

# CUBA LIBRE

a script by

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Based on the novel Cuba Libre, by Elmore Leonard

Revision by Jay Cantor

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A CRUDE DRAWING OF A HANDSOME UNSHAVEN COWBOY, held in a man's large hand. On the bottom of the drawing:

\$5,000 REWARD  
BEN TYLER, BANK ROBBER  
WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

A hand comes into frame with A BURNING MATCH. The match touches the bottom of the poster, setting it AFLAME.

The hand holding the poster drops it to the floor, where it burns next to a pair of spurred boots.

A VOICE (O.S.)  
Thought you might save that one for a souvenir.

BEN (O.S.)  
Nope. Those things, sherrifs put 'em up, but they never take 'em down. Cause me nothing but trouble.

BEN TYLER--the handsome cowboy of the poster, wearing a fine looking cowboy hat now--stands with CHARLIE BURKE, a grizzled older cowpoke, with a chaw in his cheek. BG: blue ocean. They stand on the deck of a rundown cargo boat, rocking slightly.

BEN  
Bounty hunters, they see the damn posters and keep comin' after me. I say, boys go find yourself another possum, I already done my time. I even give 'em my word.

CHARLIE  
Le'me guess. They don't believe you.

Ben shrugs. Behind him several deckhands leading jittery horses down a ramp gangway into their new quarters on this large freight scow.

CHARLIE  
Doubting bastards. How many so far?

BEN  
Shot? Two, maybe three.

CHARLIE  
You can't keep count?

BEN  
One of 'ems in a coma.  
(he sees something ahead  
of him)  
'Scuse me.

A PETITE WOMAN comes up from a hold, stands on the deck looking around. As Ben comes up to her she smiles, and throws her arms around him. He's surprised; then accommodating--but withheld.

Holding his small companions arm, Ben walks her towards the gangway to the dock. They stop. Without ceremony he pats her on the back, and sends her on her way.

His p.o.v.: her rhythmic sashay down the gangplank.

CHARLIE'S VOICE

Sweet on her?

Charlie now stands next to Ben, who still gazes at the departing woman. His p.o.v.:

As she reaches the dock, she raises A TATTERED PARASOL over her head. It's too big for her, and wobbles a bit as she walks.

BEN (O.S.)

Three nights together, Charlie. One of the few times in my life I went to bed with a woman I already knew.

CHARLIE

Course, I imagine you had to pay for nights two and three, same as one.  
(spitting a stream of tobacco juice into the ocean)  
Much as she undoubtedly loved your winning ways.

BEN

(smiling ruefully)  
Let's go have a look at the livestock.

They stroll back to the hold where all but the last horse--A BEAUTIFUL HIGH-SPIRITED DUN--has been loaded. The handler pulls on his lead, and the horse rears into the air. Scared, and baffled, the handler backs away.

CHARLIE

(to Ben, gesturing to the horse.)  
Time to work your magic, pardner.

Ben walks slowly towards the horse, smiling all the while. He bows to the horse.

The horse stares at him, intrigued, pawing the ground.

Ben shows the horse his empty hands. The horse lowers his head, disappointed.

Ben standing at arm's length, puts his hand behind the horse's ear, and--presto!--it emerges with a carrot.

He feeds it to the horse. EYE TO EYE, they commune.

BEN  
(to the handler)  
It's okay now.

The handler looks altogether puzzled. He steps warily to the horse; then--to his surprise--easily leads the docile animal down to the lower deck.

Ben and Charlie lean over the railing, looking down into the horse stalls in the cavernous hold.

BEN'S P.O.V.: The flanks and delicate long forelegs of the majestic animals.

BEN (V.O.)  
I broke every one of those beauties  
myself, Charlie. Feel like family to me.

One of the noble animals lets loose with a stream of steaming turds.

CHARLIE (V.O.)  
Yup, there's Uncle Frank.

BACK TO SCENE

BEN  
But I'm done with horses now. Learned all  
I can from 'em.  
(spits)  
From bounty hunters, too.

CHARLIE  
'Magin they'll both miss the  
entertainment you provide.

BEN  
They really payin' a hundred and fifty a  
horse in Cuba? Kansas City it's ten bucks  
a piece.

CHARLIE  
There's a war in Cuba, rebels versus  
Spanish in the fight of the century.  
Place is all shook up, prices sky-high.

BEN  
Bound to be opportunities, huh?

CHARLIE  
(smiling)  
Maybe make a new life there with that  
Louise?

Ben shrugs--and at Charlie's smile, turns to see Louise  
already picking up a sailor on the dock behind them.

The boat has cast off. The figures on the dock recede...

BEN  
(smiling, he doesn't  
care)  
'S'pose not.

He looks out towards THE OCEAN...

We move forward ACROSS THE OCEAN, rapidly picking up speed  
until we're flying forward far faster than the scow could  
sail. As we move the ocean grows DARK...

In the near dark: A LARGE BATTLESHIP.

We slow down and move inside the ship.

We hear the dull slap of water against steel and the low  
groan of straining ropes and shifting weight. Slowly the  
scene becomes a little clearer:

A canvas-textured field of dirty white shifts slowly across  
the frame, almost abstract in its blankness.

Extreme close-up of a man's face--a young man, deeply tanned  
and covered in sweat. He swings gently across the frame. His  
eyes are wide open, staring up.

HIS POV

The white canvas. Faded stenciled letters swing to and fro  
across the frame: U.S. NAVY

THE MAN

Blinking. The creaking ropes won't let him sleep.

HIS POV

The swinging hammock gradually eases to a stop. The groan of  
stressed ropes stops as well.

The only sound now is the dull and soporific slosh of waves  
against hull.

THE MAN

He closes his eyes, relieved.

Stillness.

Peace.

A loud and sudden strangled intake of breath from above, as the man in the upper hammock starts snoring.

The young man's eyes pop open.

All the hammocks in the cabin start to swing and groan.

#### SWABBIE

Dammie!

He swings his feet out, dismounts the hammock.

#### LONG SHOT

A large cabin, but very low-ceilinged. Despite the oppressive ceiling the hammocks are ranged three-high. They stretch away in regular rows.

In the middle distance our swabbie is unhooking his hammock.

#### DECK

The open deck of a great ship. Night.

The swabbie is just emerging from the aft poop, SHOELESS, carrying his hammock. Beyond him are the gas lights of a city in the bay of which the ship is anchored.

The swabbie finds a post which he judges to be about the right distance from the rail. He hooks one end of his hammock on the rail, the other on a rope coiled round the post.

He rolls in.

#### CLOSER

Smiling. A light, refreshing breeze plays across his brow.

#### HIS POV

A spar stretches up, and up. Beyond it is a field of countless stars.

#### THE SWABBIE

A very distant buoy bell. The dull slap of waves.

A great peace.

An enormous BOOM.

The swabbie is bathed in hot white-red light as he is blown up toward us, still wrapped in the hammock.

HIS POV

We are ascending towards the huge underlit spar which has cracked and is jackknifing down toward us.

The stars have disappeared.

WIDER COVERAGE

The enormous explosion is ripping the ship in half and sending pieces in high flaming arcs out into the bay.

One white hammock is just reaching the crest of its arc and starting to descend into

BLACKNESS

EXT. HAVANA HARBOR -- DAY

A handsome, clean-shaven man, with a wave to his blonde hair, promenades near the Havana harbor with a woman in a wide skirted blue dress. Her face is partially blocked from our view by the lovely TAPESTRY PARASOL that she carries gracefully tilted over her forehead.

Men on the promenade nod to the couple like they're royalty. There are no other women out today.

She raises her parasol. Half-turned from us, the woman shelters her eyes with a hand--so her face is still partly hidden.

She peers off towards...THE HARBOR.

BOUDREAUX

There's that wrecked ship you wanted to see. I can't imagine how this beats riding, or watching me play some polo.

We follow the direction of her gaze to the SMOKING HULK OF AN AMERICAN BATTLESHIP.

BOUDREAUX (O.S.)

I suppose it must speak to your romantic soul. Craggy mountains. Ruined castles. Destroyed battleships.

BACK TO SCENE:

AMELIA

It does seem holy to me, Rollie. Men lost their lives there for something they believed in.

BOUDREAUX

Or perhaps for a day's wages?

AMELIA

(not listening to him)  
They will be remembered always.

They continue on. A beefy Irishman in an ill-fitting town suit follows close behind. His short red hair 's parted in the middle and plastered down with cheap pomade.

AMELIA

Must Novis follow me everywhere?

BOUDREAUX

You've only been in Cuba a few months, Amelia. You can't see how a place so beautiful could hide so much danger. Here, a rich man's beloved companion--

AMELIA

Ah, Rollie, you always make me sound like a child's stuffed animal.

Every passing man helplessly glances towards the woman under the parasol. They nod, touch their hats. Boudreaux is pleased by these tributes.

BOUDREAUX

The very one he must hug to himself if he's to sleep at night. Precious to him. And consequently a great temptation to kidnapers.

A short dark man approaches, sixty-ish.

AMELIA

(warmly)  
Victor, good day.

VICTOR FUENTES smiles--in an Uncleish way--at the woman under the parasol.

We see a fragment of her smile in return--but her whole face is still teasingly hidden.

FUENTES

(to Amelia)

You look magnificent, Senorita, as  
always.

(to Boudreaux, not  
smiling)

Sir, the horsetraders boat has arrived.

BOUDREAUX

(the slightest nod)

Bring them to the Inglaterra. But after  
lunch.

Dismissed, Victor walks past them, on his way to the dock.  
He looks up at THE BUZZARDS that circle overhead, then down  
to the WRECK...where a cowboy hat now bobs incongruously  
nearby...we glance over to the docks to

THE HORSE SCOW

Ben Tyler stands on the deck, breeze playing through his  
hair: He runs his fingers through his hair and watches the  
hat bob up and down.

BEN

Damnit.

He ducks his head as, with a loud flap of canvas, a jib arm  
enters frame and swings past him, apparently on a return  
trip.

The string of the horses we saw earlier are being led down  
the gangplank by a barefoot Cuban boy dressed in rough white  
muslin shirt and pants. Charlie's comes across the deck.

BEN

What's that wreck?

CHARLIE

Captain says it's was a U.S. battleship,  
called The Maine. He says, maybe the  
Spanish exploded it.

THE MAINE'S CROW'S NEST sticks out of the water at an angle;  
the wreck is being circled by other, smaller boats.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Looks like the US might be helpin' out  
the insurrection here, going to war  
against Spain.

BEN

Yeah? That affect sellin' the horses?

CHARLIE

Hell no. No, the deal's set. Sugar plantation owner, name of Boudreaux. American, from New Orleans, thinks he's a Grandee.

BEN

Grandee, huh?

Victor Fuentes approaches them.

CHARLIE

Here comes Boudreaux's foreman.  
(just noticing)  
Hey, what happened to your hat?

INT. HABERDASHER - DAY

Sunlight, refracted through the perforations in the weave of a Panama hat.

In silhouette in the foreground Ben holds the Panama hat up against the window.

A dark, musty shop with a bright storefront window.

BEN

This one's got holes in it.

SALESMAN

Is called a jipijapa. It let your head breathe.

BEN

(laughing)

No, m'nose breathe. But it's a nice looking hat.

He turns to stand in front of a mirror. He puts the café con leche hat on his head.

Behind him, Charlie's slumped in a chair, fingers laced over his belly.

BEN

I got to admit, this Cuba speaks to me, Charlie.

CHARLIE

That right? What's it saying?

BEN

Like the man said, your head can breath around here. Like the West. But different.

(he snaps the brim smartly)

You can have some dash.

Behind him and OUTSIDE, Fuentes talks to two uniformed officers.

Ben puts on a holstered pistol beneath the suit coat.

CHARLIE

Remember, Ben boy, we didn't declare that pistola at customs.

Fuentes enters, looking a little worried. He whispers in Charlie's ear, and Charlie snaps to attention.

CHARLIE

Victor says there are some men outside who want to buy a horse.

BEN

I thought we were sellin' the horses to this guy Boudreaux.

FUENTES

Well, mostly, yes, but maybe is a good idea not to offend the officers. Guardia Civil. Very important. One horse, Boudreaux will understand.

BEN

Deal's a deal.

Fuentes shrugs.

FUENTES

Well, mostly, yes, but we are in Cuba.

OUTSIDE

Ben, wearing the new hat, emerges from the store with Charlie and Fuentes following closely behind. Four Guardia Civil officers are studying the horses and talking amongst themselves. Fuentes hisses:

FUENTES

Is very important not to offend them. Guardia Civil--like police, but maybe not so nice.

TAVALERA

I am Lionel Tavalera. May I present this gentleman, Mr. Barbon--

One of the peacocks next to him recognizes his own name and steps forward, presenting a card. His mustache is waxed to two needle points.

BARBON

Teo Barbon.

Ben, somewhat bemused, takes the card and looks at it. He frowns, looks at its other side; empty. Smelling something, he raises it to his nose and sniffs, perplexed. It is scented.

He looks around at Fuentes and holds the card up as if to say, What do I do with this? Fuentes smiles a non-specific encouragement.

Ben turns back to Barbon and politely hands back the card.

BEN

Yes, uh, very impressive.

Barbon, also now puzzled and somewhat offended, takes back the card.

TAVALERA

Mr. Barbon perhaps wishes to buy the horseh.

CHARLIE

Well, we're sellin' 'em.

Ben turns to Barbon, indicating THE DUN:

BEN

Thisa here ain't for sale. He likes my tricks. The rest of 'em are a hundred and a half. Nice stock. Just brung 'em in from Arizona.

Barbon is saying something in Spanish to Fuentes, who translates:

FUENTES

He is drawn to the bay with the star, but says it is too small to be worth a hundred fifty pesos.

CHARLIE

Well we ain't sellin' chuck here, by the pound. You tell him that there's a saddle-broke cutting horse, 'll turn on a dime and leave him five centavos change.

Barbon walks up to Ben with a tight smile, nose to nose, and says something in Spanish. Ben returns his smile.

BEN

What he say?

Fuentes looks uncomfortable:

FUENTES

He wants his saddle put on the bay so he can ride her, see what he thinks.

BEN

He wants me to saddle her?

FUENTES

It would seem so, yes.

BEN

These boys're some kinda mounties, ain't they? They know how to ride.

Barbon nods.

BARBON

Monto, si.

BEN

Well if you know how to ride, you ought to know how to saddle a horse.

Barbon stares, uncomprehending.

Tavalera watches with what looks like bored disinterest. Fuentes looks at Charlie with real worry: why is Ben doing this? Charlie shrugs, I can't control him.

The silence lasts too long. Fuentes looks to a peasant with a sad, drooping face, RUDI CALVO, who keeps himself in the background. At Fuentes' look, Rudi steps forward.

But Barbon puts out his arm, stops him.

BARBON

No, the Yanqui.

FUENTES

I saddle the horse.

Ben plants a boot on the saddle.

BEN

No such thing.

He stares at Barbon.

. . . You saddle her yourself.

Barbon's tight little smile disappears.

He starts yelling. He brings his rant over to Tavalera, gesticulating between himself and Ben. Tavalera shrugs, looks at Ben.

TAVALERA

He wants me to give you my sword. He believes you insulted him.

Ben grins.

BEN

He wants to swordfight?

Tavalera shrugs again.

TAVALERA

An insult. . .

Fuentes is tugging on Ben's shoulder:

FUENTES

Is enough. . . We go to see Mr. Boudreaux now.

TAVALERA

Yes, go. He is a boy--he will calm down.

Barbon looks excitedly from man to man, unable to follow the conversation.

Charlie Burke is shaking his head.

CHARLIE

You are some kinda horse trader.

He leans over to spit in the street. He hoists his saddle onto his shoulder.

CHARLIE

. . . Pick up your chair and let's go.

As the Americans move out, Barbon talks excitedly to Tavalera--

BARBON

You let them leave?!

TAVALERA

Did you think he was going to fight you with a sword?

BARBON

At least I cut him!

Tavalera smiles.

TAVALERA

You should pick your fight. And know who you are fighting.

Barbon sneers:

BARBON

A cowboy. A horsetrader.

Tavalera gives him a pitying look.

TAVALERA

You really think so? What is the duty on horses?

BARON

Eighty five dollars a head?

TAVALERA

And what do you think it costs to feed and transport them?

The effort for these calculations are beyond Barbon. He shrugs indifferently.

TAVALERA

And they're offering the horses for one fifty. Where would the profit be?

Barbon shrugs.

TAVALERA

Think Barbon. He's connected to a powerful man like Senor Boudreaux. Maybe he works for the American government, no?

BARBON

A spy? An assassin?

TAVALERA

In any case, not a horse trader.

BARBON

All right. But I still want to kill him.

EXT. STREETS NEAR THE HOTEL INGLATERRA - DAY

A BOY WITH A BROAD RED AND GREEN SCARF WRAPPED AROUND BOTH HIS WAIST AND A PALM TREE

He shimmies down with a coconut, places on a rock, and picks up a small machete.

BEN

(reaches toward the  
machete)

Lemme give it a whack with that thing.

The boy's puzzled. Ben takes the machete from his hand,  
raises it--

and misses the coconut completely. Laughing, he hands the  
boy his machete back.

BEN

Not so easy, huh?

He reaches behind the boy's ear, comes up with a coin to  
hand him.

Charlie and Ben continue walking. Ben's p.o.v.:

THE ELEGANT GATED FAÇADES OF THE HOUSES...STREET VENDORS  
OFFERING STACKED ORANGES...THE HIDDEN COURTYARDS AND  
FOUNTAIN GARDENS...WHERE LADIES WITH LONG MANTILLAS SIT AND  
TALK.

Ben's face fills with delight at what he sees:

A NUN LEADS A LINE OF SCHOOLGIRLS...HORSEMEN RIDE BY HOLDING  
UMBRELLAS AGAINST THE HOT SUN...

AND THREE PEASANTS HANG FROM A MAKESHIFT GALLOWS. SIGNS  
PINNED ON THEIR SHIRTS: INSURRECTOS.

A soldier takes a lighted cigar from another soldier's mouth  
and puts it in a hanged man's. He laughs.

BEN

Jesus, this Cuba.

They turn into the Hotel Inglaterra, Ben leading the way.

INT. HOTEL INGLATERRA

A long lens follows Ben as he walks across the crowded  
lobby. DOOR SWINGING OPEN

It reveals a smoke-filled private dining room somewhere in  
the hotel.

Novis has opened the door. He steps aside to escort Tyler  
Fuentes and Burke into the dining room where six or seven  
well fed American businessmen sit around a table smoking  
cigars, sipping brandy, and talking.

Boudreaux sits at the head of the table, holding forth and gesturing over the table in front of him. He acts oblivious to the arrival of the group.

Fuentes waits a moment for acknowledgement and, when he gets none, steps cautiously forward.

FUENTES

Sir. Whenever you are ready.

Without looking at him Boudreaux holds up a hand towards him with the index finger raised.

BOUDREAUX

. . . The insurrectos control this part of the coast but with a rail line through Sagua La Grande we can move the sugar around them and make more per pound than if we'd gone through Havana.

CLOSE ON TYLER

His eyes move from Boudreaux down to the table.

HIS POV

Close on Boudreaux's hand, holding a fat cigar, sweeping over a map of Cuba unrolled on the table and held down at one corner with a heavy glass ashtray.

A delicate hand with black lace flaring at the wrist enters frame and taps the ash from a tailor-made cigarette with a gold foil tip into the tray.

We tilt up to frame Amelia.

BACK TO TYLER

Returning the stare, and barely controlling his dumbstruck wonder at Amelia--the most beautiful, the most elegant woman he has ever seen.

BACK TO THE AMELIA

After a beat:

AMELIA

I like your hat.

He gives her a faint smile.

BEN

(pleased)

Its called a jipijapa.

AMELIA  
(smiling;)  
Gracias, Senor.  
(in Spanish)  
I will remember that always.

Ben gets the joke--and smiles.

The businessmen continue to talk, but Boudreaux is leaning back, his eyes shifting between Ben and Amelia.

Boudreaux sizes-up Ben. He's already worried--ready to show him his place.

BOUDREAUX  
You're the horsebreaker?

BEN  
You the horse buyer?

BOUDREAUX  
Well, that all depends. What's the price, Victor?

Fuentes is surprised. This apparently wasn't in the script.

FUENTES  
One hundred and fifty per head. Twenty-five head. As discussed. Three thousand seven hundred and fifty.

BOUDREAUX  
Oh, I don't think so. . .

He smiles at the other businessmen.

BOUDREAUX  
. . . Can you imagine paying a hundred fifty a head for Western range stock?

He chuckles.

BOUDREAUX  
. . . No, I believe what I agreed to was a hundred a head.

He turns again to the businessmen.

BOUDREAUX  
. . . I don't ask these men how they avoid paying duty, but they must to make a profit, even if they stole the horses to begin with.

The businessmen chuckle along with him. Boudreaux looks to Amelia--to make sure she can see how he can jerk the cowboy around. She remains impassive.

FUENTES

Sir? You agreed to one hundred fifty a head, when I told you the price these men ask.

BOUDREAUX

Now my segundo's calling me a liar.

BEN

Why'd you ask Fuentes what the deal was, you claim to remember it.

The chuckles quiet.

The talk dies away. This isn't going as Boudreaux had planned.

BOUDREAUX

Amelia?

AMELIA

Hmmm?

BOUDREAUX

You can go upstairs. I won't be much longer.

AMELIA

I haven't finished my coffee.

BOUDREAUX

You can finish in the room.

AMELIA

I don't like the room.

BOUDREAUX

It's the nicest room in the hotel.

The businessmen shift uncomfortably. There is a silent beat.

BOUDREAUX

. . . Would you like Novis to escort you?

Novis stares dully. The prospect neither excites nor dismays him.

Amelia finally gets to her feet and picks up her coffee cup. She exchanges a look with Fuentes.

And on her way to the door she makes a point of smiling at Ben.

AMELIA

Nice meeting you, cowboy.

Ben touches the brim of his hat with one finger.

Boudreaux gives Ben a long look, but finally speaks to Fuentes:

BOUDREAUX

Victor, I don't believe there's anything more to discuss.

BEN

We took your man's word we'd be paid thirty-seven fifty on delivery here in Havana.

BOUDREAUX

Well you have to know who's word to take.

There is a silence, which Boudreaux ends with a put-upon sigh.

BOUDREAUX

. . . Look, if you deliver these horses to my estate in Matanzas, I'll pay you one-twenty a head. They're no good to me here. Now we're not so far apart are we? Fair enough?

Ben and Charlie Burke exchange glances; Charlie is worried.

CHARLIE

Uh, sir, it's like you say, we can't make her pay unless--

BOUDREAUX

Look, sir, I told you how far I'm willing to go.

He addresses the table:

BOUDREAUX

. . . I'm meeting the fellow half way.

Back to Charlie:

BOUDREAUX

. . . You don't like it, you're free to put your horses back on the boat, try another island.

Ben turns from Boudreaux and walks out of the room.

## INGLATERRA LOBBY

The lobby has a large bar and tables scattered about. At one small table Amelia sits with an American, Neely. He is reading to her from a newspaper.

NEELY

" . . . Havana harbor was littered with burning bodies--and pieces of bodies. One Spanish officer said that the dead American swabbies will be 'joined by many brothers' should the U.S. Navy seek to increase its presence here--"

AMELIA

That's absurd, Allard. The Spaniards have their hands full fighting the Cuban rebels. The last thing they want is a war with the U.S., too.

NEELY

(mock offense)

Amelia, I'm a reporter. I don't invent what happened.

(smiling)

Mr. Hearst does that himself. I just report what he invents.

AMELIA

What does William Randolph Hearst care about this tiny island?

Neely's eyes show his barely hidden delight in talking with Amelia.

NEELY

Mr. Hearst believes it's time for the world to learn America can run the world as well as Britain or France ever did.

AMELIA

Allard, the American people don't want to run the world.

NEELY

Well, Mr. Hearst does. You know there was a sailor on the deck of the Maine, got himself blown right into the sea? The Spaniards grabbed him. I think he must know what really happened. I'll find him, and I'll make a war for you, Amelia.

AMELIA

(laughing)

Don't start a war on my account, Allard!

NEELY

Why not? You said yourself, it'll be good for the rebels. Keep the Spanish busy.

(has a drink)

Besides William Randolph Hearst wants a war. If I can't give it to him, the New York Herald Tribune will send down a reporter who can.

Ben, Victor and Charlie make their way across the bar to a table.

AMELIA

(indicating them by the tilt of her head)

Know anything about the cowboy who spoke with Rollie?

NEELY

His name's Ben Tyler; he's a bank robber. Did time in Yuma.

Amelia keeps her own counsel; only her eyes widen, taking this in.

EXT. NEAR THE HOTEL INGLATERRA - DAY

As Tavalera and Barbon walk along, Tavalera talks to himself.

TAVALERA

The boat, the Vamoose--

BARBON

(laughing)

It vamoosed, yes?

TAVALERA

(not laughing)

You have killed so many men in so few years, Teo, sometimes I forgot you're still just a boy. Why has it gone, this Vamoose, tell me that, Teo?

(before he can reply)

They are not horsetraders, Teo. I think they are probably gun runners. That's why they don't charge enough money for their livestock.

BARBON

Then I can kill him, the cowboy?

They pass the hanged men. Tavalera glances over, and smiles.

TAVALERA

I am telling you, he is not a cowboy!

(calming)

But yes, you may kill him. But only him.  
I require the other, to find out where  
the guns have gone.

INT. INGLATERRA ANOTHER TABLE

Ben, Charlie Burke, and Fuentes are settling in at a table.

NEELY

Fuentes and the cowboys seem very chummy.

Amelia, too, is surprised by this. She wonders...

THE TABLE

Charlie opens A SMALL LEATHER POKE WITH A "C" ON IT. He takes out some tobacco, and jams it in his mouth. Perhaps because he's agitated, he's pushing in a very large chew.

CHARLIE

Damn, I just don't get it. What's goin' on here, Victor?

BEN

I'll tell you what's goin' on: Mr. Tinhorn in there figures since we come this far he's got us over a barrel, no choice but to settle for a lower price. Well, we'll get that one-fifty, and without spending the extra money to get those horses to Matanzas.

Tavalera has come up to the table.

BEN

What's goin' on, Lionel?

TAVALERA

You call me that again!

BEN

What?

TAVALERA

You go too far, perhaps.

Ben shrugs.

BEN

What's on your mind, man? Let's get to it, I got a mood on.

TAVALERA

Teo wants to speak to you. He waits at the bar.

Ben looks.

Teo Barbon does indeed stand at the bar, stiffly watching. At Ben's look he gives a curt nod.

BEN

Why do I go to him?

Tavalera shrugs.

TAVALERA

Privacy. . . insult. . . matter of honor.

BEN

Damnit you folks're thin-skinned. He's got something to say he can come over here.

Tavalera sighs. He gestures to Barbon.

AMELIA AND NEELY

Watching.

AMELIA

What's going on?

NEELY

The officer they're talking to is Lionel Tavalera. Guardia Civil. Unkind man. You want someone to tell you something, and he refuses, you hand him over to Tavalera.

AMELIA

He's a friend of Rollie's. I saw him whip a peasant once for stepping on his exalted shadow.

NEELY

That's nothing. The Guardia make whole villages disappear overnight.

Amelia's puzzled.

NEELY

They've put half a Cuba in barbed wire holding pens, like cattle for the slaughter.

THE OTHER TABLE

As Teo Barbon arrives.

Ben is uncorking a bottle.

BEN  
You a drinking man, Theo?

Barbon pulls his card out and hands it across the table.  
Ben nods.

BEN  
. . . Seen it. Smells purty.

He makes no attempt to pick it up.

TAVALERA  
Stand, please.

Fuentes shakes his head.

FUENTES  
Don't stand.

Ben looks bemused, from one to the other.

Barbon rattles off something very quick in Spanish.

There are a few laughs from a nearby table.

Ben looks around; what is this?

TAVALERA  
Stand, please.

AMELIA'S TABLE

Still watching, Neely murmurs:

NEELY  
Don't stand.

BEN'S TABLE

Ben looks at Charlie. Charlie, still chewing, shrugs. Ben shrugs as well.

BEN  
Well, when in Rome. . .

He gets to his feet.

AMELIA'S TABLE

Both watching.

NEELY  
Yes. . .

AMELIA  
What?

NEELY

It's a challenge. Tavalera acting as second for--yes, the other fellow's getting out his gloves.

From their perspective we indeed see Barbon pulling a pair of white gloves from his belt. He slaps Ben with them.

BEN'S TABLE

We jump in for his reaction.

It is puzzled, and then angry.

Barbon is wearing a supercilious smile.

BARBON

Nos vemos manana a la plaza del--

He doesn't get to finish the sentence. Ben has brought a fist back and punches him squarely in the middle of the face.

The force of the blow, which has taken Barbon by surprise, sends him staggering back against the bar, which keeps him on his feet.

Blood from his nose gouts over his dress uniform. He is humiliated.

He reaches into his pocket and takes out a small pistol.

He places one foot forward and extends the gun at arm's length, in dueling position.

BARBON

Bueno.

There is a loud blast and Barbon's head snaps back.

AMELIA

She flinches--but doesn't look away. Her mouth opens in excitement.

BEN

His Smith & Wesson is out, still smoking.

TAVALERA

He sighs deeply, as if someone had just spilled a drink on a valued rug.

BARBON

His head lolls forward again, a hole in his forehead. He flops to the floor.

CHARLIE

He chews his tobacco for a long staring beat, then puckers a little and scans the floor, looking for a place to spit.

A dozen Guardia Civil have thundered into the room in response to the gunshot.

TAVALERA

Those two.

He is indicating Ben and Charlie Burke. As they are grabbed:

BEN

I guess we're headed for the clink, pardner.

Charlie looks worried.

CHARLIE

Yeah. . . Uh. . . something I gotta tell ya.

As they are muscled away from each other:

CHARLIE

. . . I guess it can wait.

ON RUDI CALVO

Who has observed the action from the doorway to the bar. He stands leaning against the door jamb as the soldiers escort the two Americans out past him.

His eyes are still on the table that they have just left.

VICTOR FUENTES

Sitting at the table, watching the soldiers leave. He catches Rudi's eye.

CLOSE ON RUDI

He nods, acknowledging some unspoken message, turns and is gone.

PUSHING DOWN HOTEL HALLWAY

We are tracking with Amelia. Novis lolls on a straight-backed chair that is tipped up against the wall of the hallway, outside a pair of double doors. At her approach:

NOVIS

Where you been? We're s'posta pack, goin' to the batey tomorrow. I'm s'posta find you.

She looks down at him as she reaches the doors.

AMELIA

Is this how you go looking for me?

NOVIS

Worked, dinnit?

She pushes through the doors.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Boudreaux, now in a burgundy silk robe, sits with his feet up placidly reading a newspaper and smoking a cigar.

AMELIA

Your cowboy friend just shot a Guardia officer down in the lobby.

He registers the news with the briefest glance up, then returns to the newspaper.

BOUDREAUX

Those men are fools.

AMELIA

What will happen to them?

BOUDREAUX

Mm. I suppose they'll be shot.

AMELIA

It was self-defense; there was a room full of witnesses.

BOUDREAUX

(dryly)

Well I'm sure that will help. Darling. .

.

(setting aside the paper)

Why all the questions?

AMELIA

If you had business with them shouldn't you help them? You could talk to your friend, Tavalera.

BOUDREAUX

Favors like that are expensive darling.  
Are you sure these cowboys are worth it?

He looks at her, ready to measure her response.

Confused by her own feelings, she doesn't reply.

BOUDREAUX

(picking up his  
newspaper, smiling)  
No, of course not.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY

Ben and Charlie Burke are in irons, being pushed along a hallway that looks like it has been carved through stone.

They have reached a door which is swung open. As Charlie and Ben are pushed in, A GUARD WITH A SCARRED FACE swipes the hat off Ben's head.

BEN

Hey!

The door slams shut.

INT. LARGE CELL

The two men look around. It is a large room with bare stone walls and floor crowded with shit-stained straw pallets where scarecrow men turn fitfully, or sit immobile, inches from the grave.

BEN

Sonofabitch took my hat.

One of the prisoners directs a question at the pair in Spanish.

CHARLIE

Sorry, pardner, no speakee.

PRISONER 1

Noticias--news--of the Revolution?

BEN

Well, they blown up the Maine.

CHARLIE

Wasn't you folks, was it?

The prisoners do their best to laugh.

PRISONER 2

Of course not. We are here because we are freedom fighters. You?

BEN

Shot a Don.

Weak arms give weak applause.

BEN

And Charlie...uh... Well I guess he spit on the floor.

CHARLIE

Country grows this much tobacco, don't b'lieve I've seen a single spittoon. You folks just burn it?

As his eyes adjust to the light, Ben stares at Prisoner 1. He has the hard, "lion face," of Hanson's disease.

BEN

(to Charlie)

That from the food, you think?

CHARLIE

Leprosy. Saw it once before. Don't share spit with him.

Ben looks sick. Charlie gives Ben's sleeve a tug and leads him to a dark corner where they hunker down.

CHARLIE

Ben, I got a little confession to make here, something that could bear on our current sitch-ation, uh... You know the lower deck of the boat we hired?

BEN

Horseshit deck, yeah.

CHARLIE

Exactly. Ankle-deep in siftings by the time we got here. Well, under that deck there's a hold, which it's a pretty safe bet no customs hombre was a-gonna inspect.

BEN

Sure.

CHARLIE

And in that hold was a whole bunch a guns we're a-sellin' to these-here insurrectos. Krag carbines.

Ben thinks about this.

BEN

That so.

He looks at Charlie.

BEN

Hope we're gettin' a good price.

CHARLIE

Oh, a good price, and it's a good cause. We'll split the booty of course--I warnt gonna hold out on ya, pardner, I just figured why burden you with guilty knowledge you didn't exactly require.

BEN

Uh-huh. So--why exactly you burdenin' me with it now?

CHARLIE

Well, if they find the boat now, I just want you to know how come they're a-gonna shoot us.

BEN

Thank ya, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Wal--pardners.

He ruminates.

CHARLIE

(continuing)

...I am terribly sorry about this.

BEN

Aw, hell.

CHARLIE

Well that's mighty kind. I just never counted on all this attention.

BEN

Sure. Hm. Course, if I'd a known we was gunrunners, I might never a shot the Don.

## A MOUNTED COLUMN

It is a patrol of perhaps a dozen grey-uniformed Guardia Civil riding along a road that is narrow, rural, heavily foliated--almost tropical.

We are pulling them at a walking pace.

Behind the column several peasants in white pyjamas emerge from the jungle to advance silently on the rear of the column. Some have pistols, some only machetes.

As they reach the rearmost soldiers, those with machetes run alongside the horses to grab at stirrups and hack up at the riders; those with pistols grab at the bridles of the by now turning horses and fire up point blank.

They are joined by peasants from either side of the road.

Soldiers struggle to swing guns off their shoulders. Horses rear and mill. Some of the soldiers who are still mounted try to advance on and trample their attackers; others back their horses away to give themselves distance and firing advantage.

As they do so the attackers retreat, some on foot, some galloping off on commandeered horses.

The remaining mounted soldiers now advance, trampling the prostrate bodies of their own grey-clad dead and the white-clad peasants. Shouting, pointing, and firing, they peel away into the jungle, in pursuit of the peasants who are scattering on foot.

#### AMELIA RIDING

She is riding on a road cutting across a cane field. The cane grows high overhead obscuring the view all around. The straight-ruled road stretches away through the enormous plantation field.

She slows as she hears an approaching whisking sound. Her horse nickers.

The whisking sound resolves itself into the rhythm of galloping hooves--an approaching horse--though none is visible.

Along with the sound of the footfalls we can more clearly hear the rustling crash of cane being trampled.

Amelia stops, looks.

In the middle foreground a riderless horse crashes out of the cane and bounds up the berm and onto the roadway.

As her own horse rears the other turns and thunders away, empty stirrups bouncing.

Quiet.

She urges her horse slowly forward, toward the break in the cane caused by the stampeding horse.

She draws even with the roughly defined alley of trampled-down cane, perpendicular to the road.

Flat on his stomach but moving, trying to crawl, is a bleeding, white-clad peasant.

Amelia looks.

#### BATEY YARD

A single-file line of four peasants trots into the yard, their hands bound together and all four connected by a rope that is

lashed to the pommel of a mounted Guardia. The courtyard is formed by the stone walls of outbuildings that form a square in front of the main villa; once inside, the prisoners are lined up against one of the stone walls.

Amelia rides into the yard and dismounts.

#### INTERIOR PLANTATION HOUSE

Amelia hurries up a broad staircase and pushes into the second-story office.

Boudreaux sits behind his desk slowly nodding, looking bored.

A Guardia officer stands in front of the desk. Victor Fuentes is behind Boudreaux's chair, translating.

#### FUENTES

--a skirmish quite near here. Some of the mambis got away; some injured. The Guardia would like for us to tell them if any of our workers appear to have injury.

#### BOUDREAUX

Yes, of course.--Hello dear. You see, this is why you shouldn't ride by yourself.

Victor is looking out the window at the line of captured peasants.

#### FUENTES

The boy on the left, he works in the kitchen here.

#### BOUDREAUX

Oh yes?

Fuentes exchanges a few words in Spanish with the Guardia officer. He shakes his head sourly and turns back to Boudreaux.

FUENTES

They didn't catch him with the others.  
One of the others made his way to his  
shack.

BOUDREAUX

So he's a rebel sympathizer.

FUENTES

Well--we don't know that. Just a friend,  
perhaps. He's a good boy. I know his  
mother.

BOUDREAUX

Well they're not shooting his mother,  
Victor.

Fuentes shakes his head and speaks again to the Guardia  
officer.

The officer shakes his head in return and gives a brief  
reply.

AMELIA

Rollie, if we're not sure, shouldn't  
they--

She is interrupted by a shout from the yard--"Cuba Libre!"--  
followed by a fusillade of rifle fire.

Amelia looks, wide-eyed, at Boudreaux, who is unperturbed.

BOUDREAUX

Well, that's that. These people are the  
experts, Victor.

Fuentes doesn't answer.

BOUDREAUX

. . . You were saying, dear?

She moves to the window.  
Her point of view tracking up to the window railing reveals  
four bodies prostrate in the dust below.

An officer standing over the first body points a pistol at  
its head and fires. He moves to the second body.

BOUDREAUX'S VOICE

Dear, don't look at that. . . It's so  
unpleasant. . .

The officer fires, moves to the third body.

BOUDREAUX'S VOICE

. . . Dear. . .

AMELIA RIDING

Galloping now, away from the batey.

The sound of a pursuing horse and a shout:

VOICE

Senorita! Slow! I am an old man!

She pulls up and wheels her horse angrily around. Fuentes draws up.

They are in front of an abandoned plantation outbuilding. The road fronts the house; behind it is a burnt field.

FUENTES

Mr. Boudreaux sent me after you. You aren't to ride alone any more. Too dangerous.

(gesturing to the burnt field)

Mambis burnt that field.

He smiles, turning away so she won't see. She sees.

AMELIA

There's a peasant--he was shot--I came across him riding. I helped him to the gate house here. . .

Fuentes glances at the house, and then gives Amelia a considering look.

FUENTES

. . . Why do you tell this to me and not the officer?

AMELIA

Victor!

FUENTES

Well, if you are wrong about me, you get a little chastised by Senor Boudreaux. But the wounded man, he would be shot.

She has already dismounted....

AMELIA

I'm not usually wrong about people.

and is on her way into the hut.

FUENTES

(smiling, following her in)

Then why are you with Senor Boudreaux?

INT. HUT.

Amelia is already inside, kneeling beside a peasant who lies on a narrow pallet.

AMELIA

(to Fuentes)

Well, I said usually, didn't I?

She tears a long swatch from one of the peasants' pants legs.

He screams, and she puts her hand to his cheek.

AMELIA

This man will find you a doctor.

She raises the leg carefully, and wraps the cloth from the pants around the thigh.

AMELIA

Rollie seemed so self-confident. And best of all, he lived in Cuba. The world was turning upside down here. Maybe this would be a place where a woman could do something with her life.

Amelia ties the tourniquet tightly, smiling sympathetically at the wounded man as she does it.

FUENTES

So you were wrong about Senor Boudreaux. But maybe you were right about Cuba. I have a job for you.

Amelia stands. She has blood all over her hands.

AMELIA

I have to warn you, Victor. I was in love with a doctor once--

FUENTES

Is a job, I'm not proposing marriage.

AMELIA

And I went with him to work with lepers.  
Wrote letters for the poor creatures.  
Gave them their medicine. Played  
checkers. I dreamt I'd be canonized: St.  
Amelia of the Gray Ones. But after one  
week, I totally ran out of dedication,  
ran right back home to mama. I want to do  
something worthwhile with my life but--

FUENTES

Look, this job I have, is lots easier  
than lepers.

INTERIOR. ROOM IN MORRO

At the cut the door is flung open and Ben is shoved in.

Amelia sits behind a rough-hewn wooden desk, looking very  
fresh in a riding outfit.

AMELIA

The hat you were wearing--what happened  
to it?

BEN

One of the guards here stole it.

AMELIA

Too bad. It was a nice hat.  
(she takes a pack of  
cigarettes from her  
purse)  
Sweet Corporal?

He nods. She skillfully knocks one from her pack and gives  
it to him.

Their hands touch--linger--and she draws hers back.

He rolls the perfectly cylindrical cigarette in his fingers,  
testing the unfamiliar shape.

BEN

(staring at her)  
You know, I don't often have a ready  
made.  
(drawing a match across  
his thumbnail, flaring  
it)  
So why'd Boudreaux send you?

AMELIA

Not Boudreaux. You can count on that.

BEN  
Glad to hear it.  
(flirting)  
So it's a vacation? Sightseeing?

AMELIA  
(smiling)  
Ah, the stories these stone walls could  
tell, huh?

BEN  
Yeah, would have a certain grinding  
sameness. Better class of prisoners than  
Yuma, though. Politicals.

AMELIA  
Men with convictions, dedication.

BEN  
Yup. Less likely to steal your food.

AMELIA  
I admire you so much.

BEN  
A few minutes with you, I could see you  
were something special, too.  
(hopeful)  
So is that what brings you here?

AMELIA  
I came because there's something I have  
to know.

Thinking he means about him, he takes her hand again--and  
she doesn't withdraw it this time.

AMELIA  
Where the boat's gone?

He leans back from her, but not releasing her hand yet.

BEN  
They ain't on the boat anymore. Ain't  
paid for yet either.

AMELIA  
(surprised, disappointed)  
Is this just about money for you?

BEN  
(shaking his head, and  
smiling at her)  
Not anymore. He made a deal, though.

AMELIA

Islero'll keep his word.

Ben let's go of her hand.

BEN

That Boudreaux's pet name, Islero?

AMELIA

Pet names? Rollie? No, Islero's the guerilla leader...But you're kidding me.

BEN

(smiles to cover)  
Yeah, could be.

AMELIA

You don't have to pretend. I'm with you and Charlie.

BEN

You are?

AMELIA

You don't believe a woman can fight for justice?

BEN

I don't know about a woman in general. But I believe you could do pretty much anything you set your mind, too. Thing is, I don't know what that is just yet.

AMELIA

You want to make me say it?

BEN

'Spect I do.

AMELIA

(whispering)  
Cuba libre.

BEN

(getting it)  
Yeah, you can see they're getting a raw deal, these Cubans.

AMELIA

Yes, I can.

This time she takes his hand. And just as he starts to pull her towards him--a grotesquely FAT GUARD comes in.

The Fat Guard shackles Ben's hands behind his back, and pulls him up from he table.

As Ben's pushed out:

AMELIA

We need to know where the--

BEN

That was Charlie's department.  
(on the way out the door)  
I'll tell you next time.

HALLWAY

The FAT GUARD is joined by THE SCARRED GUARD, wearing Ben's hat.

They push Ben down the hall.

They come to an intersecting passage. Ben is heading straight but one of his escort shoulder-blocks him to force him into a right turn.

Ben, puzzled, complies, but looks back over his shoulder.

BEN

My cell's back there.

FAT GUARD

New home for you. So you no talk to your friend, cook up a funny story together.

SCARRED GUARD

No more girls for you, either. Our warden won't take any more bribes.

BEN

I'll tell you, I think keeping a resolution like that, it generally depends on how large the amount of money involved is.

The Fat Guard laughs at this--

INT. NEW CELL

as Ben is shoved in and the door is slammed behind him.

This cell, though large, has only one occupant, also with stubble, his hair short on the sides, a bandage around his head. He looks up at Ben's entrance.

PRISONER

Shit, you don't look like no Cuban.

## PRISON COURTYARD - NIGHT

Amelia walks outside, into the evening.

NEELY (O.S.)

Amelia! Wait!

Neely runs out to join her, his notebook in hand.

NEELY

(gesturing to the prison)

The cowboy, right? I could see you were sweet on him when he shot that don. Your mouth opened like you thought he was gonna kiss you.

AMELIA

(joking to deflect)

Why Allard, you're jealous!

NEELY

Well, I found him, Amelia, the kid...the sailor...no, the hero of the Maine. This wary sailor's keen ears may have heard, no, definitely heard a stealthy cutter go by leaving explosives. Naturally, the dastardly Spanish don't want Americans to hear his story. So the wily Dons have locked him away in this place of hideous torture...no, vile depravity...

AMELIA

That sounds like a whorehouse.

NEELY

...this abattoir, then?...No, this inner circle of hell...

AMELIA

This place of infamy.

NEELY

Great. And I found him, the diamond hidden in the manure, if you will. The key.

A carriage pulls up. A hand gestures to Amelia.

AMELIA

Diamond? Key? Allard, you're mixing your metaphors.

NEELY

Maybe so. But you watch, I'm going to tell that sailor's story. I'm going to make him the most important American on the planet.

Amelia climbs into the carriage.

NEELY  
I'll make the big guns fire, Amelia.

THE CARRIAGE

Victor Fuentes and Amelia bump along inside, and the carriage leaves the Morro courtyard.

AMELIA  
Ben didn't know. He has to ask Charlie.  
I'll have to come back.

Amelia looks outside her window.

FUENTES  
No, no more trysts. Tavalera killed the warden for letting your journalist friend see the sailor. It won't be so easy to return.

Her point of view shows the receding Morro Castle, a great stone fortress set on the crest of a hill overlooking the harbor, vast and impregnable.

She settles back in her seat.

THE MORRO

As we arc around it--high, massive, and forbidding.

INT. CELL

Ben and the other prisoner are eating off of rough wooden plates.

VIRGIL  
--Hit the water and I don't remember a thing after, till I woke up in some hospital. Hospital, they called it.

He gazes off, savoring the Spanish pronunciation:

VIRGIL  
. . . Hospital. Nurses were nice. Nothin' to look at, though. And then some Don comes in and starts askin' me questions. Damn--that's movin'. . .

He picks something out of the meat, flicks it to the ground.

VIRGIL

. . . Damn. U.S. Navy chow bettern this.  
How was the grub in Yuma?

BEN

Terrible. Sometimes you couldn't tell  
what you were eating.

VIRGIL

Yeah, at least we know we're eatin'  
maggots.

BEN

Anyway, they're cooked.

VIRGIL

This one ain't. . .  
(he picks another one off  
his plate.)  
. . . Hardy little critters. Bread'n  
water's the best, lessen the bread's  
moldy. Otherwise you can't mess up  
bread'n water.

BEN

What'd they ask you?

VIRGIL

Aww, when I told 'em I was sleepin' up on  
the deck, he was all curious did I see  
anything right before the explosion.  
Hell, I didn't see nothin, but I can tell  
what he's kinda edgy, and I clam up. Told  
'em I'd only talk to an Americano. So  
then they all put on their war faces'n  
drug me here. Beat me couple times,  
gimme the wet towel. What was you in for,  
in Yuma?

BEN

Took some money out of a bank, without  
getting' all the signatures.

VIRGIL

Huh. Bank robbin'. That a good line?

The door opens and Tavalera enters accompanied by two  
soldiers carrying Krag carbines.

BEN

Lionel. Where's Charlie?

TAVALERA

You'll see him shortly.

Tavalera smiles thinly at Virgil.

TAVALERA

. . . So, where will they land, marine private? Where will your army try to come ashore?

VIRGIL

My damn army don't try--they do, you oily sonofabitch.

TAVALERA

That's the spirit to have. If there are many like you it could be a good war. But you don't answer my question: Where will your army come ashore?

VIRGIL

Downtown Havana with John Philip Sousa's band leading the parade. Once our guns flatten the Morro. Then we're a-gonna pick you outa the rubble, Don, and lift your goddamn scalp.

TAVALERA

I see. Yes.

BEN

You come to tell us something?

TAVALERA

No; show you.

He goes to a small window in the stone wall and waves for Ben to join him.

TAVALERA

. . . Five years ago in Spanish Africa, the Iqar'ayen declared war on us for desecrating their mosque. . .

Ben, puzzled, listens as he goes to the window.

TAVALERA

. . . Some of our soldiers, they said, pissed on it.

(shrugs)

. . . Maybe. The Iqar'ayen are Riffs. A berber tribe.

Charlie emerges in the yard below escorted on either side by two Guardia. He is chewing tobacco.

Tavalera's tone becomes dreamy:

TAVALERA

. . . Everyone in Spain loved that war. Twenty-nine generals came to Africa,

-more-

## TAVALERA (CONT'D)

hastened to Africa, for here was a pure war without economic rewards. The only thing we fought for was the honor of Spain. There was not even territory to be gained; only national pride...

They are leading Charlie across the yard toward a solitary post at its far end.

## TAVALERA

. . . It appears much different here, a great deal to be gained, this island a source of wealth, a cow that's been giving us milk for four hundred years. Still, the inspiration to keep this island is not economic but a matter of honor. You understand?

They have backed Charlie against the post and are tying his hands behind his back.

## TAVALERA

. . . Not just money. In Africa I tortured and mutilated my enemy for the sake of honor, to learn things from him, or as punishment. . .

He turns to look at Ben, who continues to watch Charlie.

## TAVALERA

. . . I respect you, so I do not do that here. However, I need to know where your boat is. You don't tell me, we shoot your friend.

Ben says nothing. His face goes ashen.

## TAVALERA

. . . They are telling him now how it is.

Down in the yard, a Guardia officer is indeed talking to Charlie, who looks up toward the window.

## TAVALERA

. . . All right. One time: I ask you where is the boat you call the Vamoose?

Ben's eyes are locked on the courtyard.

## BEN

Believe me. . . If I knew I'd tell you.

From the yard a very faint spoken "Hang on."

Charlie, tied to the post, scans the ground, finds a spot he likes, spits out his tobacco and sets himself.

Tavalera studies Ben staring out into the yard. Very sudden and very loud:

. . . Matanle!

Rifle fire.

Ben continues to stare.

#### ROLLIE'S BEDROOM--THE PLANTATION

Their bedroom. Rollie lies on the bed, clothed, reading a newspaper. Amelia stands by the door.

AMELIA

. . . They shot--?

Boudreaux is reading the paper. Absently:

BOUDREAUX

One of them.

AMELIA

Which one? The older one or the younger one?

He continues to read the paper.

AMELIA

. . . Rollie? Are you listening to me?

BOUDREAUX

(not looking up)  
Hmm?

AMELIA

The older cowboy or the younger one?

BOUDREAUX

I don't know. Tavalera says the other one will be shot if war's declared. And the sailor gets sent to Africa.

He turns the newspaper page. Amelia paces the room in agitation.

AMELIA

You really don't care what the Spaniards do--do you?

ROLLIE

No, cher...

AMELIA

To the Cubans or to those Americans.

ROLLIE

No cher, I don't really.

AMELIA

...Do you love me, Rollie?

He looks up from the paper. Amelia has stopped and is fixing him with a level but neutral stare. The agitation is gone from her voice.

ROLLIE

Of course I do, cher.

AMELIA

But you don't listen to me, Rollie. How can you love me?

ROLLIE

But I do love you. That's why I've arranged to send you back to America. It's too dangerous here for a woman. When things quiet down, I'll wire you.

AMELIA

Sending me back?

ROLLIE

Three days from now.

She starts for the door.

ROLLIE

Where are you going?

AMELIA

You said, three days. I have a lot of packing to do.

As she walks out, THE METALLIC CLANKING OF OLD MACHINERY begins...

CUT TO:

TWO TALL BLACK CHIMNEYS PUFFING SMOKE

THE CLANKING CONTINUES, as we move wider from above: Two chimneys belching smoke sit atop a long brick building, an acre in size, in the middle of the green plantation.

And we go down to ground level, where oxcarts loaded high with cane stalks pull up to a long clanking conveyor belt that juts from the side of the building.

Sweating men, some bare-chested, pull handfuls after handful of stalks from the cart and throw them on the conveyor. The clanking belt carries them into the works.

Amelia and Victor stand next to one of the loading crews, gesturing.

As we move closer we hear their words over the clanking machinery.

FUENTES

You want to talk, it's safer here. Mr. Boudreaux, he never comes where real work is done.

AMELIA

We've got to get him out, Victor.

FUENTES

Him?

AMELIA

Whichever one's alive. Anyway, now they both know where the guns are hidden.

FUENTES

Too dangerous.

Victor walks to a door into the building, as he steps in he looks back to Amelia, gestures for her to follow.

AMELIA

But he's your comrade Victor.

FUENTES

(smiling)

You mean, it's a matter of honor? He's a gun runner, Senorita.

Our eyes adjust to the light: REVOLVING KNIVES chop cane into chips.

AMELIA (O.S.)

Because the cause needed guns.

A SHREDDER methodically grips the chopped stalks and tears them apart.

AMELIA (O.S.)

He believes only Cubans should rule over Cubans.

FUENTES  
(sarcastically)  
Really? Why I believe that, too!

A CRUSHER squeezes oozing juice from the mangled stalks.

Men snatch the crushed stalks and throw them into the open door of a huge furnace. Fire leaps inside. A man kneels next to the fire, working a bellows.

Fuentes walks by one of the men snatching stalks and puts a gun in his belt. He returns to Amelia.

Amelia's face is no less lovely for the perspiration that dots it.

AMELIA  
And remember, Mr. Neely, the reporter?  
He's making them all famous, the American cowboys and the sailor from the Maine.  
You'll be a hero if you bust them out.

Victor's smile, lit by the fire, shows how much he likes the sound of that.

AMELIA  
People will really listen to you then, Victor.

#### TRACKING TOWARD FORTRESS

A dusty road. Rudi and Fuentes on horseback, their horses impatient, rearing, anxious to move on. Victor has a third horse held by the bridle. Rudi has his hands over his ears.'

RUDI  
No. I can't hear you.  
(gentling his horse)  
Our Lord Jesus Christ makes women to give life, not take it away. Women cannot fight.

FUENTES  
I think this one can. She's American.

RUDI  
Yes, she's American. So why should she fight for us?

FUENTES  
Because she believes in freedom. And she wants to fulfill herself.

RUDI  
(truly bewildered)  
To what? To fill herself with what?

FUENTES  
(musing to himself)  
She's something new. A true believer,  
yes, I think so. Yet she also wants to be  
famous. And I think she doesn't see a  
contradiction between the two.

Rudi listens, bewildered.

FUENTES  
And she knows fame isn't given to you  
unless you risk your life.

Amelia rides up on Ben's dun horse, and leading another  
horse.

RUDI  
(loudly, directed at  
Amelia)  
And sometimes fame doesn't come till  
you're dead. Does she know that?

Fuentes waves hello to Amelia, points to the horse.

FUENTES  
That's the cowboy's favorite horse. She  
also does this thing for him.

AMELIA  
Don't be foolish, Victor. I saw him shoot  
a Spaniard, that's all I know about the  
man.

They ride into a clearing, towards a wooden drawbridge  
hanging by a pair of iron chains.

FUENTES  
A Guardia. Right through the head.

RUDI  
Bang. One shot.

AMELIA  
And two days ago I saw him smoke a  
cigarette. That's not a profound  
courtship, gentlemen.

FUENTES  
You feel what you feel.

AMELIA  
(looking at the prison)  
I feel scared.

FUENTES  
Of course. You become more afraid when  
you think you are going to die, huh?

AMELIA  
Jesus, Victor, thanks.

They ride close by A HUGE BARBED WIRE ENCLOSURE and a high  
wooden guard tower.

As the horseman pass by, CUBAN PEASANTS WITH EMACIATED FACES  
RUN TO THE FENCE, hold it between their hands, peering out.

Following the horsemen, we pass across their desperate  
faces.

Then, close by, the battlements of the fortress loom against  
the sky.

FUENTES (O.S.)  
Look. Ask someone, they will tell you  
that the southern end of the fort is  
empty. In fact is where they keep  
prisoners they don't want nobody to know  
about.

On horseback, approaching the fortress, still leading  
another horse.

AMELIA  
How did you know about it?

FUENTES  
Oh. . . a little bird told me. . .

Now that she and Fuentes are apart from Rudi:

AMELIA  
(whispering, pointing to  
Rudi)  
Victor--I'm sure I've seen that man  
before. He's Tavalera's servant.

FUENTES  
Yes. Police. We must behave.

Rudi hears, smiles at her--a little sourly.

FUENTES  
. . . Okay, listen. You're just a stupid  
-more-

FUENTES (CONT'D)

gringa. Oh my, what a big fort! Let's see the fort. Show me the fort, Victor! I, of course, will play your foolish old servant.

They are approaching the drawbridge.

FUENTES

. . . Okay, here we go. Sunday ride. There will be one sentry right up here, in this little tunnel through the wall. You don't care. You're stupid. It's a Sunday ride. . .

The horses clatter onto the wooden drawbridge.

FUENTES

. . . He'll yell, wave his arms, Go back! Get off your horse! Turn around! You find him charming.

As they reach the far end of the drawbridge and enter the salleyport through the fortress's stone outer wall, a sentry does indeed emerge through a little door to a guardroom set into the stone.

He gives the riders a brief stupefied look, and then indeed starts waving his arms and shouting.

Amelia collects herself:

AMELIA

Can't we see the fort, Victor?

Rudi is dismounting from his horse; the sentry rushes to shout at him.

FUENTES

Si senorita, I see what I can do.

The sentry and Rudi are shouting at each other. Fuentes, still mounted, speaks down at the sentry who turns his back on Rudi to bellow back at him. He grabs up at the bridle of Fuentes' horse as he yells, trying to get the horse to turn.

Behind him, Rudi is taking a machete out of a scabbard hanging from his saddle.

Amelia's eyes widen watching Rudi handle the flat broad blade.

Fuentes is dismayed at her look, and tries to draw it off with a gesture.

FUENTES

The parade ground, in there, where they used to drill--

The sentry sees her look and turns as Rudi draws up to him and raises the machete with both hands.

The sentry stumbles backward and awkwardly tries to unsling the carbine from his shoulder as the machete descends.

The machete bites into the forearm reaching for the gun, and blood gouts. The man screams and his injured arm drops away. Rudi now hacks at the exposed joint of neck and shoulder.

The man sinks under repeated hacks from the machete, Rudi grunting with the effort of each blow.

Fuentes grabs Amelia's bridle to calm her skittering horse.

FUENTES

Easy. . . easy.

We hold on Amelia watching as we hear offscreen grunts and whacks.

We are close on Rudi rising up into frame, breathing heavily and dragging a sleeve across his brow. He sees the blood on his sleeve.

There is blood on his forehead. He rubs it off with the heel of one hand.

Amelia is still completely discomposed. She stares, and speaks in a whisper:

AMELIA

I'm scared to death.

FUENTES

Of course. Okay, now we get down.

He dismounts and helps her to.

AMELIA

I've never been so scared in my life.

FUENTES

Listen, you seen people killed before.

AMELIA

And I felt sorry for them. This is different, this...Look, how do I keep from shaking?

FUENTES

You think about the innocent people, murdered at the Batey, the faces behind that barbed wire. You remember how angry it made you. Now hold your anger where you can feel it. That works for me.

Fuentes goes to a saddlebag and withdraws a gun.

FUENTES

That seem too complicated? Okay, I also hold a gun in my hand. Squeeze it tight.

She grips it in an extended claw.

FUENTES

. . . Okay, but not there!

He pushes her arm down to her side. He flounces her dress around it to cover it.

FUENTES

. . . Okay. Here we go.

AMELIA

Wait.

Holding the gun has brought some color back to her cheeks.

She rearranges the flounces.

AMELIA

There.

FUENTES

Good. It's a Sunday ride. You are here to see the sights.

Fuentes opens the door in the inner gate:

## WIDE ON THE INNER COURTYARD

Rudi walks head down, like a servant, across the empty parade grounds, leading the horses. Victor and Amelia follow slowly behind, looking up at the weathered stone walls. Fuentes points up

at various things of interest, his manner relaxed. Amelia tries to play her part, looking where he indicates, but her movements are stiff.

Rudi steps through a doorway at the far end of the courtyard.

Inside the dark room four Guardia sit at a rough wooden table in their shirtsleeves, playing dominoes.

They look up at Rudi, dumbstruck that an unannounced stranger has entered the compound.

Rudi is talking to them in Spanish, as Fuentes and Amelia appear in the doorway behind him.

Not one of the Guardia has said a word.

FUENTES

He is explaining to them how I'm just showing my friend from America where I was a guest, forty-seven years ago.

The four guards look over at the American lady in the nice dress, so out-of-place in the rough stone room. One of the men has a straw hat cocked over one eye and a few day's worth of stubble;

two of them are in undershirts, one in an unbuttoned overshirt; one has a plate of eggs in front of him and some grease glistening on his chin.

RUDI

Si.

FUENTES

The guard at the gate said it's okay.

As Rudi relays this in Spanish, Fuentes smiles at Amelia.

FUENTES

. . . I was placed in stocks out there in the yard. On my back. You understand? Locked on my back so I'm facing the sun.

Amelia tries to do her part, smiling:

AMELIA

That was here?

FUENTES

Is what I'm telling you! right here, this prison, that yard right there! They kept the stocks right there, also fetters, balls and chains.

He turns to the guards.

FUENTES

. . . Tienen todavia las pelotas y cadenas?

The guards stare at him, too surly and perhaps too puzzled to be drawn into any conversation. Victor shrugs.

## FUENTES

. . . Probably. So I lie out there unable to move, not even to turn my head an inch. They told me by evening the sun would have burned through my eyes and I would be blind and out of my head. The blood in my head boiling. But you know what? I am back here. Because I prayed to St. Francis, the friend of Brother Sun and Sister Moon. I asked St. Francis, do you maybe have some cousins who are clouds?

He smiles at the guards.

## FUENTES

. . . And St. Francis, he made a milagro. The clouds gathered. Never in July. But they did. And it rained.

He has drawn a gun. One of the guards we've met before laughs, as if this were the punchline.

## GUARD 1

Escuche, viejo, que esta pensando hacer con esse?

Fuentes smiles at Amelia:

## FUENTES

He asks what I'm doing. What does one do with a gun?

He extends the revolver and shoots the man in the middle of the chest.

As the man pitches forward, Fuentes moves the gun over and shoots the guard smoking a cigarette.

Rudi shoots the third.

The fourth, the man in the straw hat, gets up with his hands raised and backs away from the table and from Fuentes. He is backing right into Rudi, who touches his gun to the man's hat and shoots.

The hat, burning, falls to the floor as the man pitches forward. Rudi grunts and stamps on it.

## HALLWAY

Fuentes and Rudi are leading the way down the hall; Amelia is behind.

They advance into a room: A guard, his feet up on the desk. After a long silent beat he greedily sucks in a loud snoring breath.

There is an empty bottle of mescal on the desktop.

Rudi steps forward and lifts the man's hat off his eyes. The man licks his lips, snores on.

Rudi replaces his hat.

Fuentes lifts a ring of keys off a nail by the door.

INT CELL

Virgil, wearing woven-straw slippers, stands in the middle of the cell with one arm stretched out, one bent at the elbow. He pivots the bent arm in a circle then raises both arms to point straight ahead. He gives an interrogative look at Ben, then relaxes.

VIRGIL

That's my name, followed by "I am in distress."

BEN

Why don't you stand in the window and do that?

VIRGIL

I would if there was anyone there to see it but a bunch a bean-eaters. I'm also a trained marksman. My shooting rule of thumb is, if I can see it, I can hit it. And I'm not just talking through my ass--huh?

The door is swinging open.

Rudi, Fuentes and Amelia enter. Ben stares at Amelia.

And she at him. He's the one alive! She runs to embrace him.

BEN

What're you doin' here?

AMELIA

I told you. Cuba libre.

HALLWAY

They walk quickly down the hall, with Amelia behind.

A door opens behind Amelia just as she passes.

They turn to look.

The Fat Guard is emerging from the door and turning to close it behind him. He looks up--sees the people; in the foreground:

an American lady in a pretty dress.

In the narrow hallway Amelia is between the others and the soldier. She and the soldier stare at each other.

She raises her gun and shoots.

He staggers back against the door, which swings open behind him. She shoots again and again, sending him back into the room.

Ben stares: Who is this refined, elegant woman--who can also shoot a man?

The man collapses against the desk. The Guard goes on sleeping; snoring.

The group runs out.

BEN

You kill all the guards?

FUENTES

I don't know. How many are there?

BEN

I don't know.

#### THE PRISON COURTYARD

As the group runs out into the dusk. The horses are tethered to a hitching post at the near end of the open yard.

To Virgil:

FUENTES

You ride?

VIRGIL

Hope to say.

They are all mounting when there is the flat crack of a rifle.

There is a mettalic PANG! and Rudi cries out and drops his machete.

His horse rears wildly, throwing him. The horse shrieks and, eyes rolling, charges wildly around the yard, directionless, turning and sprinting, turning and sprinting.

The others dismount and pull Rudi into the protective cover of the overhang of the second-story loggia.

Rudi says something in Spanish and starts cursing. His thigh is bleeding.

FUENTES

It hit his machete, then hit his leg.

VIRGIL

And then the horse.

BEN

Up there.

He indicates.

Across the yard is the sallyway to the drawbridge. In the crenellations just above is the glint of a rifle. It is well-covered. There is a blind stairway leading up from the yard next to the sallyway.

Ben looks.

BEN

. . . Huh.

He runs off to one side, close to the wall, staying under the overhang. He reaches the right side of the yard and follows its wall.

The others wait, listening to the shrieking horse and its clattering hooves.

Virgil shakes his head, dismayed.

VIRGIL

. . . Gimme that carbine, buddy.

Fuentes gives him his rifle.

Ben has reached the stairway and started up it.

Virgil's rifle sweeps back and forth as his aim follows the wildly galloping horse.

VIRGIL

. . . Damn.

He shakes his head, sets the gun down, wipes his palms on his pants, picks the gun up and aims again.

After a beat: CRACK.

The horse collapses.

Quiet.

A good beat.

There is the crack of a gun from across the way.

Amelia's grip tightens on Fuentes' arm.

The little group waits.

After a moment there is a very faint rhythmic jingle.

With jingling footfalls we see Ben's boots descending the stairs across the way. As he descends further we see knees. . . thighs. . . waist. . . chest. . . and finally his face, now topped by his jipijapa.

BEN

That was the sonofabitch took my hat.

As the group mounts up:

VIRGIL

If we ride out and anyone's left here, they'll just plunk us in the back.

Ben helps Amelia up onto his horse; Fuentes has helped Rudi mount and swings up behind him.

BEN

Good point. Let's get back in the cell and lock ourselves up.

They set the horses to a gallop.

EXT COUNTRY CHURCH

The group rides up.

They dismount and haul Rudi off his horse.

FUENTES

I was hoping to get further but this church is all right. The priest here is a Spaniard, but very sympathetic. I send the boy here for a doctor.

He speaks in Spanish to Rudi, who is very drawn. He nods.

RUDI

. . . There is a house in back.

Virgil starts to help Victor to move Rudi.

Ben and Amelia dismount.

RUDI

One moment.

He gestures to Amelia who bends over him.

RUDI

Back in America, are there many more young women like you?

AMELIA

(smiling at the expected compliment)

Oh, yes.

RUDI

Jesus!

He gestures to Virgil and Fuentes to carry him off.

RUDI

Come boys, we must go say a novena for the men of the next century.

AMELIA

(to Ben)

Do you want to go in?

Ben looks at her. She is gazing at the church.

BEN

No ma'am. Not my faith.

She nods, and starts walking toward the church.

She turns back.

AMELIA

(curious)

What is your faith?

Ben considers the question--

She turns back, and he watches her enter the church.

## HOUSE EXTERIOR

A little later; it is evening. Ben sits on the front porch. He's looking down at a small leather drawstring bag with a big C on it.

Amelia is walking up from the church behind which the house sits. As she mounts to the porch:

BEN

Wouldn't've guessed you were church-goin'.

AMELIA

Well, we don't really know each other.

BEN

Not yet.

She smiles as she sits next to him.

AMELIA

Are you really a bank robber?

BEN

Well now, see, that's how a bad reputation gets started. I wasn't robbin' a bank in the sense of indiscriminately stuffin' the bills in a satchel and then ridin' out a town with m' horse rearin' and m' six-guns ablaze.

AMELIA

In what sense, then, did you rob a bank?

He sighs.

BEN

. . . Worked breakin' horses for an express outfit, damned hard work, time come to pay me no one seemed inclined. I asked polite, all kinds of ways. Finally went to their bank in Sweetmary, Arizona, showed the teller a .44 and withdrew the nine hundred bucks they owed me from the company's account.

She smiles.

AMELIA

And that was the only one you robbed?

BEN

Well--once I had the hang of it. . .

She tries to read his expression, which gives her nothing.  
After a moment:

BEN

. . . Why'd you help Victor bust me out?

AMELIA

I told you, I'm with them. For Cuba. We thought you could lead us to the guns.

Ben stares at her, grins.

She bridles at his smile.

AMELIA

. . . What.

BEN

Oh, nothin'. You're just not my picture of an insurrecto.

AMELIA

It's impossible to see what's going on here and not take sides. Of course--you must've felt the same, risking your neck to bring those guns in.

A pause. Ben is still smiling.

BEN

. . . Yeah, I guess I musta.

She reacts to his smile:

AMELIA

You don't think my motives are as noble as yours?

BEN

Well they just might be. But don't tell me that's all of why you come and busted me outta prison. . .

They look at each other.

A long beat.

The porch door opens and Virgil emerges.

VIRGIL

Grubs on--oh. 'Scuse me.

BEN

'Tsallright. We were just discussin' politics.

LATER

The beadle and his family are staring off. They are seated at the table, eating, but have stopped for the moment to focus their attention.

VOICE

...And then you do this here.

Wider angle shows Virgil who stands to one side, arms extended.

VIRGIL

...That means, Shallow water, starboard side. Then they know they gotta proceed with caution.

He sits and goes back to his chow.

VIRGIL

...I'd show you s'more but they're U.S. Navy classified, and we could well find ourselves in a shootin' war with you folks.

BEN

It'd be the Dons we'd be fighting, not these Cubans.

VIRGIL

Well. Til the dust settles I'd as soon keep those semaphores under m'hat.

FUENTES

(smiling at Virgil)

So tomorrow I take you and the Ben to the boat. Then I go join Islero in the jungle.

AMELIA

(excited)

The guerilla leader.

FUENTES

He is my brother.

AMELIA

He is all our brother.

FUENTES

No. I mean we have the same mother.

BEN

Well, I ain't going yet, Victor. I got to discuss the murder of my partner, Mr. Charlie Burke, with a certain Guardia.

FUENTES

Yes, you are a man of honor.

BEN

I won't be killing Lionel for a word. I'm killing him because he's a scum-sucking son of a bitch and it'll be a far happier world without him in it.

Ben sees that Amelia looks a little disappointed at this.

BEN

And I'll be killing him for Cuba Libre, of course.

AMELIA

I'm with Ben. I'm not leaving until there's freedom in Cuba.

FUENTES

You want to shoot more men, huh?

AMELIA

What? No. I didn't care for that too much. I felt...

*Confused by her memories, she looks to Ben.*

BEN

That it had to be done. It was him or us.

*Amelia nods--relieved by his acceptance.*

FUENTES

Good. You did it. Your friend Neely can make you famous, like you want. Now I take you to the boat.

AMELIA

No, Victor, I'm not a child. You can't just send me away. I've found what I want to do here.

FUENTES

I can't send you? Tha' right? So you maybe wander through the jungle 'till you bump into Islero? Tell my brother you want to enlist?

*Amelia's furious.*

VIRGIL

Pass me those yams, please.

FUENTES

(to Amelia)

You were brave in the Morro. But you were lucky, too. I take no more chances. I don't won't you on my conscience.

VIRGIL

Remember me? Potatoes?

*His big arms reaches across the Silence to get his food.*

AMELIA

(not knowing where she's  
going with this)

Victor, you don't know what I have in  
mind....I've been thinking....

FUENTES

No more thinking. Your last idea, we  
rescue a cowboy who doesn't know where  
anything is, and a sailor who  
knows...sign language for boats. No mas.  
No mas.

AMELIA

(she hits on it)

I could get some money. From Rollie.

Ben's dashed down.

FUENTES

I'm sure you can get whatever you want  
from him.

AMELIA

I mean, suppose I was taken hostage, by  
the insurrectos? I might be worth a lot  
of money to Rollie.

Ben and Fuentes look at each other--interested, a little  
amazed. Amelia looks at their wondering looks.

AMELIA

I think he would pay eighty thousand  
dollars for me.

FUENTES

Eighty thousand dollars...

AMELIA

For the revolution...

CUT TO:

BEN AND AMELIA

Riding through jungle, bringing up the rear of the group.

BEN

So what's our plan if he don't pay?

AMELIA

Wouldn't you pay?

Ben smiles, gives her an appraising look.

BEN  
(teasing)  
Maybe so.

She's satisfyingly disappointed.

BEN  
But in my case, if I didn't pay I'd never  
know what I'd be missing.

Amelia gives him a determined look.

EXTERIOR CATHEDRAL

Tavalera approaches the church's great wooden doors.

INTERIOR CATHEDRAL

Tavalera enters, goes to the alter at the front, kneels  
before it, crosses himself. He rises and goes to the  
confessional to one side.

INTERIOR CONFESSIONAL

A priest slides a panel back to talk through the screen  
which obscures his face.

PRIEST  
A priest, in a church out near  
Cienfuegos.

TAVALERA  
Yes?

PRIEST  
He had the people you are looking for.  
They are gone now but one was injured.

TAVALERA  
Yes?

PRIEST  
They were going to leave him at the home  
of a doctor. . .

BEN

Sitting in a rock pool, wearing his hat. It is evening--very  
last light. Water laps up around his chest and the sunset  
glints off his jipijapa. He splashes the soap off of himself  
and then, as he prepares to get up, picks up the bar of soap  
resting on the rock next to him. He sniffs it.

BEN

...Huh.

AMELIA (O.S.)

Nice hat.

Amelia emerges from the dark. She's clothed.

BEN

How long you been there?

AMELIA

A while.

BEN

See much?

AMELIA

See the hat. You ever take it off?

Ben thinks. But she's stepped back into the darkness.

BEN

Showers.

AMELIA (O.S.)

You said you didn't pay you'd never know what you'd be missing. So it was curiosity?

BEN

I was flirting, Ma'am.

AMELIA (O.S.)

But why would you buy a pig in a poke?

BEN

Well, I surely wouldn't call you a pig.  
I--

As he speaks, she steps out from the shadows, naked now.

AMELIA

This, Ben. You'd be missing this.

Ben stands.

BEN

I'd pay.

She comes to him. He takes his hat, and flings it on to the bank.

She walks over and puts it on a rock--to show herself off.

She returns to him. They embrace, and more than embrace. He lifts her up. She wraps her legs around him...as the scene goes DARK.

LATER

Morning light's just beginning. They sit on the bank, with their feet in the water.

AMELIA

Now that you know what you'd be missing--

BEN

(immediate)

Whatever it cost.

She takes his hand.

BEN

But Amelia, I got something I got to tell you. I think you think I'm something I'm not. I think.

AMELIA

(laughing)

You think?

BEN

You have a confusing effect on me.

AMELIA

Oh no. You're going to say I clouded your mind, and made you forget you have a wife and child in Arizona.

BEN

Most certainly not. But I'm not a revolutionist, either. That's what I wanted to say.

She lets go of his hand, but she doesn't move away from him. They sit in silence, while she tries to adjust, to make this work for her.

AMELIA

Well, you saw that the cause needs guns.

BEN

Actually, I'm not much of a gun runner either. I thought Charlie and me were just bringing in polo ponies for your ex. He is ex now, ain't he?

She ignores this.

AMELIA

How could you do that, Ben? How could you deceive me like that?

Angry with herself, she begins to put on her clothes.

AMELIA

God that's got to be womankind's oldest and stupidest question, doesn't it?

BEN

(wondering about it  
himself)

I guess it was cause you seemed to like me that way.

AMELIA

Right, and if I'd wanted you rich, you'd say you had money.

(she puts on her blouse)

Till the check comes, and damn if you didn't just leave your wallet at home...

BEN

I mean, look, I agree with you about this Cuban business now. I see these people deserve a fair shake. But it's just, I don't trust all those big words you people use. Freedom. Democracy.

AMELIA

Oh, really? Ben Tyler, cowboy-philosopher, he sees through all that, does he?

BEN

No, look. I see the Cubanos have something worth fighting for. And I maybe I even got some reasons of my own to hate the Spanish.

(heartfelt, for sure)

But truth is, Amelia, for me, this is about you. As long as you're for this, I am.

She stops, for a moment...then pulls on her stockings.

AMELIA

But I have to wonder, what about when something you want more come along?

She puts on her skirt.

BEN

Amelia, that's not going to happen, you  
have my--

But she's already left.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAYTIME

Fuentes and Ben ride together, following the line of  
guerillas that snakes through the jungle. Amelia rides ahead  
of them, with Virgil.

BEN

So that Boudreaux, how'd he make his  
fortune? He arrive here rich? Or did he  
make it here?

FUENTES

Yes, both. But I think you want to know  
could she love a man who cannot spoil her  
with fine things?

BEN

Well--

His voice starts to trail off as he notices something ahead.

His point of view show that the little group is now being  
led by a couple of white-clad mambis on horseback, rifles  
slung over their shoulders, who have fallen in at the head  
of the column.

BEN

Well, when this revolution thing is over,  
you think she'll...

He twists around in his saddle.

His point of view shows a couple of white-clad mambis  
behind, placidly following.

BEN

. . . Well. Looks like we got an escort.

CAMP

The group enters a clearing dotted with shelters, each of  
which consists of poles supporting a thatched roof, tucked  
under which are rolled-up canvases that can be lowered as  
walls. As the group dismounts, a small black man hobbles out  
of one of the shelters.

With an irregular lope the man rushes up to Fuentes to hug him.

FUENTES

This is my brother, Islero.

Virgil gapes.

VIRGIL

That fella's a Negro.

FUENTES

And so am I, half. I was a slave, too, until we ran away together.

Islero, standing next to him, nods and smiles with cheery incomprehension.

FUENTES

. . . My brother, he don't speak good English. They caught him, cut the tendons in his legs so he can't run no more. Made him cook. Good cook, in Spanish army. He poisoned the officers and walked away.

Fuentes laughs, speaks Spanish to Islero and pantomimes tipping back a glass to drink. Islero laughs with him and nods a smiling confirmation at the Americans.

ISLERO

Si si. Todos mortos.

Fuentes goes to help Amelia down from her horse.

FUENTES

Don't talk about how he walks. He don't like that.

VIRGIL

Well if he don't speak English, how come we can't talk about it?

INGLATERRA INTERIOR BOUDREAUX' SUITE

Novis stands across from Boudreaux who sits at his desk, reading a letter..

NOVIS

. . .Is it a ransom note?

Boudreaux gives him a sour glance and goes back to the letter.

After a moment he sets it down and walks over to the window to look down at the street.

BOUDREAUX

I'm to put the money in a pillowcase wrapped in a hammock with rope around it securely tied. I'm to attach a tag that says, "To Amelia Brown for Cuba Libre," and you're to be sitting with it in the Cafe Tacita di Oro in Matanzas, Friday, at noon.

NOVIS

I am?

BOUDREAUX

Yes, you. . . but why you?

NOVIS

I reckon 'cause you trust me. . . Could that be it?

Boudreaux stares at him.

## JUNGLE SHELTER INTERIOR

The group is gathered around a table upon which Fuentes unrolls a map.

FUENTES

He could not have made today's train, so he will have to be on Thursday's.

BEN

Supposen he rides.

Amelia snorts--she looks disdainfully at Ben.

AMELIA

Novis? He barely knows how. Rollie is not going to put his eighty thousand dollars on a horse with Novis Crowe and send it out into the jungle.

BEN

Okay, so we know how he's gettin' there. Does it matter? Why not just meet him like he expects?

FUENTES

If there is any trap, it will be laid there, in Matanzas. So we stop the train before. Believe me, there is nothing to stopping a train. My brother has picked a bridge we blow up--here. . .

He points on the map.

FUENTES

. . . Just past Benavides, a small  
bridge, but enough for the purpose.

Islero laughs and nods.

ISLERO

Boom! Ha-ha-ha!

VIRGIL

Dynamite?

Islero says something in Spanish.

FUENTES

Hollow bamboo, dynamite sticks inside and  
fix to it the cap and the electric wire.  
We stop the train. We go in. We take the  
money from Senor Novis.

VIRGIL

Well you boys got some primitive  
ordnance. But that sounds like it'll  
work.

INT. RURAL HOUSE

Rudi Calvo lays on a bed, one leg bandaged.

Tavalera enters. Rudi's terrified. Tavalera pulls a little  
chair up next to the bed.

He looks at Rudi's leg, reaches gingerly out, touches it.

Rudi screams.

TAVALERA

. . . Oh, does that hurt? I heard that  
your legs were not good. Some  
unpleasantness at the Morro. I think I  
must get you a better doctor. After all,  
you used to have the honor to work for  
me.

He watches as Rudi settles.

TAVALERA

But I think, how did you cherish that  
great distinction?

He gives his bandaged leg a gentle, exploratory nudge.

Rudi screams again.

TAVALERA

Did you treasure it, Rudi?

He rips the bandage off.

Rudi screams.

TAVALERA

Or did you act like the peasant scum you are and always will be?

He pokes.

TAVALERA

Like scum, Rudi, that's how you acted!

He continues poking for a few moments, humming to himself.

TAVALERA

. . . Yes, the leg is very baad. It may have to be amputated. Yes, I think they will. Cut them off--or perhaps you have something to tell me. . .

He gazes at Rudi. Nothing is forthcoming.

TAVALERA

. . . All right, if you tell me who was with you at the Morro your leg will be properly cleaned and dressed, and I will set you free.

Tavalera's calculating gaze rests on Rudi, but there is still no response.

TAVALERA

. . . And if you do not tell me, here is what will happen. Both your legs will be cut off with your own machete, the weapon of peasants, without anesthetic, without a stick to bite on, without hope for the rest of your life. You have a child--a little boy. He will be brought here and you will watch as we do the same to him. And then. . . you can both go. You can go and beg together on the streets of Havana with a tin cup. It will be very touching.

He leans in.

TAVALERA

. . . Who was with you at the Morro?

RUDI

. . . God forgive me. . .

Tavalera watches.

RUDI

. . . Boudreaux's woman. And his segundo,  
Victor Fuentes.

Tavalera stares, then allows himself to smile:

TAVALERA

. . . His woman?

CRANE DOWN

We are high on what looks like unbroken jungle. As we descend, though, we bring into view a foreground gap in the foliage--a ravine spanned by a small bridge.

The continuing boom down along one of the bridge's trestles reveals white-clad mambis working in the ravine, planting their charges on the bridge's supports.

Fuentes is on horseback, talking with a group of men, as Virgil, Ben and Amelia ride up. Ben points:

BEN

What happens if the train don't see that  
the bridge is blowed in time to stop?

FUENTES

Plenty of time. That is why we pick this  
spot. Straight track--the bridge is  
visible to him long before he is upon it.

(Fuentes turns his horse)

But I got to join my brother now. We  
attack a small fort today. Near Matanzas.

Ben looks to Amelia--desperate to impress her.

BEN

Include me in.

AMELIA

(still angry)

This isn't a game, you know.

BEN

Yeah, I think I got a handle on that.

VIRGIL

Sounds good to me.

AMELIA

I'm ready.

VIRGIL  
(looking at Amelia)  
That's ridiculous.  
(to Ben)  
Ben, you got to tell her. That's  
ridiculous.

Ben shrugs.

BEN  
Virgil, I know you're a crack shot  
against a riderless horse. But you ever  
killed a man?

VIRGIL  
Not yet.

BEN  
She has.

VIRGIL  
Well, she's kidnapped!

AMELIA  
I'll disguise myself.

Amelia snatches Ben's jipijapa from his head, and puts it on  
her own.

BEN  
Yup, even your own mother wouldn't know  
you now.

AMELIA  
Mama's a dope fiend. She wouldn't know  
her elbow from her...  
(smiling at Ben despite  
herself)  
daughter in a hat.

#### HAVANA STREET

Panicked activity. People with households packed on carts  
frantically try to negotiate the crowded street.

One person is moving with calm purpose: Tavalera, on  
horseback, hardly seems to notice the furious activity  
around him.

LOBBY

Of the Hotel Inglaterra. Once again, panicked activity. People struggle with bags, bellow at the concierge's desk, etc.

Tavalera calmly crosses the lobby.

POINT OF VIEW THROUGH BINOCULARS

American warships sit in Havana harbor.

BOUDREAUX (O.S.)

. . . So they are here.

OBJECTIVE

Boudreaux turns from his hotel-room window lowering the binoculars. Tavalera is just entering.

BOUDREAUX

Yes. No doubt it'll start soon.

Tavalera removes his gloves.

BOUDREAUX

What will you do, assuming we win?

Tavalera smiles.

TAVALERA

Now, "we" is the Americans?

BOUDREAUX

I've always been American.

TAVALERA

Quite so. . .

He sits back and his smile fades.

TAVALERA

. . . You wonder what I will do? I am an old soldier. Spain--I don't know. I have never lived there. I have lived in Africa, and then this island. I don't suppose I shall be able to stay. If you win, and if I am alive--but enough. I have something to tell you.

BOUDREAUX

And I have something to show you.

Boudreaux is handing him the ransom note. As Tavalera reads:

BOUDREAU

. . . Mambis knocked out her bodyguard  
and grabbed her on her way to the boat.

Tavalera is too surprised to conceal it at first:

TAVALERA

You think she is kidnapped?!

BOUDREAU

Good God, man, can't you read?

TAVALERA

Ah-hah. Yes. . .

He continues reading the letter.

TAVALERA

. . . Yes, I see. She must be very  
frighten. Poor girl.

BOUDREAU

She must be scared to death.

Tavalera's tone is absent:

TAVALERA

. . . You know, the American, he escaped.

BOUDREAU

The cowboy?

TAVALERA

Yes.

BOUDREAU

From the Morro?!

TAVALERA

Oh yes.

BOUDREAU

Huh. . . What does that have to do with  
this?

TAVALERA

Nothing. . . nothing. . . Yes, this. .

He taps the letter.

TAVALERA

. . . is very grave.

BOUDREAU

Well, damnit, I know that! But what do I  
do?

Tavalera sits, leans back, thinks.

TAVALERA

Why. . . you pay.

BOUDREAUX

Jesus Christ, man! I love the woman,  
don't I? But eighty thousand dollars!

Tavalera shrugs.

TAVALERA

Of course, the choice is yours. We can  
intervene, no doubt catch some of these  
bad people. But we could not guarantee  
the safety of the beautiful young lady.  
Safest is, you pay.

BOUDREAUX

That's it?! After all the help we've  
given you!

TAVALERA

Just now, "we" was the Americans.

He smiles.

TAVALERA

. . . Okay, listen, we are friends, I do  
this friendly thing for you: I have some  
men at the cafe in Matanzas. They will  
watch. Help, if something goes wrong...

He idly picks up the letter and glances through it again.

TAVALERA

. . . But you should get the money, and  
hope all goes as planned.

BOUDREAUX

Damnit. . .

He is staring out the window.

BOUDREAUX

. . . You said you had something to tell  
me.

TAVALERA

Did I?

His eyes on the letter, his voice drifts mildly away:

TAVALERA

. . . I can't think what. . .

## EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MATANZAS. A FORT - DAY

A Spanish soldier, standing on the edge of a small fort--really more like an overgrown barracks. The fort's on the very edge of Matanzas, and just beyond and below it, we can see the roofs of the city.

The soldier looks through binoculars, panning over a low hill. Through the binoculars: Behind rocks, a guerilla puts a cartridge in his gun...a comrade draws a small whetstone

across the edge of his long machete...another man checks the edge on a short blade...while another fighter hefts what looks like a meat cleaver.

Ben, talking to one of the guerillas, reaches over and clumsily hefts his machete.

The guerilla, smiling, shows him where to place his hands.

Next to Fuentes, Amelia, still wearing Ben's hat, points a rifle towards the fort.

Islero now stands up next to Ben, holding binoculars himself, pointed towards the fort, watching the man watching him.

## BACK TO SCENE

AMELIA

Victor, do you still pray to St. Francis?

FUENTES

I don't believe in God anymore. Well, okay, sometimes I pray. But I think not today, not for killing people.

BEN

(to Islero)

I'm new to this kind of thing, pardner. But shouldn't we look for higher ground?

Fuentes translates. Islero shrugs. He hands the binoculars to Ben.

FUENTES

You see any mountains nearby?

Virgil pops up from behind a rock, holding a rifle.

VIRGIL

Can we set to work now?

Islero waves his hand and the guerillas begin to fire.

BEN  
(to Virgil)  
Your navy's sittin' in the harbor there.  
Have a look.

He stands up and hands the binoculars to Virgil.

Return fire starts from the fort, and Ben scrambles back behind a rock.

Virgil, unperturbed, remains standing, looking through the binoculars. Bullets ping, chipping the dirt near his feet. His straw slippers are in tatters now.

VIRGIL  
...Hot dammie. There's the Cincinnati and the New York. Twenty-one inch guns, thirty-inch armored hulls. There's a Monitor with 'em. I bet we got boats all over Cuba. Waitin' for the word, pardner. Just waitin' for the word.

He hands the binoculars to Ben.

THROUGH BINOCULARS: we see two cruisers, and a long low steel hulled gunship. The monitor's long guns swivel down towards the shore--and the barrels spit fire.

BEN (O.S.)  
Looks like they got the word.

The binoculars view swivels to Matanzas. With a huge explosion a building collapses into an alleyway, sending up clouds of dust and pulverized adobe. The alley is full of screams and panicked activity, all half-obscured by dust.

Back to the ships: The New York's guns are working now.

And the Cincinnati's--

Belching fire.

Back to the harbor:

An explosion churns up an earthworks in front of the huge fort that guards the harbor.

The shells move closer to the outerworks.

Through the binoculars: A platoon of Guardia form on the parade ground....and

shells comes down in the middle of the formation, blowing men to pieces...or leaving them lying on the ground, their mouths forming screams--

But all we can hear is the exploding shells, the firing guns...

The walls of the fort are falling inward on the men...

BACK TO SCENE:

Virgil jumps up and down, whooping.

VIRGIL

She's started! Those 're twenty-one  
inchers! Let's finish up here before  
those boys lay one up our assholes!

THE SOUND OF THE SHIP'S ARMAMENT firing and firing GROWS and GROWS. It's coming closer, and growing louder, and LOUDER AND LOUDER.

BEN

(shouting)

Jesus, do they think that's gonna help  
us?

AMELIA

What?

THE SOUND IS HUGE.

But it doesn't stop.

IT GROWS EVEN LOUDER.

We scan the bewildered faces of the guerillas behind rocks, and trees and lying on the ground. The guerillas look like tiny people in an huge ocean of sound, a dangerous crashing surf.

The shells from the battleship make the earth tremble.

Some of the guerillas throws their rifles aside, and start to run...some away from the fort, some towards it.

They take a few steps, then stop...where should they run to?

They look towards the ocean, the source of all this fury.

The shelling is almost continual now. It's getting closer and closer.

The guerillas faces are confused, scared.

But no more bullets chip the rocks the guerillas hide behind, or the ground by their feet.

The fort has stopped firing.

While the thunder of the big guns continues, still closer now, still louder--

The ground shakes. Pebbles and dirt slide from the rocks.

A white flag pokes out from the window of the fort. The flag is waved up and down.

As if in response to the flag, the gunfire from the ship finally stops.

A few Spanish soldiers begin to wander out of the fort. They, too, are stunned.

The world's weirdly quiet again. The bewildered soldiers stand in the field in front of the fort, open mouthed, looking to the ocean, or up at the sun, or staring pointlessly straight ahead with eyes out of focus.

Islero says something to Fuentes in Spanish.

FUENTES

(to Ben)

He says what the fuck should I do with them now?

VIRGIL

Jesus, man, you take them prisoner.

Islero shrugs.

FUENTES

The Spanish, before now, fortunately they fight to the death. My brother, he's got nowhere for prisoners.

The guerillas wander out into the field to look at the soldiers. The soldiers, terrified, put their hands in the air.

The guerillas wander around, looking at the prisoners like they were animals in a zoo.

FUENTES

Islero thinks maybe he give the order to kill them all.

In the background, a guerilla pokes a Spanish soldier in the back with his machete.

Islero shouts something in Spanish.

The soldier begins to take his shirt and pants off.

FUENTES

Or maybe he just takes their clothes.

The other guerillas shout at the prisoners.

FUENTES

(to Islero)

We got to get going now. Train to stop, remember?

The Spanish quickly unbutton their tunics, their shirts, and slide out of their pants

VIRGIL

(to Ben and Victor)

Wait one minute.

He runs to the soldiers milling about in the field in front of the fort.

Virgil shouts something at a Spaniard. The soldier looks blankly at the yanqui.

Virgil strikes him in the chest with his fist, knocking him down. He bends over him and starts to pull off the soldier's boots.

SHINY NEW BOOTS WITH FANCY STITCHING

and up the legs, to Virgil on horseback, riding beside Amelia, and Fuentes.

They follow the guerillas wearing new shirts over their own shirts, or open tunics with shirts over them.

BEN

(not angry, just accepting)

Well, I guess it's over, huh?

AMELIA

And what would that mean?

BEN

You know. Islero. The guerillas. The revolution.

AMELIA

You mean, Cuba's won. They'll run their own country now.

Ben shrugs.

BEN  
You heard that firing?

VIRGIL  
Hard to miss, huh?

Amelia looks perplexed.

BEN  
The Americans got the big guns,  
sweetheart. That makes 'em the new boss.  
That's how things work.

AMELIA  
(disgusted, riding away  
from him)  
So says Ben Tyler, cowboy philosopher.

#### CATHEDRAL INTERIOR

High-ceilinged, dim, lit by flickering votive candles.

Empty except for one man:

Tavalera kneels at the rail before the alter, forehead  
resting upon his hands clasped in front of him.

He seems to be suffering; he breathes heavily. One brief  
strangled sob escapes--he quickly quiets himself, but the  
fugitive cry echoes among the vaults of the ceiling.

He rises, starts for the confessional.

#### INTERIOR CONFESSIONAL

The familiar screen is slid back.

FATHER  
Lionel. . . Why are you here? I have  
nothing for you today.

For a moment there is no answer, then:

TAVALERA  
Father. . . I have served the Crown for  
many years, My entire life.

FATHER  
Yes. To live is to serve.

TAVALERA  
I have served as a soldier. In Africa,  
where I was born, I killed my enemy,  
enemies of the crown, and of this Church.  
But more--I have done many terrible  
things--things too terrible to relate  
even in this sacrament. I did not flinch  
from my duty, even when it meant doing  
that which shall deny me life  
everlasting.

FATHER

God will forgive.

TAVALERA

here as a penitent.

The things I've done I had to do, for honor. But when may a man do something for himself? When may a man, who has denied himself his eternal reward, seek some small recompense here on earth? Something that will not stain his dignity? When glory is gone--when the cause is lost. . .

FATHER

Lieutenant, our reward is not on this earth.

Tavalera sits, lost in thought.

Finally:

TAVALERA

. . . The slave-tracker, Osma. Where do I find him?

EXT. GUERRILLA CAMP - NIGHT

Ben sits cross legged with a cup of coffee between his hands. Near by, Fuentes and Victor lie rolled in blankets, sleeping.

Fuentes turns in his sleep, makes a loud whistling sound as he snores.

A twig cracks in the brush behind Ben.

Ben's hand goes to his gun.

AMELIA

(whispering)

It's me.

She sits down beside him, her face and body slumped in defeat.

AMELIA

That battle...

BEN

Yeah, that was something, huh?

AMELIA

(bewildered by her  
memories)

It was like, I don't know, like being in  
an earthquake.

BEN

Never had the pleasure.

AMELIA

I mean those guns. So loud.

BEN

Yeah.

AMELIA

And the soldiers, they looked so dazed.  
They didn't know what to do, did they?

BEN

I 'spose an earthquake says it wants your  
house, there's not much you can do.

AMELIA

Well, I lost my house today. There's no  
more Cuban revolution, is there?

BEN

No ma'am, I believe not. The day the  
Spaniards leave, the US arrives.

AMELIA

I feel like I have nothing left.

He puts his arm around her to comfort her.

He strokes her face.

She slowly leans into him, taking comfort. He strokes her  
hair.

AMELIA

Well, maybe two people, if they could  
trust each other, maybe they--

BEN

Yeah, the big guns make the rules. But  
there's room--

AMELIA

I was thinking, maybe we could--

BEN

Sure, darling, Victor's asleep--

AMELIA

Take the money.

BEN

Wha?

AMELIA

I mean, there's no more revolution. And after all, the money was meant to pay for me, wasn't it?

Fuentes lies wrapped in a blanket, looking up at the stars; his eyes, half-hidden under his blanket--are open.

AMELIA

We could board the train before the bridge, grab the money and get out. You've robbed banks before. It would be old hat for--

BEN

So is this love darling, or you just need someone whose 'et the cake?

Fuentes lets loose a long ratcheting snore.

AMELIA

Jesus, man, I scaled the walls of the Morro for you. Poetically speaking, that is.

BEN

I 'preciate that. But you said that was for the revolution.

AMELIA

I can think of two things at once.

BEN

And what things are you thinkin 'bout for after I help you get that money?

AMELIA

I'm telling you. I'm thinking about us.

BEN

That right?

He lets her go, sits self-contained and alone, looking ahead of himself into the dark.

BEN

I know these last couple ah days, you been riding high on the saddle, Amelia,  
-more-

BEN (CONT'D)

thing bout how much finer you are than a certain lying cowboy. But I'd like to tell you, there's a different way to see it.

AMELIA

(not angry, or lacking in confidence)

Ben Tyler, cowboy philosopher again?

BEN

Well, all that riding, it gives you plenty of time to think.

AMELIA

And?

BEN

So far I seen you give your all for a big word or two. But I ain't exactly seen you stick by one other person for long, have I?

AMELIA

Harsh words, Senor. But you ever think, maybe I never knew the one person worth sticking by before?

She takes his hand between hers.

BEN

(smiling)

Well, who'm I fooling? You know it's a risk I got to take.

He draws her to her, and they embrace passionately. Amelia turns her head to the side.

AMELIA

What about Virgil and Victor?

BEN

We won't wake 'em.

AMELIA

I mean we could use a couple more hands.

FUENTES

She's right. You could never do it alone.

Victor sits up.

BEN

(laughing)

You sly dog.

He imitates Victor's snoring.

Victor shrugs.

BEN

And the revolution?

FUENTES

You saw. It's over. My Cuba, she's a beautiful island. Rich in cane, rich in tobacco. The world will never let Cubans run it for themselves. I'm an old man. I got to think about feathering my own nest now.

Virgil sits up.

VIRGIL

I'm in.

Ben laughs softly.

BEN

...Looks like the only person who ain't in this thing for the money now is that sonofabitch Tavalera.

TAVALERA

Stepping up to the doorway of a mud house with a dim interior. At the cut we hear an unintelligible female chanting. We also hear an intermittent clicking sound.

Tavalera peers into the house.

HIS POV

With her back to us, a woman sits at a Santeria altar, lit by its candles. As she chants, she uses a long needle to pull the entrails out of a dead bird laid out in front of her. The needle clicks as she taps the entrails around, just so, then stops to inspect them.

TAVALERA

Donde es tu hermano?

SLUM ALLEYWAY

The old woman leads Tavalera through a narrow alley lined by mud huts like her own.

## RIVERSIDE

The old woman leads Tavalera to the mouth of a cave by the river.

WOMAN

Espere. Yo le traigo.

## CAVE INTERIOR

Later. Tavalera sits waiting.

The interior is dim. Light from the cave mouth has almost died here. We hear the distant gurgle of river water.

Tavalera sighs, bounces a stick against the ground, waits. With a start, he notices something.

A man is seated across from him, slightly nearer the mouth of the cave. He is perfectly settled, as motionless as one of the rocks;

it is a moment, in fact, before his form can be discerned from theirs. He is big, and round, but hard-looking. In the backlight from the mouth of the cave we can just see a long scar that runs from behind his ear, down his neck and under his rough cotton jersey. He is staring at Tavalera.

TAVALERA

How long have you been there?

It is a moment before Osma speaks:

OSMA

. . . My sister brought me.

TAVALERA

All right. I have an important job. A man will be getting on the train to Matanzas tomorrow, a gringo. He will be carrying a pillowcase wrapped in a hammock with a rope tied around it..It contains important material. You get on the train at Cienega. Before he gets off--before Matanzas--you stick him. Take the hammock, bring it to me.

OSMA

Mmm.

TAVALERA

Understand?

OSMA

Si.

TAVALERA

Someone may be watching him on the train,  
I don't know. Maybe not. But maybe.

Osma shrugs indifference. Tavalera acknowledges that Osma  
can handle it:

TAVALERA

. . . Okay. But if that someone is an  
American, wearing a tipijapa, you should  
stick him too.

OSMA

Mm.

TAVALERA

Kill him, and kill anyone with him.

## TRACKING ON A ROPE-BOUND HAMMOCK.

We are pulling back and widening out to reveal that it is  
Novis who carries the hammock. He wears his travel suit and  
cravat, and some extra pomade on his hair. He is walking up  
the platform of the Havana train station, looking for his  
car.

## CAR INTERIOR

First-class car. Cane seats.  
Novis climbs aboard. Though the car is mostly empty--  
carrying only a few Spanish gentlemen, reading newspapers--  
Novis walks up to an occupied seat by a window.

Novis jerks a thumb:

NOVIS

Go on. Screw.

The man looks around the car for help, then huffily gathers  
his things and moves.

Novis settles in. A whistle blows, and the train chugs into  
motion.

## INT. OSMA'S HUT - NIGHT

A BOOTED FOOT works a treadle. We are in a dim interior.

We hear a grinding sound and, as the foot rhythmically works  
the treadle, the occasional spark drops into frame.

The foot stops working. As the grinding noise stops a fainter sound comes through--a steady hollow pinging sound, as of drips on a tin roof.

A hand brings a sharpened knife down into frame and slides it into the boot.

#### WIDER

Once again we hear the female chanting and, once again, the Santeria candles burn.

To one side of the room dead chickens hang upside-down from a line, and a pan beneath them pings as it collects their dripping blood.

Osma has risen from the whetstone. He puts a large revolver into his waistband at the side.

He reaches round to put his smaller, hole gun, into his waistband at the small of his back.

His sister has been tamping something into an amulet as she chants. She now closes the amulet and hands it, on a necklace, to Osma.

Osma clasps it behind his neck, brings the amulet to his nose, smells it, then lowers it to his lips and kisses it.

He lets it drop to his chest.

#### RAILROAD STATION

It is a small rural station--really just a shack at the side of the tracks.

Ben, Fuentes, Virgil and Amelia are riding up. As they arrive and Ben and Fuentes dismount:

#### FUENTES

We get on here, you go ahead past Regla.  
Stay on the north side of the tracks.

#### AMELIA

Yes.

#### FUENTES

We toss the money out right past the watertower there. But the train is going fast there, she don't take on water.

Amelia smiles.

#### AMELIA

We won't let the money hit us.

FUENTES

She slows for a curve two miles later, we jump out.

Ben hands her the lead to his horse; Fuentes hands the lead for his to Virgil.

VIRGIL

We'll be there two minutes after you bail out.

FUENTES

We get separated, we ride where I told you. A safe place, I promise. Protected by St. Francis for their charity work.

(smiling)

Maybe we all make a contribution, feel better about what we're doing.

VIRGIL

Hell, I feel fine about it now. To think that one month ago I was a swabbie eatin' navy chow and makin' seventy-five cents a week. Now I'm in the middle of an adventure. Bein' blowed off that scow was the best thing ever happened to me.

AMELIA

(to Ben)

Now, you get hold of that money, darling, don't let it cloud your mind about me.

BEN

(smiles)

I throw you that sack of cash, don't you go concluding you don't need me anymore.

They kiss, with Virgil and Fuentes looking on with interest.

Ben and Fuentes settle on a bench in the shade of the station.

OSMA

Swaying with the motion of the train, his amulet bouncing on his chest. We are pulling him as he walks down the car aisle, steadying himself with hands on seatbacks, looking.

HIS POV

Drawing towards the back of a gringo in a suit and a bowler hat: Novis. Our angle closing in reveals that a rope-bound satchel rests in his lap.

The train whistles.

OSMA

His eyes register the satchel.

He slides into the empty seat directly behind Novis.

INT. TRAIN

Fuentes and Ben, wearing his jipijapa, are entering the first-class car, their eyes scanning.

As the train jerks back into motion, Fuentes nudges Ben, points.

THEIR POV

Novis in his bowler hat and suit, back to us, halfway up the car.

Behind him sits a large man whose back is also to us--Osma, of course, but his face is not visible.

FUENTES AND BEN

They settle into the rearmost seat of the car.

BEN

How long?

FUENTES

Not far. We'll pass them in ten minutes.

OSMA'S BOOT

His hand reaches down, draws out the knife.

OSMA

Rocking with the motion of the accelerating train, he shifts his weight forward, looks at Novis in front of him.

FROM THREE-QUARTERS BEHIND

Novis's head rests against the chair back. It jiggles with the motion of the chair back. His eyes are closed.

A gentle snore.

He has dropped off to sleep.

OSMA

He smiles.

HIS BOOT

The knife goes back in.

OSMA

He leans forward again, reaches gingerly over the chair back for the satchel in Novis's lap.

A sudden shriek of brakes.

Osma rocks forward, his weight hitting the seatback in front of him.

Novis stirs and looks around, disgruntled.

NOVIS

Watch whatcher doin', ya bean-eater.

He turns back to face forward and slouches down, pulling his bowler over his eyes and hugging the satchel.

The train has come to a jerking stop.

BEN AND FUENTES

A beat, filled by nothing but the hiss of escaping steam.

Ben looks around, puzzled; Fuentes looks worried.

BEN

. . . What's goin' on?

Fuentes shakes his head, I don't know.

There is a dull sound from somewhere in the train behind them--thunks, latches; some kind of whining scrape--perhaps the door of a freight car.

There is a dull rumble, ominous and deep. The train, though not in motion, vibrates with the sound.

Victor has craned around to look out his window.

He turns back forward, dismayed. He reaches one hand to his forehead, sinks down in his chair.

Ben's look asks a question. Fuentes answers:

FUENTES

. . . Horses.

BEN

Huh?

FUENTES

They are loading horses into the stock car.

The hoofbeat rumble continues. Ben does not understand Fuentes's dismay:

BEN

. . . So?

He leans over Victor to look as Victor explains:

FUENTES

Guardia horses.

BEN'S POV

As the horses are driven up a ramp into the stock car, soldiers are indeed boarding the train--many, many soldiers.

OBJECTIVE

As Ben sits back.

FUENTES

They must be going to defend Matanzas.

More thunks and scrapes from the rear of the train.

BEN

Maybe they won't come up here. . .

The train whistle blows. There is the distant slam of a door, and the train lurches back into motion.

FUENTES

. . . I go back and look.

He edges past Ben and leaves the car. Ben slides over next to the window. He looks forward.

HIS POV

Novis's back. Another man rides behind him. This large man, as if casing the car, looks around, looks back.

JUMP IN

Osma.

OSMA'S POV

A few Cubans, swaying with the motion of the train. In the rearmost seat, an American wearing a jipijapa.

OSMA

His look back holds perhaps a moment too long, then he turns back forward. His expression reveals nothing.

BEN

A cock of the head. Was that man interested in me?

Victor rejoins him, sitting now on the aisle side.

FUENTES

Many Guardia, but they are two cars back.  
Is okay. Some officers are coming,  
probably ride up here, is okay.

BEN

How is that okay?

Victor shrugs.

FUENTES

We shoot them. Is okay.

Ben doesn't like what he's heard--is about to say something when--

we hear the car door opening.

Four officers, laughing and chattering, enter the car and walk up the aisle, steadying themselves against the seats. They sit into two empty ones opposite and a little to the rear of Novis.

One of them has glanced back and noticed Ben.

As they all settle in he briefly looks back to stare at Ben, then looks forward again. The men's chatter continues.

BRIDGE

Islero's position is in the woods just off the ravine, with a view of the bridge spanning it.

Islero and a few men sit around a large flat stone, talking; Islero is cracking nuts on the stone with the butt of his machete handle.

A horseman is just galloping up.

HORSEMAN

We can't stop the train.

ISLERO

Huh?

HORSEMAN

We have to let it go. It carries a whole unit of Guardia. On their way to defend Matanzas.

ISLERO

But I'm not attacking Matanzas!

GUERILLA

The Americans are there.

ISLERO

Then what are the Guardia going to do?  
There is no defense against those fucking  
boats!

Islero's quiet for a moment--as he realizes what he's just  
said.

ISLERO

I don't think we fight all those nasty  
Guardia to get the money.

GUERILLA

We let the money go?

ISLERO

No. We blow up the bridge with the train  
on it. Then we go pick up the suitcase in  
the wreckage.

(smiling)

Hot work, but safe.

The men look at each other.

HORSEMAN

. . . Sir--not just Guardia--there are  
Cubans on the train.

Islero stares at him.

ISLERO

I tell you, I gave my whole life for the  
fucking Cubans. I have no family. I have  
no wife. I had only the revolution.

(rising anger)

Now the bastard bitches take that away  
from me, too!

BACK TO THE TRAIN

THE OFFICER

Still staring back over his shoulder at Ben. He sucks his  
tooth, thinking.

BEN

Trying to ignore the look.

BEN

Hope it's almost time.

THE OFFICER

He nudges the officer next to him, talks briefly, gives a jerk of the head. Both men look back at Ben.

After a long beat, the second man shrugs indifference and looks forward again.

The first man is still sourly sucking his tooth. He finally gets to his feet, hitches his pants, heads down the aisle.

BEN

He murmurs to Victor:

BEN

Here he comes.

The man arrives in front of them, places one hand on a chair back, plants the other imperiously on his waist.

OFFICER

Quien es el gringo?

Victor responds in Spanish, at great length. Much talking, nodding and smiling on his part, while the officer stands over them, staring skeptically at Ben.

Ben also gives a faint smile.

Victor's speech ends.

Quiet, except for the clatter of the train.

The officer stares, sucking his tooth.

Finally he decides.

OFFICER

No.

He sneers, shakes his head, and flips his uniform coat back to draw a pistol as he looks at Ben.

OFFICER

. . .Stan' up.

BEN AND VICTOR

From the officer's angle--slightly high. Neither Ben nor Victor moves, but they are hidden chest down by the seatback of the empty seat in front of them.

As Ben maintains his tight smile, there is a ROAR and the cane backrest poofs out with twin holes. Both six-guns are firing.

THE OFFICER

He is pushed back and down by the bullet impacts.

VICTOR

He is getting out his gun as he rises, and as Ben rises next to him.

The cane backrest in front of them is starting to burn.

Gunsmoke hangs heavy in the car.

Passengers scramble to the floor.

The three other officers are rising, startled, reaching for their guns.

BEN

Throw 'em down, boys!

FUENTES

Don't be a fool.

He is already firing.

The officers return fire.

Ben fires as well. Two of the officers go down.

Much smoke.

Where is the third?

Victor has stepped into the aisle and is advancing.

A gunshot and he flinches, dropping one of his two guns.

Ben, behind him in the narrow aisle, sweeps Fuentes to one side and fires down at the floor ahead.

The last officer, lying stomach-down in the aisle and facing them with his elbows planted and his pistol up in a marksman's position, is shot. Is he done?

Ben advances cautiously.

He is even with Osma, the only passenger who still sits upright in his seat, not having scrambled for cover.

Osma watches with apparent indifference.

Ben glances over, notices Osma's hand frozen in its reach under his tunic.

He holds up one calming hand:

BEN

Easy, pardner. This ain't none of yours.

He kicks the gun away from the officer. No motion.

He leans sideways toward Osma, reaches where Osma's hand was, pulls a gun out of his waistband, sticks it in his own.

BEN

. . . No problema.

Fuentes is drawing up behind him, one hand still clutching one gun, but pressed to a bleeding shoulder.

He stares at Osma, surprised.

Osma returns the stare, blank.

FUENTES

I know this man. A slave-hunter. Stand up, bastard.

Osma slowly replies.

OSMA

Victor. Que passa.

Fuentes points his gun point blank at Osma's forehead.

FUENTES

Que hace aqui? . . .

No answer.

BEN

What's goin' on?

Osma stares, unconcerned, as if there were no gun pressing against his forehead.

Victor shrugs.

FUENTES

. . . Doesn't matter. Adios, pendejo.

Osma blankly watches as the finger tightens on the trigger and the hammer ratchets back and. . .

Clicks. Ammunition spent.

Fuentes keeps his eye on Osma but speaks to Ben:

FUENTES

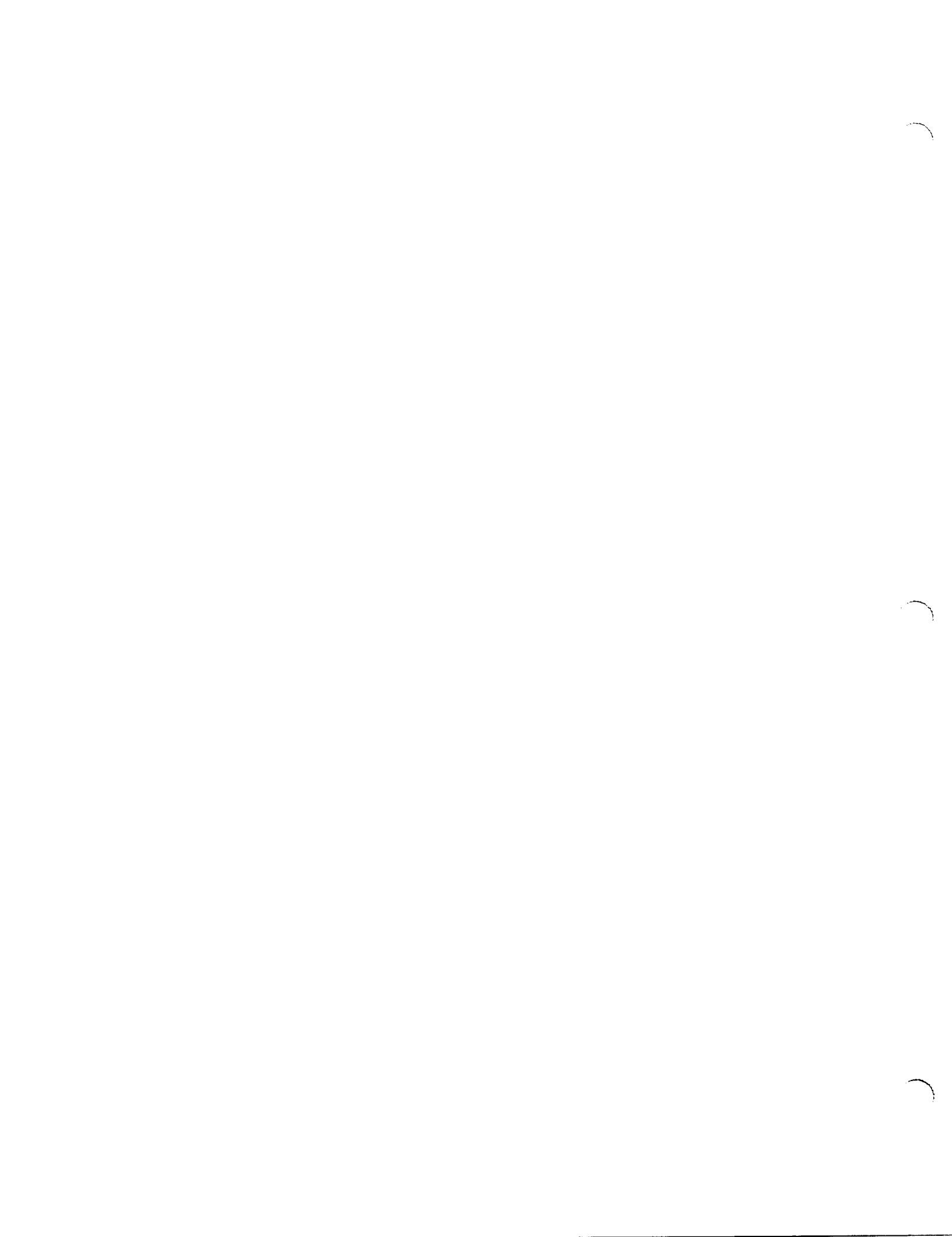
. . . Shoot him.

BEN

Damnit!

He is looking to the side.

HIS POV



Out the window. A watertower rushes by, FOLLOWED BY THE BLURRED FIGURES OF AMELIA AND VIRGIL, HOLDING THEIR WAITING Horses, BEWILDERMENT ON THEIR FACES.

## OBJECTIVE

Ben looks up.

BEN

Late. We missed 'em.

FUENTES

Shoot him!

Ben has his gun leveled but hesitates. Osma is equably saying something in Spanish to Ben, then to Victor. His manner is bland and unthreatening.

BEN

Who is he?

Osma is still slowly speaking in a tone of affable reasonableness; Fuentes is all impatience:

FUENTES

Friend of Tavalera's. Shoot him, man!

Ben still hesitates, then decides.

BEN

You're gettin' off.

OSMA

Como?

Ben starts backing him up:

BEN

Get off or get shot, pardner.

FUENTES

Why don't you shoot him, then put him off?

Osma smiles and offers one word of English:

OSMA

Cowboy.

Ben whacks him across the face, fast, with the gun barrel, and pushes him back through the door.

They are between the cars. Roadbed rushes by between the coupling. Osma reaches a hand to his mouth, looks, unperturbed, at the blood. He speaks calmly in Spanish. Ben answers:

BEN

Jump or get shot. That's the way it is.

Osma shrugs. He turns, looks out at the speeding scenery, tenses to jump, hitches his pants. . .

As his hands come away from his pants he is turning back. One hand holds his small pistol.

Ben is already reacting. He is swiping his free hand out to deflect the gun. As it fires and the bullet CHINKS against metal Ben levels his own gun.

Osma's free hand comes up to grab its barrel.

It ROARS, held in both men's hands. Osma flies back.

Osma is firing--POP-POP-POP--as he falls back toward the rushing roadbed.

He bounces and is swept from view.

Ben leans out.

HIS POV

Receding cinderbed. Osma tumbling to a motionless stop.

BEN

He looks up from Osma towards the back of the train.

HIS POV

A gentle curve in the track bends the rear cars into view.

Soldiers riding on an open flatbed car are looking up from Osma's body, towards Ben, meeting his look.

BEN

He tucks back in on the coupling platform and hastily enters the forward car.

CAR INTERIOR

As Ben reaches him, Victor is straightening from between two seats, holding the bound hammock. Ben looks down.

HIS POV

Novis is on the floor, scrunched into an odd position between front and back seats, his eyes open, his body jiggling with the motion of the train.

Blood trails from a slash across his neck.

OBJECTIVE

Victor hoists the hammock onto his good shoulder.

FUENTES

Osma. Is what Tavalera sent him for.

BEN

How we getting' off? We missed the turn,  
she's too fast.

He leans to look out a window.

FUENTES

Must wait for it to slow for the bridge.

BEN

Buddy, the bridge ain't blowed.

HIS POV

Rushing forward, on a straight line, the train accelerating  
towards the intact bridge.

OBJECTIVE

Ben draws back in.

FUENTES

Oh, shit.

Ben's puzzled.

FUENTES

(terrified)

My brother, he doesn' fight for Cuba  
anymore. He fights for Islero

Fuentes starts to cross himself.

FUENTES

St. Francis, you save our lives I give  
you...a lot of my share...

BEN

(understanding)

Pardner, we got to get out a'here.

They take a step towards the back--when the door bangs open.  
Soldiers.

The door is narrow, bottlenecking the troops.

Ben fires.

EXT LOW

Rushing towards the bridge.

WHISTLE

TOOTING as it blows steam.

CAR

Ben firing.

BEN

But he's your brother for Christ's sake.

FUENTES

Half-brother.

Ben winces, drops his gun.

BEN

Too hot. Gimme yours.

EXT. LOW

Rushing onto the bridge. The whistle screams.

CAR

As soldiers just start to make it through the rear door--  
--a deafening ROAR shakes the car.

We are looking down the length of the car. The two Guardia  
who have just managed to enter are thrown to the floor.

Our view through the open back door shows the car behind. It  
is twisting, corkscrewing to one side, its aisle rotating  
relative to ours, its passengers tumbling.

With a great shriek of metal it drops away. Our view out the  
back is now only sky.

Horizon sweeps up.

With a great crash our car lands, bounces, grinds...

EXT.

The middle of the train is collapsing into the ravine.

The inertia of the rearmost cars continues to push them,  
screeching, toward the collapsing bridge.

Only the first few cars--engine, coaler, first-class--  
reached the far bank before the explosion. Now derailed,  
they grind across cinderbed and earthen shoulder.

INT.

The shrieking sound of metal stress, wood splintering, clattering cinders, mining coal, whipping branches, all subside into a great quiet as the car comes to a groaning stop, listing to one side.

The only sound left is the hiss of steam. After a beat, the moans of the injured start in.

Distantly, the noise of human whoops and hollers.

Ben and Fuentes climb to their feet, slowly, testing themselves for damage. A few other passengers do likewise; others stay down.

The car has come to rest canted to one side and slightly nose-down. The aisle leading to the rear door is thus slanted and uphill; the two men make their way awkwardly up it.

As he passes one of the Guardia, lying wounded in the aisle, Ben stoops to pick up his carbine. Fuentes picks up another, and a pistol.

BEN

Leave them go. The revolution's over.

FUENTES

These men?

EXT.

Ben emerges onto the rear coupling platform which juts up into the air.

A couple of pistol shots, and Fuentes emerges. At Ben's look he shrugs.

FUENTES

You see Guardia, you shoot them.  
Is not a game.

They ease themselves down from the platform to the ground and look out at the source of the continuing whoops and hollers, now joined by screams.

THEIR POV

The steaming wreck of the train has scattered luggage and bodies across the floor of the ravine.

White-clad mambis have swarmed the wreck and are macheteing all of the wounded wearing uniforms.

FUENTES

Yes. Is not pretty.

In the chaos several riderless horses from the stock car stampede about, adding their screams to the soldiers'.

Ben gazes at the opposite rise, the gnarled bridgehead jutting from it.

BEN

Well... they ain't crossin' that.

GALLOPING HORSES

Amelia and Virgil, each leading a riderless horse, gallop along the side of the tracks.

AMELIA'S POV

Glinting steel rails wind away into the jungle. They seem to point to a distant source of smoke pluming above the treetops.

We are approaching an indistinct lump of clothes that lies motionless on the cinderbed ahead.

OBJECTIVE

Amelia squints, points it out to Virgil.

He looks to it as they draw near.

THEIR POV

Closing in, it becomes a recognizable human form--no one they know.

We draw even with it and pivot, swinging past. The galloping horses send earth divots and cinder chips raining onto it as they pass by.

OBJECTIVE

Virgil and Amelia receding along the line of rails.

We adjust down to Osma, still motionless.

He stirs.

He groggily looks at the receding four horses, two riders.

His dazed look settles, after a moment, on his own body.

He looks at his left hand and arm--the hand that grabbed at the barrel of Ben's gun.

Powder burn turns to oozing blood in a trail up the inside of his arm. He raises the arm, looks down at his side.

His left side, just below the armpit, also leaks blood, marking the continuing trajectory of Ben's bullet.

Osma works the arm: still functional.

With his right hand he raises his amulet to his lips and kisses it.

With the amulet still pressed to his mouth he freezes, noticing something.

#### HIS POV

Up the berm on the railed stands a horse, gazing placidly down at him. It is fully saddled and ready to go--a refugee, apparently, from the wrecked train.

#### OSMA

He lowers the amulet and gets slowly to his feet.

#### BEN AND FUENTES

Walking through jungle, Ben with the hammock slung over one shoulder. There is the dull concussive sound of distant artillery.

BEN

How long'll it take to walk?

FUENTES

Where?

BEN

The place blessed by Saint Francis. How long to hoof it?

FUENTES

A day perhaps, but my friend--why would we go there?

BEN

Meet 'em.

Fuentes shakes his head and gives a patronizing smile.

FUENTES

Think. Why would they try to meet us? They know we did not throw the money-- they will think we had already gotten off the train, to trick them, to keep the money for ourselves. Or else they believe we were still on the train, and therefore in the wreck...

He shrugs.

FUENTES

...Dead.

Ben keeps to his pace, undeterred. Fuentes, carrying the money, walks on, reluctantly.

FUENTES

By now, she's back with Rollie.

BEN

Nope. She can't go back to him. People have seen her.

FUENTES

Who? Novis? He's at the bottom of that ravine. Anyway, you never got to worry about that Amelia. Rollie will take her back. She is so beautiful, yes? He eats her like a spoon.

BEN

(baffled for a moment)

No. He eats her with a spoon.

FUENTES

Spoon, fork, whatever. Point is, Amelia, she belongs with Rollie. He's a rich man.

Victor's sobered him up. He slows down.

BEN

You sell the lady short. She fought for your revolution--

FUENTES

Yes. For awhile.

BEN

You don't know her, Victor.

FUENTES

No. I think I know her a lot longer than you do. The only thing she believes with all her heart, it's not revolutions or cowboys. It's Amelia. That's it.

Ben stops, looks up at the sky. Victor's words echo his own fears.

FUENTES

Someday, the money'll run out, and so will she.

(sure he can close the deal)

Look, let's open that hammock. Let you see what you'd be missing.

That reminds Ben of something.

BEN

Get walking Victor. Or I swear to God I'll drill you.

Victor, reluctantly, steps ahead of Ben.

We watch BEN and VICTOR from above, moving down the trail.

Osma looks down at them...He touches his medal and smiles at it. Osma's p.o.v.: THE MEDALLION COVERED WITH AN INDISTINCT TRACERY OF FINE LINES

THAT DISSOLVES INTO VINES, AND THE HUGE SERRATED LEAVES OF

A

JUNGLE.

The air's thick with haze.

Looking out from within the leaves, we see:

Ben and Fuentes, caked with sweat and dirt, walking down a thin, nearly overgrown trail

We join them. Victor stops, hacks at some brush with his machete.

FUENTES

Could use a cleaning, this path.

Ben looks up towards two high wooden posts that tilt backwards, about to fall. A faded wooden board hangs between the posts:

LAS VILLAS HOSPITAL FOR LEPERS.

BEN (O.S.)

That say what I think it says?

VICTOR

(smiling)

Why do people say that? You know? I mean, it depends wha' you think it says, huh?

BEN

Why'd you lead us here?

FUENTES

The soldiers, they'll be scared to go in there.

BEN

Well, I ain't going in there. They got a bad disease, pardner. Makes 'em look like lions.

FUENTES

Good. We leave now. Take the money with us.

Ben starts in.

FUENTES

(laughing)

Yes, what would your Amelia think of you, scared like that? She used to nurse lepers.

BEN

(stops, looking back)

She did?

Fuentes follows him in.

FUENTES

Maybe you don't know her so well, huh?

They walk in, and we watch from the back.

Osma's beady eyes in the jungle.

JUMP IN

He follows their progress through the gates.

PRIVATE DINING ROOM - THE INGLATERRA

Boudreaux sits at table with the American businessmen, their brandy and cigars. Neely stands at his ease, talking to them, holding a glass.

BOUDREAUX

Amazing. But Mr. Neely, you said you also had some news of special interest to me?

NEELY

I don't think we should talk about that here.

BOUDREAUX

(putting him in his place)

These men are people like myself, Mr. Neely. We have no secrets from each other.

NEELY

(with admiration)

Okay then. When I covered the battle for Matanzas, I saw Amelia actually fighting alongside the guerillas.

The other men look at Boudreaux with great and sly interest. Boudreaux pours some cognac with annoying compsure.

BOUDREAUX

You're certain now Mr. Neely? After all, the heat of battle, the confusion. For one who isn't a soldier...

NEELY

She looked dashing in a jipijapa, holding a rifle. Acquitted herself well. Just what you'd accept from Amelia.

Boudreaux tries to sip and his cognac sloshes just a bit. He sips again, with shaking hands.

NEELY

(smiling)

I definitely don't think she's been kidnapped.

Boudreaux tries to favor this with a condescending smile, taking a long moment to figure how not to look like the chump.

BOUDREAUX

(laughs broadly, for the audience)

You have to admire her then, don't you, Mr. Neely? She saw her opportunity and she took it. One can admire that kind of spirit in a mistress.

Neely doesn't like his condescension to him--or to Amelia. He wants to stick it to him more.

NEELY

Eighty thousand dollars. That's a lot of enjoyment.

BOUDREAUX

To you it is, Mr. Neely. Ten lifetimes of what Mr. Hearts pays you. But for me-

He snaps his fingers.

EXT. AT THE LEPER COLONY - DAY

Amelia, laughing giddily, kneels on the ground, with the hammock open. She's holding piles of money in her hand.

WIDER

Ben watches, laughing along with her.

She leaps up, and they embrace avidly.

WIDER STILL

The two are near the middle of a huge square of raked dirt surrounded by jungle that goes right up to the edges. Behind them a long wooden one story house with a small porch.

AMELIA

You can't believe how I missed your face.

BEN

Sure I can. I know how I missed yours, your face and every part of you.

He wraps her in his arms again.

BG: three lepers sit on the porch, in long chairs, amused. A TALL MAN whose missing most of his nose makes a broad kissing face towards the cheek of THE SMALL WOMAN next to him. She smiles, leans away at the last second, leaving him air to receive his loud smackeros.

Ben and Amelia realize they have an audience and reluctantly disentangle.

BEN

Where's Virgil?

Amelia points to a tall tree--at the far end of the square from the house.

High in the middle of the tree branches, a small shack, like a kid's tree house with a few perilously thin boards in front. Virgil sits cross-legged on this "porch." He waves.

AMELIA

That's where Sister Margaret puts a leper who misbehaves. Give him a chance to think about his sins.

From a hut nearby an older NUN walks briskly towards Ben and Amelia, carrying a pile of folded sheets.

BEN

Virgil do a lot of sinning?

AMELIA

No, he's hiding up there. Scared of the lepers.

BEN

Crazy, huh? Scared of something harmless like that....It is harmless, ain't it?

Amelia smiles, takes some sheets from Sister Margaret.

Behind them, Victor stands precariously on the small "porch" of the tree house. He holds both arms up, then swings the

left arm down. He tilts too far forward...and one foot goes perilously over the edge...he bends backwards, nearly falls the other way...and finally just regains his balance.

He raises his left arm again, like he's signaling a turn.

AMELIA

What's all that? Bee after him?

BEN

He's saying Danger Ahead: Lepers on Board.

AMELIA

Very funny. I'll wrap up the money and hide it now. You trust me to do that?

Ben nods.

AMELIA

(handing him some sheets)

The staff got conscripted by the Spanish. There's only Sister Margaret now for all the work.

(points to the house)

You can make yourself useful.

Ben stands frozen.

BEN  
(a touch sullen)  
What's Fuentes doing?

AMELIA  
Emptying the chamber pots.

BEN  
All right then.

He strolls over to the leper hut cradling his pile of sheets in one hand. After a few steps, he starts to whistle--a man keeping his spirits up. He waves howdy to the lepers on the porch.

EXT. RURAL TOWN - DAY

A small train station and a general store.

Osma walks up to the RR Station telegraph window.

EXT. LEPER COLONY - EVENING

SISTER MARGARET'S gesturing to two small huts along one side of the colony. It's evening.

SISTER MARGARET  
You boys can have either of those. Nobody left there, anyway.

Ben, Fuentes and Amelia stand with her. Three lepers (including The Tall Disfigured Man, and The Very Small Woman) still sit on chaises on the porch behind them.

SISTER MARGARET  
You can take some of the doctors clothes, too, you want.

AMELIA  
That's all right, sister. Ben and I can stay together tonight. We're already married.

Sister Margaret looks dubious. Amelia smiles at her eager new husband.

EXT. LEPER COLONY HUT - MORNING

Ben, wearing an overly-large soft white suit, in the style of the country looks like he's had a very good night.

AMELIA

(radiant)

Their medicine's called chualmoogra oil.  
The Pharmacy's on the main street.

BEN

Got it.

He lifts her off her feet, kisses her, then gets on his horse, a machete strapped to the saddle.

She gazes at him, riding his dun out of the colony.

CUT TO:

THE SMALL LEPROUS WOMAN

naked, lying in a long copper tub of soapy water, her long black hair reaching all the way down her back. Amelia rubs her arm lightly with a washcloth.

Six other lepers watch, standing and sitting on beds in the big house.

THE TALL MAN--his face already rigid, and one nostril of his nose eaten away--sits squeezed on one of the lower bunks, arms resting on his legs.

TALL LEPER

Careful with Sophia.

(to Fuentes)

Before she joined us, she was a rich man's bon bon.

SOPHIA

(to Fuentes, who comes up  
with a big iron pot)

He's jealous of you. Last week, Joquin's dick fell off.

Fuentes is shocked.

SOPHIA

I'm joking you, man!

FUENTES

(to Amelia)

Maybe it's like with Rollie, you're not such a good judge of character, huh? He was no revolutionary, after all.

SOPHIA

(coquetishly, to Fuentes)

Now don't forget my hair.

JOQUIN

She's very vain about her hair. Is one place on her body the disease hasn't touched yet.

Fuentes carefully pours water from the kettle over her head.

FUENTES

(to Amelia)

We split the money two ways, why not? You can go back to New Orleans a rich woman. Find someone better than him.

AMELIA

(carefully washing  
Sophia's leg)

No, Victor. He's what I want.

Kneeling behind her, Victor soaps the small woman's hair, then kneads it with his large fingers.

FUENTES

He's just a cowboy!

AMELIA

But he's true, Victor.

FUENTES

(smiling, giving up)

Ah well, you feel what you feel.

Victor has made a lather on the tiny woman's head as big as the Ritz.

SOPHIA

(to Victor)

Enough. Rinse now.

FUENTES

Okay. Sorry.

But he goes on kneading and kneading her scalp, thinking to himself.

FUENTES

Forgive me, Amelia. I envy you and Ben. My war is over, and what do I have left? I'm going to be a lonely old man.

SOPHIA

Stop! Stop!

## EXT. THE LEPER COLONY GATES

Osma and Tavalera, and two bedraggled soldiers on horseback look up at the faded, tilting sign.

TAVALERA  
(laughing at the  
soldiers)  
You frightened?

SOLDIER  
(the answer's clearly  
yes)  
Sir?

TAVALERA  
All right, you two stay outside. You can  
do that? A cowboy comes by wearing a  
jipijapa, you shoot him. That not too  
hard? Look, I make it easier, anybody  
comes by, wearing anything, you shoot  
them, okay?  
(to Osma)  
So, just you and me.

Osma looks sick, frozen. He rubs his medallion.

Tavalera laughs.

TAVALERA  
Santeria's only got sissy gods, huh? No  
power against lepers?

He rides through the gate. Osma follows him.

TAVALERA  
(shouting as he rides)  
Amelia? Amelia, darling?

## INT. THE LEPER HUT

Amelia hears something. She drops the soap, and grabs a  
rifle. She runs to the window: Tavalera and Osma are riding  
in to the square.

She kneels, aims the rifle.

FUENTES  
Shoot him. What is wrong with you people?  
Is not a game!

Her p.o.v.: Sister Margaret is running from a hut.

The rifle wavers.

Amelia re-aims--

But now Sister Margaret is between her sights and Tavalera.

MARGARET

We have no more people for you bastards  
to take!

Tavalera grabs her around the neck.

TAVALERA

Don't fret yourself. I no longer  
represent the crown of Spain.

He turns her towards the house, pointing his pistol at her  
head.

TAVAL

ERA

(shouting)

(to Sister Margaret)

You are innocent, no? I had nuns for  
teachers, and many of them were such  
bitches--

Margaret gets a hand free, and strikes Tavalera on the top  
of his head.

Holding her by the front of the neck, he pushes her out at  
arms length, and, with a thickening thud, slaps her across  
the side of her face with his pistol. Her head droops.

TAVALERA

(shouting)

Amelia, you have the white ones with you?  
Send them out to me now. They don't need  
to be a part of our business. They suffer  
enough already with that awful disease.

A beat.

Terrified, the lepers shamble slowly out of the house,  
single file. Sofia's still wrapped in a towel.

TAVALERA

Come here, little ones.

(to Osma)

Go, get them. Bring them closer.

Osma pushes the lepers towards Tavalera with his rifle  
barrel.

OSMA

Go on, you hear him.

Osma keeps his other arm tightly at his side, terrified of touching the lepers.

#### ON THE PATH TO THE LEPER COLONY

Ben rides towards the colony, carrying a small brown package on the saddle in front of him.

#### INSIDE THE COLONY

Osma points a gun towards Joquin's ear, pushing his head to the side.

Joquin looks out at us, his face contorted with fear, tears running down his disfigured cheeks.

#### TAVALERA

Amelia, you come to me now. Or I have this poor man killed.

#### ON THE PATH

Ben looks towards the sound of a gunshot.

#### IN THE LEPER HOUSE

#### FUENTES

You hear that? You must go to him now before he kills more. He won't hurt you. He just takes you back to Rollie.

#### AMELIA

(resigned, standing)  
I stole eighty thousand dollars from Rollie.

#### FUENTES

(shrugs)  
Rollie, he says, you a bad girl, yes, but with lots of spirit. I eat you with my spoons.

Amelia looks out the window. Her p.o.v.: Tavalera grabs Sophia by the neck, and her towel falls up. Tavalera holds her naked body up with one hand, feet dangling off the ground and kicking helplessly. He puts the gun barrel to her head.

#### FUENTES

Look, lady, this is not the time for false modesty.

#### OUTSIDE

Amelia boldly walks out of the hut towards TAVALERA.

TAVALERA  
Come to me. All the way now.

With straight-back, she walks over.

AMELIA  
Let her go.

TAVALERA  
Naturally.

He flings Sophia on the ground behind him.

TAVALERA  
So, now you tell me where is our friend  
Rollie's money.

Amelia hesitates.

TAVALERA  
Your cowboy, you must forget about him,  
please. In a few moments, you hear  
probably one, maybe two shots. It means  
my men have killed him.

AMELIA  
If you haven't got him yet, you never  
will.

TAVALERA  
Look, why shouldn't you and I share the  
money? Better for everyone.

Without seeming to aim, he shoots a leper in the leg. The man collapses to the dirt, screaming, his hands raised up as if in prayer.

TAVALERA  
You tell me where it is--then I don't  
have to kill anymore of these ugly  
people.

Defeated, she points to the house.

AMELIA  
It's hidden in the rafters over the  
table. Fuentes'll show you.

Behind Tavalera:

Virgil's standing on the little plank platform, turned towards the jungle. His arms go up and down, signaling.

Amelia barely turns her head upward towards him.

But Osma sees.

He turns and with one fluid motion points the gun up at the tree house and shoots.

Virgil wavers, unsteadily.

JUMP TO VIRGIL, trying to balance himself. Blood pours down his leg.

From Virgil's wavering p.o.v.:

FUENTES RUNS OUT OF THE BACK OF THE HUT A FULL PILLOWCASE BOUNCING ON HIS SHOULDER. HE RUNS INTO THE BRUSH AND JUNGLE BEHIND THE HOUSE, AND THE THICK FOLIAGE SWALLOWS HIM UP.

Virgil starts to open his mouth--as his foot goes over the side of the plank. He flaps his arms to get his balance--or maybe to fly.

Again Virgil's p.o.v.: the bare earth rushing up to meet him.

As we're about to hit:

CUT TO:

A MACHETE BLADE

moving through the air past us. As it's about to go out of frame--

WIDER

Ben, on horseback, carrying the blade raised in one hand, and his pistol in the other.

We follow behind him as he rushes towards the soldiers-- Who sit on the ground near the gate, a deck of cards spread out in front of them, their tunics open. Their rifles lean against the rickety posts behind them.

Finally, they see Ben descending on them, and scramble up, almost falling backwards to grab their rifles.

One of them makes it to his gun, and turns back, just able to point the rifle at Ben--

When his chest explodes. The other's soldier's terrified hand knocks his own rifle on to the ground.

He bends over to grab it, and turns, terrified, clasping his rifle in two hands--

As (from his p.o.v.): a long silver blade slices down towards him--

And misses.

BEN  
(perplexed)  
Ah, shit.

He points his pistol and shoots the guard.

CUT TO:

TAVALERA CLIMBING THE STEPS TO THE LEPER HOUSE.

Amelia watches.

TAVALERA  
(to Amelia)  
You heard that? Two shots. Three people.  
Your cowboy's dead.

BG: Ben, on foot, walks out of the jungle, dragging his machete in one hand, his pistol held in the other.

Sophia, naked now, sees him--and smiles.

Osma's sees her smile, and is about to turn towards Ben when--

Sophia reaches over and strokes downward on Osma's face with a hand missing two fingers.

Osma's eyes pop; his huge body quakes.

Sophia snatches at the amulet, tries to rip it from Osma's neck--

As Osma wallops her with the side of his pistol. The motion turns his body, pistol in hand, so he's facing Ben.

His finger closes on the trigger--

As Ben fires.

Without a sound, Osma keels over.

Sophia backs towards the hut--

Ben moves towards Osma--

and Tavalera comes down the porch steps shouting, holding a hammock that flaps open--empty.

TAVALERA  
(shouting)  
Amelia, you lied to me, or that fucking  
black bastard, he--

WITH TAVALERA

As he sees Osma's body, and Ben, with a gun in his hand.

Ben raises his pistol towards Tavalera--

And Tavalera grabs the little leper by the neck. Ben stops just before firing.

Holding her in front of him, TAVALERA swings himself on to a horse.

TAVALERA

(riding off, shouting to  
Amelia)

I think that old man, he stole our money.  
I go take it back for us.

Tavalera's horse tears across the square, as he swivels Sophia behind him. She swings back and forth as he heads down the path, through the gates.

OUTSIDE

Still riding, he tosses Sophia on the ground like a rag doll, and continues on.

EXT. LEPER COLONY

Ben's standing over Virgil as Amelia cradles his head. Sister Margaret kneels next to him, looking at the wound.

Virgil opens his eyes.

VIRGIL

Man, I tell you, that was worse than  
being blown sky high from that ship a'  
mine.

Ben and Sister Margaret pick Virgil up, and drape him over their shoulders. Slowly, they walk towards the hut.

As they walk, we see the blood on the ground where Osma had lain... but he's not there anymore.

The high grass by the edge of the square moves with Ben, Virgil and Amelia....

And as they near the house...

Sophia steps out of the grass.

Amelia rushes to embrace her, and Sophia faints--falling from Margaret's arms.

Ben bends over, and picks her up, cradling her in his arms. She revives and smiles coquetishly up at him--

As Osma, his chest covered in his own blood, comes out from the jungle just ahead of Ben, and right behind Sister Margaret. He's picked up a machete and has it already poised above the nun's head.

Ben hurls Sophia at Osma's knees--knocking him backwards a step.

SOPHIA  
(more outraged than hurt)  
For Christ's sakes!

Still Osma's blade comes down, slicing into Margaret's habit, and opening a bloody gash in her back. Screaming, she falls to the ground.

Lifting his blade again, he steps towards Amelia and Ben.

Ben draws his gun and fires--but the hammer CLICKS on an empty barrel.

He bends, grabs a machete from the ground, and with an ungainly upward motion swings at Osma's leg--but only slices the edge.

Osma laughs, and brings his blade down towards Ben's left shoulder.

At the last second Ben turns, and is sliced badly on the side of his arm--but Ben swivels his machete down and around, and he cuts deeply into Osma's ribs. Blood gushes out.

BEN  
Yeah, I'm getting the hang of this.

Osma falls to the ground at the edge of the jungle.

Ben bends over him, and tugs at the chain on his amulet.

BEN  
This your Santaria thing? Victor says  
it's hard to kill you while you're  
wearing it.

Their faces are inches apart.

OSMA  
Fuck you.

BEN  
So it's not like a religious thing then,  
you talk like that? It's a good luck  
charm?

He rips it from Osma's neck, throws it aside.

BEN

Well, looks like your luck's run out,  
pardner.

He stands back up.

From below: he looms above swinging his machete upwards as--  
Osma's hand reaches into his boot, and with one quick motion  
withdraws a blade and throws it towards Ben--

And the blade lodges deep in Ben's shoulder, inches from his  
neck.

BEN

Damn me!

With the blade still sticking out of him, Ben bends over  
Osma.

BEN

I got to say, Osma, old horse, you're  
impressively hard to kill.

Ben lofts the machete overhead, and the blade comes down  
towards Osma's neck.

BLACK

COTTAGE YARD

We are low, looking up at Virgil. He looks to be in good  
shape, though he holds a rough-hewn branch serving as a cane  
in one hand. He is standing out in the middle of the yard,  
looking down.

VIRGIL

Sit.

He stares.

. . . Sit, goll damnit!

REVERSE

A piglet looks interrogatively up.

Virgil grunts as he stoops and forces the animal's hind  
quarters into a squat.

VIRGIL

Sit!

After a moment, he takes his hand away.

The piglet immediately straightens, stiff tail waving.

BEN  
Hell you doin'?

Virgil looks over at Ben, who has emerged onto the porch.

VIRGIL  
They's supposed to be more intelligent  
than dogs.

He looks back down at the piglet.

VIRGIL  
. . . Sit, now!

The piglet gazes up at him.

Ben watches, leaning on a hoe in the vegetable garden on the side of the house, his arm and neck heavily bandaged.

BEN  
Try magic.

Virgil looks blankly at him.

On the front porch: Amelia and Sister Margaret chop vegetables on a board table, laughing at Virgil.

Ben goes back to chopping weeds. Three other lepers--one with a bandaged leg--work in the garden with him hoeing, weeding, planting.

Two lepers wash clothes in large iron tubs in the center of the square.

They all look up at approaching hoofbeats.

The horses appear at a walk, mounted by United States cavalry.

Virgil whoops:

VIRGIL  
Son of a bitch, it's Uncle Sam!

SOLDIER  
You got any dons hiding here?

VIRGIL  
No, sir.

ANOTHER SOLDIER  
We just kicked them boys' asses in San Cristobal. Ain't no Spanieros now between here'n Havana.

SOLDIER

What're you doin' out here? You got the pox?

VIRGIL

No sir. I'm Ensign first class Virgil Webster, blown off the Maine! Just holed up here for a little R & R.

SECOND SOLDIER

Well you better make it short or you'll miss the whole damn show!

The horses turn to go back down the path. Virgil muses:

VIRGIL

That boy had a point--I'm feelin' pretty fit. I oughta ride over to Matanzas, flag me down a boat and liaise up with the United States Navy. Damn, I think I'll do that. Dammie--I think I'll do her right now!

He flings the cane aside and hobbles over to the horses. As he mounts up:

VIRGIL

. . . Ben, it's been a privilege knowin' you. And you too, Ma'am. Nice to see a woman pullin' her own weight.

AMELIA

Thank you, Virgil. It's been good knowing you as well.

He starts to gallop off:

VIRGIL

Write to me care of the U.S. Navy!

He wheels the horse around:

VIRGIL

. . . Where should I write to you?

Ben and Amelia look at each other.

Virgil sees the indecision and can't wait. As he reins his horse around again:

VIRGIL

. . . Well, you'll let me know.

They watch him recede, standing by the garden.

AMELIA

(to Ben)

Did Victor try to get you to go with him,  
take the money?

BEN

Yeah, but you know...Well, I lost a step  
maybe, wondering if you loved me, just a  
cowboy and all. But the money, that was  
never an issue. I was gonna see you got  
it.

AMELIA

I knew you would.

BEN

He work on you, too?

AMELIA

I suppose. But I didn't lose a step.

BEN

(smiling)

That right?

AMELIA

You think Victor got away?

BEN

Victor? He knows this jungle. Tavalera'll  
never even smell him. Victor's in Florida  
by how.

AMELIA

(accepting)

Well, that old man, he showed me the  
world.

BEN

But we got no money now. That change  
anything for you?

He looks at Amelia, testingly. As he does, we see Sister  
Margaret, Sophia and two other lepers standing here and  
there among the tomatoes, peas and corn, leaning on rakes  
and shovels.

AMELIA

Changes the quality of the wine we'll  
drink.

BEN

(smiling)

Course that sonofabitch with the wave in  
-more-

EN (CONT'D)

his hair still owes me thirty-seven  
hunnert'n fifty bucks, big enough stake  
for somethin'. . . . What do you wanna do  
with it?

AMELIA

You trust me now--pardner?

Ben shrugs--playing with her.

BEN

Yeah, I thought we could try it two-  
handed.

AMELIA

That's one of the most romantic things  
I've ever heard. It bespeaks a future of  
starlight and rapture and candle-lit  
dinners for two.

BEN

I do trust you, Amelia. I believe you  
trust me, too.

He comes towards her as she moves towards him.

AMELIA

I do, Ben Tyler.

They kiss...to the leper's delight.

AMELIA

So we could have that horse ranch?

BEN

It mightn't be enough money for that.

AMELIA

Maybe that's not enough money for  
Arizona. But why not here?

BEN

Here? In Cuba?

SOPHIA

Sure. Why not?

AMELIA

(smiling)

We fought for it, after all.

SISTER MARGARET

And you can bet a lot of Spaniards will  
be selling their land cheaply soon.

SOPHIA

(laughing)

You'll make out like bandits.

SISTER MARGARET

Right near here, there's gonna be a place, I bet.

SOPHIA

You could still visit us.

BEN

All right then. We got a house lined up, we got neighbors to visit. I guess we can go to Havana now'n collect.

EXTERIOR HOTEL INGLATERRA

Crowded but, unlike last time, not panicked. People come and go; business as usual. Tavalera, in uniform, is mounting the steps to the hotel.

INT LOBBY

As Tavalera walks toward the bar area a Cuban passing in the opposite direction gives him a shoulder--purposefully, it seems.

Tavalera staggers, looks at the back of the receding man, flushes but controls himself. After a considering beat he moves on.

LONG LENS

On Tavalera crossing the bar.

VOICE

It's the twilight of the Dons. Yesterday the US Navy overran the last defenses at Guantanamo, and established a coaling station that will serve America for decades, no for generations, no, for eternity...

Tavalera reaches a table where Boudreaux is already sitting with Neely. Tavalera stares daggers toward the camera.

BOUDREAUX

And tell Mr. Tavalera how well we did in the Philippines, Mr. Neely.

NEELY

We're a power now. A first rate power.  
-more-

NEELY (CONT'D)

(to Tavalera)

The Spanish are yesterday's newspapers.

Ben walks across the bar towards Boudreaux, followed by Amelia.

As Ben reaches the table, he looks coolly at Tavalera.

BEN

Later for you, Lynil.

Tavalera decides to swallow one more insult:

TAVALERA

This is not my name. However. We have fought honorably but the old man, he beat us both.

BEN

You say one more word to me and I'll shoot you right now, you son of a bitch.

(to Boudreaux)

Otherwise, I got some business first with this wavy-haired tin horn. He owes me thirty-seven hunnert'n fifty dollars.

Boudreaux looks to Tavalera.

BEN

No Guardia anymore to baby-sit you, Rollie. You're on your own.

BOUDREAUX

Till our army gets here.

BEN

Well, they ain't here now are they?

Amelia steps towards the table.

BOUDREAUX

I suppose the kidnapping was his idea?

AMELIA

Oh Rollie, you never really listened to me, did you?

She takes a pistol from the flounces of her skirt.

AMELIA

Do you know how annoying that is?

BOUDREAUX

You can't be serious.

Ben raises his eyebrows, gives a half-smile: yeah compadre.  
she's serious.

A beat.

Boudreaux reaches into a pocket, takes out a small booklet.

BOUDREAUX

Don't you think we should deduct it from  
the eighty grand you owe me.

BEN

Talk to Victor 'bout that, you ever see  
him again.

AMELIA

(gesturing with the gun)  
Give him our love while your at it.

He writes out a check in silence, hands it up towards Ben  
and Amelia.

Amelia grabs it, folds it in half.

BOUDREAUX

Better watch her, cowboy.

NEELY

(to Boudreaux)  
I'd love to write a story about them...  
(he turns to Amelia)  
I'd call it The Cowboy and the Lady.

BOUDREAUX

If you mention me, Mr. Neely, I'll sue  
your newspaper. And you know I'd win.

Neely looks towards the pistol in Amelia's hand and smiles.

NEELY

Mr. Hearst, he has even bigger guns than  
that.

BEN

(to Tavalera)  
And now for you Lionel, you piece of pig  
shit. I challenge you to a duel.

He slaps him across the face.

BEN

Did I do that right?

Tavalera doesn't say anything--but he looks like he's about  
to burst.

BEN

I didn't?

Ben slaps him so hard that Tavalera's dazed face snaps to the side.

BEN

That better?

With great effort, Tavalera--one cheek red with pain--controls himself, says nothing.

He and Boudreaux turn at an approaching clanking noise, with irregular footfalls.

With the aid of two canes, Rudi Calvo is approaching Boudreaux's table.

BEN

Rudi?

Calvo does not even seem to have heard him. His eyes are on Tavalera.

He clanks to a stop behind the table.

With Boudreaux and Tavalera gazing at him, he takes a cane in one hand and hooks it over the other arm.

BEN

You listening to me? It's a matter of honor. That word still mean anything to you?

Tavalera turns back to Ben, and puts his arms out and down at his side, to show he won't fight.

BEN

(drawing out his pistol)  
Okay then--

RUDI

(anguished)

No!

Rudi shoots Tavalera in the back of the head.

The bar goes silent.

A beat.

Two US Military Police, carrying batons, march through the silent crowd, and over to the table.

BOUDREAUX

There's been a shooting.  
(pointing to Rudi)  
This man did it.

A SHINY BOOT WITH FANCY STITCHING pushes at the corpse's head. And as we move up the boot, we see that it belongs to VIRGIL--now in the uniform of the Military Police.

We look back down: blood oozes out of a bullet wound that goes neatly through the back of Tavalera's head.

BACK TO SCENE

VIRGIL

(to Boudreaux)

Looks like a clear case of self-defense to me.

Boudreaux's mouth open even as Virgil turns away from him.

VIRGIL

(to Ben and Amelia)

Damn bullet those sons a bitches put through me means all I'm good for is being a cop.

BEN

(looking around the room)

Man this Cuba!

AMELIA

Yes?

BEN

It's gonna take some getting used to.