

FRENCH

an original pilot

Written by

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**TEASER**

**EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY (ESTABLISHING)**

Clear, bright Northern Oregon sky. Wilderness and rock stretch beneath. High wind.

**EXT. WILDERNESS ROAD - DAY**

CAPTION: NORTHERN OREGON, 1888.

Down here, that means HOT. Insects buzz. The sun bakes cracked dirt. DRIVER, 60, guides a mule-drawn HUT ON WHEELS labelled "THE GREEN BOX." SMOKE issues from a pipe through the roof. The hut totters through rut and over mound...

**INT. THE GREEN BOX - DAY**

...causing the interior to JOLT and SHAKE. BOOKS on natural history fall from shelves. HOLLINGSWORTH, 30, an Ashanti prince with more culture than the Europeans who tutored him, SMASHES his head against the ceiling. He puts down his book, *The Man Who Laughs* by Victor Hugo. Wipes his sweaty brow. His sonorous voice could get him elected to British Parliament.

HOLLINGSWORTH (TO O.S.)

'You have to do that NOW?!

A manicured HAND feeds a rattling cast-iron STOVE with pages from a botany journal--into a ROARING FIRE.

FRENCH (O.S.)

These people....these...IDIOTS.

FRENCH, 39, Chinese with European features fighting for room, or vice-versa, rips with tears in his eyes. His English dips with a slight French accent. Like Hollingsworth, he wears only dirty, sweaty LONG UNDERWEAR.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Not Vitis CaliforniCA. Californ-YA.

Like the STATE!

The STOVE PIPE kicks loose. SMOKE seeps into the cabin. The firelight exposes CHINESE WRITING everywhere on the faded wallpaper. French huffs, reaches to fix the pipe--

**EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY**

A faint SIZZLE. French WAILS. The tiny Green Box halts.

**EXT. GRASSY FIELD - DAY**

French holds his handwritten PLANT JOURNAL with a pressed, dried frond next to a live one.

FRENCH

*Vitis California*. The California Grape, Hollingsworth. Its leaf serves as a medicant--ouch!

DRIVER (O.S.)

Hold still, Mr. French.

The Driver treats the burns on French's other hand.

ANGLE ON: An enormous WOLF in the brush. Peers intelligently at them. We see its teeth, feel its hunger.

FRENCH (O.S.)

It's tight. And don't call me that.

DRIVER (O.S.)

All right, then. Only, everyone else seems to. And on account of your accent--

The Wolf prowls through some brush.

French LIMPS to a plant with white berries. Driver trails behind with his gauze.

FRENCH

And this! *Symphoricarpos*. The Snowberry. The roots cure the cold, the berries are laxative, and the leaves--well, are not to be made into tea. I did the research! Not--

HOLLINGSWORTH

The leaves almost killed you.

FRENCH

--not H. K. R. Prosser and his damned journal!

The Wolf lopes toward them and SPRINGS--

DRIVER

Mr. French!

--RIGHT into French's open arms. Licks his face, wags tail. French scratches the wolf's ears with his good hand.

FRENCH

Hombre! One of *Canis lupus*, the great American wolf. And start of my new menagerie--

French recoils at Hombre's noxious breath.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

--in dire need of oral hygiene. What did you eat? Go away, bad dog!

Hombre barks and dashes off. French bends over, clutches his stomach, addresses Hollingsworth.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Speaking of eating, Hollingsworth, you were right about the muskrat stew. Let's harvest snowberries.

**EXT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

Hombre pads next to the Green Box, chained and collared.

**INT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

The fire's out but they still sweat bullets. French fusses with his bandage and nibbles snowberries. They're bitter.

FRENCH

I told him not so tight.

HOLLINGSWORTH

If your brother's way out here he's probably dead.

FRENCH

Proof of death's all I'll need to inherit my father's fortune. The last three towns were merely...how do you say...dead herrings.

Hollingsworth notes a RAILROAD GANG lay rail along the road. Chinese WORKERS toil in the sun.

HOLLINGSWORTH

It's "red herrings" and I find it hard to believe we'll find one Chinese man in this wilderness.

FRENCH

The Chronicle says differently.

French hands him a newspaper. While Hollingsworth reads,

HOLLINGSWORTH

"Rattlesnake Creek Features Chinese Curiosities." A shack in a dead mining town?

FRENCH

A shack "recently supplied by a Chinese prince with ancient mysteries of the Orient."

HOLLINGSWORTH

That "prince" could be anyone!

FRENCH

--anyone who lived in the Imperial palace, which we did. Besides, we need to stop. Our coffers need...restocking.

He opens a case and trays unfold in clever ways, holding: patent medicine, vials, pouches, dried animals, roots, powders and unguents, magnets and wires, totems. He smiles.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

And Oregon needs healing.

Hollingsworth SNORTS and looks outside. DOUBLE-TAKES--

**EXT. WILDERNESS ROAD - DAY**

A WEATHERED SIGN: RATTLESNAKE CREEK

and below that, pointing to a road going down:

SIGN IN NEW PAINT: NIGGERS AND CHINKS TAKE THE LOW ROAD

**EXT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

DRIVER sees, gulps, takes the high road. Looks down--

**EXT. CLIFF - DAY**

--at SKELETONS in the crevice where the "low road" leads.

**INT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

Hollingsworth tries to warn French, but French hears faint CROWD sounds and grins triumph.

FRENCH  
Get dressed! I sense great  
enthusiasm for philosophical  
discourse and bottled well-being.

Hollingsworth gulps, but slips on a ragged blouse. The vehicle JOLTS again, and they smack their heads hard.

DRIVER (O.S.)  
(chuckles)  
Sorry, Mr. French. Railroad.

FRENCH  
'Railroad?' Out here?

He peers out...

**EXT. RAILROAD SPUR TRACK - DAY**

...and sees the dead eyes of URSUS, 40s, a bear of a man driving LABORERS hard. A SIGN next to wooden ties reads:

SPUR TRACK TO RATTLESNAKE CREEK STOCKYARDS--COMIN SOON!

The clamor of pickaxes breaking ground gives way to...

**EXT. RATTLESNAKE CREEK MAIN ROAD - DAY**

...the CLAMOR of a CROWD abusing a Chinese man, KWOK. They drive him to a SCAFFOLD and ROPE. Some wave BABY CLOTHES.

CROWD  
(ad lib)  
Thief! Scoundrel! Chink!

ANGLE ON: A well-to-do man, JACOBSEN, watches smugly. He sticks a SHERIFF'S BADGE onto his lapel.

JACOBSEN  
Time for my elected duties.

Jacobsen pats SVEN, 40s, on the shoulder and guffaws.

RETURN TO: The scaffold. Jacobsen fires his revolver.

JACOBSEN (CONT'D)  
 Rattlesnake Creek's a fount of  
 civilization in dry wilderness. The  
 rule of law pertains here and I'll  
 be the one...pertaining it.

The crowd and Kwok look back blankly. Another Chinese man,  
 YUN, 40s, skids to a stop behind them, panicked. Jacobsen  
 tries again as the Green Box lurches to a stop.

JACOBSEN (CONT'D)  
 No man has ever been lynched in our  
 town. Whether you're white, yellow,  
 or bl--well....No white or yellow  
 man has ever been lynched.  
 (to Kwok)  
 So you, uh, won't be hanged.

The crowd moans, shifts. Kwok beams back. Jacobsen frowns.

JACOBSEN (CONT'D)  
 But since the accused is...accused  
 of stealing clothes--then drive him  
 outta town without any!

KWOK  
 Out of town? What about my inn?!

But the crowd cheers and RIPS the clothes off Kwok, He flees  
 toward the Green Box.

YUN (O.S.)  
 Kwok!

Yun runs after them. But everyone FREEZES when Hombre menaces  
 them at the end of his chain.

KWOK  
 Nice doggie.

JACOBSEN  
 Stand aside!

He advances with pistol aimed at Hombre. Driver chuckles. A  
 RIFLE pokes between the curtained passenger window.

FRENCH (O.S.)  
 Careful, lawman.

**INT. GREEN BOX - CONTINUOUS**

Both men are half-dressed. French aims down the barrel in his  
 ruffled French blouse. Hollingsworth whispers urgently.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
French! What are you doing?

FRENCH  
(loud to Jacobsen)  
My four-legged friend represents  
property, established from Roman  
Common Law, when bound by chain.  
And which law of yours leads an  
armed mob against an unarmed man?  
(sly to Hollingsworth)  
This is the Wild West, my friend. A  
show of force goes a long way.

Hollingsworth can't believe him. Outside, several guns are  
COCKED. Ignoring caution, he peers through the curtain--

**EXT. GREEN BOX - CONTINUOUS**

--at the Crowd with guns aimed at them. Jacobsen lowers his,  
cyphers the letters on the trailer's wall.

JACOBSEN  
"Green...Box." You entertainers?

FRENCH (O.S.)  
I'm a doctor.

JACOBSEN  
No wonder you sound peculiar. Why  
you here--Doc?

French unfurls the Chronicle page outside with a SNAP.

**INT. CHASTITY'S ROOM - DAY**

A curtain closes with a SNAP as MOLLY, 25, a firecracker of  
Southern white trash, spins to CHASTITY LOW, 18, a pretty,  
slim-faced girl with a lot of girth beneath her bedsheet.

MOLLY  
"Doctor." He said it plain, Chas.

Chastity moans, sweats in the hot darkness. Pale as death.

CHASTITY  
Too late fer that.

MOLLY  
And Chinaman!



CHASTITY

(groans)

Another one. Their medicine sticks  
needles in you. I'd rather die.

MOLLY

You won't, honey.

She sets her mouth, looks out the window.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Molly will take care of you.

Off her determination,

CUT TO:

**EXT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

French eases from the van in front of Kwok. Inspects him.  
Double-takes. Kwok glares, covers himself.

FRENCH

So much for that rumor. You going  
to hang him with that?

Yun throws his jacket over Kwok.

YUN

Jacobsen's driving my brother Kwok  
out of town so he can take the inn!

French looks at the inn, a well-built two-story building.  
Jacobsen sees, looks over his shoulder, grins back.

KWOK

Yun and I built it from nothing!  
Now that the railroad's coming, he  
wants to take over.

JACOBSEN

That's a lie. He bedded a white  
woman. In the cathouse.

FRENCH

(re: townsfolk)

And took her to greater lengths  
than these men?

The crowd mutters, advances. But falls back when  
Hollingsworth, his revolver drawn, emerges.

JACOBSEN

And now I'm having second thoughts  
about the brother, what with the  
company his enterprise attracts.

FRENCH

(re: Kwok)

You were going to exile him?

JACOBSEN

We were *gonna* hang him!

FRENCH

For the crime of miscegenation?

JACOBSEN

Uh?

French hands Hollingsworth his rifle.

FRENCH

Then hang me in his place.

The crowd gasps. Hollingsworth rolls his eyes. Not again.  
French deftly folds his cuffs and offers his wrists to be  
bound. Jacobsen laughs and motions to a Sven, who grabs some  
rope. French steps back.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

But! If I should live, the man  
remains in town. And everyone goes  
about their business.

Crowd chuckles. Jacobsen nods, laughing. Yun and Kwok react.

**EXT. SCAFFOLD - DAY (LATER)**

French, neck in noose, refuses the hood. Prepares himself.

**INT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

Hollingsworth sights down the rifle at the rope. Exhales,  
fingers the trigger. A PISTOL edges under his chin. He lets  
the rifle go, hands up. But just as the pistol lowers--

HOLLINGSWORTH

FRENCH!

**EXT. SCAFFOLD - DAY**

French's eyes go WIDE. Sees Jacobsen's hand on the lever. About to say something. The lever falls, and so does the trapdoor, and French. As he strains at the end of the rope,

CUT TO TITLES.

**END TEASER**

ACT ONE**EXT. SCAFFOLD - DAY**

Hollingsworth SWATS Sven's pistol away, but can only watch with Kwok and Yun as French twitches by the neck.

Off French's eyes glazing, the world goes quiet.

FADE TO BLACK.

**INT. CHINESE MONASTERY - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)**

From darkness, a swirling chaos of smoke and fire. A ROAR. A CHINESE DRAGON snakes into view.

YOUNG FRENCH (O.S.)  
(Chinese subtitles, gags)  
Master...finally I see...the  
Dragon...!

In the depths a MARTIAL ARTS MASTER seated in a lotus position swims into view. He smiles back benevolently.

**EXT. LONDON ALLEY - DAY (FLASHBACK, 1850S)**

The Master's face melts into NIELS, 50s, a branded thief with five days' stubble and rags for clothes. YOUNG FRENCH, 7, HANGS by his neck from a FRAYED rope. His eyes glaze and he murmurs in CHINESE.

NIELS  
Hunh. The chavy does speak Chinese.  
What you think 'is dyin' words are?

FRENCH'S POV: A torn poster of THE DRAGON OF ST. GEORGE on the alley wall. His eyelids flutter on--

--a COINPURSE. Niels cuts the strings and fishes through it. BENNIE, 15, inspects French.

BENNIE  
Mebbe that he can't breathe.

NIELS  
Nah. Add 'nother weight.

Bennie shrugs and hangs a fishing weight on Young French's pant leg. French watches, GROANS when the weight pulls his neck harder. The rope STRAINS.

YOUNG FRENCH  
Can't feel toes.

NIELS  
An' I told ya to work the neck for  
an hour each night 'fore you sleep.

He nods at Bennie, who adds another weight. French's breath RATTLES. His eyes roll back for the last time--and the rope SNAPS. Topples him to the ground. Niels GUFFAWS.

NIELS (CONT'D)  
Just a li'l longer and you'd'a  
slept for good.

Niels scowls at the coins and stuffs the pouch in his waistband. Bennie squats over French as he gulps air. French motions weakly to help him up. They hold him; his legs tremble violently.

NIELS (CONT'D)  
(to Bennie)  
The trick's lost on this one,  
though. You should try it, boy.  
Save your life. It did me....

He pulls back the rag around his neck--it is deeply marked by attempted hangings. He pounds Bennie on the back.

NIELS (CONT'D)  
Leave this one to the rats. Market  
means many fat purses.

They dump him unceremoniously and saunter off. French strains to gain air, rubs his neck. With his other hand--he holds up Niel's stolen purse. A wan smile.

**EXT. GREEN BOX - DAY (RETURN TO PRESENT)**

Two GOONS DUMP French's corpse to the ground. His open eyes don't register the impact. Jacobsen smirks at Hollingsworth.

JACOBSEN  
Here's yer friend back. Now for the  
other Chinaman....

He advances on Kwok. Yun's hand tightens on Kwok's shoulder.

Hollingsworth leans down to French and whispers.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
Sorry about this, *mon frere*.

Hollingsworth bows his head--tucks his face into his cravat. Opens a vial under French's nose--who AWAKES gasping for air.

FRENCH  
Master I didn't touch her!

Jacobsen JUMPS back. French regains his senses. Groans. Hollingsworth covers the vial and grins ear to ear.

**INT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

French and Hollingsworth return to dressing. Yun and Kwok, now clothed, bow continually to French. French is hoarse.

FRENCH  
The stinky stuff. Again?

HOLLINGSWORTH  
I should have left you that way?

FRENCH  
(muses)  
Asphyxiation. Painful delight.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
Some day they'll leave you up all night to die. You have to stop.

FRENCH  
And waste those years strengthening my neck?

He looks at Kwok, prostrate before him. French sighs and pats him on the back.

**EXT. BEHIND RATTLESNAKE INN - DAY**

Driver navigates the Green Box behind a small, tidy building. He mumbles loud enough to hear.

DRIVER  
...pulls an UNLOADED gun at a badge after th' BADGE led a whole MOB to chase one o' his own NAKED into the WASTELAND and endangers the lives of ALL involved like the DAMNED DOG was his purest FRIEND....

The Green Box stops. The door pops open and STEPS drop down. A CANE presses the top step as FRENCH descends smartly in a weathered European suit. Hollingsworth, similarly dressed, trails Kwok and Yun.

FRENCH

So this girl whose face launched a  
thousand inbred dirt humpers...?

YUN

No girl. Whore.

KWOK

Quiet!

FRENCH

No shame in spending a few bits--

KWOK

I didn't give her any money! I did  
her--laundry.

FRENCH

H'mm!

HOLLINGSWORTH

Oh.

KWOK

Not what you think! I do the *all*  
the town's laundry...Oh. That is  
what you thought.

YUN

She brought her--unmentionables.  
Returns that night, showing off  
everything those men pay for...

KWOK

...what was I to do?

FRENCH

H'mm.

HOLLINGSWORTH

Ah.

YUN

Turn her away! Women like that keep  
coming back.

KWOK

(sighs)  
Again and again.

FRENCH

H'mm?

HOLLINGSWORTH

Oh?

KWOK

And now Jacobsen will use her  
against me until I'm ruined.

French shrugs at Hollingsworth. Hollingsworth glowers back.

**INT. INN GUEST ROOM - DAY**

Kwok leads them in to a tidy suite. French and Hollingsworth set down their bags.

FRENCH

Too bad about your romantic problems. A night or two at your brother's shop and we should be well on our way....

KWOK

(despondent)

If only she weren't so sick. I'd--

French has his arm around Kwok instantly.

FRENCH

"Sick," you say?

KWOK

On the verge of death. I'd give any amount of money--

FRENCH

Young love is so rare these days. I'm on the case.

KWOK

(overjoyed)

You--you'll help...?!

Hollingsworth holds his face in his hand as French hustles Kwok and Yun out.

FRENCH

If you could scare up some victuals my partner and I are famished.

KWOK

Yes, dumplings, rice, just like the old country--!

FRENCH

Anything other than muskrat, yes, thanks, we'll bill you later.

He slams the door on their gratitude, his eyes aglint with thoughts of--

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Gold, Hollingsworth, I can smell it. Food, lodging, and now treasure. Where's my food dye?



HOLLINGSWORTH

Packed with your conscience. Are you even thinking about that man in love and his sick woman?

FRENCH

My dear Hollingsworth, the medicine's real. The color is only to help the...common imagination.

HOLLINGSWORTH

Like how your "friend's" skin color helped the lynch mob's imagination?

FRENCH

I'm helping Kong's mother!

HOLLINGSWORTH

Kwok's girlfriend.

FRENCH

Exactly! One moment I was near death, and now....Could our fortunes turn any more quickly?

A KNOCK at the door. French FREEZES. Hollingsworth sighs, opens it. Jacobsen stands, hat in hand.

JACOBSEN

I thought I'd apologize about the  
(mimes hanging French)  
Rule of law, et cetera.  
(offers hand)  
Call me Jacobsen.

FRENCH

Chang August de Normandie, at your service, and Hollingsworth, Bantu nobleman.

HOLLINGSWORTH

Ashanti.

JACOBSEN

It's not every day we have Eastern and, er, other dignitaries in town. As proprietor of delight in Rattlesnake Creek, might I introduce you to our ladies?

French, about to take off his jacket, stops. Raises an eyebrow.

**EXT. BROTHEL - DAY**

Jacobsen leads them to the front door, where WHORES present themselves in a line.

JACOBSEN

The lovely ladies of Rattlesnake  
Creek's exclusive house of--love.

French and Hollingsworth BOW. Molly exits, stumbles, adjusts her dress, curtsies.

JACOBSEN (CONT'D)

And Molly Robinson. Singer, dancer,  
six-shooter. Belle of the South.

FRENCH

The South? Miss Robinson might  
object to me. I treated soldiers  
for the other side.

MOLLY

Forgive me for not fainting. All  
they did was shoot peckerwoods and  
slavers.

JACOBSEN

Normally we subject visitors to a  
cursory and entirely legal  
inspection...

French RAPS Sven's knuckle with his cane when he tries to take it, revealing French's FULL POUCH during the action.

JACOBSEN (CONT'D)

...but considering all you've been  
through, won't you join us tonight  
as honored dinner guests?

FRENCH

Delighted.

Everyone bows and departs. Sven, sucking on his knuckle, approaches Jacobsen.

SVEN

You're letting them stay?

JACOBSEN

Shouldn't be too hard to fleece  
them dandies of that fat purse.

Sven grins. Places his hand on the butt of his revolver.

**INT. INN GUEST ROOM - DAY**

French empties his purse. Only a few coins among PEBBLES and copper INGOTS.

FRENCH

Remind me to think ten times before  
saving strangers in need.

HOLLINGSWORTH

Thinking never seems to deter you.

French opens his bag, unwraps a framed photo: WEN, 30s, stands holding a pick among other men. "SNAKE RIVER, OR is scrawled on it.

HOLLINGSWORTH (CONT'D)

He could be alive.

French tosses the picture on the bed and...

TIME CUT TO:

adds GREEN DYE to a bottle of medicine...

FRENCH

He shouldn't have run without me.  
Was just a stupid little coup.

and pours that mixture into tiny vials. Hollingsworth turns the picture over, reads a newspaper article, headlined:

MASSACRE AT SNAKE RIVER, OREGON. UNTOLD NUMBERS DEAD.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

All Wen wanted was to make his  
fortune. I sought knowledge.

HOLLINGSWORTH

As I remember, you sought every  
shilling to be plucked from the  
pockets of London.

FRENCH

Speaking of, get dressed!

He closes the valise smartly and grandly opens a narrow wardrobe. Off Hollingsworth's resignation,

CUT TO:

**EXT. GREEN BOX - DAY**

Hollingsworth stands in Central Casting African warrior costume--painted face, spear, lacquered grass shield. He stands in front of--

The Green Box--only the wooden hut is opened into a STAGE, complete with wings and a proscenium arch. Driver lies on his back as Hombre MENACES him. Hollingsworth and French talk from the sides of their mouths.

HOLLINGSWORTH

This is the last time.

FRENCH

Hurry, Hombre looks hungry.

Hombre lunges. Hollingsworth JUMPS in front of Driver and brandishes his spear. Hombre growls. The CROWD GASPS.

DRIVER

(means it)

He's going to eat me alive!

FRENCH

(to the crowd)

Not defended with the strength of a hundred African lions, a dozen elephants, all embodied by the strength of this one Bantu warrior.

HOLLINGSWORTH

(hisses)

Not Bantu. Ashanti!

French thrusts up a tiny vial of the green liquid. It GLISTENS in the sunlight. The Crowd OOS and AAHS.

FRENCH

Ashanti Savannah Blend! This exclusive concentrate of native African plant extracts combines the energy of that sun-baked soil with the native strength and terrifying power of the leavings of its giant animals! Two dozen tiny applications will give you enough strength to clear your fields, till them, and impress the woman of your dreams with your undying stamina! All for--

**INT. INN GUEST ROOM - DAY**

FRENCH

--not very much money at all...

French tosses his collection box aside while Hollingsworth, glowers, wipes make-up off his face.

HOLLINGSWORTH

No one I know wears this stuff.

FRENCH

Part of the show.

HOLLINGSWORTH

It's dishonest!

FRENCH

(huffs)

My tonic, subjected to objective, scientific tests--

HOLLINGSWORTH

--conducted in Madame Claude's second floor rooms--!?

FRENCH

--resulted in 32% increased vigor in trial subjects.

HOLLINGSWORTH

Perhaps because you paid for them!

FRENCH

Well, yes, the placebo customers sounded fairly vigorous as well.

(knocks box with cane)

Another impoverished town. The mood here is sour to gentlemen of distinction. And the women? Why waste even one lion on them?

Outside, a woman SCREECHES.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Or even one?

**END ACT ONE**

ACT TWO**EXT. BROTHEL - DAY**

French and Hollingsworth recoil as a giant MUSLIN TUMBLEWEED shoots from the brothel's front door. This is Chastity, resplendent in boas, hat, lace, scarves, and hoop skirt. She recovers, spins, and lays into Jacobsen. Though fevered she doesn't seem so weak and helpless now.

JACOBSEN

You're blaming me for your  
Chinaman?

CHASTITY

You almost killed an innocent man.

JACOBSEN

He sullied your honor. You're a  
disgrace to this town!

CHASTITY

I'm a whore and he had two bits!

JACOBSEN

You had relations with him and let  
him touch your...unmentionables.

He retreats to his brothel.

CHASTITY

He runs the LAUNDRY for land's  
sake!

(pouts)

And he was sweet.

Molly tries to help her inside, but Chastity has sass and shakes her off. French and Hollingsworth mosey up to her.

FRENCH

A rather...spirited couple.

MOLLY

Ever since she come to town not a  
day goes by without....

They scoff, shake their heads. Suddenly aware they have not been formally introduced. They walk off together...

**EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS**

...in silence for a moment before....

MOLLY  
Molly Robinson.

FRENCH  
Chang August de--call me French.

She shakes his hand.

MOLLY  
Delighted, French.

FRENCH  
*Enchante.*

They pass Jacobsen shaking the hand of JAMES J. HILL with a U.S. MARSHALL standing behind him.

MOLLY  
Do you know who that is? J. J. Hill!

FRENCH  
Who?

MOLLY  
He owns the railroad.

French nods approvingly. Collects his manners.

FRENCH  
Ah! And this--

HOLLINGSWORTH  
Hollingsworth.

She curtsies. Offers her hand.

MOLLY  
Ooo...a Nubian prince.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
Yes....Nubia....

MOLLY  
So delighted, Your Highness.

FRENCH  
Now that's clear, Miss Molly, you have that troubled look on your face with a problem only a Chinaman and elite--  
(glares at Hollingsworth)  
Nubian Warrior can solve.

MOLLY  
Well, as a matter of fact--

**INT. SALOON - DAY**

She has bought drinks. French and Hollingsworth try to look comfortable at the bar, but the other patrons are passed out.

MOLLY  
The thing is, she's feverish.

FRENCH  
Feverish?

HOLLINGSWORTH  
It is insanely hot weather.

MOLLY  
This is unfamiliar to you?  
(before he can answer)  
She's a--venereal woman with anger  
issues. And her medical issues--

HOLLINGSWORTH  
"Venereal?"

FRENCH  
(in French, subtitled)  
Plumbing.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
Ah.

MOLLY  
We don't need a plumber, we need a  
doctor! Or a swift blow to the back  
to the head, except--

FRENCH  
(in French, subtitled)  
You know French?

JACOBSEN (O.S.)  
Molly!

MOLLY  
(in French, subtitled)  
My Grandmother was from Marseilles.  
(in English)  
Got to go. Tonight, after the show.

She skedaddles.



HOLLINGSWORTH  
We're happy to help.

FRENCH  
Let's put together a payment plan!

MOLLY (O.S.)  
Our girls will compensate you!

FRENCH  
(sighs)  
Oh, that again.

Hollingsworth frowns at French.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
We already arranged with Kwok to help her.

FRENCH  
Merely establishing the market value for our services.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
And this Molly. My grandmother had a word for her. A "liar." She's keeping something from us.

FRENCH  
Fine, keep an eye on her while I'll find that shop.

He leaves, passes by GOON #1, who slips away to--

**INT. JACOBSEN'S BROTHEL OFFICE - DAY**

...where Jacobsen confers with Sven and Jarl.

JACOBSEN  
A doctor arrives in town just now. Coincidence? No.

SVEN  
I checked with the telegraph office, and Bill said he didn't see any letters from any of the girls in the past few months.

Jacobsen points a finger at him.

JACOBSEN  
Your job is to make sure those two the twain never meet. Understand?

Sven doesn't, but nods dumbly. Jacobsen points to Jarl.

JACOBSEN (CONT'D)

And just in case, get a couple of  
your friends and scare this guy.  
Get him and his folk out of town.

Off their determined looks,

CUT TO:

**EXT. CURIOSITY SHOP - DAY (ESTABLISHING)**

People stop and whisper at French as he hobbles by RANCH HANDS constructing CATTLE STOCKADES. French scoffs, halts in front of a CURIOSITY SHOPPE. Inspects the hastily constructed mineshaft timber, windows crammed with quack anthropology.

BOY (O.S.)

Got a nickel, Chinaman?

Two BOYS in ragged trousers look up at him. French scowls and enters....

**INT. CURIOSITY SHOP - DAY**

It's dark and dusty. Two CHINESE CHILDREN'S SUITS. Display cases of African masks, miniature Chinese pagodas, shrunken heads and skulls, with barely enough space to get by. French pushes through, displeased. His face lights at an elaborate set of straps and clamps inside an iron chest piece.

FRENCH

My father used one of these to set  
the ribs of a general!

Pleased, he stops at an tribal front piece. Takes out a JOURNAL and flips pages in the darkness.

YUN (O.S.).

Armor of a Sioux chieftain. Saved  
his life before he took an axe to  
the skull.

French compares it to his journal--the lines match up. Nods.

FRENCH

Fine work. Only this is Tengu. 10th  
century. And this breech--right  
below the ribs. That did him in.

French turns to see Yun behind a counter.

YUN

Quite a book, Doctor. I think I know what you're looking for.

**INT. BACK OF CURIOSITY SHOP - DAY**

Yun yanks dusty canvas off of a curio and opens the doors. French looks over Chinese porcelain knick-knacks.

YUN

Fellow looked similar to yourself. Lighter.

FRENCH

Look at this.

He hands YUN the photo. YUN squints and nods. Finger hovers over Wen, then stabs another Chinese in the picture, ZHI.

YUN

This one. Don't know how he managed to keep these trinkets intact. Break if you sneeze too loud. He had some medical issue so had to sell it all for a song.

FRENCH

(points to Wen in picture)  
Are you sure it's not this one?

YUN

I'm sure. We don't all look the same, you know.

French's eyes go wide as he sees a DRAGON STATUETTE.

YUN (O.S.). (CONT'D)

See something you like?

French is lost in memory....

**INT. PALACE APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**

A young prince, MING, (5) rapidly opens gifts, not unlike a modern American child, without spending more than a few seconds before opening the next. WEN (8) and YOUNG FRENCH (6) watch as the Dragon Statuette is revealed. The prince is about to toss it.

MOTHER (O.S.)  
 (Chinese)  
 Ming! That toy is fine  
 craftsmanship. You'll break it.

Ming doesn't care. He's about to toss it when his eye happens to land upon Wen. He chucks it. It ALMOST hits the floor, but Wen DIVES to save it. He and French run away.

**INT. PALACE HALL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**

Wen and French turn it in their hands, a new favorite toy.

**INT. CURIOSITY SHOP - DAY (RETURN TO PRESENT)**

French looks with admiration at a COSSACK soldier's coat.

FRENCH  
 I saw this while traveling with my  
 father in Siberia. Horrible mess  
 with those Cossacks.

YUN  
 Well I can throw it in for an extra  
 five dollars, but the statuette  
 will set you back twenty.

FRENCH  
 The bauble's nothing--they give  
 away hundreds in the markets of  
 Shanghai. Ten dollars for the coat-  
 and throw in two of these.

He indicates something off screen. Yun gulps and nods.

**EXT. CURIOSITY SHOP STREET - DAY**

French passes the two boys poking sticks into a mud puddle and hands them the two Chinese OUTFITS. Walks away.

**EXT. RATTLESNAKE INN FRONT - DAY**

Profoundly pleased, French approaches the inn in his new coat, unaware of GOONS trailing him.

**INT. INN LOBBY - DAY**

French hobbles in, but GOON #1 blocks his way to the stairs. He turns, sees JARL approach with a pipe and SVEN with his hands confidently in his pockets.

SVEN

Just when we chase one off, another waltzes in.

JARL

He's not even a doctor. Just a quack.

All the cool in French's eyes lights to fire. He STRIKES his cane on the floor and faces Jarl squarely.

FRENCH

Say that again.

**INT. INN GUEST ROOM - DAY**

Molly looks through the vials, tools, mechanical bric-a-brac of French's life. Hollingsworth watches, interested.

MOLLY

He knows how to make these? Potions and such?

HOLLINGSWORTH

He's studied all over the world. His father was a doctor--his mother was French. Consort to the emperor.

MOLLY

My granma made things. She was French, too, out of the Bayou. Cast some mean spells.

She and Hollingsworth look at each other, wondering over which spells they might cast. A knock, and Harry ENTERS.

**INT. INN UPSTAIRS LANDING - CONTINUOUS**

Hollingsworth and Molly charge out of the room...but can only watch as, below, FIVE GOONS surround FRENCH.

MOLLY

French!

French fixes SVEN with his eye. Sven gulps, but is no coward.

SVEN

I said you're a quack.

FRENCH

Normally I would forgive your ignorance. But a lady is present. I am forced to risk your life for honor.

French eases into a ready stance. The goons charge, but even with a limp French fights them off using his cane and their own momentum, expertly attacking vulnerable portions of their anatomy. Until he hears a KNIFE unsheath....

HOLLINGSWORTH

No!

Goon #3 lunges....French pivots again...presses a button on his cane whips out a SWORD beneath the wood...too late for #3 as French SPITS him in a perfect dueling stance. Molly, eyes wide, flies down the stairs and surveys the carnage.

MOLLY

Cheese and rice! Honey, you done broke bad!

(leans over GOON #3)

I think you kilt him.

A GROAN. French turns, looks down at Sven.

SVEN

If he is, you're dead, Chinaman.

French glares, turns, sheathes his sword in his sash...NICKS his thumb with the blade. He sucks on the cut. Hisses to Hollingsworth.

FRENCH

Ouch! I always do that!

**END ACT TWO**

ACT THREE**EXT. RATTLESNAKE INN FRONT - DAY**

An UNDERTAKER leads two MEN through a CROWD, bearing the dead Goon #3 wrapped in a sheet.

**INT. JACOBSEN'S BROTHEL OFFICE - NIGHT**

Sven helps Jacobsen dress in a fancy suit in front of the mirror. It's difficult with Sven's arm in a sling. Jarl, his head bandaged from the fight, stands behind with his hat in his hand.

JARL

Him and that black fella left their room only once to take air. Kept it locked.

JACOBSEN

What about that van of his--"The Green Box?"

JARL

Couldn't get in with that big wolf between the wheels. And that old fella who sleeps on the roof.

Jacobsen squints at Sven.

JACOBSEN

And at Kwok's place none of you even hit him? A chink with a limp?

Sven's head hangs low.

JARL

He went all...squirrely.

JACOBSEN

(to Sven)

Get Ragnar and a couple boys from the ranch. Tonight, after the show. This time bring guns.

(as Sven leaves)

And....

Sven pauses.

JACOBSEN (CONT'D)

Wake Ursus.

Jarl gulps.

JARL  
You want this French...dead, boss?

JACOBSEN  
Just make a night he'll remember.

He smiles at his immaculate image in the mirror.

**INT. BROTHEL MAIN ROOM - NIGHT**

The show's in full swing. Jacobsen and his ranch hands roar and stomp. Jacobsen throws dollar coins at Molly, on stage. She sings sweetly while dodging things thrown at her.

MOLLY  
*Toorala...*

RANCH HANDS  
Tooralay!

MOLLY  
*A rolling stone gathers no moss, so  
they say....*

The ranch hands try to distract her with--

RANCH HANDS  
...so they say "Suck me dry!"

--in the same way children will interject phrases into Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

MOLLY  
*Sing along with the birds...*

RANCH HANDS  
WOOO! Here she comes!

MOLLY  
*It's a wonderful song....*

She trails off, staring at nothing with tired contempt. But she doesn't have to go on--

RANCH HANDS  
BUT IT'S ALL ABOUT TURDS!!

Jacobsen and his hands applaud themselves and pelt the stage. Molly's fingertips grind her forehead.



MOLLY  
Any more requests? Gentlemen?

SVEN  
"Dixie!"

The Ranch Hands CHEER. Molly rolls her eyes.

JACOBSEN  
Sing it.

French stands.

FRENCH  
You've had your song, Monsieur.  
Permettez.  
(to Molly)  
"Love's Old Sweet Song?"

The crowd GROANS, but Molly holds French's eyes for the first time, and sings with growing passion.

MOLLY  
*Once in the dear dead days beyond  
recall,  
When on the world the mists began  
to fall,  
Out of the dreams that rose in  
happy throng  
Low to our hearts Love sang an old  
sweet song;*

The Ranch Hands, at first jeering, quiet. The piano joins in. And in the dusk where fell the firelight gleam, Softly it wove itself into our dream.

A banjo player picks up a horn and adds a bluesy note. Jacobsen scowls and SMACKS a Hand, who flinches, guilty. Just a song a twilight, when the lights are low, And the flick'ring shadows softly come and go,

JACOBSEN  
A song for women!  
(to Chastity)  
Join her. Come on, git!

He whacks her tush. Chastity stumbles onto the stage, again a ball of fabric. Molly manages to keep the song going, and Chastity, holding her belly, tries to keep up.

MOLLY AND CHASTITY  
*Tho' the heart be weary, sad the  
day and long,*  
(MORE)

MOLLY AND CHASTITY (CONT'D)  
*Still to us at twilight comes  
 Love's old song,  
 Comes Love's old sweet song.*

She swoons. COLLAPSES. French lunges forward and catches her with Molly. Her face is white. French checks her pulse.

FRENCH  
 This isn't venereal disease. She's  
 really sick!

He locks eyes with Jacobsen, who joins his Hands with great laughter. HEAVES her with Hollingsworth's help into....

**INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - NIGHT**

...where WHORES scatter as they drag Chastity in. Molly rips off layers of clothing.

MOLLY  
 Not just sick. She's...

French looks down at Chastity's swollen, blotchy belly.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
 --pregnant!

FRENCH  
 Just about nine months.

MOLLY  
 And Kwok, the man you saved when  
 you come to town? He's the father.  
 Jacobsen won't have it. He'd rather  
 die than have this child be born.

CHASTITY  
 (fevered)  
 My dear Mr. Jacobsen!

French and Hollingsworth look to one another.

FRENCH  
 A baby...just like me. My mother  
 was a French courtesan who joined  
 the Chinese royal court.  
 (wipes Chastity's brow)  
 Hollingsworth, bring my bag and  
 plant journal. We must save this  
 woman and her child!

As Hollingsworth exits,

CUT TO:

**INT. JACOBSEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

A wall that walks like a man, URSUS, lumbers in. The Goons near the door edge away nervously. Jacobsen fills his tumbler with whiskey.

JACOBSEN

Didn't I tell him not to treat her?  
That Chastity's off limits?!

SVEN

Yes, sir. I mean, no, actually. Not  
in those--

Jacobsen throws the tumbler at Sven.

SVEN (CONT'D)

That Chinaman heard what you said  
and deserves what he gets....

His voice dies when he sees Jacobsen look behind him. Sven turns to Ursus, back to Jacobsen with a nasty smile. Flexes his hand in the sling. Jacobsen's eye glints.

JACOBSEN

Tonight.

Off of Ursus's dead-eye glare,

CUT TO:

**INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - NIGHT**

Molly watches, eyes glowing, while French flips through his plant journal. Ripped pieces of paper pasted with spit serve as post-it notes.

FRENCH

Just a few handful of each...  
collect the berries in this pouch.  
Wait until the clouds part from the  
moon before you harvest the root...

CHASTITY

(fevered delight)  
Oh, Mr. Jacobsen...!

French glares at her, pastes another piece onto a page.

FRENCH

And fir bark to deal with her  
delirium. She's in love with him?

MOLLY

Utterly devoted.

French tsks and hands her a tiny silver sickle.

FRENCH

And the mugwort. Harvest it with  
this--only with *this* sickle...!

MOLLY

Wait a minute. Moonlight? Silver  
tools? Honey, I've seen crazy  
things in my day but....

FRENCH

My dear. I've studied in the finest  
institutions of Europe when the  
doors were locked and no one was  
awake to kick me out. Go on.

Chastity cries in pain. Molly snatches the sickle, gives him  
a worried look.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

They've tried to kill me twice  
already.

**EXT. BROTHEL ALLEY - NIGHT**

Jacobsen sends Ursus and some Goons to the back door.

FRENCH (O.S.)

They've learned their lesson.

Tobacco juice dribbles down Jacobsen's chin as cocks a  
pistol.

**END ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR****EXT. RANCH FENCE - NIGHT**

Hollingsworth and Molly approach. She yanks him back.

MOLLY

You didn't tell me we were going to  
Jacobsen's ranch.

HOLLINGSWORTH

What does that matter?

MOLLY

He has ranch hands and hired guns  
everywhere. They'll shoot us even  
for coming near.

Hollingsworth considers this.

HOLLINGSWORTH

This isn't the first time I've  
hunted by moonlight.

MOLLY

I'm coming with--!

But he's off, slips beneath the fence into....

**EXT. RANCH OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT**

...and crawls through brush to a ravine. Peers over the edge  
to see a couple of GUNMEN on patrol.

GUNMAN #1 (O.S.)

You got a light?

GUNMAN #2 hands him a match. Rubs himself.

GUNMAN #2

Got to take a leak.

He heads to the ravine. Hollingsworth freezes, eyes wide.  
Hears rustling, a beat, then the steady DRIZZLE as Gunman #2  
relieves himself.

**EXT. RANCH FENCE - NIGHT**

Disgust, sympathy, determination pass over Molly as she  
watches. She crawls forward....

**INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - NIGHT**

French opens a jar while Chastity squawls to the heavens.

CHASTITY

Why doesn't he come to me? Doctor!  
Where is my beloved Mr. Jacobsen?

FRENCH

I've no idea, Miss...?

CHASTITY

Chastity.

FRENCH

Yes, I've just gone mad. Now spread  
your legs.

He begins slathering ointment.

CHASTITY

You Chinamen! Dishonorable, just  
like the one who did--this to me  
and left. I only took his money  
because he was so pitiful.

French is about to speak when the door creaks open. SVEN enters, smiles at Chastity's outspread legs. French replaces the sheet and stands with his cane to face him.

FRENCH

Come for another lesson?

SVEN

We got word about your friends.

FRENCH

What did you do to them?

French hears MUFFLED GROANS from the alley.

SVEN

(grins)

Come 'long and find out.

He exits before French can speak. French hesitates, loosens his sword cane. Follows. LILLY, 20, blonde, looks desperately at FATTY, 22, skinny. Fatty gulps, faces French.

FATTY

You're not--you can't--

FRENCH

She'll be fine for five minutes!

He limps out, wipes salve on his pant leg....

LILY

Well he did kill ten of Jacobsen's men with his hatpin.

Fatty shakes her head.

FATTY

It was twelve, armed with machetes.

LILY

You don't say.

**EXT. RANCH - NIGHT**

Hollingsworth and Molly scoot from bush to tree. Molly, dressed in white, stands out like a moonbeam.

HOLLINGSWORTH

I told you to stay by the fence.

MOLLY

By myself? No way.

HOLLINGSWORTH

Well, could you be less...white...?

MOLLY

I'll think of coal.

Hollingsworth closes his eyes.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

HOLLINGSWORTH

Shh! Listening for frogs.

MOLLY

(whispers)

We're collecting frogs...?

The faint chirping of frogs. Hollingsworth heads to it.

HOLLINGSWORTH

This fern grows next to water.

MOLLY

Oh.

Molly follows him.

TIME CUT TO:

Molly crams *Vitis California*, root and all, into a bag.  
Hollingsworth hisses at her.

HOLLINGSWORTH

Hurry!

MOLLY

The ranch hands turned in. We're  
safe.

HOLLINGSWORTH

We are. But if I know French, he's  
already in trouble.

He looks to town.

**EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT**

French follows Sven out into the alley. French sees nothing  
but shadows, turns back...right into Ursus, who squeezes  
through the door and closes it.

FRENCH

B...big....

Jacobsen and several Goons emerge from the shadows.

JACOBSEN

I told you not to help the whore.

FRENCH

No, you didn't.

JACOBSEN

Well, I'm telling you now. And you  
need to leave.

French considers him, then Ursus.

FRENCH

Without a doctor, she might die. So  
might the child.

JACOBSEN

Just what I wanted to hear. Boys.

The Goons advance on French. French lifts his cane, but  
Jacobsen knocks it away. French backs against a wall.



JACOBSEN (CONT'D)  
 Tonight. You and your negro and  
 your little cart.

FRENCH  
 No.

JACOBSEN  
 This is Ursus. Ursus, be polite.  
 Introduce yourself to the doctor.

Ursus ponders for a moment, and smashes French's head. French collapses. Jacobsen nods at Sven, who grins.

To the sound of French being beaten, Jacobsen strolls away, picks up French's cane. Runs his fingers down the fine inlay seen by moonlight....

**EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT**

...into the main street. The beating in the alley is LOUD. Around him, TOWNSFOLK in their homes dart behind curtains, shut windows and doors. He glowers at every one, secure in his authority. Tosses the cane into a puddle, and walks briskly away...

...as Hollingsworth and Molly rush up to the brothel. They are about to enter the front when Molly sees and picks up the cane. They hear the beating in the alley--

HOLLINGSWORTH  
 Hey!

He charges down the alley. Molly runs after him...

**INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - NIGHT**

...and they DRAG French's beaten body in. The Whores recoil. French wheezes.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
 Don't speak.

FRENCH  
 This is how...Barcelona ended, too.  
 No, don't set down. Our room.  
 Prepare...medicine.

They lay him down next to Chastity, who gawks at his body. Then Hollingsworth and Molly GASP. French looks down.

CHASTITY

I can see--his ribs. They're sticking out.

French examines himself clinically with ragged breaths.

FRENCH

Eighth and ninth anterior ribs of right side. The man Ursus is strong. I shouldn't be alive.

Hollingsworth and Chastity are stiff with shock.

MOLLY

(determined)

What should we do?

FRENCH

Some reason...lungs haven't... collapsed. Stabilize...'fore that happens.

MOLLY

What do we need?

FRENCH

Leverage. Alcohol. Yun.

MOLLY

Alcohol and--what?

FRENCH

Shop owner. Tell him. He'll know.

HOLLINGSWORTH

I'll get him.

Hollingsworth exits shakily. Molly bends to French.

FRENCH

Don't mind...Sight of blood...does that...him.

Molly settles next to him, frightened, steeling herself.

MOLLY

You've done this before?

FRENCH

's 'long 's you do it right. If not....

(he looks at a knife)

...don't want to drown in blood.

Molly nods. A WHORE hands her a bottle of alcohol, shudders.

**INT. CURIOSITY SHOP - NIGHT**

Yun, half-awake, rummages the shelves, crashing through the cramped displays, as Hollingsworth watches. Finds the rib setter French saw in his first visit.

**EXT. BROTHEL - NIGHT**

French gurgles and groans as Molly and Yun grunts, adjusting him to the sound of cranking and squeaking.

**EXT. RATTLESNAKE INN FRONT - DAY**

Dawn. The streets are empty.

**INT. INN GUEST ROOM - DAY**

French lies still, eyes closed, not breathing. AWAKES with a great intake of breath. Rolls to the side in pain. Rubs his hand over his face. Hollingsworth wakes from a chair.

FRENCH  
The medicine...!

Hollingsworth rummages among French's bottles. French winces and shakes his head.

FRENCH (CONT'D)  
Not for me. Chastity. Make her medicine.

HOLLINGSWORTH  
Don't worry about her. Rest. She's going to give birth soon.

FRENCH  
She won't. It's only been--  
(feels stubble on chin)  
--three days!

HOLLINGSWORTH  
No she--wait. How did you know--

FRENCH  
The stubble on my face. For heaven's sake, if you thought I was going to die in my sleep, at least shave my corpse!

He sits up. Checks his ribs.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Better. Where are the plants? The plants you foraged!

Hollingsworth looks for them. Then collects himself. Corrals French and gets him to look him in the eye.

HOLLINGSWORTH

I'm glad you're alive, my friend.

FRENCH

That makes one of us. Now get those herbs. The woman's immune system is the only thing preventing the fetus from dying. If it is born with the infection, Jacobsen gets his wish.

Hollingsworth smiles and turns away. French sighs.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Hopefully he'll kill me for sure before that happens.

TIME CUT TO:

**INT. INN GUEST ROOM - NIGHT**

French snore-wheezes. Three vials of medicine are on the nightstand next to a mess of ground plant matter and a mortar and pestle. Molly enters. Looks at Hollingsworth. He nods, exits with the vials, closes the door softly.

She closes the drapes. Sits next to French. His face is open in repose. She strokes his shoulders around his bandages. He wakes. Takes her in.

FRENCH

Hello.

She kisses him. He looks abruptly to the nightstand.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

The medicine....

MOLLY

I know.

Her hand slips beneath the covers. He breathes in sharply.

FRENCH

I wish...but I can barely breathe.  
I can't move.

She unhooks the top of her blouse. Leans in to kiss him.

MOLLY

Good.

They kiss. His arms encircle her.

**EXT. RATTLESNAKE INN HALL - DAY**

Outside, Hollingsworth hears the bed creak. He puts the vials in his pocket and descends the stairs.

**END ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE****INT. BROTHEL BACK HALL - DAY**

At the door to the back room, Molly sets her hair.  
Straightens her clothes...

**INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - DAY**

...and enters. Chastity drinks, makes a face at its taste,  
and sets an empty vial next to two others. Hollingsworth  
watches her, than turns to Molly. Molly avoids his eyes.

MOLLY

How do you feel?

CHASTITY

Better. Can you get Jacobsen?

MOLLY

Honey, that's not a good idea.

Chastity inspects her, so Molly turns to a pitcher and fills  
a glass with water.

CHASTITY

Where's the doctor?

MOLLY

French is--I'm not sure.

CHASTITY

Well, I'm getting up. I haven't  
moved...

MOLLY

No--

She turns to see Chastity's look of astonishment.

**INT. INN GUEST ROOM - DAY**

French takes a long hit from his opium pipe. Sighs with  
relief. Turns with a screwdriver to a table and works on  
something off-screen. STEPS outside. Someone tries to come in  
but it's locked. Frantic KNOCKING.

FATTY (O.S.)

Mister! Doctor Chinaman!

French continues with his work.

FRENCH

Go away.

FATTY (O.S.)

Doctor, it's Chastity. She's--

FRENCH

Gather towels and hot water and tell her to take deep breaths.

FATTY (O.S.)

Oh, but mister--

**EXT. RATTLESNAKE INN HALL - DAY**

BLAM. A gunshot tears a hole above the door. Fatty staggers back, huddles in a corner, SCREAMS. The door unlocks, opens to French holding a smoking pistol. He holds up one finger and looks at her. Fatty stammers.

FATTY

Towels.

He nods, holds up two fingers. She struggles with her memory through shock.

FATTY (CONT'D)

...hot water...?

He nods, holds up three fingers. She trembles. Painfully, he mimes breathing.

FATTY (CONT'D)

Deep breaths.

He SLAMS the door. She tears down the stairs.

**EXT. BROTHEL - DAY**

A dozen GOONS stand holding shotguns and rifles. Faint CRIES from Chastity's contractions. They stiffen as French totters up. They surround him. His eyes are glassy.

FRENCH

(slurs)

Let's get this over with. I challenge you to a duel.

He brandishes his cane. They LAUGH. Jarl knocks him out and takes his cane. Sven draws his pistol and looks up to the brothel window. TOWNSFOLK close their eyes and cross themselves.

Jacobsen shakes his head and points to the nearby Curiosity Shop. They pick up his body, and Sven leads the way.

**INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - DAY**

Lily looks from the window to Chastity in the throes of labor. She whispers into Molly's ear.

LILY  
They're going to kill French!

Molly gets up but Chastity SCREAMS.

MOLLY  
Hollingsworth--?

He's not there. Chastity moans.

**INT. CURIOSITY SHOP - DAY**

The Goons chase Yun out and throw French in a corner, slap his face so he wakes.

FRENCH  
You need help?

SVEN  
You should have left when you could. Now it's over.

FRENCH  
Oh, good, then I'll just rest here.

JARL  
How we gonna do it? Beat him? Shoot him?

Sven brandishes the cane.

SVEN  
No. Just like he did to Olaf.

French, turns away from them, puts on a MASK from his pocket.

SVEN (CONT'D)  
I avenge you--!

Sven pulls the cane's handle. FIZZT!--a GREEN GAS explodes from it. The Goons CHOKE, fall to the ground, as French rises, plucks the now empty cane...



**EXT. CURIOSITY SHOP - CONTINUOUS**

and exits as TOWNSFOLK back away from him. In the open air he hands the mask to Yun.

FRENCH  
Wear this before you go in.

YUN  
Wait. The man who sold the items.  
His family lived across the river,  
fifty-sixty miles. They may help  
with your brother.

French nods, pushes the cane handle firmly back in, sees--

**EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY**

--Jacobsen stands alone in the middle. His hands hover over six-shooters. Chastity MOANS faintly from the brothel.

French and Hollingsworth pass and toss canes to each other. French catches his sharply and WHIPS a sword from it without breaking his path straight at Jacobsen.

JACOBSEN  
Chink, that sword of yours--

FRENCH  
Draw.

Jacobsen eyes Hollingsworth, pistol still beneath his duster.

FRENCH (CONT'D)  
He won't shoot. He wants all this  
steel through your gut, too.

JACOBSEN  
I'm warning--

FRENCH  
I am warned! Draw!

Jacobsen does and FIRES. French swipes his sword, and DEFLECTS it. SPARKS FLY as the blade recoils with a TING!

FRENCH (CONT'D)  
Where're your men now?

JACOBSEN  
That was lucky!

Jacobsen takes careful aim and fires both guns. French's sword CUTS bullets from the air. More sparks.

FRENCH  
 And that badge.  
 (TING!)  
 A sham to hide--  
 (TING!)  
 --your power-lust.

Jacobsen fires both guns again.

FRENCH (CONT'D)  
 Beatings!  
 (TING!)  
 Lynching!  
 (TING!)  
 And for what?

Jacobsen frantically fires his guns empty. French's sword is a wall of steel and sparks. He closes the distance and lays the rapier's point on Jacobsen's jugular. Jacobsen falls to his knees.

JACOBSEN  
 H-how'd you do that?

FRENCH  
 All for a stupid inn?

Kwok and Yun, jaws dropped, look toward the inn.

JACOBSEN  
 That shack? No! Because the chink--  
 (the rapier presses  
 tighter)  
 --Chinaman got her pregnant!

FRENCH  
 That "shack" is a gold mine. And  
 you know it.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILROAD SPUR TRACK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

French again watches railroad workers lay track.

FRENCH (O.S., CONT'D)  
 Once the spur track opens--

CUT TO:

EXT. RATTLESNAKE CREEK MAIN ROAD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

French and Molly again see Jacobsen shake hands with Hill.

FRENCH (O.S., CONT'D)  
 --which you assured meeting with  
 your railroad executive--

CUT TO:

EXT. CURIOSITY SHOP STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

French again sees ranch hands build cattle stockades.

FRENCH (O.S., CONT'D)  
 --and using low-paid drones to  
 build your cattle yards.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY (RETURN TO PRESENT)

BACK ON French.

FRENCH  
 Kwok's lonely inn won't be enough  
 to hold all the guests.

JACOBSEN  
 I worked for it! I built this town.  
 And you want to take it from me.

FRENCH  
 But you went too far. How hard  
 would it have been to turn that  
 ambition into building another inn?

JACOBSEN  
 He was on my land! That I leased to  
 him for ninety-nine years.

FRENCH  
 Well, now you're going to pay.

Jacobsen swallows, but fear has vanished from his eyes.

JACOBSEN  
 Kill me then, you swindler, you  
 thief. You quack!

At that word, French's eyes gleam.

FRENCH  
Don't...call me...a quack....

Hollingsworth gasps, steps closer. French tightens his grip.

FRENCH (CONT'D)  
No.

He lowers his sword.

FRENCH (CONT'D)  
I'm off to deliver your baby.

He starts to sheathe his sword. But his anger vanishes, and he smiles. Moves his thumb and sheathes the sword carefully into the cane. Jacobsen cackles.

JACOBSEN  
My baby? That's--Kwok's baby!

Kwok's face lights up. French sees him and sighs.

FRENCH  
No, *monsieur*.

CUT TO:

INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

French notices the red rash around Chastity's belly button.

FRENCH (O.S., CONT'D)  
She had a red ring on her navel.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY (RETURN TO PRESENT)

BACK ON French.

FRENCH  
This late in the pregnancy, it means the father's race is the same as the mother's. And the fetus has settled too high. It is yours.

Molly arches an eyebrow. Kwok deflates, stunned by the news. French walks away. Jacobsen fishes for his gun--and Hollingsworth STEPS on his hand.

JACOBSEN

Agh! So what? She's a *whore*. I won't take responsibility for a lowly whore bastard whore child.

HILL (O.S.)

Well, then, that's bad news.

Jacobsen looks up to Hill standing with the Marshall behind.

HILL (CONT'D)

I had misgivings about the spur track here. Now I'm positive you're a man not to take responsibilities seriously.

(loud to the crowd)

I suspend construction on the spur.

RAILROAD LABORERS and RANCH HANDS GROAN and GRUMBLE. Marshall holds up HAND-IRONS.

MARSHALL

And until I can get a look at election results, "sheriff," I'm placing you under arrest for fraud and impersonating a peace officer.

JACOBSEN

This is all--everything I said was under duress! You saw him!

Jacobsen continues his excuses under the Marshall's care as French passes Kwok.

JACOBSEN (O.S., FAINT) (CONT'D)

I disavow any ties to the whore and the bastard brat!

KWOK

The child...is not mine?

FRENCH

Apparently not. I'm sorry, my friend.

KWOK

Do you think she would mind if I was there anyway?

French claps him on the shoulder.

FRENCH

I think she would be grateful.

They pass Railroad Workers and Ranch Hands.

RAILROAD WORKER  
We worked without pay for that  
bastard.

RANCH HAND  
I moved from Illinois on his advert  
and now there won't be work.

RAILROAD WORKER  
Screw that Marshall.

They CHARGE and attack Jacobsen, throwing his clothes in the air, drive him from town. Hollingsworth escapes the stampede, and the Marshall tries to impose order. French turns Kwok back to the brothel. PRE-LAP newborn baby noises as we...

CUT TO:

**INT. BROTHEL BACK ROOM - DAY**

...where Molly swaddles an ALL-WHITE baby girl and hands it to an exhausted, but glowing, Chastity.

CHASTITY  
Beautiful green eyes, little Jacky.  
Just like your father!

French glowers as he packs his instruments. Molly tsks and approaches. Puts a hand on his shoulder.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)  
And we'll live in his biiiig ranch  
with a fire going and servants to  
cook and clean.

Kwok stands in a corner, hat in hand. French snaps his case.

FRENCH  
I'm sorry to say the man is under  
arrest. Or worse.

CHASTITY  
Jacky? You're a liar, mister. He IS  
this town, and we'll be together.

FRENCH  
Like so many before you, I'm afraid  
you are on your own.

Chastity fights to keep her voice down for her daughter.

CHASTITY

Mr. Jacobsen would never abandon me  
and his infant daughter.

MOLLY

He's right, honey. The marshall  
arrested him.

CHASTITY

What...? Th-this is your fault!  
Everything was going right until  
you told me to trust this...this...

French looks down to the floor. Chastity wipes away tears.

KWOK

Chastity.

CHASTITY

Kwok. Why are you here? You're not  
the father.

KWOK

I know. Can I see her?

She nods, hands her to him. He holds her, delighted.

KWOK (CONT'D)

So beautiful. Green eyes are lucky!

Chastity snuffles, looks at Kwok as he sits next to her.

KWOK (CONT'D)

What are you going to call her?

CHASTITY

Don't know now. What do you think?

KWOK

She's soft as plum blossom. Chinese  
word is Mei.

CHASTITY

Like "Edna Mae?"

KWOK

Could be. M-E-I in English.

He hands Mei to her, turns away.

CHASTITY

I like that name. I mean, meaning  
plum blossom and all. Her name is  
going to be "Mei." M-E-I Mei.

Kwok stops, reacts.

CHASTITY (CONT'D)  
If you have room at the inn.

Overjoyed, Kwok kneels and kisses Chastity. Kisses little Mei. Tries to say something to French, to Molly, who both smile.

FRENCH  
At a loss for words?

**EXT. BROTHEL - NIGHT**

Ranch Hands, Railroad Workers, Townsfolk mill in front.

RANCH HAND  
All this on account of one  
Chinaman. Boy, I wish we had  
lynched him and had it done.

Kwok steps from the brothel. He raises his fists.

KWOK  
Everyone! I'm a father!

French and Hollingsworth run from the back, weapons ready. The Crowd turns to Kwok. A Railroad Worker throws Jacobsen's HAT to the ground and SPITS.

KWOK (CONT'D)  
DRINKS ON THE HOUSE!

The crowd considers this a beat. ERUPT in CHEERS, grab Kwok, carry him to the Inn, past a stunned French and Hollingsworth. Hill speaks with Marshall.

HILL  
Quite a crowd here. Maybe a spur  
track would not be unjustified.

They walk away. Hollingsworth shrugs at French's look.

**END ACT FIVE**



TAG**EXT. GREEN BOX - DAY (LATER)**

French, freshly shaved, painfully loads his bags as Hollingsworth and Driver ready the vehicle. Molly watches with her fists on her hips.

MOLLY

You know, I've seen rashes on plenty of pregnant women before.

French just arches an eyebrow and continues.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Of course, Jacobsen hadn't. I guess that was the point.

French smiles and hands his bag up to Driver.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Well?! Aren't you going to speak with me? You're just leaving without saying good-bye?

Kwok walks up with more luggage.

KWOK

Your last bags, Mr. Chang.

FRENCH

I'm a man on a mission, Cherie. A hard life on the road, I know, but I travel prepared.

He hoists a huge CASE and GRUNTS.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Hollingsworth! What do we have packed in--?

He sees--it is PINK with WHITE LACE. Painted: MISS MOLLY ROBINSON -- SOUTHERN BELLE. Drops and glares at Molly, who smiles and hands Hollingsworth another parcel.

MOLLY

I've seen your act and decided it could use a woman's talents.

French sputters at Hollingsworth, who stifles a chuckle.

FRENCH

My act--?! You knew about this?

MOLLY

You louts cost me my job and until  
I secure a new position....

FRENCH

WE cost YOU...?

She steps inside the Green Box.

MOLLY (O.S.)

How cozy! Bigger than I thought.

FRENCH

Well, that is due to certain  
architectural....

MOLLY (O.S.)

The bed will do nicely! You  
gentlemen take the roof.

FRENCH

See here...!

Molly pops her head out.

MOLLY

I'm teasing, of course. I'm sure we  
can come to an...arrangement.

She smiles and settles back inside. Hollingsworth gives  
French an enigmatic look and follows.

French chuckles. Sees Hombre, who returns the look like a  
sage. French squats, scratches his ears. Hombre licks his  
face.

FRENCH

Sorry, old man. It's the chain for  
you in these parts....

He grabs the chain to cinch it more tightly. Hombre bows his  
head, whines. French sighs, then sets his jaw.

CUT TO:

**EXT. RATTLESNAKE CREEK MAIN ROAD - DAY**

Driver leads the Green Box down the center. Hombre leads the  
way, nipping at TOWNSFOLK, prancing like a spring lamb.  
Horses rear, chicken scatter, men flee screaming.

**EXT. RATTLE CREEK OUTSKIRTS - DAY**

Back on the tumbling trail--PAST a naked, bound Jacobsen rotting in the sun.

MOLLY (O.S.)  
How'd you deflect those bullets?

FRENCH (O.S.)  
A magician never reveals his--

HOLLINGSWORTH (O.S.)  
I put wax ones in.

FRENCH (O.S.)  
--secrets! Damn you. Oh, well, just  
don't tell her--

HOLLINGSWORTH (O.S.)  
And flint and steel in the blade.

MOLLY (O.S.)  
Ooo. Very inventive.

FRENCH (O.S.)  
Hollingsworth!

So the Green Box makes its way as the sun draws to the hills.

**THE END**