrounded the conflagration. 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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ASA (CONT'D)

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.

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 was he left unguarded? Why was the telegraph shut off? By official order. And the Potomac bridge. The only bridge by which he could escape. Why was it left open that far side of Garrett's barn? The trial of his accomplices a secret. And they were young with hoods over their heads and a gag in their mouths.

MARY

And Booth?

ASA

Still alive. There's been reports of him from Texas to California. Places in Boston.

DUTCH HENRY

That Reverend. I believe you said his name was John Willis Prospero?

GATOR

He limps. The assassin caught one of his spurs on one of the flags draped over the President's box when he jumped from it to the stage at Ford's theatre. Broke his darn leg. Dr. Mudd was sent to prison for setting it. He testified he'd be maimed for life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARY

No, if you knew the kinda person
he is...

ASA

I know he was a man of the
theatre, did some acting back
east. Boston I believe. Always
quoting Shakespeare too. This
clipping he apparently keeps. Got
to admit, the name's similar to
John Wilkes. What more do you
want?

MARY

There's this. Reverend Prospero
and Dotti Miranda. Those are
Shakespearean names.

JUDGE DUTCH HENRY

Why, if this man is Booth, this
would start a Civil war right here
in Purgatory Glutch. The Yankees
will want to lynch him and the
Rebels would fight to the death to
protect him.

Mary studies Duncan a moment, then--

MARY

There's a lotta fuss about this
fella Booth. We've all heard the
rumors about him being alive. 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's
really dead?

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

A wide, flat landscape.

On one end, Rivers on Caesar, at breakneck speed,
followed far behind on the other end by two GUN-THUGS who
start shooting at them.

And at the end of the day? No chance to catch up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA JUANITA

We're wasting bullets. She's out
of pistol range.

In the distance, gunshots and smoke.

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - DAY

Sierra rides into the ruins of a RANCHERO.

She remains on her horse and looks around at the cactus,
hills in the short distance. Makes sure she's alone.

INT. RANCHERO - DAY

A stark contrast from the exterior, the place is
beautiful, a fireplace. A weather-beaten Quantrill's flag
on a wall. *It resembles the Confederate, but the canton
displays a fist.*

Sierra and reverend Prospero in mid-conversation. There's
desperation in his eyes.

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

REVEREND PROSPERO

There always will be a Rivers
someplace, somewhere. Keeping the
tragedy of Lincoln alive. The name
of Booth an infamous thing.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

No man or woman has the right to
become another man's conscience.

REVEREND PROSPERO

No, the Devil takes care of that.
I've had my share of him.

(then)

"Like a dull actor now, I have
forgot my part, and I am out. Even
to a full disgrace."

POKER FLATS

Shakespeare.

REVEREND PROSPERO

The tragedy of Coriolanus. A man
can't go in hiding forever while
his debts accumulate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

Put it on -- Rivers doesn't have
to goad you. The poster says dead
or alive. Put it on.

REVEREND PROSPERO

Hardly matters now. That holster
or mine. Rivers' gun hand is
quicker than the eye.

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

I swear, sometimes you're so slow
witted I wonder why you don't
break a leg in a gopher hole.

She throws on the gun belt, swivels the holster to a 90
degree angle -- fires -- the slugs RICOCHET off a wall.

It startles Poker and Reverend Prospero. The smoking gun
primed, levelled, and still in its holster.

POKER FLATS

Dang all the luck. A swivel
holster. Yep, your odds just went
up. I'll give ten to one... and I
don't even like your chances, but
I'm a gambler and I play the odds.

She hands it at him. Finally--

Reverend Prospero puts it on, adjust the belt. Grabs his
.36 caliber *Griswold and Gunnison*, holsters it.

A beat, Reverend Prospero swivels the holster at them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REVEREND PROSPERO

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

SIERRA NEVADA ROSE

That's the spirit.

EXT. RUSTLERS CANYON - DAY

A few buttes and brush through out. Rivers rides fast
alone the trail leading towards the Rancho.

EXT. RUSTLER'S CANYON - DAY

A bad bit of road. A back road.

Mary fast, handling the reins expertly, despite showing
the effects of the rough ride.

INT. RANCHERO - DAY

Dottie 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?

DOTTIE MIRANDA

There's plenty wrong with it.

REVEREND PROSPERO

I'm sorry to hear that.

DOTTIE 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, Dottie, about
what I think you're tryin' to say.
Suppose you come right out with
it.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Alright, you killed Lincoln.

REVEREND PROSPERO

That's what I thought you meant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOTTIE 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. 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?

DOTTIE MIRANDA

You bet I'm sure.

REVEREND PROSPERO

You could be wrong you know.

DOTTIE 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, Dottie. That's a very shrewd deduction.

DOTTIE 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.

He backhands Dottie, sends her reeling to the floor, snatches Dottie 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 - When she does, he smacks her again. Dottie grimaces, tries to crawl away -

The enraged Reverend kicks her, leans in to hit her with his fists. She fends off the blows, but is no match for a man frenzied with rage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Sierra watches with gleaming eyes. Poker rushes to pull him off-- O.S. HOOFBEATS!

Dottie, an expression we've never seen before - composed, smiling through bloody teeth, her eyes burn with hatred.

DOTTIE MIRANDA

Well this is your finish John
Wilkes Booth. 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.

Reverend's attention is diverted... he stops to listen.

EXT. RANCHERO - DAY

Rivers rides up, dismounts, hitching her horse.

She doesn't seem to be in a hurry, as she is careful to navigate around the Rancho.

INT. RANCHERO - DAY

Reverend Prospero is looking out the window - catches sight of Rivers running across the front property.

EXT. RANCHERO - DAY

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

INT. RANCHERO - DAY

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

RIVERS

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

Reverend Prospero smirks, then -

RIVERS

What's the matter play actor you
forget your lines.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND PROSPERO

If I were the fugitive you clam me to be would I call myself John Willis. A name so similar to the other? Or would had been wiser for a desperate hunted man to assume a name completely different.

RIVERS

Pride. Vanity. The very vicarious contempt of the criminal. Does that answer your question? Explain that limp?

REVEREND PROSPERO

Congenital defect, childhood accident. I could give you many explanations but I'm sure you wouldn't accept any of them. What leg did he limp on?

RIVERS

Your right. You can't shoot your way out of this one.

REVEREND PROSPERO

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

In one fluid motion he swivels his holster, but Rivers' faster. The color drains from his face as he looks down at his exploded knee cap.

He CORKSCREWS. Collapses into the floor.

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

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

EXT. RANCHERO - DAY

Duncan, Dutch Henry, pulls up in a hurry.

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

MARY

She didn't kill him, Jim.

RIVERS

Tell 'em.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

RIVERS

You can hang him.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Rivers lies on the bed, sweaty, feverish. Mary lays down a bowl of hot water and towels.

MARY

Doctoring you was a waste of time
a bullet will get you eventually.

RIVERS

Maybe, but luckily for me you were
around.

Mary inserts a finger into her bullet wound, as Rivers arches away from Mary in pain.

She grabs her medical bag, uncaps a bottle and packs Rivers' wound with gunpowder.

MARY

I can give you something for the
pain. Or a shot of whiskey.

Rivers declines. Mary hands her a bullet.

MARY

Then bite on this if it tinkles.

Mary strikes a match and we briefly see Mary's face before she lights the wound on fire. Rivers upright.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mary washes her bloody hands and forearms in a porcelain bowl. She pulls a towel from a peg, turns to Duncan.

DUNCAN

Will she make it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

DUNCAN

Did you tell her?

MARY

I didn't have to.

As Duncan leaves, Rivers comes out, fresh new shirt, laboring her shoulder, but her arms is not in a sling.

RIVERS

I reckon God ain't wantin' me much, Mary, but when I look at you, I feel I've been ridin' the wrong trail.

Mary kisses Rivers in a passionate good-bye.

EXT. MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Rivers and Mary come out, a small crowd has formed. She mounts up, favoring her wounded shoulder.

RIVERS

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

MARY

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

RIVERS

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

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

FADE TO BLACK.