

THE DEATH OF COLM CANTER

by

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EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

1

1870. Railroad tracks snake through the forests of wild, unsettled Colorado. Dusk becomes cold night. The last rays of sunlight crack like yolk over the tips of the autumn trees.

2

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - NIGHT

2

The lit end of a cigarette reveals the faint outline of a man, COLM CANTER (35). He stands on railroad tracks that end abruptly, WARPED and bent.

SETH (V.O.)

I learned a thing or two about him
from a dime-store novel long after
he was gone from my life.

The sound of a match strikes behind him. A flame comes up to flicker over another face. It is not the only one.

SETH (V.O.)

He did not carry a pocket watch. To
tell time, he would put four
fingers to the sky between the sun
and the horizon.

There are FOUR others. In the dark, they are just ghosts of the CANTER GANG. Each have a RED ASCOT tucked at the nape of their neck.

SETH (V.O.)

He hated the taste of tobacco but
smoked it anyway.

Each of the men holds a gun at the ready. At their feet is a small crate of dynamite.

SETH (V.O.)

Most nights he didn't sleep.

CLOSE UP OF THE RAILROAD TRACKS, TWISTED AND TORN BY A RECENT EXPLOSION.

SETH (V.O.)

He did not think shooting a man in
the back to be dishonorable.

In the far off distance, a pinprick of light draws closer.

SETH (V.O.)

He liked horses more than he liked
most people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

SETH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Of the 22 men he killed over the
course of his 35 years, he never
hurt one of their horses.

CLOSE UP OF COLM'S FACE. The light of his cigarette just
barely illuminates the dark pools of his eyes. It glints off
the silvery scar on his cheek.

A low hum fills the air.

SETH (V.O.)
He had a small scar underneath his
left eye no wider than a silver
dollar. He said he got it from a
fight with a Arapaho chieftain.
This was a lie, but he lay claim to
it because it felt true.

The humming of the approaching train increases. The rail-
tracks shudder.

SETH (V.O.)
He and my ma didn't settle on much,
but both believed in the worth of
holding your own reins. After what
happened that autumn, I am inclined
to the same view.

Colm steps back.

COLM
Not a minute late.

He slips up his ascot to cover his mouth like a bandana. The
others follow suit.

3 INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

3

CLOSE UP: A DIME-STORE NOVEL.

A YOUNG BOY sits in a carriage, engrossed in the book. His
LITTLE SISTER grips his arm at his side, staring intently at
something across the aisle.

SAMUEL (40s) is sleeping, hat over face. His fine shoes
suggest money. The little girl stares at the gun on his hip.

Next to him, his colleague WILLIAM (20s), is decidedly more
awake. William fingers a bright new Pinkerton National
Detective Agency badge.

He jumps a little when Samuel addresses him.

(CONTINUED)

SAMUEL

What did Sally say?

William shrugs.

WILLIAM

She was gone before I could tell
her.

Samuel gives a nod of sympathy. He's not the kind of man to
give more than that.

SAMUEL

It's probably better off this way.

He stands up, stretches.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

I'll be back, just checking on the
neighbors.

William watches Samuel disappear behind the sliding door. He
turns back to window. He winces at the sight of his own
reflection - the hair combed over, the new shirt. He looks
out past it to the vague shapes that sail by in the dark. The
train rattles on.

The carriage LURCHES. Slowly, it comes to a stop. Passengers
exchange glances. They murmur, concerned.

A young woman looks to her husband.

YOUNG WOMAN

Copperton isn't for another 20
miles, is it?

The little girl peers out the window. It's hard to tell
because of the glare on the window and the moonless night,
but there's the hint of a shape climbing the side of the
train. Like a spider.

She strains her neck to catch a better look -

BLAM.

She is yanked away from the window as her mother pulls her
close.

The lock has been blown clean off the door of the passenger
car.

The door slides open to reveal the smoke rising off the
barrel of a pistol. At the other end of it - Colm Canter.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

Behind him, part of his posse: AMYCUS CANTER (37), ELI WILSON (33), DAVID CANTER (34), and NOAH WILCOX (31).

The masked men move with a cold swiftness that only comes from practice. The tallest, Amycus, steps up. Raises his pistol.

AMYCUS
Alright, let's go.

He need say no more than that. The frightened passengers comply.

4 EXT. TRAIN ROOF - NIGHT

4

The night is pitch dark. JAMIE CANTER (26), Colm's brother, moves along the roof of the train.

There's a soft clinking sound as Jamie unloads his bag. He lays out his tools. Dark eyes calculate behind a red ascot.

He holds up a bottle. Warm light from the train illuminates the label. FORMALDEHYDE.

Jamie leans over the edge of the roof to peer through the windows. We watch with him as the rest of his gang loots the passengers.

CREAK

Jamie snaps his attention to the sound, much too close to have come from inside the train.

5 INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

5

Amycus, Eli and David sweep the passengers belongings unceremoniously into a sack.

WILLIAM(O.S.)
Hold it right there.

Colm turns and stares William down with cold eyes. William is nearly shaking, but he tries to stand firm.

BANG.

Colm fires a warning shot into the paneling next to William's head.

William shoots reflexively, without real aim. The bullet hits a window. Glass SPRAYS.

(CONTINUED)

Colm closes the distance in a couple of steps. He knocks the gun out of William's hand. He likes it up close and personal.

In a swift movement, Colm shoots the man in the foot. William goes down. Colm crouches next to him, so he can look the man in the eye.

COLM

Would you like a moment to pray?

WILLIAM

What?

COLM

I'm about to kill you. Thought it would be kind to give you a moment.

A pause. William opens his mouth to say something.

TOO SLOW. Colm's sympathy has passed. BANG. He shoots William in the gut. William slumps over. Colm rummages through the man's pockets.

COLM (CONT'D)

Don't understand why some people are so set on being heroes.

He takes what little the man has before drawing himself up to his full height. Amycus, Eli, Noah and David stand dispersed amongst the passengers. Job done.

Colm's eyes sweep the car once more. He knocks on the wall five times. A signal.

Nothing happens.

Colm looks up at the ceiling. Something is not right. There's a flash of irritation on his face. He motions the rest of his crew to stay.

Colm climbs up the roof of the train and sees the struggle. Samuel and Jamie exchange blows. Their guns lie just out of reach.

Colm watches impassively, hand on his peacemaker. There's a CRACK as Jamie's foot meets Samuel's jaw. The lawman's head snaps back and he tumbles off the roof.

Jamie looks over the edge of the roof to the broken body below. He turns back to Colm.

6 CONTINUED:

COLM
You're late.

JAMIE
I know. I know.

Jamie grabs one of the glass containers.

7 INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

7

Windows shatter. Members of the gang move quickly for the doors. This is what they have been waiting for.

Formaldehyde bottles smash on the unsuspecting members of the cabin. The effects are almost instantaneous. The passengers erupt into coughs, suffocating on the fumes.

The gang slips out of the passenger car.

8 EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

8

The Canter Gang jams the cabin doors, trapping the passengers inside. Colm and Jamie join the other men down on the tracks.

Colm ties two of the loot bags together and slings them over the back of his horse. The men saddle up and spur their horses into a run. They head away from the lights of the train and towards a dark wood about a half-mile off.

A GUNSHOT rings out through the night. Colm looks over his shoulder. William has pushed through a window and staggered off the train, bleeding profusely. He's holding a DOUBLE-BARRELED SHOTGUN.

William takes aim. Colm ducks as the shotgun goes off, and leans close to his horse. The shot isn't meant for him. To his right, one of his fellow gang members is picked clean off their mount and tumbles to the ground. Colm accelerates into a gallop.

BANG.

Colm's horse lets out a fierce scream as the spray cuts through its torso. Colm is thrown from its back, barreling into the dirt.

Colm looks up to see the rest of his gang disappear into the woods. He snatches the bags from the horse's back. Half-crouching, half-running, Colm flees from the sounds of the shotgun behind him. Just twenty yards to go. He breaks into a sprint and runs for the safety of the trees. He stops beneath the branches to look back.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

His horse lies dead on its side. A loud bell begins to ring out from the train. Colm retreats into the trees.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

9 EXT. O'HENRY HOUSE - DAY

9

The O'Henry House sits in a vast field. A barn stands nestled close by.

A weathered LAWMAN (40s) stands waiting by his horse outside on the porch. He puts out the end of his cigarette under the heel of his boot and squints into the sun. A PINKERTON BADGE gleams on his lapel

10 INT. O'HENRY HOUSE - DAY

10

SETH O'HENRY (12), rebellious and growing fast, stands in front of a mirror, trying on his father's hat. He attempts to look older by making a serious face. His reflection scowls back at him.

Nearby, a tattered coat - halfway mended by a needle and thread - lies abandoned.

JACK (O.S.)

I'm going to need my hat back.

Seth whips around to see his father JACK O'HENRY (late 30s) standing in the doorway. Jack's voice is kind, but his face is weary. Seth sheepishly pulls the hat off his head and hands it to his father.

SETH

Can I come with you?

Without looking up, Jack grabs a shining PINKERTON BADGE from the side table. He pins it to his jacket.

JACK

Not this time, Seth.

SETH

You said you'd teach me to shoot.

Jack makes his way to leave, but is intercepted by his son.

SETH (CONT'D)

You promised.

A pout from Seth. Jack softens a bit.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

There'll be plenty of time for that
later. For now, your mother needs
you here.

Jack exits the room. Frustrated, Seth stares into the mirror.
He throws a disdainful look at the coat he is meant to be
mending.

ANNA (PRE-LAP)

He talks about me like I'm the
warden.

ANNA O'HENRY (30s), Seth's step-mother. She has the joyless
face, bleached hair and leathery skin of a woman who has done
her fair share of work in the sun. At the kitchen table, she
skins a rabbit. She easily works through the blood on her
apron and hands.

Behind her, Jack is placing a few canned goods into a pack.

JACK

He just misses his Ma, that's all.
You've just got to give him more
time. Three years ain't that long.
Besides, all boys have problems
with their mothers. You know how we
are.

Anna says nothing. She just gives a particularly frustrated
stab at the rabbit.

Jack notices the frustration and moves to embrace her. He
stops short, noticing the mess on her apron and hands.

JACK (CONT'D)

He'll come around.

ANNA

It is what it is. I just forget
sometimes, that's all.

She wipes her hands on her apron.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You get back next Sunday?

JACK

The bank needs me till then. The
ride itself is at least a day. I'll
write if I'm needed longer.

11 CONTINUED:

11

A moment of tenderness as Jack places a kiss to her temple. Anna accepts this with the same flatness with which she takes everything else.

JACK (CONT'D)

You two can manage till I get back.

12 EXT. O'HENRY HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

12

CLOSE UP: JACK'S SADDLE, ENGRAVED WITH HIS INITIALS "J.O."

Jack mounts his GREY APPALOOSA with ease. The Lawman nods to him, then turns his own horse and begins to trot away.

Anna stands on the porch while Seth watches from a window. Jack turns once to tip his hat at both of them in a silent goodbye. He follows after the Lawman.

LAWMAN

Don't know why you gotta live so
fuckin' far out here, Jack.

JACK

Ain't selling my Daddy's farm,
Pete.

Anna watches till the horses and their riders disappear beyond the ridge. When she finally turns to return inside, she catches Seth's eye and sees his scowling face.

13 INT. O'HENRY HOUSE - DAY

13

Anna returns to the kitchen to pick up where she left off. As she moves through the house, we get a better look at the O'Henry household. Jack's job pays well and the house's furnishings reflect that. Anna moves through it like she doesn't belong.

A bunch of field daisies sit wilting in a colorful vase. A plain cross is mounted on the wall. A few photographs line the shelves.

There's a portrait of Jack, Seth, and an unnamed, mousy woman. Beside it, an image of Jack with two other men in dressed in Union Army blues, smiling. Finally, a lone portrait of Anna, now officially part of the O'Henry family.

Anna finishes with the rabbit.

We hear Seth in the next room. He emerges suddenly. He coldly breezes past Anna. The front door slams shut. Anna sighs. From the window, she watches Seth stalk off over the hill.

14 EXT. O'HENRY HOUSE- DAY 14

Empty cans are lined along the edge of a fence.

Seth stands at a distance holding one an old, single-action Colt revolvers.

He brings it up, struggling to hold it one-handed. He fires all six rounds, one after the other.

The cans remain intact. He's a terrible shot.

Seth kicks at the dirt in frustration and flops onto the ground dramatically.

As the sun begins to set against the horizon, storm clouds approach in the distance.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK: The sound of a GUNSHOT finding it's mark.

FADE IN:

15 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT 15

A THUD! The silhouette of a man's body falls splayed on the cold ground. Blood pools from the shot in his chest. There is the sound of a horse braying in alarm, then heavy hoofbeats as it gallops away.

As sounds of the horse disappears into the distance, the clouds shift. Moonlight illuminates the face of the fallen man. JACK O'HENRY's eyes are unfocused; his breathing rapid.

16 EXT. O'HENRY HOUSE - NIGHT 16

A tangerine moon hangs in the Colorado sky.

17 INT. O'HENRY HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT 17

Anna and Seth sit at the table, eating dinner in stiff silence. Anna breaks it.

ANNA

When you're done eating, I'm going
to need you to finish sewing up
your jacket for church.

No response.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (CONT'D)

It's important that you learn to take care of these things, Seth.

SETH

I don't wanna learn to make house, I wanna learn how to fire a gun. A man should know how to shoot. All you do is sit here and stitch and make stew.

ANNA

My life is more than that.

SETH

Well, it don't seem like it.

They finish eating in silence.

18 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 18

Anna sits on her bed. By the light of a dim lamp she stitches up Seth's jacket for him. Her handiwork is neat and even.

19 INT. SETH'S ROOM - NIGHT 19

In his room, Seth thumbs through a worn dime-store NOVEL. He flips to the back where, tucked away, there is a frayed handkerchief. Embroidered in the corner is the name "Sally O'Henry".

He settles up next to a window. Pushes it open and stares out into the night. He gazes longingly at the horizon.

In the quiet of the Colorado night there is the faint whinnie of a horse as a rider draws up to the house. Seth squints into the darkness.

20 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 20

A loud KNOCK. Anna's eyes jump to Jack's shotgun, mounted on the wall. She grabs a lantern and heads to the front door.

21 INT. O'HENRY HOUSE - NIGHT 21

Seth reaches the door before Anna, though she is not far behind. He opens it to reveal a man, stepping into the light. Colm.

COLM

Evening, son.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

SETH
Can I help you?

COLM
You the man of the house?

Anna steps in, gently pushing Seth aside with a protective hand.

ANNA
Evening, Mister...?

COLM
Colm Canter, Ma'am. I'm headed
towards Copperton and need a place
to stay for the night. Can you
spare a bunk?

Anna regards Colm cautiously. She glances at Seth.

COLM (CONT'D)
It's mighty cold out tonight.

He smiles genially.

COLM (CONT'D)
Ain't trying to intrude. If'n you
can't, I understand...

Anna hesitates. Then --

ANNA
We have a barn. It's not much, but
there's soft hay and a roof.

COLM
Much obliged. I won't stay long. Be
gone come morning.

Anna nods. She grabs her overcoat, fetches a lantern, and makes sure to close the door behind her. Seth watches from the window.

22 EXT. O'HENRY HOUSE - NIGHT

22

The two make their way to the barn, past the hitching post where Canter's horse rests.

23 INT. BARN - NIGHT

23

Other than the bails of hay and a brown horse, the barn is empty.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

Anna stands in the doorway as Colm sets up a small bed roll in the barn. She notices that Colm walks with a limp. She says nothing.

ANNA

What kind of business you got in
Copperton?

COLM

I'm just a ranch hand, looking for
work - goin' cattle town to cattle
town.

ANNA

Might not find much in Copperton.
It being a mining town and all.

Beat.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Well, if you need anything, just
holler.

COLM

That's very kind of you.

Anna nods in acknowledgment and lights an extra lantern. The small light just barely illuminates the rest of barn.

COLM (CONT'D)

It just you and your boy out here?

Anna throws him a glance. She sets down the lantern next to Colm.

ANNA

And my husband. Good night, Mr.
Canter.

She gives the horse a pat before stepping back into the night.

24 EXT. O'HENRY HOUSE - NIGHT

24

Anna heads back towards the house, but stops at a sharp braying nearby. The horse Colm arrived on, grey-coated and agitated, paws at the ground a few yards off. She checks to make sure her guest isn't behind her, then moves to take a closer look. Anna pulls back the blanket on the horse's back, revealing the saddle.

The initials 'J.O' mark the leather. IT'S JACK'S HORSE.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

There's no doubt. Jack's initials stare back at Anna as she fights against a rising fear. Taking one look at the barn, she makes a decision.

Anna blows out her lantern.

25 EXT. BARN - NIGHT

25

Anna quietly sidles up to the side of the barn. With her lantern now extinguished, the only sources of light come from the house, the barn and the moon.

Pushing herself up against the barn, a gap in the loose planks allows Anna to spy on the stranger.

26 INT. BARN - NIGHT

26

Colm has settled down on his makeshift bed. He's hunched over, the leg of his pants rolled up to reveal a BULLET WOUND. He winces in pain.

A GUN sits not too far from his bedside. He attempts to tend to himself.

27 EXT. BARN - NIGHT

27

Anna slumps against the wall of the barn. Off her fear-stricken face -

CUT TO:

28 INT. O'HENRY HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

28

Anna throws open the doors to the bedroom, frantically searching. Her eyes land on a SHOTGUN. Seth stands right behind her.

ANNA

I need you to stay here.

SETH

What's going on?

Anna crouches down to look her defiant child in the eye.

ANNA

Seth, for once, I just need you to listen to me -

There is a loud THUMP. Anna's eyes fly to the front door, then back to Seth.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

ANNA (CONT'D)

Stay here.

She grabs the shotgun and exits the room.

29 INT. O'HENRY HOUSE - NIGHT

29

Anna keeps the gun barrel steadily pointed at the door.

ANNA

Who is it?

No answer. A few seconds of silence. Then -

THUMP.

Louder this time. Like a large weight just dropped.

Anna fingers the trigger, steels herself and carefully pulls the door open to reveal -

Her husband. Face down on the porch.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Jack!

Abandoning the gun, Anna drops to his side. Seth hurries over.

SETH

Pa!

The two help Jack to the kitchen table; he drifts in and out of consciousness. Seth scrambles to clear the table and the two push Jack on to the horizontal surface.

Anna moves quickly to dress the wound in Jack's gut, removing a wadded handkerchief that Jack has been holding as a makeshift bandage. Hot blood flows down his navel. Anna shoves a wooden spoon between his teeth.

ANNA

(Sharply)

Seth. Poker.

Anna snaps her fingers at a hesitant Seth. He scurries to the fireplace and brings her the burning poker. Anna presses it hard against Jack's wound. There is a sizzle of flesh. Agonized, Jack groans between clenched teeth.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(to Seth)

Bandages. Quickly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seth runs to retrieve bandages. It's awkward but Anna quickly goes for a shelved whiskey bottle and uncorks it. She douses her husband's wound with the alcohol. The spoon falls limply from Jack's mouth.

JACK
(weakly)
It's too much blood.

ANNA
Don't say that.

Seth returns, his hands full of linen cloth. He stops, frozen, on the threshold.

JACK
A man - in the woods...

It's just what Anna feared. We can see it in her face.

JACK (CONT'D)
Stole my horse. Anna...

Jack's used the last of his energy. His head rolls sideways and he falls silent. Anna keeps pressure on the wound.

ANNA
(to Seth)
Bandages, NOW.

SETH
He's not breathing.

Beat. Anna struggles to keep back tears. Seth cannot.

A stillness falls over the room. Anna takes a step back, blood on her hands and her apron. She takes a few steady breaths. Seth's hands ball into fists.

SETH (CONT'D)
The man in the barn -

ANNA
I know.

Anna reaches out and delicately closes her husband's eyes. She strokes his cheek.

SETH
So what are we going to do?

Anna's eyes fall on the shotgun.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Take him to the Copperton sheriff.

Seth jumps to his feet, his face a stew of grief and anger.

SETH

What? You think he's just going to go, without a fight?

Anna picks up the abandoned shotgun.

ANNA

No. But that man will face the law for what he did to your father.

SETH

He's dead. You think that bastard deserves any better?

ANNA

Seth, you're talking about killing a man.

SETH

A murderer.

He rubs his eyes with the back of his hand.

SETH (CONT'D)

If you had just let me go with him, this wouldn't have happened. But you didn't and now he's dead.

This accusation hits Anna hard. Seth glares at his mother.

SETH (CONT'D)

We need to do something.

ANNA

I am doing something.

Tears well in her eyes, but now isn't the time for that. Instead, she lets a certain steeliness take over. Anna exits the house without another word.

As Anna heads to the barn, she hears the door CLICK behind her a second time. She stops dead in her tracks and turns to confront her step-son.

ANNA
(whispers)
Seth, go back inside!

SETH
I'm coming too.

ANNA
(whispers)
No! I will not lose my boy and
husband in the same night. Now, go
inside. If I'm not out in five
minutes, ride to Copperton. Find
the Sheriff and bring him here.

Seth watches as his step-mother continues to the barn, the
lantern disappearing into the darkness.

31 INT. BARN - NIGHT

31

Anna enters the barn. The light of her lantern shows Colm
laying on his bed. He is pale and weak from the blood loss.
Anna gets closer, becoming more and more mindful of the rifle
in her arm. Colm's eyes drift to Anna.

COLM
Thank God. I think I must've
scraped my leg against a hay hook
when I laid down.

Anna is silent.

COLM (CONT'D)
Could I trouble you for some water?
The hay is making it itch something
nasty.

ANNA
That ain't no hay hook. That's from
a pistol. My husband's.

Colm sits silent, his eyes sharp. He shoots a look to his
gun.

COLM
I think you're mistaken, Ma'am.

ANNA
My husband is laying dead in our
house. Said a man in the woods shot
him. My guess is he meant you.

32 INT. O'HENRY HOUSE - NIGHT 32

Seth races in, looking for something specific. He finds it on his father's hip - a COLT 45. He spares a moment for his father's face. He grabs it and runs out.

33 INT. BARN - NIGHT 33

Anna keeps her gun trained on Colm.

COLM

Ma'am, I never shot a man in my life. This is all just a big misunderstanding.

ANNA

That may be, but I insist you come with me to Copperton and see the Sheriff. He'll sort it out.

Colm sizes up Anna. The hand that holds the rifle shakes ever so slightly. There is a pause before his innocent demeanor melts away. Colm chuckles.

COLM

My God. What a sight you are. Here you stand, ready to drag me off to face the law. And how do you plan on getting me all the way into town? Scrawny little thing like you. Gonna carry me there on your back?

ANNA

You don't know what I can do. But I know you won't get too far. I saw enough gunshot wounds during the war. Come morning, if you're standing at all, it will be before the judge in Copperton. No matter how I have to get you there.

Colm's drops his smile. His lip twists.

34 EXT. BARN - NIGHT 34

Seth does his best to make his way quietly to side the of the barn. Another entrance. He slips up behind a hay bail. From his hiding spot, he watches Anna and Colm.

COLM (O.S.)

I didn't want to kill your husband.

35

INT. BARN - NIGHT

35

Anna, shaken by the confession, does her best to stand strong.

COLM

All I wanted was his horse, but the damn fool had to go and be a hero. Now, I don't want to kill you either. Or that boy. So why don't you go back inside, little lady, and come sunrise, I'll be gone.

Colm reaches for his gun.

SETH (O.S)

You're not going anywhere, you son of a bitch.

Seth EMERGES from his hiding spot, holding his father's gun.

ANNA

Seth!

COLM

Don't be stupid, boy. You can barely hold that thing straight.

Seth advances on him, pointing the gun at Colm's chest.

SETH

Don't take much aim from here.

ANNA

Seth, give me the gun.

SETH

No! He deserves to die. He deserves to bleed on the ground, like an animal!

Seth steps closer. He's shaking. Closer. He practically presses the gun into Colm's stomach.

ANNA

It don't work that way Seth. You do that and you're a murderer too.

Colm grins at this. Seth hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Seth. This man will die. I promise.
But whether it's by a gun or by a
noose makes all the difference.

As Seth looks imploringly at his mother, Colm seizes the moment. He snatches at the gun in Seth's hand and twists it from his grip. Kicking the boy aside, he points the gun toward Anna.

COLM

Can't say I didn't warn -

BLAM.

Anna SHOOTS Colm in the shoulder. He falls to the ground, dropping the gun. Before he can reach for it -

ANNA

Don't.

She steps forward and kicks the pistol out of his reach. Seth scrambles to be next to Anna. Her attention remains on Colm. He clutches his bleeding shoulder with his good hand. His right arm dangles limply.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Up.

Scowling, Colm struggles to his feet. Seth's eyes follow Anna as she leads the man out of the barn at gunpoint. The flickering lantern makes her shadow loom large on the walls.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Seth, get a pack ready for the ride
to Copperton.

Seth stands, holding a gun to Colm. Anna bandages him up from the shot she just put in his shoulder. It's a silent affair - or at least, Anna's trying to have it be a silent affair.

COLM

Nice place you got here.

Anna says nothing. Seth stands guard warily.

COLM (CONT'D)

Real quaint. Like out of storybook.

Anna cuts gauze for Colm and then slides the scissors across the floor, far away from the two of them. Out of his reach. Colm smiles. She ignores him.

COLM (CONT'D)

What did you say your husband did again?

Nothing from Anna.

COLM (CONT'D)

Maybe a miner? Copperton is a mining town...

(pointedly)

Or so I'm told.

SETH

He's a watchman.

Anna throws a sharp look at Seth. Seth shrugs. Colm looks pleased.

(COLM)

Was. I think you have to start using 'was' son.

Colm nods to indicate the middle of the room.

REVEAL - JACK'S BODY ON THE KITCHEN TABLE.

SETH

Don't call me son.

ANNA

Stop. Seth, I don't want you talking to him.

COLM

Think he's old enough to make his own decisions.

Anna pushes into the fresh gunshot wound. Colm winces. It takes the friendly edge off his voice. She ties his hands with a rough length of cord. Lashes him to the chair.

COLM (CONT'D)

If you think even for a second that my gang won't be here come tomorrow night, you got another thing coming.

ANNA

Plan to see you hanged before then.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

Colm snorts derisively.

COLM

The law's a fickle thing.

SETH

If the law don't kill you, Mister,
I'll do it myself.

COLM

(To Anna)

Strong words from your boy.

(To Seth)

Know that I'm the kind of man to
hold you to it, son.

Anna reaches out to put a hand on Seth's shoulder.

SETH

(to Colm)

Don't call me 'son'.

(to Anna)

And I'm not YOUR son.

COLM

(intrigued)

Well now...

Seth heads towards his room. Pauses a moment next to Jack's body.

SETH

What about Pa?

Anna stops, stumped by the question. She looks at her husband's body, no longer able to avoid it.

ANNA

We'll take him with us.

Seth leaves the room without argument. Anna takes a seat next to Jack. She looks at his face.

She unbuckles his holster and wraps it around her own waist.

37 EXT. O' HENRY HOUSE - NIGHT

37

A small cart pulled by two horses. Colm, arms lashed, rides in the back with Jack's body. Seth rides shotgun with Anna. Anna finishes tightening the reins on her horse.

Colm stares at the dark horizon. The wind whips at them.

(CONTINUED)

COLM

You know, you do manage to make it
to Copperton before this storm
does, I'll let you keep my gun.

Anna glances at the butt of Colm's gun in her holster.
There's a red-tailed hawk engraved on the handle. A custom
job. Valuable, perhaps. Personal, definitely.

She looks at the horizon. Colm's right. There is a storm
coming.

Beneath the shadow of a dozen withered trees, a horse trots
slowly into the clearing. It bears a rider in a black duster,
dark, matted hair covering his shoulders. About his neck he
wears a tar-stained, red ascot. Amycus Canter, the eldest of
the Canter brothers.

Gradually, he is joined by other members of his gang. First,
Noah Wilcox, riding a chestnut-brown courser. A former
rustler, Noah prefers the company of animals and speaks
little.

Next, Eli Wilson, black and handsome. He wears a rifle slung
over one shoulder and carries himself with a straight back
and an upraised chin.

Finally, Jamie Canter ambles into the clearing on a white
colt. His round, boyish face is set with a constant smirk.
His smiling blue eyes have the sting of cruelty in them.

The four men stand on horseback in the round. There is a
conspicuous gap in their circle.

AMYCUS

So I see you boys made it.

His horse paws the ground nervously.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)

Christ, what was that mess before?
Didn't no one sweep the carriage
'fore we started?

JAMIE

That was David's job.

AMYCUS

'Course it was. Damn idiot.

ELI
(reproachfully)
He was your cousin, Mick.

AMYCUS
Yeah, well that's what we get for
working with the extended family.
Bunch of inbred jackasses.

NOAH
What happened to David?

ELI
He got shot.

JAMIE
You know like how when a horse
don't wanna run no more and it goes
to sleep forever?

ELI
Shut it, Jamie.

JAMIE
Oh, why yes sir, Mister Eli! Now
did I miss when y'all became my
boss?

AMYCUS
BOTH of you shut up.

He opens his watch.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)
Now, it's a quarter after and it
seems to me we's still waiting on
our fearless leader. So anybody see
what happened to my brother?

JAMIE
Why, but I'm right here, Amycus! Or
has all this excitement weathered
my beautiful face beyond
recognition?

Jamie slaps his hands to his cheeks theatrically.

AMYCUS
You know damn well I didn't mean
you, Jamie.

ELI

Last I saw, he was riding behind us. We got separated after that.

AMYCUS

Terrific. Well, I guess we wait on him a little longer.

NOAH

I seen his horse got shot.

ELI

What's that, Noah?

JAMIE

Yeah, spit it out, pinhead.

NOAH

We were all riding away and then Colm's horse - Francisco - he started screaming. I turned and seen 'em falling.

ELI

Dammit.

JAMIE

You couldn't have mentioned this five minutes ago?

AMYCUS

Well, that settles it. Guess we'd better move on without him.

ELI

What are you talking about, Mick? We gotta go find him. We don't know he's dead yet.

AMYCUS

He's as good as. Best we don't slow ourselves down. I ain't taking chances based on a guess.

JAMIE

Colm knows how dicey this game is. Reckon he wouldn't have no hard feelings anyhow.

Eli glares hard at them.

(CONTINUED)

ELI

Listen to you two. Colm's the one
what brung us all into this. This
here's his plan. We're his posse.
And you three's KIN. Ain't you got
no fealty?

AMYCUS

Just ain't practical, is all.

Amycus sniffs and spits again on the ground. He lights a
cigarette. Eli turns in his saddle.

ELI

Jamie, Noah. You saying you
amenable to this arrangement?

Jamie simply shrugs. Noah looks thoughtful.

NOAH

(distantly)

I just takes care of the horses, is
all. But...

He furrows his brow in concentration.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Colm's our leader. I don't think we
should leave him behind.

Eli looks at Amycus and gestures emphatically in Noah's
direction. Amycus continues to smoke impassively.

AMYCUS

Well, this ain't no democracy.

He throws the stub of the cigarette onto the dirt, and turns
his horse about.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)

Come on, boys. A little haste and
we can be in Masonville by dawn. I
know a cathouse with the sweetest
ass in the state.

He begins to trot away. Jamie and Noah follow slowly after
him. Eli remains in place.

ELI

So which one of you's gonna be
paying for that?

The men halt. Amycus looks from one to the other.

(CONTINUED)

AMYCUS

Either o' you boys got the take
from the job?

Jamie shrugs, nonchalantly. Noah begins to inspect his pack
uncertainly.

ELI

They ain't got it, Amycus. You know
who does?

AMYCUS

Dammit.

Amycus leads his horse around and heads back towards Eli. He
crosses the clearing and starts in the opposite direction.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)

Alright, guess we'd better go find
ole' fearless, then.

JAMIE

Yeah, what with us bein' so loyal
and all.

Eli thumbs his hat in mock respect.

ELI

Well, that warms my heart, boys. It
really does.

The four riders set out toward the open plain.

Anna, Seth, and Colm ride through the Colorado desert, the
large cliff-faces watching them.

The trio stops for a water break. Anna passes the canteen to
Seth first, then takes a sip for her own.

ANNA

Copperton's about a day's ride. If
we keep at it, we should make it
just by sundown.

She says this to no one in particular. She hands the water
canteen to Colm, who awkwardly takes with his bound hands.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(To Seth)
How are you doing?

Seth nods.

SETH
I'm okay. (Beat) Did you want to
sleep?

Anna is functioning on zero sleep from the night before.

ANNA
(wary smile)
I'll hold up.

A clattering sound, then the slush of water. Colm has DROPPED the water canteen. Precious water - wasted.

Anna leaps to retrieve it. Colm flings himself from the cart, dragging Anna to the ground.

Anna has the wind knocked out of her, but refuses to yield to the man. Colm struggles to subdue her. The two tussle.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Seth!

Seth scrambles to grab his father's pistol. He cocks it, aims, but can't shoot. The barrel wavers between the entwined fighters. Seth hesitates.

SETH
You're too close!

Colm's hands have made it up to Anna's neck. He's straddling her.

COLM
Well, this didn't last long.

Anna KNEES Colm. He crumples. It's all she needs. She whacks him in the head with her fist and rolls out from under him.

Anna lunges for the pistol, pries it from Seth's hand. She turns it on Colm.

Quiet descends as quickly as the chaos began. Colm stops, breathing heavily. So does Anna. Her tongue darts out to feel her split lip. Her fingers come up to touch the bruise blooming on her cheek.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

Her eyes drop down to the empty canteen. Anna keeps her gun on Colm.

ANNA

Come on. Up. Let's go.

Colm gives her a withering look. He climbs to his feet.

41 EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

41

Anna pulls the horse drawn cart to a stop.

They've made it to a saloon halfway outside the middle of nowhere. A small, grimy place where a man can stock up on just about anything - scotch, shells, sex.

Anna checks to make sure Jack's body is covered. Waits for Seth to climb down from the cart.

ANNA

(to Seth)

Keep your head down.

He gives her a look. Anna throws her coat into Colm's arms, to cover his bound hands.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Hold my coat.

42 INT. SALOON - NIGHT

42

Winding down for the night. A man helps his drunk friend stumble out of the establishment. They push past.

ANNA

Stay here.

She approaches the bar. A trio of prostitutes stand behind it, smoke curling from their cigarettes.

One of them peels away from the group. Anna nods at her and approaches. Seth and Colm watch their exchange, wordlessly. Colm's eyes scan the room.

Anna gives a stone cold nod to the woman before heading back.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Got us a room.

The three of them head upstairs, passing a table of grubby-looking men playing cards. They draw some looks.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

Colm adjusts his grip on the coat, and the rope binding is momentarily visible to one of the men at the table. The man looks at the small woman with a shotgun. He looks Colm in the face. Calculating. Colm narrows his eyes menacingly and continues on upstairs.

43 INT. ROOM - NIGHT

43

The three enter the bedroom. Unsanded floorboards. A flickering paraffin lamp. Anna ties Colm to the bed post, like a horse.

COLM

Y'all prob'ly shouldn't give me so much slack.

He swings the limp tether back and forth, smiling. After a moment, Anna secures his wrists more tightly to the bottom of the post, forcing him into a seated position.

COLM (CONT'D)

That's it.

Anna crosses to the window, and pulls up a wooden chair.

ANNA

Seth, bed. Get some rest.

Seth looks at her uncertainly. Looks at Colm, fixed to the bed.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'll watch him. You need to sleep.

She lays the shotgun across her lap. Seth climbs onto the mattress and rolls over.

COLM

Sleep tight, kid.

44 INT. ROOM - NIGHT

44

ON SETH, EYES SHUT TIGHTLY

Seth's eyes open. Close again for a few moments. Reopen. He can't sleep. He twists. Gazes at the dagger of moonlight that falls over his step-mother. She's still awake, sitting by the window.

Seth sits up. Anna's head jerks in his direction.

SETH

Need the jake.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

Anna nods. Colm is snoring peacefully. Quite unlike a man walking to his own death.

45 INT. SALOON - NIGHT

45

Seth lingers in the stairwell before slinking downstairs. He stands on the threshold, looking painfully out of place.

Seth approaches the bar, and runs his hand over some faint, brown bloodstains on the wood. Someone's taken a rag and fifteen minutes of elbow grease to it. Not much more. People eyeball him without much interest.

The bartender approaches.

SETH

Can I open up a tab?

The bartender looks at him.

BARTENDER

What's your name, kid?

He sours at being called 'kid' again.

SETH

Seth O'Henry.

It doesn't even occur to him to use a false name.

BARTENDER

Jack's boy?

Seth is surprised hear his father's name.

SETH

That's me.

BARTENDER

Your daddy has one hell of a tab here already.

A man steps in, a pipe clenched between his teeth. The lit bowl casts a soft light on the face of JASPER JONES (40s).

JASPER

Did I hear you were Jack O'Henry's boy?

SETH

S'right.

He watches the man, cautiously.

(CONTINUED)

JASPER

Clay, glass of rye for my young
friend here.

Grumbling slightly, the bartender pours out the drink into a
chipped glass. He pushes it towards Seth.

SETH

(to Jasper)

Thanks.

JASPER

Your father helped my cousin out
when he needed an extra hand. He's
a good man.

Seth stares into the drink in his hand.

SETH

Was. He died last night.

JASPER

That so? Well that's a damn shame.

He raises his glass, Seth follows suit. He takes a sip of the
whiskey and stifles a cough. Jasper is polite enough not to
comment on it.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Lost my old man at a young age as
well. But I can't say I'm much the
worse for it.

SETH

How's that?

Jasper takes another drink. He speaks in bullet points.

JASPER

Forced me to grow up, get my shit
together. Pop came over for the
Gold Rush. Worked hard, set up a
small mining camp. Paid a few
fellas to dig. Was always ready to
give work to anyone looked like
they needed it. Was a little too
kind. People take advantage of
that. He was shot by one'a his
workers during a squabble over
nuthin'.

Jasper points his two forefingers and shoots them at the air.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

SETH
You a gold miner now?

Tight smile from Jasper.

JASPER
Something like that.

Jasper notices Seth's untouched glass of whisky.

JASPER (CONT'D)
You don't have to drink if you
don't like it.

Seth pushes the drink away gratefully.

46 INT. ROOM - NIGHT

46

Anna waits for Seth to get back. Head lolling. She struggles to stay awake. Colm's voice snaps her to attention.

COLM
You know, you do fall asleep, I
promise not to hurt you or your
boy. I'll just be on my way plain
and simple. Cross my heart.

ANNA
I'm getting real tired of having to
ignore you, Mr. Canter.

The door reopens and Seth enters. He locks the door behind him. Anna watches him, but doesn't ask where he's been.

Seth goes to sit in the other chair next to her. Anna warily hands off the gun and then sinks into her chair. She closes her eyes. Lets out a sigh as she starts to sink into sleep.

There is silence for a second. Peace.

The sound of footsteps approaches in the hall. There is a loud KNOCK at the door.

Anna snaps bolt upright. The three exchange looks.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Yes? Who is it?

VOICE (O.S.)
James Grey, Ma'am. Proprietor.

(CONTINUED)

COLM
(low voice)
It ain't.

Anna shoots him a look.

ANNA
You are aware it's five in the
morn? I paid for the entire night.
(To Colm, quietly)
Who?

COLM
Trouble.

ANNA
(Still whispering)
You're going to have to be a bit
more specific than that, Mister
Canter.

VOICE (O.S.)
We got reason to believe there may
be a fugitive in your room, ma'am.

Anna stares at the door. She takes aim with the rifle.

COLM
Couple fellas downstairs. Bounty
hunters. They know you got me tied.
Reckon they're here to poach your
bear.

VOICE (O.S.)
Ma'am, am I gonna have to come in
there?

ANNA
Just a moment.

She keeps her rifle steady. With the barrel still on the
door, Anna pushes aside the window's curtain. She peers out
into the night.

They are two stories up. With a slanted roof below the
window, it's possible to climb down. She catches Seth's eye.

ANNA (CONT'D)
You think you can climb down it?
Lord knows you snuck out enough at
home.

(CONTINUED)

She gives a faint smile. Seth nods, approaches the window. Anna unleashes Colm from the bed and pushes him towards the window.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You get down first Seth.

Another fierce knock at the door.

VOICE (O.S.)
Ma'am, we will bring down this door
if we gotta.

ANNA
Coming!
(to Seth)
Go!

The door rattles on its hinges as the men on the other side kick against it. Anna throws one leg out of the window and points the gun at Colm.

ANNA (CONT'D)
You can stay here with them or come
along with me, Mr. Canter. Which is
it gonna be?

COLM
Get on, dammit!

As they slide out the window, there is the sound of wood splintering. The window shatters behind them as bullets fly overhead. Anna and Colm shimmy down to--

Seth sits waiting on nervously horseback. Colm and Anna sprint over to him, Stray shots raining down on them.

ANNA
Go! Seth, Go!

Seth whips the reins of his horse and bolts into the night. Colm makes to grab the reins of the cart-horse.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Cart.

Colm looks down into the barrel of Anna's gun. Scowling, he scrambles into the cart while she mounts the horse. Anna spurs it into an immediate gallop, and Colm nearly falls from the cart as it wobbles with the sudden speed.

Behind them, their two assailants dash out of the saloon, firing wildly in their direction. Anna and Colm pace away into the night.

BEARDED BOUNTY HUNTER

Dammit.

TALL BOUNTY HUNTER

We shoulda had 'em. Ain't you ever kicked down a door before?

BEARDED BOUNTY HUNTER

Shut it.

JASPER JONES steps out of the doors behind them, lighting his pipe nonchalantly.

JASPER

You boys lose something?

BEARDED BOUNTY HUNTER

Some son of a bitch in a red ascot. Ain't shit.

TALL BOUNTY HUNTER

S'right. Prob'ly worth less'n the bullets we'd spend tryin' to bring his ass in.

Jasper puffs on his pipe thoughtfully.

JASPER

This son-of-a-bitch in the ascot. He have a scar on his face?

Seth, Anna and Colm continue on horseback at a breakneck pace, still running from their pursuers. Colm does his best to brace himself against the dangerous swerving of the cart.

COLM

(Shouting)

Woman! You wanna slow it down? Pretty sure we lost 'em.

Anna pulls back hard on the reins, but it's pretty clear she's lost control of the horse. They're riding blind into the dark on the crest of a deep ravine. The sound of rushing water penetrates the air.

ANNA

Seth! Stop!

She continues to drag on the reins. Seth slows to a trot and falls back. Anna and Colm thunder on.

COLM

Woman!

Anna wrenches the reins hard into her hip. The horse bridles and digs its hooves into the dirt, but struggles for purchase. The momentum of the cart carries it round in a wide arc, spinning it out over the edge of the ravine.

The cart teeters. Anna leaps from the back of the horse, landing in the dirt. Colm scrambles for safety, throwing himself off the cart and onto solid ground. The horse strains against the leather straps of the cart as gravity pulls it over the cliff's edge.

Colm snatches a fallen knife from the ground and slashes the straps loose. The cart tumbles loudly into the ravine. Jack's body ragdolls as it falls down into the darkness. Gone.

Anna rises to her feet.

ANNA

What did you do?

COLM

I saved your horse.

She strides over to him, picking up her gun as she goes. Stops ten feet short and points it at him.

ANNA

My husband was in that cart.

COLM

Just his body.

Behind them, Seth rides up. He dismounts.

SETH

What happened to the cart? Where's Pa?

ANNA

What happened to the cart, Mr. Canter?

Colm says nothing.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Went in the ravine, Seth.

(CONTINUED)

SETH

What? So what are we gonna do?

Anna scowls silently at Colm.

SETH (CONT'D)

We gotta go down and get him. We're gonna go down and get him.

ANNA

We can't, Seth.

SETH

We GOTTA!

ANNA

How, Seth? How are you gonna do that? You'll kill yourself trying.

Seth glares at her, tears filling his eyes.

SETH

We can't just leave him behind...

Colm tightens his grip on the knife. Anna raises the gun.

ANNA

Drop it.

A pause. Colm throws the knife at her feet. It sticks in the ground.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Get back on your horse now, Seth. Daylight's comin' and we gotta get movin' before it breaks.

(To Colm)

You. You're walking.

COLM

Ma'am.

ANNA

We can follow the river. There's a dock not too far up ahead. I'm sure we can make the dawn ferry if we hurry.

She pulls her horse along. Leashes Colm to the bridle.

SETH

But Pa--

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (3)

COLM

He's dead, boy. Leave it.

Anna doesn't correct him. She spurs her horse into a slow trot. Colm staggers slightly to keep up. Seth stands by his horse and weeps silent, bitter tears.

49 INT. SALOON - DAY

49

The heavy air of a hangover fogs the atmosphere of the tavern. People still drink and cavort with the local color, but now with a subdued, fatigued energy.

The Canter gang saunters in, framed by knives of stinging white daylight. They draw a few looks from the patrons, but nothing much. They're not exactly standouts among the rest of the mulch.

Amycus approaches the barman.

AMYCUS

I'm looking for a man.

BARMAN

Ain't that kind of place, pal.

This gets a few weak chuckles from the barflies in earshot. Amycus narrows his eyes and presses on.

AMYCUS

Bout my height. Brown hair. Scar on his face--

He draws a finger across his face in demonstration.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)

--probably wearing a red scarf. You seen 'im?

The barman shakes his head, uninterested.

BALD BARFLY

I seen him.

Amycus turn slowly to the man.

AMYCUS

That right?

BALD BARFLY

Yep. Came in here last night with a woman.

(CONTINUED)

AMYCUS

Whore?

BALD BARFLY

Don't reckon so. Not how she was
lookin'. Lady had a gun most as big
as she was. Seemed spooked.

Amycus approaches the man. The barfly remains slumped
casually in his stool, half-leaning against the bar. He wears
the broad grin that belongs to the utterly wily and the truly
stupid.

AMYCUS

Go on.

BALD BARFLY

Well, now. You looking to hear a
song? Might be I know a good one.
But see, I don't play for free.
Singer's gotta make a living too.

AMYCUS

(Impatiently)

How much?

The barfly feigns thoughtfulness.

BALD BARFLY

Mmmm... ten dollars? It's a good
song.

Amycus bangs a small leather pouch down on the counter. There
is an audible clink. The barfly places his fingers over it.

BALD BARFLY (CONT'D)

They come in here together last
night. 'Bout 3:00 A.M. Had a kid
with 'em too.

AMYCUS

A kid? How old?

BALD BARFLY

Bout ten. Twelve, maybe. He grabs a
drink at the bar with this other
fella. Looked like the law to me.
The fella, not the kid.

AMYCUS

The man with the scar.

(CONTINUED)

BALD BARFLY

Right. So he's standing there in the corner like a rented mule. Don't say nothing. Don't DRINK nothing. Just stands there holding his coat. But eventually, they all heads upstairs to sleep. And when he passes me by...

AMYCUS

What?

BALD BARFLY

Well, I get a quick look under his coat. See his hands lashed together with a piece of cattle-rope.

Amycus looks back to the gang in silent communication.

BALD BARFLY (CONT'D)

Ask ME, he weren't here voluntary.

AMYCUS

Which way they go?

BALD BARFLY

Well, that's hard to say. Couple hours after they hit the hay, there's a whole mess of gunfire and they bolt. Can't quite rightly say if they ain't dead.

BARMAN

Ruined my room, too. They best HOPE they dead, else I find 'em.

BALD BARFLY

Alright, Clarence. Easy now.

AMYCUS

WHEN?

BALD BARFLY

Bout five after five? Listen, if you're looking, you wanna start by the river. Only thing round here actually goes anywhere. Could show you if'n you want? Only...

The barfly jingles the pouch meaningfully.

BALD BARFLY (CONT'D)

Tour guide needs wages, too.

(CONTINUED)

AMYCUS

Right.

BANG. The barfly slumps over, gut-shot. Blood flows between his grinning teeth. Amycus holds his gun steady.

The barman drops the glass in his hands and reaches under the bar. His fingers close around a shotgun.

ELI

No.

The barman turns his head cautiously. The barrel of Eli's rifle is near touching his temple.

Elsewhere in the room, Noah and Jamie have taken up key positions with their guns squared on the patrons. Most of the customers are docile, but the few with the foresight to go for their holsters now reach slowly into the air, aware of the situation. Jamie casually grabs a handful of peanuts from a nearby bowl.

The barman releases his grip on the shotgun and slowly brings his hands up to his ears.

ELI (CONT'D)

Good boy.

Amycus casually pulls the pouch of coins out of the dead man's hand.

AMYCUS

That story weren't worth ten dollars.

Suddenly, he rounds on the barman, fire in his eyes. He points his pistol at the man's brow.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)

And I ain't no FAGGOT. You hear?

The barman begins to sweat.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)

You hear me, funny man?

The barman nods, desperately.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)

Good.

Amycus pushes the hammer forward on his gun. Brings it back to his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (4)

49

He turns sharply and lurches out of the door. The rest of the Canter gang brings up the rear, keeping their guns on the crowd. Jamie swings his pistols lazily.

JAMIE

Thanks for havin' us.

He touches the brim of his cap, and exits.

50 EXT. FERRY DOCK - DAWN

50

A couple of Ferries line the shore, a few more can be seen a ways up the river.

ANNA

Excuse me, sir! Excuse me.

She waves to catch the attention of a portly helmsman. This is JACOB (late 40s).

ANNA (CONT'D)

My name is Anna O'Henry and this here's my son Seth. The man at the end of my colt is Colm Canter. We're taking him to Copperton to bring him to justice for shooting my husband. How much to get the three of us and our two horses just up the river?

Her words are cut and dry. Jacob leans against the railing of his steamboat. He sucks on his pipe once more before dipping his head behind the bannister.

Anna waits patiently.

Jacob's head pops up once more over the edge of the boat.

JACOB

Alright, Judy's fine with it. It'll be two dollars.

ANNA

Thank you.

She grabs the reins of the horse and nods to Seth. As they walk up the plank to the ferry, Jacob sticks out his hand to shake. Anna does.

JACOB

I'm sorry to hear about your husband.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

That's kind of you. And it's kind
of Judy as well.

JACOB

She's my better half. Got a big
heart.

Anna climbs into the steamboat. She keeps Colm at a distance.
Seth nearly trips over something small. He looks down and
hears a soft meow. It's a small, grey, tabby cat.

JACOB (CONT'D)

She likes you already.

COLM

Let me guess - Judy?

JACOB

The one and only woman of my heart.

The steamboat pushes off shore. The horses snort lightly on
board. Behind it, the sun rises.

It's a two-story ferry, with an upper and lower deck. From
the upper story, A TALL FIGURE WEARING A BLUE BOWLER HAT
looks down at them.

Jacob takes Anna's horses from her even though she insists on
tying them to the onboard post herself.

JACOB

Shouldn't take us more than two
hours to get upstream.

He looks to the sky.

JACOB (CONT'D)

With this weather though, you never
know.

It's a clear, blue day.

SETH

Looks like smooth sailing to me.

Jacob points to Judy, who is pawing her face.

JACOB

Just take a look at that.

51 CONTINUED:

51

In the corner of the boat is a small, brown-skinned boy, likely Native American. He can't be more than 10. He pours Judy a small bowl of milk.

The boy looks at Seth and Seth looks at him. This may be the first child Seth has met outside of church.

The cat runs around the boy's feet, licking its paws and rubbing them over its face. Jacob nods.

JACOB (CONT'D)

That settles it.

ANNA

Settles what?

JACOB

There's a storm coming.

ANNA

Did the cat say that? I missed it.

JACOB

Surest way to tell if there's a storm coming. If a cat licks its paws and rubs its face.

ANNA

Ah.

52 EXT. FERRY DECK - DAY

52

Colm leans against the railing of the ferry, admiring the view. Anna, not too far off, watches him closely. Her head nods sleepily. Seth stands beside her, looking at the water.

ANNA

(To Seth)

You ever been fishing?

COLM

Used to go coon-hunting and fishing with my brothers every summer.

She ignores him. As usual.

SETH

Was supposed to go this summer.

TIMOTHY (O.S)

If you go past the bend a few miles up there's a patch where you could swear the water is made of salmon.

(CONTINUED)

The man in the blue bowler hat walks towards them. TIMOTHY (50s) takes himself and his job very seriously.

ANNA

I'll keep that in mind.

Anna reaches out to shake his hand, he doesn't take it. He just nods at it once.

TIMOTHY

Captain Timothy O'Leary, Ma'am. At your service.

ANNA

Anna.

We get a better look at Timothy now. He's a bigger man. You would not be surprised to hear he fought a war or two in his lifetime.

TIMOTHY

Looks like you're going to fall asleep standing right here, Anna.

Anna grudgingly admits it.

ANNA

Well, it's been quite the day and the sky is still pink. I'm already bone-weary.

TIMOTHY

Outlaw-wrangling isn't really a lady's job.

Colm smirks. He can see this rubs Anna the wrong way.

ANNA

I'm sure even the best of men would find themselves tasked.

Timothy nods toward the lower deck of the boat.

TIMOTHY

There's a few benches down there if you and your son want to catch some shut-eye. I can watch him from up here. I don't mind walking him to the Copperton Sheriff myself when we dock.

It's a good offer. Anna appears tempted, but uncertain.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Mean to take him there myself.

TIMOTHY

Wouldn't never stop you from coming to see the job's done. But you can rest your hand now. This man won't bother you no more now I'm around.

ANNA

(Ironically)

Sure you'd be able to handle it?

Her sarcasm translates poorly. Timothy pushes aside his jacket and puts a hand on the Remington on his hip. Colm eyes it coolly.

TIMOTHY

Been shooting all my life. Fought in the war.

COLM

For the north or the south?

TIMOTHY

North. Illinois.

(To Anna)

But you'd be surprised what little work there is for a veteran once you've fought for your country.

He taps his foot. It's a fake. Timothy has a bit of a limp.

Anna's demeanor changes. She's stiffer now.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

But don't you worry your pretty little head. If there's two things I hate, its outlaws and deserters. Get some sleep.

Timothy pulls out a pair of handcuffs, they're a bit older, but they still do the trick. He cuffs himself to Colm and then uses a knife from his belt to cut the excess rope free.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

He's going nowhere, I assure you.

Anna looks at the two men. Decides to take the favor.

ANNA

Thank you kindly.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (3)

52

She means it. Anna puts a hand on Seth's back and leads him away with her. Colm calls after her.

COLM

Take care, Ms. O'Henry.

Seth throws Colm a look over his shoulder.

53 INT. LOWER DECK CABINS - DAY

53

Anna takes a seat next to the window, resting her head on the pane, and watches the river go by. The exhaustion of the past few hours is finally catching up to her.

For the first time in a long time she sets the pistol she took from Colm next to her. She smooths down her skirt. An odd act of etiquette amidst all this.

Seth sits on the bench in front of her, watching the river float by. Anna wants nothing more than to let sleep take over her. But this is the first moment she's really had alone with Seth since the whole ordeal started.

Her voice is weary.

ANNA

You could have really hurt yourself.

SETH

Huh?

ANNA

Back at the barn, when you were pointing the gun at him. It misfired. You could've taken your whole hand off.

SETH

Oh.

Anna reaches for Colm's gun.

ANNA

Here. Stand up.

She proffers the gun. Seth takes it. Anna adjusts his grip on the handle.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Firm grip. That's it.

54 INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

54

Timothy is back in the captain's room with Colm and the small Native American boy. Colm watches the child scoop up Judy and cradle her.

COLM
(To the boy)
How long have you been on the boat?

Timothy looks up and then looks back at the map on the small table next to them.

TIMOTHY
I wouldn't bother.

He marks something with a small pencil.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
He don't speak a word of English.

Colm stares at the boy.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
Got him during the Apache raid.

COLM
He's Cheyenne.

TIMOTHY
Same thing. When the government needed to get the Injuns off the land, they paid a few hands to chase 'em out. We cleaned away so many of the bastards, what's even the difference? Less feathers?

The boy is looking at Colm, eyes wide. Colm glances down to see what has caught his eye - it's the trinket around his neck. A coffin-nail twisted into a pendent.

Colm slips it off and over his head, shooting an uncaring glance at Timothy, who is nose deep in his map. Colm holds out the pendant.

The boy timidly steps forward and takes the pendant from Colm. He quickly retreats back to his corner to admire it with Judy.

TIMOTHY (O.S) (CONT'D)
Don't expect that back.

Colm turns to meet Timothy's gaze.

(CONTINUED)

COLM

Don't need it back.

Colm tugs lightly at the handcuffs, more as an after-thought than anything else. He's calm - calculating. There's something lupine about the way he carries himself in these moments.

Colm looks down at the map on the table next to the boat. There's A TRACING COMPASS right at the edge.

55 INT. LOWER DECK CABINS - DAY

55

Seth leans against the cabin wall, wide awake. The gun sits on his lap. He holds it tightly. Anna's eyes are closed but she shifts in her seat.

SETH

Can't sleep?

ANNA

My mind's just having trouble finding peace.

She waves it off with a hand.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It'll come soon enough.

SETH

I can tell you a story.

Anna laughs softly.

ANNA

And what stories do you know?

SETH

When I was little, my ma used to read stories till I could read them on my own. Stories about Jesse James and other gunslingers. She'd tell me them even if it was after my bedtime and even do all the voices.

Anna's eye cracks open just a little. This is the first time Seth has talked about his mother in a very long time.

ANNA

That sounds wonderful.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

She closes her eyes to listen. Opens them once more. She searches around in the waistband of her skirt, pulls out a handkerchief. Reaches forward to wipe a bit of dirt off Seth's face.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Tell me.

56 INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN - DAY

56

Timothy continues to chart their journey in careful notes on a map. He tugs Colm around the room with him. For the most part Colm follows obligingly, but his eyes are focused on Timothy's limping wooden leg.

COLM

You look a little off balance there.

TIMOTHY

That's from Sandcreek, too.

Colm doesn't react.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

You remember that one?

Pause.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

We marched about 260 miles. The snow left icicles in our lungs. It gave us the advantage though. They didn't see us coming. Made easy work. Got this while going up against some of their warriors in one of their lodges.

COLM

I heard. Killed women and children too, didn't you? That's mighty Christian of you.

TIMOTHY

They scalped nineteen men.

COLM

(flatly)
Oh, well in THAT case...

TIMOTHY

That's where we found him.

(CONTINUED)

Timothy gestures to the boy.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

We give him a home. Taught him to
make an honest living.

The tracing compass is no longer on the desk. Colm handles it
in the sleeve of his free arm.

COLM

Isn't that just sweet?

The boy nuzzles Judy.

TIMOTHY

Can't say it's done much good,
though. Been with us for five
fucking years and he still don't
speak a word of English. Guess
savage goes clear to the bone.

Colm suddenly yanks at the cuffs, pulling the man close. He
cracks Timothy in the nose with a headbutt. But Timothy is
not Anna. Blood streaming from his nose, the man swings a
broad fist at Colm's head.

COLM throws himself sideways, tries to knock out Timothy.
Timothy's hand finds his gun, but he's not quick enough.

Colm barges into the man once more, throwing off the aim of
the gun. There's a stray shot, and the gun clatters to the
floor.

Anna sits up at the sound of the gunshot. She grabs Seth.

ANNA

We have to get to our packs.

The young boy in the corner lets out a small yell and runs
out of the room.

COLM

Fuck.

Colm has no time to pursue. The gun lies out of reach on the
floor. Timothy is on him again, red-faced and fiery. The
captain reaches for his knife. The handcuffs hinder movement,
making for a close range fight.

TIMOTHY

I ain't that little lady, son.

The two crash into a table as they claw at each other.

The outlaw swings the body of the captain in front of him. He pulls the man's arm back, hears it snap at an unnatural angle. Timothy roars in pain.

Colm brings the point of the compass up like a dagger, stabbing it into Timothy's throat.

Timothy drops his knife. His hand jumps up to his neck as he chokes on his own blood.

Colm breathes hard, gathering his senses. He leans down to swipe up the knife. Timothy gurgles horribly.

COLM

At least SHE knows well enough to
keep her distance.

Colm pats Timothy down for the keys to the handcuffs. They are nowhere to be found. With a huff of frustration, Colm SLITS Timothy's throat.

59 INT. LOWER DECK CABIN - DAY

59

Anna pushes Seth behind her. She hurries to grab the peacemaker. There's only one entrance to this room.

60 INT. FERRY STAIRCASE - DAY

60

Colm makes his way down the staircase. He holds the heavy corpse of Timothy in front of him as a shield.

Jacob, hearing the comotion, runs up the stairs with a rifle. Timothy's body keeps him from gaining a clean shot at Colm. He fires away, wasting two bullets before Colm is on him.

The knife comes down on Jacob. Once, twice. As blood spurts from Jacob, Colm kicks him down the stairs. Jacob falls and lets out a dying cry. Colm drags Timothy past him unceremoniously. He leans down only for a moment to check his body for the keys. Nothing

COLM

Goddamn all of you.

There's a soft jingle of a keyring. Sure enough, at the other end of the deck is the fear-stricken Cheyenne boy. In his fist, the keys to the cuffs.

(CONTINUED)

Colm stares him down and for a moment, it looks like the little boy is going to hand them over.

The boy throws them over deck.

BOY

No.

Colm's eyes narrow.

Anna positions herself in front of the doorway, waiting for Colm. She holds the gun ready.

Colm steps into the doorway, dragging the body of Timothy behind him.

He leans against the frame for a moment to catch his breath. He grins at the look Anna gives to the lifeless body chained to him.

ANNA

Stay right there.

COLM

I'm going to need my gun back.

Slowly, he begins to stalk forward. He drags the weight of the dead man behind him.

COLM (CONT'D)

Gives a whole new meaning to dead weight, don't it?

ANNA

I WILL shoot you.

COLM

Oh, I know you will. But Winona there only has one bullet left in her.

In her exhaustion, Anna didn't even think to look. It's too late to check now.

She retreats. He advances.

Colm is nearly close enough to be a sure shot. He drags Timothy back up in front of him and closes the distance between them. He's close enough for her to see the sweat on his brow and the cruelty in his eyes.

61 CONTINUED:

61

Anna keeps herself in front of Seth. Colm couldn't care less. He's enjoying scaring her.

Colm's knife is in his handcuffed hand. The free one darts forward and snatches the Colt from her fingers.

He fires at the handcuffs. It blows a bit of Timothy's hand off with it. He's free.

He grins up at Anna and before tucking the Colt into his holster. He switches the knife to his dominant hand. Anna is weaponless. Colm gets right in her face.

COLM (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Mrs. O'Henry.

He turns and hurries out of the small cabin and onto--

62 EXT. FERRY MAIN DECK - DAY

62

The horses are spooked. Colm makes a beeline for the pack on Jack's old horse. His loot from the train robbery. He takes it for himself, then looks around for a means of escape. A small dinghy hangs suspended near the deck's starboard railing. Colm looks over the edge of the ferry to judge the distance.

WHAM!

Anna charges headlong into Colm. The two of them fall right over the railings and straight into the river.

63 EXT. RIVER - DAY

63

Cold, rushing water. Anna breaks the surface of the current, gasping for air. A few feet away Colm does the same. He sputters through the water, furious.

COLM
You crazy?!

In the fall, Colm has lost hold of his pack. He dives back under the surface to try and retrieve it. Anna refuses to let him get away. She dives in after him.

64 EXT. FERRY DECK - DAY

64

Seth stands alone on deck. He dashes to the railing's edge and leans over. Ann and Colm are already moving far from the boat in the current.

SETH
Anna!

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

She can't hear him.

He grabs the packs with the guns and climbs into the rickety rowboat. He tugs at the ropes, trying to loosen them. They are taught. He tugs HARDER and they give. The dingy drops roughly into the water. Seth is nearly tossed into the raging river.

65 EXT. RIVER - DAY

65

Underwater, Colm tries to shake Anna off of him. He kicks wildly. She holds tight, clinging to his back.

The outlaw begins to lose precious air. Breaking the surface of the water, he has no choice but to swim to shore with Anna weighing him down.

66 EXT. RIVER SHORE - DAY

66

The two drag themselves onto the rocks. Anna doesn't waste a moment. She takes Colm's gun from his exhausted hand and clocks him over the head. Colm falls unconscious.

Anna collapses next to him. She coughs up green river water. Just off shore, Seth paddles the dingy towards them.

In the distance, the ferry floats on without a captain.

67 EXT. RIVER SHORE - LATER

67

With a fierce hacking sound, Colm chokes up water and comes to.

Anna sits on a boulder with Seth, dripping wet and holding a gun at the ready. Seth carries the second gun.

COLM

You really oughta just shoot me.
This would be a whole lot easier.

ANNA

Good to see you alive and kicking,
Canter.

SETH

How much further to Copperton?

ANNA

We're a little off the trail.

COLM

"A little."

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

We'll see if we can set up camp in the field over there. We should be able to make it on foot.

On foot. Their horses are still on the boat.

COLM

You want to fall asleep right in the middle of Cheyenne territory? Be my guest.

ANNA

Well, we would take the rowboat, but you'll excuse me if I decline to sit in a cramped wooden tub with you and chance it on the open water. Besides, ain't no Cheyenne left on this land.

COLM

Sure, they all left their homes without no fuss at all. We should get back to the main trail while we can.

ANNA

So your men can catch up to us? I don't think so.

COLM

At least my men would kill you quick.

ANNA

We're going this way.

68 EXT. RIVER SHORE - LATER

68

The three walk along the river towards a plain of flat grass land.

69 EXT. GRASSLAND - DAY

69

They've stopped by the edge of a stream. One of the more frequent breaks they take now that they are on foot. Boots are caked with mud. Shirts are sweaty. Anna slowly wades through the water, not caring much for her skirt, but rolling up her sleeves to avoid getting them wet.

Seth and Colm stand at the shore with their packs. Seth is on watch.

(CONTINUED)

SETH

Ma -

ANNA

One moment, Seth -

SETH

Look.

His tone catches her ear. Anna looks up to Seth and then follows his gaze. Across the stream sits a figure on horseback. A young Cheyenne man, perhaps fifteen or sixteen. He rides a grey horse - reined, but unsaddled. He holds the reins to another horse, this one jet-black. For a moment, the three stare at him. He stares back. The young man looks like he's about to bolt.

All of a sudden, Colm shouts to him in a foreign language. The stranger appears surprised, as do Anna and Seth. Colm's tone is amicable - good-natured, even.

SETH (CONT'D)

You speak Indian?

The stranger is cautious, but Colm continues to speak to him. The man slowly wades towards them through the water. He finally replies to Colm in his tongue, speaking in a low, level voice.

COLM

Oh, great.

ANNA

What's he saying?

COLM

That he knows this land back and front. That he don't know us.

ANNA

Maybe he can help?

Colm continues to smile fixedly.

COLM

We have to shoot him.

SETH

What?

ANNA

No.

(CONTINUED)

COLM

You let him go now, he'll go back
and bring others. Shoot him.

ANNA

You know I won't do that.

The Cheyenne man sits about half way across the stream.

COLM

He's not going to let us go easy.

ANNA

I won't shoot him.

COLM

Either he dies, or the three of us
do.

GUNSHOT. Seth has fired, but his aim hasn't gotten much
better. He hits the man in the knee. The Native American man
goes down into the water, with a cry of pain.

The gunshot spooks the horses. They buck wildly.

ANNA

Seth! The horses!

Colm trudges through the water to the fallen body.

Anna's right there after him. The Cheyenne man is struggling
to stand. Red ribbons of blood float in the river, oozing
from the bullet hole in his knee.

Anna and Seth pull the man to shore together. It's work. Colm
throws the man to the ground and he looks up at them with a
betrayed expression.

COLM

(To Anna)

You going to drag both of us across
Colorado?

Anna takes her rifle and knocks out the Cheyenne man.

ANNA

If I have to. At least till we're
off his land.

She wraps the Cheyenne's wound in a strip of his own
clothing. It's not much, but the best they can do right now.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (3)

69

She looks to the prairie in front of them. Seth's finally managed to guide the horses to shore.

ANNA (CONT'D)

We're almost there.

70 EXT. RIVER DOCK - DAY

70

The little Cheyenne boy from earlier sits on top of a whisky barrel, his legs dangling above the ground. On his head he wears Timothy's navy blue bowler hat, the brim still sticky with blood. He fidgets with a small, metallic object, turning it over and over in his hands. Colm's pendant. A shadow falls over his head. The boy looks up to see four men looming large over him.

AMYCUS

That ain't yours.

The boy's face remains still. Jamie slaps Amycus jovially on the shoulder.

JAMIE

Hey now, Mick! Ain't no reason to scare the kid!

Jamie crouches down, all smiles. A pistol dangles from his gun-hand. He meets the boy's eye-line.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Whatchu got there, boy?

The boy say nothing. Jamie points at the necklace.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Mind if I see?

Slowly, the boy holds up the pendant.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Well, that's real nice. Someone give you that?

The boy says nothing.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

The man who gave you that, you see which way he went?

The boy just stares.

AMYCUS

Kid's a freakin' dunce.

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE

Hmm. No English, I reckon.

Jamie pats his thighs and rises again.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That it, kid? You don't speak white?

Nothing.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Right.

Jamie holds his hand up level with his head, palm towards the ground. He speaks slowly.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

The MAN...

He points at the necklace.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That gave you THAT...

He waves his finger around like a dowsing rod.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Which way'd he GO?

The boy looks at Jamie's waving hand. Looks back. Nothing.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(still smiling)

Come on, kid. Don't make me lose my patience, now.

There is a tense silence. Jamie cocks his ear.

Slowly, the boy raises a finger and points due East, away from the river.

Jamie claps his hands in satisfaction, breaking the quiet.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

See? Now, I knew you had it in ya!
Come on boys, you heard the kid.
Let's go.

ELI

Guess we know where he's headed.
We'll meet him there.

(CONTINUED)

AMYCUS

Hey. Who's in charge here?

JAMIE

Fine question, brother mine, fine question.

Jamie winks at him. As they turn to leave, the Cheyenne boy holds up the necklace to Jamie.

Jamie crouches down, and closes the boy's fist over the pendant.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Ah, no, son. You go ahead and keep that. Souvenir.

He stands and begins to walk away with Eli and Amycus. The boy looks at the pendant in his hand and inhales deeply.

BANG.

The child's blood explodes out the side of his hat. His body tumbles limply off the barrel and sprawls on the ground.

Gun still smoking, Noah leans down and scrapes the pendant out of the dirt with his large, leathery hand.

The rest of the gang looks back at him. Not startled, but certainly miffed. Noah holds up the pendant.

NOAH

Colm's.

He pockets the bauble and lopes over to join the rest of his posse. The four men stride away.

Anna, Seth and Colm sit in their makeshift camp in the grass. Anna reorganizes the packs. Seth lies on his side in the dirt. Colm leans idly against a large boulder, staring at the night sky. The storm continues to chase them. The last embers of a small campfire are dying down. In the glow of the ash, the Cheyenne scout lies bound and unconscious. Nearby, his two horses stand.

COLM

You should put out the fire.

Anna appears not to hear him.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

(To Seth)

Get some sleep, son. Might be
leaving sooner than sunrise, so
every second of shut-eye counts.

Seth looks over his shoulder at her, blank-faced. Says
nothing. Anna busies herself re-packing.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(Not looking at him)

I love you, Seth.

Seth's face remains impassive.

SETH

Really?

ANNA

What?

SETH

Do you love me?

Anna takes the lid off a can. Gives it a sniff.

ANNA

Don't say things I don't mean to.

Anna tosses the contents of the can into the grass.

SETH

You love my pa, too?

ANNA

(flatly)

With all my heart.

Seth watches her clean the barrel of Colm's gun. Reload it.
Test the sight.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Loved the both of you. Don't you
doubt that.

Colm casts a sideways glance at the woman. He fails to
suppress a chuckle. Seth watches her doubtfully. He stands
up.

SETH

Gonna go check on the horses.

(CONTINUED)

He walks beyond the penumbra of fire's glow. The grass rustles underfoot. Colm waits till Seth is out of earshot.

COLM

So, did you love him?

Anna ignores him.

COLM (CONT'D)

Look, lady, you don't need to tell me. Lots of fine-lookin' women fix up with some dope just for a roof and a full purse. He keep you in nice dresses? Keep you fed?

Anna continues to give him nothing.

COLM (CONT'D)

I never got a good look at the fella. But he seemed a dull sort. Real bland. You like 'em simple like that?

Quiet.

COLM (CONT'D)

Or maybe he weren't. Maybe you likes your men dangerous. Exciting. Lawmen's usually gotta temper, my experience. He ever lay hands on you? Get rough? Is that what you like?

Anna stares daggers at him.

COLM (CONT'D)

You doin' this cause you loved that man and his boy? Or just 'cause no one thinks you can?

ANNA

Why do you do the things YOU do?

COLM

I'm a Canter.

ANNA

My husband--

COLM

(sharply)

Shut up.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

I will have my say, Mr Canter.
Don't you dare try and--

COLM

(forcefully)

Fuck's sake, woman - we are being
followed.

That stops her dead. She pauses. Looks. Sure enough, there is
a small camp fire in the distance.

The RUSTLE of grass. Anna immediately turns her gun on it.
It's just SETH.

SETH

(whispering)

Injuns?

ANNA

They can't approach us without us
seeing them. All this grass and
flat land, we'll catch them a mile
away.

COLM

It's not the Cheyenne. Not the
Arapaho, neither.

SETH

How do you know?

COLM

They wouldn't be dumb enough to
light a campfire.

ANNA

We'll keep an eye on them.

Suddenly, there's the whiz of an arrow from behind them. It
catches Seth in the arm. He cries out.

A stream of both bullets and arrows breaks out around them.
Blindly shooting, Anna moves for Seth. Colm dives for the
fire, smothering it with dirt.

There's another round of furious fire. The light of the moon
offers little visibility.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(To Seth)

Are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

Seth nods. He's been hit in the biceps. An arrow is lodged in deep.

Open fire continues to fly from the tall grass. It's impossible to see where it's coming from.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(To Colm)

I thought you said it weren't
Indians?

COLM

Fine, it ain't JUST Indians. Gimme
the pistol.

He holds out his bound palms for the gun. Anna stares at him disbelievingly.

COLM (CONT'D)

Woman, there ain't time to argue.
Your boy's shot. Give me a GUN.

Around them, the sound of gunfire dies down. A deathly quiet presses in. Gentle rustling in the grass gets louder.

Anna throws a glance at the Seth's wound. She flicks open the barrel of the revolver and drops a number of bullets from the chamber. She snaps it shut.

ANNA

Three bullets, that's all you get.

With one gun still on Colm, Anna hands the revolver over.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Think hard on where you wanna put
them.

Colm meets her gaze. He takes the gun and dashes into the grass behind them.

Anna sits quietly with Seth, gun raised and ears peeled for approaching enemies. She tries to stifle her breaths, suddenly aware of how loud they are.

Around them, the sound of movement grows more distinct. They hunker down in the shadows. Suddenly--

BANG.

A muzzle flash briefly lights the grasses. There is a shout, and the sound of a struggle. The grizzly noise of someone being gutted. Another voice rings out, then--

(CONTINUED)

Silence.

Anna and Seth wait, alert. Strangling their fear. The grasses start to move near to them. Rustling like a nest of snakes.

A figure steps into the clearing. A Cheyenne warrior, bare-chested and steely-eyed. He sees them, crouched on the ground. Anna lifts her weapon. The man steps forward, raising a heavy blade above his shoulder-

BANG.

The Cheyenne's throat sprays blood over Anna and her son. He chokes for a moment, then drops to his knees. Slumps over, dead.

As the warrior falls, we see Colm standing behind him, gun still smoking. His body is painted in blood and dirt. The rope around his wrists is cut. His left hand clutches a curved knife. He steps over the body.

Anna holds out her hand to take the gun. Colm pauses. He looks at the pistol in his hand.

COLM

One left.

He turns to Anna. Moving to cover Seth, she raises her gun-

BANG.

Colm Shoots their unconscious Cheyenne hostage in the head. He whips back to Anna, gun level. He's too fast a draw. Colm pulls the trigger idly.

CLICK.

He grins wolfishly and hands the empty gun back to her.

73 The bubbling clouds finally break. A storm hits, and like a prairie storm it is sudden and thunderous. The rain is harsh and falls in heavy sheets. A person wouldn't be able to see their hand in front of their face.

Anna and Seth heave their hastily-packed bags. The water soaks the trio to the bone. The wind threatens to knock them off their feet. Still, they battle onward.

Anna struggles to be heard over the raging storm.

ANNA
(shouting)
If we can just make it to the tree
line -

Colm pushes past her, takes a sharp turn.

COLM
Follow me.

She can't hear him. Neither can Seth. The wind drowns out his words. In this weather, they have no choice but to follow.

The trio steps into the cluster of trees. It's better, but not by much. Anna tries to wipe the water out of her eyes. She holds her pack and the guns close.

ANNA
Where are we going?
(harshly)
Canter.

Through the darkness, a small cabin appears, no bigger than one room.

The windows are shaded. Colm kicks at the door - once, twice. It gives on the third try.

The three tumble inside. Anna pulls the horses under the shelter of the porch overhang. It's the best she can do.

They've settled down somewhat. Anna examines her gun for water damage.

ANNA
The town is just past this ridge.
We'll have to wait till the rain
stops.

SETH
Ma -

His voice is weak. Anna gestures for her son to come closer.

SETH (CONT'D)
They got me.

ANNA
(to Colm)
You stay there.
(to Seth)
Sit still, darling.

She reaches forward to take a closer look at it.

ANNA (CONT'D)
There's a doctor in Copperton. I'm
going to need you to hold on till
the rain dies down a bit.

She rummages through what little they have. There's not much.

COLM
Sometimes you just have to accept
that you're stuck soaking wet in
the middle of the god-damned
forest.

Anna takes one more look at the arrow. With one hand bracing
the shaft, she snaps off the tail, leaving the head lodged.
Seth winces in pain.

ANNA
Well, it ain't worse'n a bullet.
Hold still.

She grips the short spine of the arrow and prepares to pull
it free.

COLM (O.S.)
Wouldn't do that.

ANNA
Not the first time I've done this,
Mr. Canter.

COLM
Oh, I don't doubt it. But you're
still best off waiting to town.
Cheyenne use serrated arrow-heads.
Yank that thing wrong, you're
liable to nick something important.
Your boy bleeds to death right here
in this shitty cabin and ain't a
thing either of us can do to stop
it.

Seth looks alarmed. Anna hesitates. Then she reaches for a
hip flask and douses Seth's arm in spirits.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

He grits his teeth at the burn. Anna pulls the scarf from around her neck and wraps it tightly above the wound.

ANNA

Keep that held tight. Your arm'll go numb, but that's better'n the alternative.

She fashions him a crude sling from her shawl. All they can do now is wait.

COLM

Might have to say good-bye to that arm, boy. 'Less we can find a barber-surgeon hiding up'n one a these trees.

SETH

How did you know how to talk to that man?

Colm pauses. Then--

COLM

My grandmother would speak to me in Cheyenne.

Seth takes this in.

ANNA

Seth, lean back for me.
(To Colm)
You - you don't move.

The rain continues to fall.

76 INT. CABIN - MORNING

76

Seth sleeps in a wooden chair. Anna sits down next to the small fire in the hearth.

Colm notices she's still fingering the Colt.

COLM

You're doing an awful lot, keeping me alive just to see me hang.

ANNA

I see things through, Mr. Canter.

COLM

That right?

(CONTINUED)

ANNA
That's right.

COLM
'Tween your husband and that
scrappy boy of yours, I guess there
ain't no one in your family knows
when to quit.

Anna stokes the fire silently.

COLM (CONT'D)
Or am I wrong?

ANNA
My daddy sure did.

She stares into the flames.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Found himself hip-deep in a war he
didn't have the stomach for, and
turned for the hills. Never came
back. Momma took down the family
bible and jus' crossed his name
out, like he never been.

She looks at Colm, daring him to respond. He doesn't.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Didn't matter WHAT she did to
denounce him, though. Soured the
whole lot of us. Round our way, the
name 'Vanderbilt' meant as good as
'coward'.

Colm finally speaks.

COLM
Vanderbilt? Like the railroad?

ANNA
LIKE the railroad baron, yeah. No
relation. Sometimes got mistook
that way - never corrected anyone
that did. It was nice to be thought
of as respectable for once. Used to
imagine I was part of the American
aristocracy, 'stead of just the
child of a deserter.

COLM
So you moved out here.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Sewed enough bullet-holes for a lifetime. Most in the back, the legs. Not enough men came home. And of them that did, not enough came back whole.

She shifts. Points her gun at him.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Rain's cleared up.

The storm has finally died down, leaving the earth cold and wet. Anna steps out onto the porch to check the horses.

She weighs a saddle bag in her hand, as if calculating the weight. The wild grey horse gives a pained whinnie. She steps closer to soothe it. It bridles, hobbling off one raised foreleg. Blood stains the pale hair of its flank. It has taken a bullet in the leg during the skirmish.

Anna gazes at it stoically, stroking its neck. She steps back inside.

Anna enters silently. Colm watches her hawkishly. Seth is stirring, waking slowly.

COLM

That horse is going nowhere.

ANNA

We just need to make it around the hill.

She doesn't seem convinced. Anna rubs her face with a tired hand. Starts gathering their things.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Come on, Seth. We gotta get moving.

SETH

What's gonna happen to pa?

Stunned, Anna stops packing. There is a deep pause.

ANNA

What do you mean?

SETH

He went into the ravine. What's gonna happen to him?

COLM

Coyotes'll have 'im, my best guess.

ANNA

Shut up.

COLM

Lotta good eatin' on a man his size. Nature ain't gonna let that go to waste.

ANNA

I said SHUT UP, dammit.

She strides angrily over to Colm and kicks him off his chair. He falls heavily to the ground, unable to catch himself. She puts a foot on his head and presses the gun to his temple.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Say one more thing. Say one more god-damned thing and I swear I will shoot you right here, Colm Canter. Right here in this piece-of-shit cabin in the middle of god-damn nowhere, and it'll be RATS that eat you.

Colm smiles up at her through bloody teeth. Seth stares at his step-mother, shocked by her fury. This is an unfamiliar creature to him.

COLM

Sure you will.

Anna releases her hold on Colm, but keeps the gun trained on him.

ANNA

Get up.

With his hands tied behind his back, it takes him some time. Anna watches him struggle, without helping. Finally he stands upright, bruised but proud.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Outside.

She gestures with the gun. Colm follows her command, crossing the room with a languid, loping stride. He steps outside.

(CONTINUED)

SETH

Anna -- Ma--

ANNA

You stay put now, Seth.

She steps after Colm, gun still raised.

Colm stands a few feet from the doorway, boots caked in fresh mud. Roped hands hanging down. Anna steps out after him, skirts dragging through soil and water.

The wounded horses whinnies beside them. Colm watches the barrel of Anna's gun, intently.

ANNA

Turn around.

He stares her down.

COLM

This it, then?

ANNA

Turn around. NOW.

Slowly, he rotates on the spot. Faces away from her towards the trees. He hears the silky sound of a knife being drawn.

COLM

Don't wanna waste the bullets, huh?
Smart lady.

Colm watches a hawk, perched high up in the branches. He takes a solemn breath, but does not close his eyes.

Anna shoves Colm roughly to his knees. He grunts in subdued pain as his arms are pulled up high behind his back--

SLICE

Colm topples forward, barely catching himself with his outstretched hands. He leaps to his feet, arms freed, snarling through a mask of thick, black mud.

Anna stares at him impassively, pistol cocked and held at the hip. Colm glares at her impotently, fighting to calm his breath, brow furrowed in confusion.

ANNA

Need you to bury the body.

(CONTINUED)

COLM
(Furiously)
BODY? Woman, WHAT body? We LOST the
damn--

BANG.

Colm flinches at the sound. First time ever. The wounded horse collapses at Anna's feet, bleeding steadily from the bullet-hole in its head. Anna whips the gun back into Colm's face.

ANNA
Need you to bury the body, boy.

Colm stands in a shallow grave, flinging dirt with a rusty shovel. A mix of heavy sweat and grime smears his brow. He grunts with the effort.

The corpse of the grey horse lies beside the hole. Nearby, Anna stands with Seth close behind, gun still firmly pointed at Colm. Right arm in a sling, Seth holds the second pistol in his good hand.

COLM
Could be a hundred Cheyenne
warriors heading toward us right
now, woman. You wanna stop and have
a nice funeral for damn pony.

ANNA
Keep digging.
(To Seth)
Don't move your arm around so much,
you're going to make it worse. You
sure you can hold that gun
straight?

Seth nods quickly. Anna inclines her chin in acknowledgement. Behind them, Colm continues to scrape at the earth.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(Softly)
You wanna say some words for your
dad while we're here?

SETH
Do you?

Anna looks into the empty grave. She clears her throat.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

Jack -- your father -- was a good man. When I met him I thought he was simple. But he had more... edges than I expected. He weren't perfect, but he tried to be good. Sometimes that's harder...

She trails off.

ANNA (CONT'D)

And I loved him.

Anna nods as though assuring herself. A pause. Then--

SETH

Pa didn't like it when I took his things. One time, he caught me playing with his revolver outside. He musta beat me six kinds of stupid that day.

He toes the ground thoughtfully. Looks at the gun in his hand.

SETH (CONT'D)

I heard him crying afterward. Only time I ever heard him cry. I don't think he liked the idea of me doing the things he had to do.

Seth stops, short of anything else to say. Anna touches him on the shoulder. They share a moment.

SMACK.

Anna tumbles into the open grave, head ringing. COLM stands in her place, shovel raised. He shoves the horse carcass with his leg and the loose soil gives way beneath it.

Dazed, Anna raises her gun, but it drops from her hand as the corpse of her horse rolls down on top of her. She wheezes for breath, mouth full of grave-soil and choked under the weight of the dead animal.

Colm rounds on Seth. Trembling, the boy raises Colm's pistol in his left hand.

COLM

Ain't we done this before, boy?

BANG.

(CONTINUED)

Seth fires, but it's wild. The bullet grazes Colm's thigh. He pushes through the pain and shoulders the boy to the ground.

Winded, Seth raises the gun again--

BANG.

This time it shreds Colm's earlobe. The outlaw smacks the gun out of the boy's hand with a sweep of his shovel. He steps on Seth's chest and kneels down beside him to pick up the gun. Seth groans beneath his weight.

Colm picks the gun up lovingly, and lets the shovel fall to the ground. He pulls the hammer back slowly.

COLM (CONT'D)

(To Seth)

Mine.

He wrenches the boy up by the scruff of his neck, and turns the gun on his forehead.

COLM (CONT'D)

(Shouting to Anna)

Me and your boy's going for a little walk now, you hear? Don't be stupid and try to follow.

Anna spits out a mouthful of dirt, fighting for breath.

ANNA

SETH! SETH!

COLM

I hear so much as a nag's footstep behind me, I will blow his fucking brains out. Hear me on that.

Colm waves Seth toward the remaining horse with his gun-hand. Anna continues to shout, straining her lungs.

ANNA

SETH! SETH!

Her breaths get thinner. She begins to lose consciousness. Colm forces Seth up into the saddle, then mounts the horse behind him, gun in his back and one hand on the reins.

COLM

It's been real pretty, Ms. Vanderbilt.

(CONTINUED)

Colm spurs the horse into a canter and rides away. Anna can only listen as the hoof-beats get more distant. She writhes against the weight of the animal on top of her, suffocating slowly, soil flowing into every pocket of air. Entombing her.

Desperately, she fumbles for the knife at her hip. Her fingers close around the handle. She plunges it into the horse's side, tearing a rough gash along its stomach. Blood and steaming entrails flow out of the carcass. It spreads the weight, lightening her burden.

Anna pushes her arms through the earth and viscera, clawing for release. She pushes her head above, gasping for air. Her flailing arms fail to find purchase. She begins to drown.

A rough hand closes around hers. Anna pulls against it with all her might, heaving her way through mud and organs. She is dragged from the grave by strange arms. Anna wheezes. Her eyes roll back. The world goes dark.

Anna groans and cracks her eyes open. Her bleary eyes fall on a pair of dusty boots in front of her.

With some effort, she rolls over and looks up at the unfamiliar figure standing over her. She struggles to sit up.

JASPER

Easy now.

Anna stands up slowly, eyes hard . Tries to pull herself into a state of composure.

ANNA

How long was I out?

JASPER

Least as long as we been here. Was a mighty struggle getting that horse off'f ya. Matter of fact, if Edward hadn't spotted you down there, we mighta rode on by without even stopping.

ANNA

Edward?

JASPER

Yes Ma'am. My partner -

He jerks a thumb to the bearded man standing behind him. EDWARD AUGUST is examining the ground around them.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

JASPER (CONT'D)

- Edward. Best tracker around. Not much of a conversationalist, though.

Anna nods at him briskly.

ANNA

Pleasure.

Edward looks up from his work. Nods in return.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Who does that make you?

Jasper inclines his hat.

JASPER

Jasper Jones, Ma'am. At your service.

ANNA

At your own service, seems to me.

Jasper smiles innocently.

JASPER

Not sure I take your meaning, Ma'am.

ANNA

A-huh. Wanderin' around on the edge of Cheyenne land. Tracker in your pocket. Mouthful of gold teeth. You ain't just passing Samaritans.

JASPER

No?

ANNA

No. So what's the bounty on his head?

JASPER

Why madam, I can assure you that my associate and I are acting only out a sense of social responsibility! Not for something so base as fiscal reward.

(CONTINUED)

ANNA

That much, huh? Can I assume it was
your bullets what we was running
from last night?

Still smiling, Jasper holds up one hand.

JASPER

Upon my honor, Ma'am, we had no
idea that you and your boy were out
there with him.

ANNA

Ain't mentioned my son yet.

Jasper shrugs.

JASPER

Worth a try. So how well acquainted
are you with our good friend Colm
Canter?

ANNA

Didn't know him from Adam 'til a
couple days back. Been dragging the
sorry son of a bitch around at
gunpoint ever since.

JASPER

Just you?

ANNA

Me and my boy.

JASPER

Well, I'll be.

ANNA

You'll be what?

JASPER

Nothin'. Just -- We heard he was
travelling with a woman and child.
Figured you for hostages.

ANNA

Well, you were only half wrong. He
took my son.

She starts towards where her pack lies on the ground.

JASPER

Where you goin', Ma'am?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (3)

She slings the pack over one shoulder.

ANNA
After him.

JASPER
On foot?

She starts pacing away from him.

JASPER (CONT'D)
You even got a clue which way? You
know you can't make it on your own.

ANNA
I ain't heard that.

JASPER
Lady, stop.

She doesn't.

JASPER (CONT'D)
God dammit.

He quickly mounts his horse and trots after her. Circling in front, he blocks her path.

JASPER (CONT'D)
You're gonna die, lady. Miracle you
haven't already.

ANNA
You concerned for my well-being
now, Mr. Jones?

Jasper exhales in exasperation. Thinks.

JASPER
You know, we've been following
Canter for a while now. Heard his
gang got a spot near the mines just
north of here. If I know Colm,
he'll be heading there to regroup
with his brothers.

Anna holds his gaze.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Even if you could hoof it all the
way there on your ownsome, they'll
shoot you the second they see your
pretty little head on the horizon.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (4)

ANNA

They got my boy.

Jasper looks to Edward. Edward shrugs noncommittally.

JASPER

Gonna be no convincing you
otherwise, huh?

ANNA

'Fraid not.

JASPER

Alright, keep up.

Jasper takes her hand and helps her up onto his horse. They
ride double.

82 EXT. MINING SITE - DAY

82

Colm rides, the boy still in front of him. Seth winces with
each gallop, his wounded arm jerked by the horse's motion.They ride up against a giant, grey cliff-face, pock-marked
with exploded holes. On the horizon, Copperton is just
visible against the skyline.They draw up to a cabin nestled right against the boulders at
the foot of the cliff. The shutters are closed.Colm dismounts and walks to the cabin without looking back to
see if Seth follows. He KNOCKS.

83 INT. MINING CABIN - DAY

83

Eli and Jamie sit at an uneven table in the middle of the
room, a half-empty bottle of whisky and a dog-eared pile of
playing cards between them. Colm wears a nostalgic smile.
Seth stands beside him, trying to look unshaken.

ELI

Thought you'd finally found a path
to hell.

COLM

Not yet, Eli. It just you two?

Jamie's opens his mouth to say something. He notices Seth.

JAMIE

Who's this?

(CONTINUED)

COLM

Seth O'Henry. Good friend o' mine.

SETH

I ain't that.

(to Jamie)

Who are you?

JAMIE

Jamie Canter. The better Canter brother.

Colm lets out a short laugh. Eli merely tips his hat to Seth.

ELI

Others are just up the river,
watering the horses.

JAMIE

Water. Can't stand the stuff.

He takes a large swig of whisky from the bottle.

COLM

I'll go fetch 'em.

(To Seth)

Come on, boy.

SETH

I ain't goin' with you.

COLM

Don't want you causing no trouble.
'Sides, can't leave you here with
this degenerate.

Jamie smiles like a crocodile.

JAMIE

It's true.

Colm pulls up his ascot, exits. Jamie settles back into his chair, gives Seth a look. Hesitantly, Seth exits.

Anna rides, saddled behind Jasper. In the distance, the grey mountainside is visible. The mining facility comes into view. The shutters on the cabin are still closed.

The trio stops at the top of a nearby hill and watches the cabin from a distance.

(CONTINUED)

JASPER

Looks like we beat him here.

ANNA

How long you been chasing him?

JASPER

While now. Usually it's impossible
to get 'em on their own.

He indicates the single horse tied up outside.

JASPER (CONT'D)

Looks like we got lucky. Got one
'em right in there.

Edward clicks his tongue in disagreement.

JASPER (CONT'D)

'Scuse me, two of them.

He dismounts. Anna follows suit.

JASPER (CONT'D)

What do you have on you?

Anna unholsters the Remington and opens the barrel. Empty.
Edward steps up, takes it from her. Examines it. Hands her a
Schofield.

JASPER (CONT'D)

You think you can sneak up round
and wait by the back window?

Anna takes the Schofield, holsters the Remington.

ANNA

Yes.

EDWARD

Good luck. Don't die.

The first words he's said to her. She nods, gravely.

ANNA

Don't intend to.

Jasper approaches the front door, slowly.

(CONTINUED)

JASPER
(Calling out)
Anyone in there?

He holds his gun at his hip, ready to shoot.

JASPER (CONT'D)
Got lost. Just looking for a place
to stay the night.

A silhouette appears between the slats of the shutters.

JAMIE (O.S.)
(Friendly surprise)
Is that Jasper Jones?

There's a second of silence.

BANG.

A shot blows clean through the door. Jasper drops to the ground. He scrambles for cover behind an overturned minecart.

JAMIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(Playful)
You've always been a terrible liar,
Jasper Jones. Is that mute out
there with you?

JASPER
Got five of my men right up on the
hill. 'Nother three at your back
door.

Anna takes this as her signal. She fires a warning shot into the cabin.

ELI (O.S.)
Fuck.

JAMIE (O.S.)
Don't trust your math, Jasper
Jones!

The back door flies open. BANG. Anna barrels over just in time to avoid the gunfire. She lands behind a pile of refuse.

ELI
Nothing out here but a little
mouse.

(CONTINUED)

He cracks off another couple of shots in Anna's direction. They ricochet off the rubble around her, spraying dust. Anna crawls on hands and knees around the side of the cabin.

At the front of the cabin, the shots continue to fly at Jasper, piercing holes in his mine-cart. Suddenly they stop. Jasper cautiously peers around the cart. Nothing.

A window shutter opens. A lit stick of DYNAMITE spins through the air and lands in front of Jasper. Instinctively, he kicks over the cart to cover it and takes off in a sprint.

BOOM.

The cart is blown high into the air. Jasper, mid-stride, is thrown to the ground by the force of the explosion. At the side of the house, Anna flinches at the noise. The mine-cart lands with a loud clang, crumpled and shredded. Shots continue to fly from the cabin.

Anna proceeds around the cabin in a crouch. She very slowly raises herself up to a side window and peers through the slats. Inside she sees JAMIE, back to the room and shooting out the door at Jasper. She very slowly places the barrel of her gun between the shutter-slats and takes aim.

BANG.

Jamie falls with a grunt as the bullet catches him in the shoulder-blade. Jasper sprints into the room and holds him at gun-point.

JASPER

Don't move.

Anna exhales.

CLICK.

She turns to see Eli standing behind her, rifle pointed at her head.

ELI

What HE said, darlin'.

BANG.

Eli crumples as his right knee is blown out. His rifle fires. Anna cries out in sudden pain. She squeezes her left wrist, hard. EDWARD emerges behind Eli, gun still raised.

(CONTINUED)

EDWARD
(to Eli)
Drop it.

Gasping, Eli tosses his rifle. Anna raises her shaking hand. Blood gushes down her forearm. Most of her ring finger is gone, severed by Eli's stray bullet.

86 INT. CABIN - EVENING

86

Jamie and Eli kneel, handcuffed to a disused, cast-iron stove. Jasper guards them, his revolver held casually down at their faces.

Edward finishes winding a patterned silk handkerchief around the stump of Anna's finger. Blood immediately stains it.

ANNA
(To the two prisoners)
Where's my boy?

Jamie scoffs. Eli says nothing. Jasper sighs and smacks Jamie in the mouth with his gun. Jamie spits blood.

JAMIE
Careful now, Jones. Don't be losing
your temper.

JASPER
I ain't in the mood. Answer her.

JAMIE
Thought you were after the Canter
Gang, Mr. Jones. You collecting
kids now? Runnin' a Sunday school?

ELI
We ain't seen no boy, Jones. Ain't
seen Colm, neither. You kill him?

ANNA
You're a worse liar than your
friend.

JAMIE
Ooh, she got you pegged, sweet Eli!
You never could sell it good.
(To Anna)
So, you're the kid's ma'. That
right, precious?

ELI
Quiet, Jamie.

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE

Seth. That was his name, right?

ANNA

What did you do with him?

JAMIE

Colm took off with him. Said he knew someone who might wanna buy a boy for the right price. Kid's probably halfway down the river by now. Headin' to.. well, who knows?

ANNA

Liar.

JASPER

Where's the rest of you?

JAMIE

Beats me. Colm said we's supposed to split up til the heat's off. Could be anywhere by now.

ANNA

Bullshit.

Jamie's eyes narrow. His smile remains fixed.

JAMIE

You think you know my brother better? Who the fuck are you, sweetness?

ANNA

I'm a woman with a gun. Who the fuck are you?

Jamie's grin widens. He inclines his head in a mock bow.

JAMIE

Jamie Canter, Ma'am.

JASPER

Well, nice to see we're all getting acquainted.

Jasper pulls over a chair and sits down, gun raised.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2)

86

JASPER (CONT'D)

Guess we'll just sit here all nice
and cozy 'til your brother gets
back. Figure he won't keep us
waiting long.

87 EXT. HILLSIDE - EVENING

87

Colm, Amycus, Noah and Seth crest a hill overlooking the mine. The three men ride on horseback, Noah holding the reins of a second horse. Seth sits captive in front of Colm, as before.

Amycus makes to move toward the cabin, but Noah swats him in the chest, holding him back with his arm. Amycus, bridling with machismo, makes to say something. Noah silently points a large finger. Jabs at the air.

Colm's gaze follows this gesture to the knoll on the far side of the mining facility. Just barely visible are the heads of two horses, standing where Jasper and Edward left them.

88 EXT. CABIN

88

Colm, Amycus and Noah stand on the porch of the cabin, guns drawn. Noah holds his weapon to Seth's head.

Amycus knocks on the door thrice.

89 INT. CABIN

89

We crosscut between the cabin interior and exterior for the rest of the scene.

Jasper points his gun at Jamie. Ed sits next to Eli with his hunting knife raised.

Jasper cocks the gun.

ELI

We've got no room to offer.

AMYCUS (O.S.)

It's us.

JASPER

(whispering at Jamie)

You, keep your mouth shut.

(At Eli)

Tell them it's just the two of you.

Eli nods, carefully. Takes a deep breath.

(CONTINUED)

ELI

We've got Jasper Jones in here with
us and some bitch--

BANG. Jasper shoots Eli in the head. Jamie looks disdainfully
at the blood on his shirt.

AMYCUS

Christ.

COLM squares his gun.

JASPER (O.S.)

That was your friend Eli, Colm. We
still got Jamie, though.

COLM

And why's that matter?

Amycus looks at Colm. There is a thoughtful pause from the
inside of the cabin.

JASPER (O.S.)

...Because I'll shoot him.

COLM

I assumed. What I said was: "why's
that matter?"

Jasper looks at Jamie in bafflement. Jamie grins and shrugs.

JAMIE

Go ahead and shoot.

Jasper looks at him, thinking rapidly.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Ain't no bounty on me dead, is
there? Guess no one wants me so
bad.

COLM (O.S)

Who else is in there, Jay?

JASPER

Don't--

JAMIE

A Miss O'Henry? Seth's momma. Says
she knows you real good.

Desperately, Jasper shoots Jamie in the gut. Jamie makes only
the faintest grunt.

(CONTINUED)

JASPER

Looks like he needs a doctor, Colm.
Might just make it to Copperton
alive if you hurry. I'd quit
dallying. You and your brother put
down your guns. Want you to open
the door and walk in with your
hands locked on your head. NOW.

AMYCUS

(To Colm)

We got the guns, we got 'em
bottled. Say it's about time we
start shootin'. Kill 'em all.

COLM

We ain't doing that.

AMYCUS

Why the hell not?

A pregnant pause. Colm thinks. Looks over at Noah.

The door swings open. Colm and Amycus step forward, hands on
their heads.

Seth runs over to his mother. She hugs him. His arm is
completely limp now. Colm sighs and looks at Jamie.

COLM

Why is nothing ever easy with you
Jamie? I shoulda let them just
shoot you dead.

Jamie gives him a teasing sneer. Nods weakly at his wound.

JAMIE

Near enough.

JASPER

Colm Canter, you and your brothers
are wanted for robbery, fraud, and
21 counts of murder, including
Sheriff Poulter of Downyville,
Texas.

Colm's eyes harden. His smile stays in place.

COLM

That last one weren't me.

JASPER

Ain't my concern, Canter.

(CONTINUED)

Still embracing Anna, Seth whispers urgently in her ear.

SETH

Ma, get down.

ANNA

What?

COLM

Never taken credit for another
man's killings. Wouldn't wanna hang
for something I ain't did.

JASPER

Well, maybe I'll just save you the
trouble and kill you right here.

SETH

(Whispering)

Something gonna happen, Ma. Get
down. Now.

Anna drops to the ground with Seth.

BLAM.

Edward groans and keels over, his back peppered with
buckshot. Noah stands behind him, reloading a shotgun.

It happens fast.

Jasper spins and fires at Noah, but his shot goes wide as
Colm's knife plunges into his shoulder. He sprawls over. Noah
steps forward to finish the job.

Edward, still breathing, slices Noah's Achilles tendon with
his hunting knife. The giant man topples heavily to the
ground with a roar of pain. His gun discharges as it falls,
and Jamie takes the full blast.

From the ground, Jasper shoots the fallen Noah in the brain.
Colm dashes around to Jamie. His face is shredded and
lifeless. A bullet flies into the wall behind him.

Anna kneels, gun pointed at Colm. They lock eyes. Seth is
wrenched out of Anna's grasp by strong hands. Amycus stands
with his knife to the boy's throat. Jasper rolls over and
aims his gun at Amycus.

AMYCUS

Easy, now.

(CONTINUED)

There they stand. Anna's gun on Colm. Amycus's knife on Seth. Jasper's gun on Amycus. Each person looks to the next, trying to assess their odds.

AMYCUS (CONT'D)
(Growling)
Now why don't we all--

BLAM.

Jasper fires. A bullet rips across the room. Blood soaks into Seth's shirt at the navel. Amycus collapses behind him. Breathing heavily, Jasper turns his gun on Colm.

JASPER
Alright now, Canter--

Jasper is gun-butted from behind by Anna. He drops his weapon. Anna kicks his gun away across the floor.

JASPER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What the damn hell?

ANNA
Don't move, you son of a bitch.
Seth? You hit, son?

Seth lifts up his bloodied shirt to reveal a gash where Jasper's bullet grazed him.

SETH
A little.

ANNA
(To Jasper)
You shot at my boy.

COLM
She don't like that, Jones.

ANNA
(To Colm)
You don't move, neither.

Anna keeps her gun on Colm, but her eyes on Jasper. She tosses Seth a length of rope.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Seth, tie up Mr. Canter's hands.
We're taking him in.

(CONTINUED)

JASPER

Lady, what the hell are you doin'?
That's MY mark!

ANNA

Wrong. It's mine. Always been mine.

Seth crosses the room and holds up the rope to Colm. Colm puts his arms out obediently. He smiles slightly as Seth binds his wrists.

COLM

Here we are again...

JASPER

That bastard stabbed me! I need
medical attention!

Anna ushers Seth and Colm out the door with her gun-barrel.

ANNA

Copperton's only a five-mile ride,
Mr. Jones. I'm sure you can help
yourself.

She steps over him and out into the night, shutting the door gently behind her.

The sun rises over the small town. At the gallows, a crowd is gathering. Colm is led onto stage. He wears clean flannel. A priest drones comfortless words from a bible.

PRIEST

Where, o death, is your victory?
Where, o death, is your sting? The
sting of death is sin, and the
power of sin is the law--

COLM

Enough, Padre.

The priest closes the bible with a shrug.

PRIEST

Anything you wanna say here, son?

Colm shakes his head vaguely. He looks out into the crowd, scanning the faces. He catches Anna's eye. They share a look. As the bag is slipped over his head, there is the faintest hint of a nod.

90 CONTINUED:

90

Seth, watches his mother, her eyes staring unblinking at the man about to die. He looks up to see them slip the noose around Colm's neck. He takes Anna's hand and squeezes. They both watch as the lever is pulled.

SNAP.

Anna wraps a protective arm around Seth. Her eyes are hard. Cold. Off her face -

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

91 EXT. O'HENRY FARM - EARLY MORNING

91

The sky is an inky grey. Two silhouetted figure trek on horseback towards the farm.

SETH (V.O)

My mother never took another husband. I don't believe the married life was ever for her. She would go on long rides and come back only when she felt like it.

92 INT. O'HENRY HOUSEHOLD - EARLY MORNING

92

Anna lights a lantern. She and Seth re-enter their house. It's only been a few days, but the two treat the space as if years had passed. Anna sets her fingers lightly on the dining room table, where her husband's body lay. Seth peers at the strangers in the family photos.

SETH (V.O)

She made money teaching classes over at the school-house. Kept the home nice, for a while. But she let it run down, by and by. Don't think it concerned her much.

93 INT. SETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

93

Seth sits down on his bed. Sees the dime-store novel on his bedside table. He puts it in the top drawer and closes it.

SETH (V.O)

After it all, Colm Canter's name came up once, maybe twice in the span of thirty years. I think that for my Ma, it was just a thing what had to be done.

94 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

94

Anna lies alone in the center of the bed. Her finger is freshly stitched at the stump.

SETH (V.O.)

She lost a piece of herself in
doing it, of course. But that was
alright. She managed fine without.

(Beat)

She managed fine.

OFF ANNA'S UNBLINKING EYES.

FADE OUT.