

GUNSMOKE & GLORY

Written By

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SECOND DRAFT
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FADE IN:

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

Across the dusty tundra races a TRAIN. Giant plumes of ash-black smoke spat out in huge coughs.

The SOUND of wheels over the tracks is like machine gun fire.

THE TRAIN

roars along. One engine, two carriages. Faces at the window of the first.

The second is a sealed box car.

INT. TRAIN ENGINE CAB - DAY

The ENGINEER sticks his head out the window. Cranes to look forward.

Beside him the STOKER waits ... a shovelful of coal at the ready. Eager.

ENGINEER

Wait...

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The tracks move into a small canyon. Rock walls either side cast deep shadows.

The train passes a crude warning sign: HANGMAN'S HILL.

INT. TRAIN ENGINE CAB - DAY

A cry of anguish from the engine itself. Steam hisses.

The Engineer turns dials. Worried expression.

INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - DAY

A dozen or so passengers scattered throughout the carriage.

A WOMAN with a large colourful bonnet bobs her head like a nervous chicken.

BONNET WOMAN
What was that noise?

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The train begins to slow. The canyon walls close in. The incline of the hill becomes prominent.

ENGINEER (O.S)
Okay ... NOW!

INT. TRAIN ENGINE CAB - DAY

The Stoker starts to shovel furiously ... feeds coal into the furnace with no pause.

The Engineer adjusts dials, twists controls. Hisses of steam.

The sound of grinding metal on metal.

EXT. HANGMAN'S HILL - DAY

A steep bitch of a hill. The train struggles. Limp forward.

THE WHEELS spin wildly as they fight to keep grip.

Grinding metal NOISES as SPARKS explode with the exertion.

INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - DAY

Nervous chatter.

A child's ball rolls down the central aisle as the train moves higher up Hangman's Hill.

A MAN gets up. Tips his hat to the child's mother.

STRANGER
I'll get it for you.

MOTHER
Thank you, sir.

He carefully makes his way down the carriage. Against the incline. Uses the seats to steady his progress.

EXT. HANGMAN'S HILL - DAY

Now inclined steeply, the train HUFFS its way forward ...
PUFFS its anguish along the tracks.

They pass a new sign: HILLS CREST - 600FT

INT. TRAIN ENGINE CAB - DAY

The Engineer lets out a WHOOP!

ENGINEER
Almost there! More coal!

The Stoker digs the shovel into the coal mountain once more.
Throws coal into the furnace.

INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - DAY

The Stranger stands at the end of the carriage. Braces
himself on the seats as he grabs the child's ball.

Throws it up the carriage.

The boy catches it. Smiles.

The Stranger tips his hat. Disappears quickly through the
connecting door.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

Loud noise of wheels on tracks.

Steam ... smoke billows around the Stranger.

With cool ease he steps from the passenger carriage across
the gap ... to the box car.

INT. TRAIN ENGINE CAB - DAY

The Engineer claps the Stoker on his shoulder.

ENGINEER
Done it, Bob! Thirty more feet and
we've beaten the Hill again!

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

The peak of the hill looms ahead.

The engine starts to crest.

EXT. BOX CAR - DAY

The Stranger kneels. Works the connector mechanism. Strains.

The pin comes free with a CLUNK!

He falls back against the door of the Box Car. Smiles.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

The engine and passenger carriage move towards the crest of the hill.

The Box Car's momentum carries it forward a few feet. Slows.

INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - DAY

The boy - ball clutched under his arm - walks to the connecting door. Pulls it open to reveal

THE STRANGER stood on the lip of the Box Car as it slowly starts to roll back DOWN the hill.

He waves.

THE BOY waves back.

EXT. BOX CAR - DAY

Unattached the Box Car rolls faster.

The Stranger works on the door. A moment later it opens.

INT. BOX CAR - DAY

The Stranger moves through the Box Car. Past stacks of cargo. All labelled: GUNSMOKE MINERS ASSOCIATION.

A horse is stabled in a small haybox. It whinnies nervously as the Stranger passes. He pats the animals nose.

STRANGER
Easy, boy. Easy.

The horse calms.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

At the bottom of the hill the track levels out for a hundred feet before a sharp curve leads it across a bridge that spans a deep ravine.

THE BOX CAR rockets down the incline. Hits the level.

SPARKS!

The squeal of metal on metal.

The Box Car rocks dangerously.

INT. BOX CAR - DAY

Violent shakes. Boxes tumble around. Smash open. Sticks of dynamite roll across the floor along with shattered jars of grain, sugar, coffee.

The Stranger navigates the hazards. Gets to the rear door. Opens it.

Steps out.

EXT. BOX CAR - DAY

On the foot-stall, the Stranger clings to the rail. His hair whipped about his face. His long coat-tails flutter like a birds wings.

He moves down a step. Grabs the manual brake. Pulls.

SPARKS as the brake is applied to the metal wheels. They burn hot.

THE STRANGER grimaces. Pulls harder. Strains.

THE BOX CAR rockets along towards the curve.

STRANGER
Too fast!

INT. BOX CAR - DAY

Everything shakes. Jostled around. The horse snorts. Stamps.

EXT. BOX CAR - DAY

It rattles along. Closer to the curve - twenty feet.

Too fast for the curve.

THE STRANGER yanks the brake lever back. Hard.

It snaps!

He stares dumbfounded at the useless lever. Throws it aside. Looks at THE RAPIDLY APPROACHING CURVED TRACK.

INT. BOX CAR - DAY

The Stranger rushes through. Looks around. Debris from the shattered boxes.

The Box Car shakes violently. He falls. Lands amidst DYNAMITE STICKS.

He looks at the horse.

EXT. BOX CAR - DAY

The runaway carriage zooms towards the curve.

INT. BOX CAR - DAY

A low hissing sound.

The Stranger stares at the far wall. Sticks of dynamite stacked against it. On it.

A BURNING FUSE rushes across the floor.

THE STRANGER astride the horse kicks the beast into a sprint. Towards the short wall.

EXT. BOX CAR - DAY

It hits the curve. Bounces off the tracks. Crashes towards the ravine edge.

As the Box Car bounces again, the rear of the carriage EXPLODES into splinters.

THE HORSE leaps out!

The Stranger holds tight. Hunkers low as the pair sail through the air. Land unhurt, yet singed.

THE BOX CAR careens over the edge in flames.

EXT. RAVINE LIP - DAY

The Stranger reins the horse in. Watches the Box Car disappear over the edge.

STRANGER

I can always search through the wreckage. Come on --

A huge EXPLOSION. A FIREBALL mushrooms up.

A beat.

STRANGER

Ah ... Bart's not going to be happy about this.

He turns the horse.

Rides off.

FADE TO:

EXT. GUNSMOKE - DAY

A small frontier mining town. Ringed by a tall wooden fence. Across the entrance a curved sign: GUNSMOKE.

Either side of the Main Street a dozen buildings, six either side.

A large mountain dominates the North point. A dark mouth opens into its face.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - DAY

People go about their business. Men tip their hats as ladies pass by.

A couple of schoolchildren run down, chase a hoop. Keep it rolling with a stick. They laugh.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

A man dressed in black sits on a pale thin horse. A strange flat hat on his head. Grey/white stalks of hair poke out beneath it.

He stares down at the town below.

The RIDER takes out a silver Harmonica. Presses it to thin, cracked lips. His cheeks sink even further. He starts to play a mournful tune.

EXT. GUNSMOKE - DAY

Sat on a stool beside the gates, JEFF UNGER tilts his hat back as harmonica music drifts down. Strong features, weather-beaten face.

Jeff looks towards the hill. Towards the man in black.

His hand reaches for the shotgun nestled beside him.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The tune continues.

The Rider raises a thin gaunt hand.

Down below, Jeff waves back.

A beat.

With a gentle prod, horse and rider start down the grassy hill towards the town.

THE GRASS beneath the horse turns brown as they pass. A path of withered grass left behind in their wake.

THE RIDERS EYES focus on the town.

He continues his mournful tune.

FADE TO:

EXT. DODGE CITY - DAY

A bustling, thriving town. Very fast paced. People everywhere. Dusty, dirty, its a working town.

Two MEN in tan longcoats walk the boardwalk. Everyone they pass either tips their hat or smiles as they step aside to allow them to pass.

The taller of the pair, MCCLAREN holds a shotgun under his arm. The smaller, JAMES, checks his pistol.

JAMES

... and then she started crying.

MCCLAREN

So what are you going to do?

JAMES

WE are going to do what we're told
and go with her back to the town.
Check it out.

They walk past the General Store. A pleasant woman with worry in her eyes pokes her head out of the door.

PROPRIETOR

Coo-ee! Marshall!

The men turn. Both tip their hats.

JAMES

Morning Louisa. Fine day, wouldn't
you say?

LOUISA

Fine or not, the day will still
happen. Doesn't matter what I
think. What are you doing about
that unsavoury character in the
Golden Sunset?

MCCLAREN

We're just heading their now,
Ma'am.

Louisa comes out. Broom in hand.

LOUISA

You be careful, Marshall. I hear he
shot Two-Gun Willy down in
Abernathy last week. Didn't even
think about it. One minute Two-Gun

(MORE)

LOUISA (cont'd)
 was breathing like you and me, the next he was being measured for his last suit. And it was all over a card game of all things. A card game! So you go do what you need to do but be careful, Marshall.

MCCLAREN
We will.

James holsters his pistol. Tips his hat again.

JAMES
 Have to be going now, Louisa. You go back inside and tell your Vernon to keep out of the Golden Sunset.

LOUISA
 Too late for that.

INT. GOLDEN SUNSET - DAY

Quiet. A few die-hard regulars sit. Drink. A young boy in black and whites sweeps the floor. Sneaks looks at a penny-dreadful he keeps in his apron.

The BARTENDER sees this. Smiles.

VERNON (O.S)
 How about another bottle, Tom?

The Bartender takes a bottle of whiskey to a table dead centre of the room.

Four men sit around it. The speaker, VERNON has the larger stack of chips before him. A good deal of cash in the table.

BARTENDER
 You got yourself a good pile there, Vern. Why not quit when you're ahead for a change. Take that money back to your Louisa. Store should be opening soon, anyway.

Vernon snatches the bottle.

VERNON
 You ain't my wife so you don't get to tell me what to do.

A beat.

Everyone looks up. All except one. The Stranger stares at his cards.

VERNON

(hurried)

Not that I'm saying I let my wife tell me what to do.

BARTENDER

Course not Vernon. Oh, hello Louisa...

Vernon snaps his head round.

The young boy looks up from his book. Waves.

Laughter from everyone.

Vernon glares at the bartender.

VERNON

That's not funny, Tom!

A bulky CATTLE DRIVER to Vernon's right snatches the bottle. Pours whiskey.

CATTLE DRIVER

We going to play or you going to jibber-jabber all day? Clancy and me gotta meet Mr Dawson before noon.

VERNON

You work for Dawson?

CATTLE DRIVER

We work for ourselves, mister.

VERNON

Free grazers?

CLANCY, sat to Vernon's left puts a huge revolver on the table.

CLANCY

That a problem?

A beat.

Several chips suddenly crash onto the table.

THE STRANGER (O.S)
 For someone who don't want to
 jibber-jabber, you're sure doing a
 lot of it.

The Cattle Driver turns his stare to the Stranger.

CATTLE DRIVER
 You don't want to be testing me.

He opens his coat to reveal several pistols.

The Stranger raises his hands, palms out.

STRANGER
 I just came here to play cards.
 Passing through myself. I don't
 want any trouble.

JAMES (O.S)
 Looks like you found trouble.

James stands in the doorway. Pistol drawn. Pointed at the table.

He steps inside.

The Stranger watches as James approaches.

STRANGER
 'Fraid the tables full.

JAMES
 Didn't come to play.

He pulls aside his long jacket. A star badge pinned to his black waistcoat.

STRANGER
 Lawman, huh?
 (beat)
 Dangerous work.

JAMES
 Not really.

Vernon, his eyes locked on the Stranger, talks with a wobble to his voice.

VERNON
 What brings you Marshall.

JAMES

You heard about Two-Gunn down in Abernathy? Stage he was with got robbed. He got a gut full of lead and his murderer got two thousand dollars.

STRANGER

That's a lot of money.

JAMES

That it is. But this aint about the money. Two-Gun was a friend of mine.

Clancy and the Cattle Driver share a look. Vernon looks scared to death.

STRANGER

Well, I sure am sorry for your loss.

JAMES

His killers going to be a lot sorrier come the morning.

VERNON

How ... how so?

James, gun trained on the table, laughs. Its cold.

JAMES

Dawn hanging.

The Stranger leans back in the chair. Calm. Cool.

STRANGER

That so?

JAMES

Yup. See, Two-Gun saw the man who shot him up close. Was able to pass on that detail before he died.

James moves the gun to point at Clancy.

JAMES

Clancy Jones, you're under arrest for the killing of William Harold Bannerman and the robbery of the Abernathy coach.

Clancy stands slowly. His hand hangs close to the gun strapped to his thigh.

CLANCY

I ain't going with you. Abernathy is twenty miles south of Dodge. You're a Dodge City lawman. That makes Abernathy out your jurisdiction.

The Cattle Driver also stands. A gun already in his hand.

CATTLE DRIVER

This true, Clancy? Is what he says right?

CLANCY

Damn fool of an old man raised his gun to me. Weren't his money.

CATTLE DRIVER

You robbed the stage?

Clancy grins.

CLANCY

How'd you think I paid for those whores? Don't worry, I was cutting you in on it. Soon as we sort out Mr Marshall here.

The Cattle Driver turns his gun towards James.

CATTLE DRIVER

Two against one. Bad odds for you.

JAMES

Which one you got?

A loud KA-CHACK! as a shotgun is loaded. All turn to THE BALCONY where McClaren stands. Shotgun aimed at the Cattle Driver.

MCCLAREN

I got me that long drink of water. Dead centre.

JAMES grins. Looks to Clancy.

JAMES

Then I guess you're mine.

CLANCY

Still outta your jurisdiction. Can't be taking me in. Wouldn't be legal. It'd be murder.

MCCLAREN

Ain't just Marshalls anymore,
Jones. We're Pinkerton men now.

JAMES

That means we go where we want,
when we want and arrest who we
want. I could shoot you down right
here and no one would say boo about
it.

He steps forward. Thrusts the pistol right to Clancy's face.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(forceful)

Now - put your guns down.

The Stranger stands. Hands raised.

STRANGER

If you'll excuse me gents, this is
between y'all.

He reaches for his money. Clancy draws another gun to point
at the Stranger.

CLANCY

You touch that money and you'll be
playing cards with Two-Gun.

The Stranger opens his jacket.

STRANGER

As you can see, I ain't carrying,
Mister. Don't believe in iron.

CLANCY

Then I'll have shot me a fool.

JAMES

You ain't shooting anyone.

MCCLAREN

Let me take 'em, James.

CATTLE DRIVER

You can try!

JAMES

Hold still.

MCCLAREN

Damn it James! You're such a see-saw! Let's take 'em. Didn't say they were wanted alive.

CLANCY

Try it!

Everyone starts shouting. Hard threats. Curses.

A chaotic stand off.

THE DOORS burst open. Four ARMED COWBOYS rush in. One pistol whips the boy to the ground.

Behind McClaren a fifth cowboy eases a Winchester against the man's cheek.

COWBOY #5

Easy.

A TALL MAN dressed in expensive threads steps into the saloon. BLACK BART wears a black stetson laced with silver dollars.

BLACK BART

Oh, Hoody. What have you got mixed up in now?

JAMES

I don't know who you are, mister, but this don't concern you.

BLACK BART

My business doesn't concern you either lawman.

(beat)

At least not this day.

He walks to the table. Stands beside Vernon.

BLACK BART

Do you mind?

Vernon gets to shakey feet. Holds the chair. Black Bart sits. Vernon moves to the bar. Black Bart stares across the table at the Stranger.

BLACK BART

Hoody.

HOODY

Bart.

BLACK BART

You've a lot to answer for, Mr
Brown. A lot.

The Cattle Driver tips a nod at Clancy. Clancy nods back.

BLACK BART

Did you think I wouldn't be mad?

The Cattle Driver goes to fire.

JAMES anticipates. Fires first. Blasts the Cattle Driver in
the chest.

CLANCY fires. Misses the Marshall.

MCCLAREN ducks aside as the Cowboy opens fire. Grabs the
rifle. Slams it back into the man's face.

The next few moments are a confusing explosion of gunfire. A
maelstrom of bullets and smoke.

In the eye of the storm, surrounded by gunsmoke and the
cries of the combatants, Hoody and Black Bart stare at one
another. Neither flinches.

Black Bart picks up the cards.

BLACK BART

It's taken me two weeks to find
you.

CLANCY cries out as a bullet opens his shoulder. He spins
round. Fires. Blasts a gunfighter off his feet.

HOODY pours them both a drink. Puts the bottle between them.

HOODY

You did good. Maybe if I'd tried to
hide my trail you'd have had a
harder time.

BLACK BART

(sneers)

You ain't that good.

THE WHISKEY BOTTLE explodes. Showers the table with glass.
Whiskey puddles beneath the pistol.

MCCLAREN gets punched in the face. Recoils. Comes back,
fists flying.

JAMES fires at the nearest cowboy. His gun CLICKS EMPTY. In a flash the weapon is holstered. He throws himself onto the two cowboys. They all crash to the floor.

BLACK BART
You cost me a lot of money.

HOODY
I can pay you back. You know that.

BLACK BART
This isn't about money. This is about pride. My pride. My reputation.

JAMES ducks under a wild swing. One of Black Bart's cowboys sneaks behind him. Pistol cracks James on the back of the head. He goes down - out cold.

HOODY
You shouldn't worry about such things.

BLACK BART
Oh, but I do.

Bart pulls out an impressive solid silver pistol. Intricate designs down the barrel.

BLACK BART
Time to go home, Hoody.

MCCLAREN hauls the cowboy over the balcony. He falls through the air to CRASH through the poker table.

Smashed glass, money, chips and the pistol are thrown up.

HOODY in a smooth move, plucks the pistol from the air. Levels it at Black Bart.

BLACK BART
(grins)
You don't believe in killing.

HOODY
Very true.

With no hesitation he throws the gun. It strikes Bart dead centre of the forehead. Bart goes down.

Hoody runs through the batwing doors.

EXT. GOLDEN SUNSET SALOON - DAY

Hoody runs out. Skids to a halt.

A line of GUNHANDS in the street open fire.

The wood railings, pillars and a section of wall EXPLODE around Hoody.

He ducks. He dives back through the doors.

INT. GOLDEN SUNSET - DAY

The windows shatter under the deluge of firepower from outside.

Hoody jumps to his feet. Hunched low he charges past a recovering Black Bart. Up the stairs.

More gunhands burst through the doors.

BLACK BART
Shoot that man down!

They open fire.

HOODY somehow makes it to the balcony through a storm of wooden splinters as the staircase is riddled with gunfire.

MCCLAREN goes to grab him.

A GUNHAND sights on the lawman. Fires.

MCCLAREN takes the hit in the chest. Slams back against the wall, his rifle thrown up.

HOODY grabs it as he runs past. Runs along the landing. Fires at a closed door. It bursts open. He runs inside.

BLACK BART
Get him!

With the gunhands close behind, they charge up the stairs.

INT. GOLDEN SUNSET BEDROOM - DAY

Racing through the room, Hoody fires at the window.

GUNHAND #1
You any idea where he'll go?

BLACK BART
I know Hoody. He's a simple man.
He'll already be on a horse
hightailing it out of town.
Probably head to Tombstone or
Kansas City. Somewhere busy. I can
find him anytime. For now, I've
another job for us ...

They walk out leaving behind

UTTER CARNAGE

The ballisade has been blown apart. Shattered tables.
Smashed mirrors. The windows are shattered. Bullet holes
punched into every surface.

A beat.

The chandelier collapses. Shatters.

Another beat.

The crunch of glass as Vernon, Tom and the young boy raise
their heads from behind the bar.

FADE TO:

EXT. GUNSMOKE - DAY

Hunkered down between two buildings, Hoody watches Black
Bart and his men leave the Golden Sunset. Get on horses.
Ride away.

TOWNSFOLK drift to the shattered saloon. Peer inside.

A beat.

JAMES staggers out. Blood on his forehead. He wipes at it.
Talks to a thin rail of a man. He points in the direction
Bart's posse went.

Hoody waits for a moment. Slinks away into the shadows.

INT. GUNSMOKE SHERIFFS OFFICE - DAY

Dressed in the hard working clothes of a frontierswoman, LUCY UNGER sits in a high backed chair.

James enters.

LUCY
What happened to you?

James stomps past the woman to a water basin.

JAMES
Doesn't matter. Are you ready?

LUCY
You're bleeding.

She brings over a rag. Presses it to his forehead. Dabs at the wound.

He winces.

JAMES
Please ... I don't need your help.

LUCY
You look like you got run over by a herd. I thought you said it was an easy arrest. That's why I waited.

JAMES
Stage doesn't leave for another half hour.

LUCY
Time for you to get fixed then.
(beat)
Where's the other one?

James takes the rag from her. Washes it out. The water in the sink turns red.

JAMES
He won't be coming.

LUCY
He's dead?

JAMES
Are you ready?

LUCY

It's just you? That's not enough.
Even two weren't enough for what's
going on in Gunsmoke.

JAMES

And just what is going on in? So
far you've told me nothing except
ghost stories.

He grabs a bag. Opens a drawer. Starts packing clothes.

LUCY

I've told you all I can. If you
don't believe me, then why are you
coming?

JAMES

Because the Pinkerton's want me to.
Seems Gunsmoke is important to
them. God only knows why. It's just
another mining town. Soon as its
all used up, people'll move on like
they always do.

James packs several boxes of shells. Starts to reload.

LUCY

It's not just another mining town.
And those won't help you ... not in
Gunsmoke.

JAMES

(scoffs)

Ha! So what will?

Lucy pauses in the doorway. Her voice drops.

LUCY

Prayer.

She steps outside.

A beat.

James takes out another gun and holster rig. Intricate gold
symbols on both. Packs it.

EXT. STAGE COACH STATION - DAY

CHARLIE (40s) Rugged, heavysset. A bushy dirty grey beard. He thumps up to Lucy.

CHARLIE
Morning Ma'am. You the one we
taking through the Territories?

LUCY
With the Marshall, yes.

Charlie lets out a bark of a laugh.

CHARLIE
Don't you be a 'worrying ma'am. Me
and Shotgun Pete'll get you there
safely. Ain't that right, Pete?

LUCY
Pete?

Shock at the name on her face.

Charlie points a beefy finger to the top of the coach.

SHOTGUN PETE (30s). Weather beaten face. No front teeth. he cradles a huge blunderbuss. He nods down.

CHARLIE
You got a Pete, don't you? A
sweetheart.

Lucy offers a weak smile.

LUCY
In Gunsmoke.
(to Pete)
You been there before?

CHARLIE
Pete don't talk none since he got
his tongue cut out one trip.

LUCY
Savages?

Shotgun Pete waggles his tongueless mouth.

CHARLIE
That they were but their skin was
white not Red.

He passes luggage up to Pete who secures it to the roof.

CHARLIE

All lies about the Redskin. Only difference between them and us is the colour of the skin. They love their families as much, if not more, than us. Like us they'll protect them and theirs. Sure we'll be passing through the Territories but way's I see it ... we keep to ourselves, we'll be fine.

Charlie throws up the last piece of luggage.

LUCY

Wait. That's not ours.

CHARLIE

No. It's his.

LUCY

Whose?

JAMES (O.S)

We have a travelling companion.

James walks up with a troubled expression.

JAMES

I heard you talking about the Territories. We're not gong through there, right?

CHARLIE

Like I said to the Lady, you let me and Pete look after it. Been through there dozens of times. Ain't only had one run in. Don't worry ... we'll get you there safe 'n' sound.

James scowls. Takes Lucy's hand. Opens the stage door. Helps her inside.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

They take their seats on one side of the coach. On the other a figure sits slumped under a heavy Mexican poncho.

CHARLIE (O.S)

Fella fell asleep as soon as he got onboard. Wont cause you bother. Seems he'll be sleeping most of the way.

Charlie shuts the coach door. Climbs up onto the driver's seat.

Lucy wrinkles her nose. Wafts the air before her face.

LUCY
Interesting ...

James opens a window.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Charlie gets comfy. Shotgun Pete sticks his feet on the running board.

CHARLIE
Ready?

Pete nods.

Charlie gives his team of horses a yank on the reins. The four horses jog forward.

EXT. DODGE CITY - DAY

The stage coach trundles down the street.

No sooner has it turned a corner, a MEXICAN, naked save for a pair of britches, stumbles from between two buildings. He has a large bruise on his neck. Money in his hand.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The stage coach leaves Dodge City behind. A plume of plains dust in its wake.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Charlie drives the horses one handed. the other clutches a canteen. He drinks deep. Passes it to Pete.

Pete drinks. Coughs. Hands it back.

Charlie laughs. Drives the horses on.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

With sporadic jostles, James reads a newspaper. Lucy stares out the window at the passing terrain: tall hills; dust plains. Rocky outcrops.

A deep snore from their companion draws both their attention. Lucy hides her laugh behind her hand. James resumes reading.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

On a rocky outcrop, six tough looking hombres watch the stage coach rumble through the land.

A large Mexican draws a large knife.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Lucy runs her hand through her hair. Pulls at the knots. James folds the paper away.

JAMES

What's going on in Gunsmoke?

LUCY

It'll be easier to show you.

JAMES

You said that already. I want the truth, not ghost stories.

LUCY

Ghost stories are tales told around a campfire to scare little children. This isn't a tale. This is real.

JAMES

And I'm not a child and I don't scare easily.

A beat.

LUCY

Do we have anything to drink?

JAMES

(pulls out a canteen)
You're stalling.

LUCY
I'm thirsty.

The coach rocks some more. Lucy nearly drops the canteen.
The sleeping passenger snores.

She passes the canteen back.

LUCY
You ever heard of the yellow rock?

A SPLUTTER from the passenger.

JAMES
You got something to say?

A grunt. A shake of the head under the poncho.

James leans over.

JAMES
I'm talking to you!

He yanks the Mexican blanket aside to reveal

HOODY BROWN

who grins.

HOODY
Afternoon there Marshall. We there
yet?

James goes to draw. Gets the gun halfway out the holster.
Hoody grabs James arm ... pushes the gun back in.

James draws left handed ... Hoody snatches it from the
lawman's grasp ... throws it out the window.

HOODY
Don't need to be any trouble.

JAMES
Trouble has a habit of finding you.

James punches Hoody ... Hoody falls back across the seats
... James draws.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Roars along.

A WHEEL

hits a sinkhole. Bounces the whole coach up. It comes down violently. Shakes.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Everyone is thrown about.

JAMES hits the door. It crashes open. He falls through. Drops his gun to grab the door. He hangs out, feet drag in the dust.

Another jostle. James loses his grip.

LUCY grabs him. Struggles to hold him. Throws a scared glance back at Hoody.

He watches.

LUCY
Help me, damn it!

HOODY
Help you ... he was going to shoot me. You were going to shoot me!

JAMES tries to pull himself up. Another jostle of the coach. He slips out further. Feet close to the rear wheel.

Dust everywhere.

JAMES
It's your fault McClaren's dead.

HOODY
Seems to me people close to you end up getting dead. I don't wanna be one of them.

James slips some more.

JAMES
Pull me in, damn you!

LUCY
There's money in my bag. It's yours. Help me!

Hoody opens her bag. Takes the money. Frowns.

HOODY
Is this all you have?

LUCY
He's slipping!

She loses her grip. James falls ...

HOODY'S HAND grabs James' arm. Yanks him high enough for the lawman to grab the inside of the door. He hangs half in, half out the bouncing coach.

HOODY
Seriously ... is this all you have?

James pulls himself inside the coach. Slams the door shut.

JAMES
I suppose I should say thanks.

HOODY
Suppose you should.

JAMES
And no one died.

A GUNSHOT!

Charlie falls from the stage coach past the window. Into the dust, blood on his back. His body is left behind in moments.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

From out of the sun ride the six hombres. They charge towards the coach.

Another shot.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

In the process of grabbing the reins, Shotgun Pete is shot in the back. He falls on the floor plate.

Spooked, the horses rush off.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

James goes to draw. Empty holsters.

JAMES
You got guns?

Hoody shakes his head.

HOODY
Never fired one.

LUCY
Pete's got one.

JAMES
He's too busy with the horses.
Damn!

HOODY
I'll get it.

Before James can reply, Hoody climbs out the window.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Hoody drags himself onto the roof of the coach. A bullet whizzes past his head.

He jumps down onto the drivers seat. SHOTGUN PETE lies in the footwell.

More bullets whizz past him as he grabs the reins. Turns to see

THE POSSE

charging in. They open fire in a deadly barrage of pistol and rifle fire.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Bullets blast jagged holes through the coach.

Lucy hunkers down. JAMES shields her with his own body. He cries out - a stray shot grazes his arm.

LUCY
Where is he? Why aren't they
shooting back?

JAMES
Stay down!

JAMES eases out the farside window. Looks up - no Hoody on the footwell. Pete slumped forward. Only three horses.

THE FOURTH HORSE

is ridden away by Hoody

JAMES
Bastard!

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

The coach rockets along, the horses clearly spooked. They don't care where they run - just that they run.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Both Lucy and James are bounced like toys.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The Posse ride after the coach. Continue firing.

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROPS - DAY

Hoody rides his horse hard.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

JAMES struggles to the window.

JAMES
Screw this!

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

James pulls his way out the window. Onto the roof. He grabs luggage as another powerful jostle nearly unlodges him.

THE POSSE ride close. A COWBOY holds a rifle in both hands. Fires repeatedly at the shaky form of James as he inches along the roof.

Wood EXPLODES around the lawman. He looks back.

A MEXICAN fires. JAMES is struck on the temple. Spins round. Bleeding. Out cold.

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROPS - DAY

Hoody reins the horse to a stop. Looks back in time to see JAMES slump across the seat.

Watches a COWBOY ride up to the side of the coach.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

The COWBOY rides alongside. Reaches to the door.

LUCY kicks hard. The door slams into the man, knocks him from the horse.

He clings briefly to the door before a solid punch from LUCY sends him under the rear wheel.

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROPS - DAY

HOODY winces.

HOODY
Good girl.

He turns the horse away. Starts towards a wooded path into the rocks.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

The coach rumbles on. Spooked further and with the lead horse gone, the trio of horses bolt on.

Behind, the five remaining HOMBRES ride closer.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

LUCY struggles to stay on her feet. She leans out the window, hair whipped about her face.

LUCY
James!

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

IN THE FOOTWELL the inert forms of James and Shotgun Pete are jostled about.

GUNSHOTS.

THE HOMBRES open fire again. Cover fire as a GUNMAN rides right up to the rear luggage rack. Jumps.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

A loud THUMP from outside.

Lucy looks to either side. Only the blur of terrain; the clouds of dust.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

The GUNMAN climbs up over the luggage. Onto the roof.

A COWBOY turns to the left. Grins at the MEXICAN riding alongside him. Turns to the right to grin at HOODY BROWN!

HOODY throws a punch.

The COWBOY hits the dust. Hoody leaps onto the vacant horse. Lets the coach horse go.

The MEXICAN can't believe his eyes. Starts to raise his gun. Hoody jabs him in the face with the butt of his newly acquired rifle. The MEXICAN eats dirt.

ATOP THE STAGE COACH

The GUNMAN starts to work his way towards the still form of James. Low moans from the dazed lawman. A wicked smile on the GUNMAN's face. He draws a huge knife. Advances.

A HAND reaches up to grab his ankle. Yanks. The GUNMAN hits the roof hard. Looses another tooth. Drops the knife.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

THE KNIFE BLADE punches through the roof.

LUCY, her determined, fierce expression, clings to his leg.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

The GUNMAN kicks out. Catches Lucy on the forehead. She falls back on the door. Swings out over the rushing terrain.

HOODY drives his horse faster. No whip, just gentle encouragements. He rides between the last two riders. Stays level with them. Both COWBOYS DRAW.

In a smooth move, Hoody slips from the saddle just as the men FIRE. Their bullets criss-cross where he used to sit. They blast each other into the hereafter.

Hoody's boots hit the ground, trampoline him back up onto his horse.

He rides on. Towards the coach where

THE GUNMAN

gets to his feet.

LUCY hangs from the door. The coach hits another sink-hole. The door slams back... throws Lucy inside.

INT. STAGE COACH - DAY

LUCY rockets through the interior of the coach. CRASHES out the other side.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Lucy EXPLODES through the door. Flung clear. She screams.

HOODY catches her. Swings her onto the back of his horse. She holds him tight.

A breathless beat.

LUCY
I thought you'd gone.

HOODY
I had.

He starts to turn the horse away.

LUCY
Wait! What about Mr James?

Hoody lets out a frustrated shout.

HOODY
 He tried to shoot me!
 (beat)
 Damn it! Here!

He pushes the reins into her hands. Without a moments hesitation ... he LEAPS.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

ON THE ROOF the GUNMAN pulls his knife free. Starts towards the prone lawman.

A GRUNT from behind him.

HOODY (O.S)
 How about a hand here ... wait,
 never mind!

He turns.

HOODY climbs onto the roof. Brushes his hands down.

HOODY
That was harder than it looked.

The GUNMAN sneers. Tosses the knife back and forth in an impressive display of knifeman-ship. He LEAPS.

A GUNSHOT blasts the man back and off the stage coach. Hoody turns surprised eyes to look at

LUCY riding alongside. She racks another bullet.

LUCY
 We don't have time for this shit
 ... look!

She points.

Ahead ... a RAVINE looms.

Hoody jumps into the footwell. Grabs the reins.

THE HORSES run on... Hoody struggles to bring them under control... LUCY rides alongside, tries to grab the harness.

THE RAVINE is mere feet away. A powerful surge and the horses turn. A WHEEL scuffs the edge.

Hoody brings the coach to a stop. Lucy rides up.

LUCY
 You don't believe in doing things
 easy, do you?

HOODY
 You'd be surprised. This ones dead.
 (props Pete up)
 Damn. This one's still alive.

He lifts James into a sitting position.

LUCY
 What do we do?

EXT. PLAINS - LATER

The sun sets behind the hills. The coach rattles off into
 the rocks, Hoody at the reins.

FADE TO:

EXT. PLAINS - NIGHT

Thunderous pounding of hooves. A new posse ride out of the
 dark. Led by Black Bart.

The COWBOY Hoody hit with the rifle sits in the dirt. Rubs
 at his head.

COWBOY
 It was Hoody Brown.

BLACK BART
 Of course it was. He fought you
 off. Took the coach - and the prize
 - for himself.

COWBOY
 But you said no one else knew about
 it. How did Hoody --

Black Bart kicks the COWBOY back into the dirt.

BLACK BART
 We'll follow their trail. Catch up
 to them tomorrow. Let's go get Dan.

He starts his horse away.

A HOMBRE points to the COWBOY.

BLACK BART

What about Billy? We ain't got a spare horse, and mine's hankering her left.

Black Bart takes out his gun.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Flames lick at the sky from within a ring of stones. James is stretched out on a blanket. Lucy puts a cool damp rag on the lawman's forehead.

Nearby Hoody pats down the horses. Unhitched from the coach. He coos softly to them.

A GUNSHOT echoes in the dark.

LUCY

What was that?

HOODY

Guess someone got fired.

He goes back to cleaning down the horses. Lucy watches him.

LUCY

You don't strike me as a tough guy.

HOODY

Never said I was.

LUCY

James told me what happened back in town.

HOODY

Surprised he could remember any of it. For a lawman, he has a particular skill for being knocked unconscious. How is he?

JAMES

Awake.

James tries to sit up. Lucy gently pushes him back down.

LUCY

Easy. You've a concussion.

HOODY
He's fine. He's got a hard head.

JAMES
Where's Pete?

Lucy points to a mound of fresh earth. A crude crucifix made out of broken branches.

James sits up. Throws the blanket aside. Stands on shaky legs.

JAMES
I recognised those gunslingers.
They're part of Bart's gang.

LUCY
Bart? As in Black Bart? You ride
with The Black Hand gang?

HOODY
No. I don't.

JAMES
You seemed awful friendly with the
man. Like you were still part of
the gang.

HOODY
I never rode with them.

His voice hard. His eyes cold.

HOODY
And I'll take it up with anyone...
(looks at Lucy)
... anyone who says different.

JAMES (O.S)
Try it, mister.

JAMES quick draws air. Hoody looks at him with a strange puzzled expression.

JAMES
Where are my guns?

LUCY
You lost them. Now sit down before
you fall down.

JAMES
I'm fine. I--

He faints. Hoody laughs.

HOODY
I'll see if we have anything to
eat.

He wanders to the coach.

Lucy scowls.

LUCY
(mutters)
Bloody men!

She tends to James.

Hoody watches for a beat. Shakes his head. Goes back to the
luggage. Opens a case. Women's clothes.

LUCY
Do you mind?

He stuffs the clothes back inside.

HOODY
You packed enough for six. Long
trip was it?

LUCY
If you must know it took a while to
track Mr James down. He's a busy
man. Putting people like you in
jail.

HOODY
There's a lot of us around. How
long?
(pulls out a greaseproof pack)
You like jerky?

She shakes her head. He continues rooting.

HOODY
Come on. How long did it take you
to find this example of
peacekeeping excellence?

A beat.

LUCY
Five weeks?

HOODY
Five weeks? You've been away for
five weeks?
(she nods)
Alone on the trails for five weeks
says to me you had a real hankering
to find this man. What do you need
him for anyway? You got cattle
rustlers over at Gunsmoke? They
tend to get active around this
time.

LUCY
Gunsmoke is a mining town, not a
cattle town and besides... our
cattle are dead.

HOODY
Bad grazing, huh?

LUCY
Something like that.

Hoody comes over with several cans. Flops to the dirt beside
the fire. Uses a knife to open one. Holds it out to Lucy.

HOODY
Beans.

She takes it.

LUCY
Thanks.

He nods. Opens the other. Eats. They both do.

LUCY
So what now?

HOODY
We eat. We sleep. In the morning,
you head that way. You can manage a
team right? Good ... because I'm
going that way.

LUCY
You can't leave us. What if more of
Bart's men come looking for you?

HOODY

They're not looking for me. And if they are, then they won't be coming upon you will they, cos they'll be after me.

(beat)

They're not after me anyway. At least I don't think they are. Why would they be... it doesn't matter. You have your lawman to protect you, anyway.

LUCY

He's unconcious most of the time.

JAMES

I am awake you know. Any more of those beans left.

Hoody throws his can aside. Gets up.

HOODY

I'll get you one.

He goes back to the coach. Starts rummaging again. Fnds a can of beans.

HOODY

Whatever you got going on over there in Gunsmoke is your problem. Seems I have a few of my own. You've got your Marshall. You'll be fine.

Hoody throws over the cans. Lucy catches them.

LUCY

You're a selfish bastard.

HOODY

That's what they tell me.

He turns back to the luggage. Takes out a bedroll. Shakes it. Something falls out into the dirt.

A furtive look over his shoulder shows LUCY sat with her back to him. Spooning beans to James.

He picks the NUGGET OF GOLD from the dust. Stares at it.

A beat.

HOODY
 But ... I'm in no rush to be
 anyplace else.

He puts the gold back. Walks back to the campfire with the
 bedrolls.

HOODY
 Okay. You got me for a few more
 days. At least until we get you
 back home.

Lucy takes a bedroll.

LUCY
 Thank you.

HOODY
 It'll be cold.

LUCY
 That's not what I meant.

Hoody rolls his out. Gets in.

HOODY
 Get some sleep.

He rolls over.

FADE TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - DAY

Smoke drifts from the fire ring. BLACK BART stands holding
 one of the blankets. His men around him.

BLACK BART
 Still warm.

A huge brute of a man, TRACKER DAN appears from the scrub.
 He wears long buffalo furs. Many knives.

TRACKER DAN
 Many tracks lead away from this
 spot. Hard to determine the true
 track.

Black Bart draws his gun in a smooth movement. Tracker Dan
 doesn't flinch. Smiles.

TRACKER DAN
I said hard ... not impossible.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The coach rumbles across the terrain. Overhead dark skies form. In the distance, a mountain looms.

EXT. STAGE COACH - DAY

Lucy sits on one side of Hoody. James on the other. Watches him struggle with the reins.

HOODY
Horses are skittish.

The LEAD HORSE skips to one side. He brings it back in line. They whinny in fear. Make strange little jumps.

The sky has darkened further. Thunder rumbles.

JAMES
Storms a-coming.

HOODY
Nothing gets past you, does it?

James removes the bandage from his head.

LUCY
You should take it easy.

JAMES
I'm fine ... what the hell is that?

He points ahead. Illuminated by a sudden crash of lightning is a tall structure of rock - pointed like a knife blade.

LUCY
That's what I wanted to show you.
That's the mountain.

A huge crash of thunder. A roar of lightning.

A steady rain starts to fall.

EXT. GUNSMOKE - DAY

Dark skies. Torrential rain is expelled from the dark clouds. Flashes of lightning paint the wooden boards of the perimeter wall in brief swathes of silver.

The coach pulls up before the tall wooden gates. Once solid, compact, the gates hang in torn shreds.

Bullet holes riddle the wood like termite tracks. Several planks of torn wood have been reduced to splinters.

Lucy stares in disbelief. In horror. James and Hoody share a concerned look.

LUCY

Oh, my God.

She starts to scramble past Hoody. He blocks her.

HOODY

Wait.

Lucy pushes away from him. Past James instead. She climbs down into the mud. Grabs the blunderbus.

LUCY

They came out. They came out!

JAMES

Who?

She starts towards the shattered gates. James struggles out of the seat.

Hoody jumps down.

HOODY

What's going on here?

LUCY

You'll see.

HOODY

Damn it woman!

JAMES

Wait!

James goes to the rear luggage. Opens a case. Takes out a two-pistol holster rig.

HOODY
You're full of surprises.

JAMES
Better safe than sorry.

He fastens the guns to his belt.

LUCY
You two finished?

Lucy pushes through the gate. Disappears inside.

The men follow.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - DAY

The buildings are little more than shells. Most show signs of burning, their fronts blackened husks.

The three stand in the rain at the lower end of the street. Stare up the long corridor at the devastation.

THE MOUNTAIN looms at the northern tip of the town. Its dark mouth open.

BODIES lie scattered about like forgotten toys, their limbs twisted into unnatural shapes.

Tears pour from Lucy's eyes as she looks over the bodies of the dead. She grips the old weapon tight.

HOODY
What the hell happened here?

LUCY
We found them in there.

She points with the blunderbus to the cavernous mouth of the mountain.

JAMES
Found who?

Her answer is a shake of the head.

A SUDDEN NOISE from a building beside them. James draws in a quick motion. Hoody pushes Lucy behind him.

JAMES
Who's there?

Movement in the building. A shuffling sound.

JAMES
I'm a US marshall. I'm armed. Come
out slowly, hands raised.

A shadow behind the shattered glass of the window moves. The
sound of something being knocked over.

JAMES
Come out. Now!

He cocks his guns. A shadow lengthens in the doorway.

JAMES
Slowly!

An old man - SELBY - stumbles out. Hands grope the air.

Lucy cries out. Pushes past Hoody. Slaps James' guns down.

LUCY
Don't shoot!

She rushes forward to the old man, Hoody close behind her.
With fresh tears she grabs the old man. They both fall to
the floor. Holds him to her. Turns him.

Gasps!

HIS EYES are nothing but black pits. Ragged flesh around
each socket.

LUCY
Oh, my God!

SELBY
Lucy ... is that you?

LUCY
I'm here.

SELBY
You came back. You came back.

LUCY
Of course I came back.

Hoody kneels close. Helps sit the old man up. James keeps a
watch on the dark shadows of the buildings.

HOODY
Who is he?

Lucy brushes the old man's hair out of his face. Winces as
she sees the ruins of his eyes.

LUCY
 (soft)
 He's my father.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Rain continues to fall heavily outside. The sound is a constant deluge. A lantern has been lit to ward off the fading light.

Lucy washes Selby's face. James stands by the window. Hoody stands nearby.

LUCY
 Who did this father? What happened?

SELBY
 They came out. They came out of the dark to take us into their hold.

James turns from the window. Beyond, the street is a dark strip of mystery.

JAMES
 Who? Who did this?

SELBY
 I don't know their true name but we christened them Dwellers. Ha ... christened. Bad choice of words. Demons of the dark...

HOODY
 Dwellers ... demons ... Madness. It's utter madness.

LUCY
 Does this look like madness?

She turns her fathers head to show the pits that were once his eyes.

LUCY
 Even before I left there were rumours of something that dwelt within the mountain. Some nameless threat that was awakened when we found it.

JAMES
 Found what?

HOODY

This.

He takes out the golden nugget. Throws it to the lawman. He looks at it with growing eyes.

JAMES

(awed)

You weren't joking, were you? This is --

HOODY

Just what she said. The yellow rock. Gold.

LUCY

And that's just a small sample. I was going to show you back in town but it seemed too dangerous.

(looks at Hoody)

Too many unsavoury types.

HOODY

Thanks.

JAMES

I'd heard rumours. Hell, who hasn't, but I never expected to get my hands on some. They say it'll replace the dollar as our means of currency.

HOODY

Only if there's enough of it.

SELBY

Oh, there's enough of it.

He breaks out in a chesty laugh. Lucy dabs at his forehead.

LUCY

We found it in the mountain. Gunsmoke is a mining town but not for gold ... for silver. We found the vein, sold all our silver to buy what we needed to mine the gold but before we could begin, the train with all our equipment got robbed. Destroyed.

SELBY

Bastards! Ruining a man's livelihood just so's they can take rather than earn an honest living.

Hooody keeps his best poker face in place.

LUCY

(Because we didn't have the equipment, the town decided they couldn't wait. We'd heard the rumours too ... they'd be coming and we didn't want anyone else taking what was rightfully ours.

(beat)

They went in with pickaxes.

SELBY

And came out with something more.

JAMES

What the hell does that mean - came out with something more? They found the vein?

Selby laughs.

SELBY

Something found theirs.

HOODY

I'm getting all sorts of tired with you dancing around the fire Old man. What the hell happened here?

LUCY

There was something in the mountain. We woke it up.

(beat)

Damn it... if we'd had the drilling equipment we'd bought, no one would have been there when they came across the Dwellers.

HOODY

I guess that was my fault.

LUCY

What?

(realisation dawns)

You! You robbed our train.

Hooody shrugs.

HOODY

It's not perfect, but it's a job.

She starts slapping him.

LUCY
Do you know what you did?

HOODY
I tried to rob a train. Didn't work
out too well.

She really starts to punch his arm now.

LUCY
He was right. You are a disaster to
everyone around you.

He grabs her arms.

HOODY
I didn't set out to hurt you. It's
a job. Just a job. Wait! What's
wrong with me? It's not like I set
out to hurt you personally.

LUCY
But you did! And because of you
they're dead. They're all dead!

Hoody pushes her away.

HOODY
Like it's my fault your greed
unearthed some nameless demon of
the dark. Not me.

LUCY
You're a leech.

She slaps him across the face.

HOODY
And you're a bitch.

His slap is even harder. It rocks her back. She crashes into
a table. Knocks it over.

James launches himself at Hoody. Fists swing. Hoody punches
James down. Hard.

Selby swings his cane. Catches Hoody on the back of his leg.
Hoody rounds on him.

HOODY
What the hell?

LUCY
Don't you dare!

Her face red raw, she throws herself at Hoody. They grapple.
James gets between them. Pushes Hoody aside.

HOODY
You're crazy. All of you!

JAMES
I should shoot you right here.

HOODY
I wouldn't. You'd probably only end
up shooting yourself.

LUCY
You're a disaster.

HOODY
You weren't saying that when I was
saving you. Saving you both!

LUCY
Just get out!

She turns back to her father. James goes to help.
Hoody stares at them for a moment. Storms out.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - DAY

He stands outside. Under the awning. Composes himself. Looks
back into the Store. Lucy wipes her fathers face.

HOODY
Idiots.

A noise.

He turns to stare into the gloomy town. To the entrance.
Shadows move beneath the curved sign.

Hoody slips from the boardwalk. Disappears between the
buildings.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

More rolls of thunder. Deep booming coughs.

James lights more lanterns.

Lucy pours coffee into cups. Closes Selby's hand around one.

SELBY

I always knew you'd come back. Was that the man you went to find?

LUCY

No. God, no!

SELBY

Good. He sounds like an idiot. Who did you bring?

James comes over. Places a lantern on the table.

JAMES

That would be me, sir. Bartholomew James.

SELBY

You're a man of the law?

JAMES

That I am, sir.

SELBY

What makes you so special? Five weeks she's been gone from my side.

JAMES

A blessing hidden by a curse so it would seem. If she'd been here, then your daughter would have suffered the same fate as the others.

Shelby shifts in his seat. Nervous.

SELBY

You have knowledge of what we face here?

JAMES

Some. I know their methods. It is why, I assume, your daughter came looking for me. We've fought before.

Lucy looks surprised.

LUCY

No. I just heard that you were the best lawman in the territories. How do you know of what we face?

JAMES

It's too long a story for now. Suffice to say I've had dealings with the like before. I know how they work, if not what they ultimately want.

A beat.

LUCY

What are they?

JAMES

Lost souls of the damned. Trapped between worlds, forced to do the bidding of their dark master.

He looks at Selby.

JAMES

Though why they are here is a mystery to me. A riddle that needs to be answered.

James pulls his gun. Rams it under the old man's chin.

JAMES

So talk!

EXT. HOTEL ROOF - NIGHT

The day has truly fled.

Thunder rumbles overhead. The dark sky split by lightning.

Hoody huddles beneath the sign of the hotel. Peeks through broken slats at

SEVERAL DARK FIGURES

that stroll up the street. Towards the General Store.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy is beside herself with rage.

James grips the back of Selby's head, his gun pressed tight to the man's flesh.

LUCY
What the hell do you think you're doing?

JAMES
He ain't your father! Not anymore!

LUCY
Are you out of your freaking mind!?
I know my father! Let. Him. Go!

James presses the gun tighter.

JAMES
Tell her!

Lucy tries to pull James away. He pushes her aside.

JAMES
Tell her!

A beat.

The old man starts to laugh. The sound changes to a guttural, deep cackle. When he speaks, his voice is a mix of sounds.

SELBY
What gave it away?

Lucy stares in horror. Backs away.

JAMES
You're the only one left alive --

SELBY
Maybe.

JAMES (CONT'D)
-- there has to be a reason for it.

LUCY
(scared)
F-Father?

Selby snaps his head to her voice. A strange glow where his eyes used to be.

SELBY

Daddy is gone sweet-thing. His soul
was such a tasty snack.

He smacks his lips with delight. The sound is sickening.

LUCY

No... n-n-no!

The old man starts to laugh once more.

James SMACKS him upside the head with his pistol.

The laughter stops.

Selby turns those ethereal eyes to the lawman.

SELBY

That wasn't nice... lawman.

From the back, the sound of a door BURST open. A moment
later Hoody RUSHES into the main store.

HOODY

They're coming!

Selby laughs in that awful bestial cackle.

SELBY

Ah... Hoody Brown. Selfish
mercenary. Soldier for hire. Killer
of dreams. Long have the Masters
shaped your fate.

(to Lucy)

And you... daughter of time. So
trusting. So naive. Long have I
lived in this flesh-sac of your
father. Shaping you. Crafting you
into the perfect instrument of
doom. You who have brought them
together so that his Will can be
done. Come close and listen... for
I have secrets to reveal.

HOODY

Enough of this shit!

He rushes forward. Grabs James gun.

LUCY

No!

With a powerful swing, he knocks the old man out. The figure
slumps back. Falls to the ground.

Hoody hands the gun back to James.

JAMES

Jesus... I thought you were going
to kill him.

HOODY

It wouldn't be killing when they're
already dead.

Lucy sobs beside the prone figure of her father. Distraught.

Hoody kneels beside her.

HOODY

I'm sorry but we couldn't have him
talking those lies.

She turns her tear streaked face to him.

LUCY

Who are you?

He smiles. Helps her up.

HOODY

They're coming.

JAMES

Who?

LUCY

More of... them?

She points to Selby.

Hoody shakes his head.

HOODY

Worse.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

THE BLACK HAND GANG stand in front of the store. Weapons
out. A dozen men with iron at the ready. Six Cowboys; four
Mexicans.

Black Bart stands at their fore. Tracker Dan at his side.

BLACK BART

Hoody Brown! I know you're in
there. Stop hiding like a dog!

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Hoody shrugs.

HOODY
See... much worse.

JAMES
For you, maybe.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Black Bart surveys the ruined town.

BLACK BART
Pretty fittiing you'd come to a
ghost town to try hide from me.
Ain't nothing gonna stop what's
coming to you and any that help
you, for that matter.

The gang guffaw.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

The gang's laughter drifts through the broken windows. Lucy
and James both stare at Hoody.

HOODY
Hmm...

JAMES
Yeah.

BLACK BART (O.S)
You must have known I wouldn't let
you slink away. First the train.
Then the coach.

HOODY
The train wasn't my fault.

BLACK BART (O.S)
That's what you said about
Tombstone.

HOODY
Tombstone...?
(calls out)
That wasn't my fault either. Did
you wanna go up against the Earps,
cos I sure as hell didn't?

A beat.

HOODY
Well... would you?

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

A crack of thunder so loud the ground shakes. Rain starts to pound the streets. A rivulet runs strong.

Behind the gang, a body is washed away.

BLACK BART
Well, forget Tombstone. You still cost me a pretty dollar on this venture and no mistaking it.

BEHIND THE GANG

in the buildings... shadows move.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Hoody looks to James.

HOODY
What guns you got?

James taps his pistols.

A beat.

HOODY
I think you're going to need more than that.

LUCY

stares at the unconscious form of her father.

A beat. A decision.

LUCY
We have more guns.

Hoody turns slowly to look at Lucy.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Black Bart's eyes narrow. Jaw clenches.

BLACK BART

No way are you getting out of this one. No fancy talking. No side deal. Tonight, you die, Hoody Brown.

Thunder rumbles.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

James shakes his head.

JAMES

He talks a lot. Lucy... what do you mean... you have more guns?

LUCY

This is my father's store. He is... he was a staunch bluecoat.

She moves to a section of shelving.

LUCY

Father always thought there would be an uprising.

Lucy taps the shelving hard.

LUCY (CONT'D)

He wanted to be prepared.

The shelf swings open.

A long beat.

HOODY

Whoa...

James nods mutely.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Thunder. Lightning.

The Black Hand Gang are drenched in rain. In shadow.

MORE SHADOWS

move behind them. Dark forms slither through the mud.

BLACK BART

Last chance, boy!

(beat)

Ha... there ain't nothing but an incompetent sheriff that stands between your dying here this night. What you gotta say to that?

A beat.

JAMES (O.S)

I'm a marhsall!

BLACK BART

Well, Marshall, all you got's a lousy two-gun rig. And I'm betting the girl can't shoot for toffee. So what do you have to say to that?

Another beat.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON JAMES FACE

his eyes wide.

JAMES

Oh... I think we can manage.

OPEN TO REVEAL

a huge RACK OF WEAPONS fastened to the inside of a secret cupboard. Rifles; pistols; knives. Boxes of bullets. Row after row of dynamite.

James grabs a rifle.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Black Bart draws his guns.

BLACK BART

Last chance Hoody Brown.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

In the gap between buildings DARK SHAPES move.

Slither. Crawl.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Silent signals between the gang. With quiet jabs of his guns, Black Bart gives orders.

THREE COWBOYS slink to the right.

The FOUR MEXICANS slide towards the hotel.

The rest stand beside their leader.

Tracker Dan sharpens a blade.

TRACKER DAN

He'll run before he fights.

BLACK BART

A shot in the back works just as well as a shot to the front.

HOODY (O.S)

Why don't we just settle this over a quiet game of cards?

Black Bart laughs.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The three Cowboys inch down the side of the General Store. Guns drawn.

BLACK BART (O.S)

I ain't playng anymore.

One of them stumbles in the dark. Falls against the side of the store.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

A loud HEAVY THUMP

Hoody points to the wall.

BLACK BART (O.S)
 I ain't giving you one more cotton
 picking chance.

James nods. Lucy passes him a rifle. He takes a box of shells. Moves behind the counter towards the back room.

HOODY

takes a box of shells. Empties them into his pockets. Lucy throws a quizzical stare.

HOODY
 Just in case.

LUCY
 In case of what? What can you do
 with bullets alone?

Hoody smiles.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Black Bart looks over at

THE HOTEL

The Mexicans disappear inside the darkened building.

He looks down the alley. Can't see anything. Just dark shapes moving in the shadows.

INT. STORE - NIGHT

A FIGURE rises in the dark. Stares out into the street.

TRACKER DAN

turns away from the General Store.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The Tracker stares at the dark store window.

BLACK BART
 What you doing, Dan?

TRACKER DAN
 I thought I heard something.

A beat. He stares at the building. Waits. Nothing moves.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy loads the rifles. Sets them against the counter.

INT. GENERAL STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

A kitchen area. Dark.

James steps through. Moves to the door. Locks it.

Looks out through the curtains into the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The COWBOYS move closer.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

James head appears through the door. Raises his hand - three fingers.

Lucy nods. Grabs a rifle.

BLACK BART (O.S)
Tonight, Hoody Brown...

Hoody points to his chest. To the ceiling.

James nods. Goes back inside.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Black Bart cocks his guns. The gunhands do the same. Tracker Dan swings his blades.

BLACK BART (CONT'D)
... you'll reap the whirlwind!

They open fire.

DEAFENING GUNFIRE.

Stood in a firing line, Black Bart and his hired guns unleash hot lead.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Chaos.

Bullet hits destroy cabinets. Windows. Splinters of wood rush through the air like fireworks.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The three COWBOYS blast away at the rear of the store.

None see the dark shadow that slinks towards them.

INT. GENERAL STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

More devastation as bullet hits blast into the room. A stray hit destroys a bag of flour. Showers James in white powder.

He clutches a rifle to his chest. Rides the storm.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Two hired guns reload. The other pumps lead.

BLACK BART
Where's the dynamite?

Tracker Dan grins.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy, her back to several large grain sacks flinches.

LUCY
Dynamite?

EXT. HOTEL ROOF - NIGHT

GUNSHOTS below.

The MEXICANS pull themselves onto the roof.

Two carry long blades strapped to their backs. The third carries a long bow.

They run across the roof... LEAP over the gap between the buildings. Across

FIVE FIGURES

that stagger towards main street down the alley. Unseen.

THE MEXICANS

smash through the side window.

INT. GENERAL STORE BEDROOM - NIGHT

A shower of glass and wood.

THE MEXICANS

roll to their feet...

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy stares up at the ceiling. The SOUND of shattered glass.

INT. GENERAL STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Covered in flour, James hunkers lower as more bullets fly.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The COWBOYS keep up their relentless assault.

INT. GENERAL STORE BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Mexicans draw their blades.

The third moves to the door. Moves his bow across his back. Grins - dirty black teeth. Opens the door.

HOODY

stands there. PUNCHES the Mexican. Grabs him. Spins him.

TWO BLADES

imbedd themselves into the Mexicans chest. A surprised grunt. Wide surprise in his eyes. He dies.

Hoody throws the body into the room. They grab at it reflexively. Off balance.

Hoody DIVES into the room.

THE DOOR

slams shut.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The gunhands stop firing. Start to reload.

Tracker Dan opens a gunny-sack. Takes out a stick of dynamite. Another. Binds them together.

Hands it to Black Bart.

BLACK BART
If they ain't dead already...

He lights the fuse.

BLACK BART
... they soon will be!

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy looks out the shattered window. Sees

BLACK BART

throw the dynamite.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

THE DYNAMITE

soars through the air towards the store. Spins. Rotates. Sparks from the fuse leave a trail in the dark.

AN ARROW

zips between the sticks. Skewers it. Sends it back towards the gunmen.

BLACK BART

dives aside.

The others aren't so lucky. A fiery missile, the dynamite laden arrow smashes through a shop window.

Tracker Dan watches its passing with shocked eyes.

A beat.

THE EXPLOSION

is huge. The entire shop disappears in a giant fireball that destroys the shop. Showers the street in fire, glass and timber.

The gunhands are blown apart. Tracker Dan is lifted off his feet. Slammed into the ground so hard his boots fly off.

Small pockets of fire now dance in the street.

Slowly, Black Bart raises his head.

IN AN UPPER WINDOW

Hoody, bow in hand, tips a wave. Disappears back inside.

BLACK BART

I want that bastard dead!

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The Cowboys rush forward.

A window smashes. Gunfire.

INT. GENERAL STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

James fires into the alley.

A COWBOY

is blown off his feet, his chest nothing but a ruined red mess. The others dive for cover.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy shoots into the street. Shot after shot.

SELBY unseen, just a shadow in the dark, rises to his feet.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Scrunched down behind a water trough, Black Bart curses.

BLACK BART

Damn that man! Damn him to the
deepest level of hell!

He reloads.

BLACK BART
 (shouts out)
 You hear me, Hoody Brown? Damn you
 to hell and back!

Tracker Dan peeks round the trough. Shots kick up dirt
 around him. Punch into the water.

TRACKER DAN
 Uh... boss?

He points. Black Bart risks a look.

FIVE FIGURES

stumble from between the General Store and the Hotel. They
 lumber forward. Vacant faces. Eyes of white.

BLACK BART
 What the hell?

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Pinned down by James's rifle fire, the two COWBOYS slink
 back, hands on knees.

JAMES (O.S)
 Yeah... you better --

His voice fades away.

INT. GENERAL STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Rifle dropped down. His face slack with horror.

JAMES

watches a WOMAN stagger towards the Cowboys. Her face ripped
 in long, jagged scratches. Her eyes white pools.

JAMES
 Run!

He points behind them.

They turn.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

THE WOMAN

snarls. Grey ooze pours from her mouth. Her teeth are fangs.

COWBOY

What the --

He doesn't finish.

She LEAPS upon him... BITES into his flesh... Blood GUSHES from the wound... She TEARS his neck open.

The last Cowboy runs. Runs to the store.

James beckons him on.

INT. GENERAL STORE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

The door slams shut.

The Cowboy leans against it. Breathes hard.

COWBOY

What the hell was that?

James locks the door. Bolts it.

JAMES

I've no idea. Help me with this.

They start to push a table against the door.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

She looks up, her face smeared with blood. SOUNDS of the table being dragged. Wedged against the door.

She drops her meal.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Bathed in the ruddy light of flames, Black Bart stares at the horrific figures that shamble towards him.

SOUNDS of breaking wood.

From another building, busting through the wooden framework of the walls, more townsfolk stagger out into the street.

INT. GENERAL STORE BEDROOM - NIGHT

HOODY stares down into the street with disbelief. Watches the two groups of possessed townsfolk converge on the two surrounded gunmen.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy - shocked, watches also.

Laughter behind her.

SELBY

steps into the light.

SELBY

I told you, daughter darling. The
Master wants you.

He rushes.

She shoots.

Knocked off his feet, his shoulder a red gaping wound. Blood pours. He lies still.

A beat.

A CRUNCH... Selby twitches... another CRUNCH... spine bends double. Fingernails pinch into the floor, sharp talons. He scuttles like a crab across the floor.

Towards Lucy.

She SHOTS. Misses. Shoots again.

DRY CLICK!

SELBY

crab leaps onto the counter. Rushes across it. Leaps onto the ceiling.

BONES SNAP as the creature turns its head to look at the terrified girl.

SELBY

Daughter...

She screams.

INT. GENERAL STORE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her scream rings through the building.

He draws his hand from his pocket. Steps to the window.

HOODY

Hey, Bart!

BLACK BART

looks up.

HOODY

throws his hand wide open.

BULLETS

scatter like seeds from his hand into the fertile earth of the fires in the street.

HOODY

runs past the unconscious Mexicans. Bound by bedsheets.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Tracker Dan is beset upon. Dragged into shadow.. God-awful scream of pain.

Black Bart sees the BULLETS in the flames... staggers to his feet... runs.

Runs through the SHAMBLING FIGURES. They grab at him. He pushes them aside.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Hoody CRASHES through the door.

SELBY

hangs from the ceiling, fastened by sharp claws. He leers down, dark gruel pours from his mouth. Sharp teeth.

Lucy, frozen in terror.

JAMES

smashes through from the back room. Sees the creature. No hesitation. Shoots.

the creatures head blows apart like a foul melon. Purple ichor splatters Lucy. Gobs splash Hoody.

JAMES

This is becoming one screwed up night.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

BULLETS

lie in flames. Crackle. Fizzle.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Black Bart runs up the steps.

BLACK BART

Don't shoot - don't shoot - don't shoot - don't shoot!

Launches himself at the door. It BURSTS inward.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

FIERY DETONATIONS as the bullets fire off.

The shambling figures are cut down in the deadly firepower. Limbs are blown apart. Jagged holes of flesh explode.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Black Bart CRASHES through, his back seared in flames. Stray bullet shots send everyone to their knees.

The COWBOY runs through. Gets blown off his feet by a bullet from outside.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Flames flicker in a dozen places. Gunsmoke drifts. Covers the destruction.

A beat.

Figures move in the murk...

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Lucy rolls back... brings her rifle up. Points to Black Bart. Racks a round.

BLACK BART

Whoa... it's not me! I'm out!

Hoody shuffles up. Lowers her rifle with a hand.

HOODY

It's okay.

She lowers the rifle.

Everyone staggers to their feet.

LUCY

We can't stay here.

JAMES

What the hell is going on?

Hoody stands by Black Bart.

HOODY

You okay to put this aside... at least for now?

Black Bart looks round. Amazed.

BLACK BART

I'm with Deputy Dimwit over there. What the hell just happened?

HOODY

You know. It's part of why we're all here. The gold. The mountain. The Demon that lives under it.

A beat...

... a long beat.

JAMES

You want to say that again?

HOODY

Not really. Come on, Bartholemew, you know perfectly well what they found here. That's the real reason you sent me after that damn train.

BLACK BART

And?

Lucy hands a rifle to Hoody. He hands it on to James. the lawman nods thanks. Starts to reload his pistols.

JAMES

So you're the horse-apple that started this?

BLACK BART

I started nothing. It was you folks, tampering in things you had no idea about. Had no inkling even existed. You just saw your gold and went a-digging. Didn't stop to think just why no one had ever mined this place before, did you? Think you were the first to come here? Idiots.

Bart starts to back away. Towards the doors.

BLACK BART (CONT'D)

You just plowed right on in there, didn't you. Started hacking away, no thought to just why this place was deserted. You didn't think to just leave well alone.

LUCY

It was a ramshackle town. We built it up from nothing.

BLACK BART

And nothing's right what it's going to be again.

JAMES

I should just shoot you right here and have done with it!

Hoody steps between them.

HOODY

No! We need him!

LUCY

Need him...HA! We don't need a black hearted piece of horse-apple like him.

James guns are locked. Loaded. Point directly at Bart, which means they point, in part, at Hoody. He doesn't move.

HOODY
 Don't do this, Marshall. Okay, he's
 a cockroach, but you do need him.

BLACK BART
 (inches closer to the door)
 Yeah. Listen to the man. you need
 me... erm, why do they need me?

Hoody turns to the man.

HOODY
 Because you know the way out.

Black Bart looks confused.

BLACK BART
 What way out?
 (realisation dawns)
 Now wait just a damn minute...

HOODY
 You know it's the only way. Look, a
 minute ago you were all for it.

BLACK BART
 That's before I realised how damn
 crazy you are!

Lucy shares a puzzled look with James.

LUCY
 What the hell are you two
 blathering about?

Black Bart draws his guns. Lightning fast.

BLACK BART
 It ain't happening, Hoody. They
 came from in there. It's their
 mountain. You know it!

HOODY
 And you know the road is our only
 chance.

Bart moves closer to the doors. His guns trained on James.
 On Lucy.

Hoody stands between them all.

BLACK BART
No way. I'll die first.

A loud metallic CLICK!

Lucy sights down a rifle right at Black Bart.

LUCY
That can be arranged.

HOODY
Don't! Tell them, Bart. Tell them.

A beat.

Black Bart lowers his guns.

BLACK BART
What he's asking... It's suicide.
Your mountain... their mountain...
we've known it's secrets for years.
All of 'em, not just the gold or
the diamonds.

LUCY
Diamonds? There's diamonds in there
too?

BLACK BART
There's diamonds as big as my fist.
Bigger in the deeper parts. Whole
damn fields of them, spread as wide
as the plains themselves.

He smiles at a bitter memory.

BLACK BART
(continues)
There's places in that look like a
night's sky filled with stars. It
ain't stars... it's diamonds in a
ceiling of rock so high above you,
you'll swear you're outside. Damn,
but a person could live forever and
never have to do another days work
as long as he lived if he could get
just the smallest load out of that
mountain. But...

(beat)
... but there's more than wealth in
the dark. Something made a home in
that place. Something evil.
Something old. Older than Father

(MORE)

BLACK BART (cont'd)
Time himself. Didn't you ever stop
to think why no one had ever mined
that place before? Did you think
you were the first?

HOODY
The road. Tell them about the road.

LUCY
What road?

Black Bart lets out a resigned laugh. Lowers his guns. Lucy
does the same.

James keeps his trained.

BLACK BART
What the hell. Damned either way,
right Hoody?

HOODY
Tell them.

BLACK BART
There's a road... really a channel
between rock faces, that runs right
through the heart of that dark
fortress, right through to the
other side. To the Blackfire
Plains. You'll be safe there.

JAMES
Blackfire... are you insane? That's
Indian country. They'll kill us and
scalp us and use our bodies as
trophies.

BLACK BART
Maybe so. Maybe no. But you stay
here... you'll lose more than that
fine crop of hair.
(beat)
You'll lose your soul.

A beat.

LUCY
Will you show us?

BLACK BART
(laughs)
I ain't no hero. I never did
anything for anyone that didn't
(MORE)

BLACK BART (cont'd)
 benefit me more. I came here to
 take yours from you. Take that
 damned gold without running the
 risk of stirrng up old ghosts.

LUCY
 Please?

A beat.

Black Bart holsters his guns. James lowers his.

BLACK BART
 Sure. Why not...

THE DOOR

smashes open. Putrid decayed bodies of townsfolk stumble in.
 Grab hold of the outlaw.

He fumbles for his guns. The mass of bodies around him
 prevents him from drawing.

Shocked at the sudden assault, Lucy staggers back into
 James. Hoody - for the first time in his life - freezes.

THE POSSESSED TOWNSFOLK

claw about Black Bart. Hands rip into his body. Pull his
 flesh apart. His screams rise into a high note.

Like frenzied beasts they tear into the outlaw to devour his
 flesh. One plucks out an eye... eats it like candy.

More start to crash through the windows. Skin is ripped to
 shreds on glass. Hands punch through the walls, little more
 than shredded bone.

LUCY
 (shock)
 What...

HOODY
 Get back here. This way!

James starts to unload firepower into the Possessed hoard as
 they surge forward.

MOANS of hunger break from the Possessed. Their faces blank.

JAMES

What the hell is doing this?

He continues to fire into the oncoming mass.

Hoody heads to the back room.

HOODY

No time! Come on!

He reaches for Lucy.

The back room door shakes. Breaks open in the centre. the arms of the Possessed woman reach through. Grasp at Lucy.

Hoody pulls her aside.

LUCY

Oh God!

With renewed frenzy, the woman starts to smash the door to pieces, desperate to get to a new meal.

Hoody pushes Lucy back.

HOODY

Upstairs... quickly!

They dash to the stairs.

James drops his empty rifle. Grabs another.

HOODY

Damn it, lawman! Come on!

James backs to the stairs. Fires. Takes the head off a shambling Possessed. The others feast on it.

JAMES

What the hell are they?

Hoody YANKS the lawman back seconds before a Possessed grabs the man's leg.

HOODY

You want a conversation or you want to live? Now move it!

He pushes James upstairs.

ON THE LANDING

Lucy waits. Looks down at the hoard of Possessed.

Some drag themselves over the floor. Some limp on bleeding limbs. Low moans. All drool ectoplasmic gore.

It is a nightmarish vision.

TOP OF THE STAIRS

James sights on the first Possessed to start after them. Fires... an empty CLICK!

He drops the rifle... pulls a pistol. Fires.

The Possessed head erupts in a fine spray of gore. Drops. Rolls down the stairs.

LUCY

Now what?

HOODY

We can't stay here, that's for sure.

JAMES

No shit.

James takes out another Possessed with a well aimed shot.

JAMES

You know... this would be easier if you helped.

HOODY

I don't believe in guns.

LUCY

What do you believe in?

HOODY

This!

He holds up several sticks of dynamite.

LUCY

And just what do you plan on doing with those?

Hoody grins.

EXT. GENERAL STORE ROOF - NIGHT

James helps pull Lucy up. She nods her thanks.

The CRACKLE of flames from the street below. Low animalistic GROANS from the Possessed. They mill in the street.

A SCREAM.

Lucy inches to the roof edge. Looks down.

A WOUNDED COWBOY

drags himself through the mud. The Possessed toy with him. Let him sense freedom. Take swipes at his legs. His arms. He bleeds from dozens of wounds.

Lucy sights a rifle. James gently lowers the barrel.

A beat.

LUCY

But...

JAMES

They aren't too bright, but if they see us, we're done. I can't believe I'm saying this, but we have to give Hoody time.

(beat)

Look. There he is...

James indicates the shadowed form of Hoody.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Hunched between two buildings, Hoody crouches in the shadows. Waits. Watches.

The Cowboy drags himself towards the mercenary.

COWBOY

Help me...

Hoody's stare is cold granite.

COWBOY

(continues)

... please. Help me...

A Possessed falls upon the man's back.

EXT. GENERAL STORE ROOF - NIGHT

Lucy turns away. Buries her face into James' shoulder. His face is a mask of pure disgust.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

HOODY'S FACE

is locked in grim determination.

HORRIBLE SCREAMS sound out... quickly cut off... the SOUND of feasting.

He slips away.

EXT. GENERAL STORE ROOF - NIGHT

They hold each other. Longer than necessary. She presses into hm. He strokes her hair.

LUCY

Why is this happening?

JAMES

You heard what he said. They were always here. You woke them.

She pulls away.

LUCY

You make it sound like such a simple triviality.

JAMES

To be honest... it is.

She steps away.

LUCY

People are dead - or worse and you call it a triviality? What kind of bastard are you? You're as cold as Hoody.

JAMES

You misunderstand. I'm a lawman. I deal in black and right. Wrong and white. I've dealt with murderers, rapists and cattle thieves. I've tracked bandits who kidnap young

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)
 girls to use as entertainment on
 the plains or to sell for a bottle
 of whiskey when they're done with
 them. I've been hired to kill
 troublesome cowboy's who just won't
 quit their dark ways. I've done a
 lot of bad things, all in the name
 of the law, all legal. All
 justified by the law of man, and
 let me tell you... each and every
 one of them - the murderers, the
 rapists, all of them - they all
 started from something trivial. And
 you want to know what that trivial
 trigger was?

His voice has taken on a hard edge.

Lucy looks at him as if seeing him for the first time. A
 small note of fear creeps into her voice.

LUCY
 What?

James grabs her.

JAMES
 It's not love. It's not lust that
 sends a man mad. At least not the
 love for a woman or the lust for
 his desire.

LUCY
 Get off me!

He yanks her tight against him. His hands rummage through
 her clothes.

LUCY
 Don't touch me!

JAMES
 It's madness just as strong though.
 A madness that can affect the most
 staid of men. The most timid.
 (beat)
 The most lawful.

She struggles against him.

He holds her tight.

JAMES

(continues)

All can be as affected as the most
torrid of gunslingers. And for
what?

James gropes through her clothes. An evil smile on his face.

He steps back.

Without hesitation she slaps him across the face.

LUCY

You bastard! I thought you were
different! What's got into you?

JAMES

Not me. This!

He holds up the yellow nugget of gold.

JAMES

(continues)

This is what causes the madness.
This is what led your townsfolk to
their ruin. This. This most trivial
of items. Nothing more than a lump
of rock and yet look what it did.

James winds his arm back.

LUCY

Wait... what are you doing?

JAMES

The desire for wealth led you to
this point. A man made system that
hurts more than it helps.

(beat)

Time to remove temptation...

LUCY

NO!

He throws the yellow rock. Lucy grabs at it as it soars
overhead.

LUCY

NO!

A HAND

plucks the nugget from the air.

Hoody examines it. Drops it in his pocket.

HOODY

You never know when this may come
in handy.

JAMES

Should have known. It'll only eat
at you. You'll want more. Do
anything to get more. Just like
those sorry bastards down there.
Look what happened to them. Best to
get rid of it.

HOODY

You know... I never thought I'd say
this but I agree with you.

He pulls a cigar out. Jams it in his mouth.

HOODY

Anyone have a match.

James passes him one.

HOODY

Thanks.

JAMES

You agree with me?

Hoody beckons them over.

HOODY

What do you see?

They stare down.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The Possessed stagger around. A dozen or so. Some have
visible wounds. All shuffle towards the distant form of the
mountain.

HOODY

See... it draws them back.

LUCY

(soft)

People I used to call family. How
did we come to this?

JAMES

I see the inevitable slide of man's
moralistic soul.

Hoody laughs.

LUCY

What do you see?

He takes the cigar out. Presses it against a cord he holds
in his hand. It runs the length of the roof. Disappears over
the edge.

HOODY

Opportunity.

The cord - the FUSE - sparks into life. Burns across the
roof.

JAMES

What did you do?

HOODY

What should have been done right at
the start when that yellow vein was
discovered.

They look as vacant as the Possessed.

HOODY

I'm sealing the mountain back up.

All eyes watch the fuse burn over the edge of the roof.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Stretched between the buildings, the fuse disappears into
each building before moving on to the next.

INT. CHINESE LAUNDRY - NIGHT

Lodged against the wall - sticks of dynamite linked by fuse.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Pressed against the stairs - dynamite.

INT. GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Wedged against the armoury - more dynamite.

The door opens. The trio run down.

LUCY
Are you crazy?

HOODY
Some say.

JAMES
You're gong to blow up the town
with us in it, you moron! What
about them?

He points outside to the Possessed.

HOODY
I have a plan for that.

Hoody goes to the door.

LUCY
What are you going to do?

He grins.

HOODY
Something really stupid...

He runs out into the street.

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The Possessed mill about. Lost. Their slow gait naturally
toward the mountain.

Hoody takes a breath. Runs forward. Towards them.

Lucy stands beside James on the General Store porch.

LUCY
What's he doing?

JAMES
Buying us time with his life.
(beat)
Idiot.

HOODY

runs into the throng of possessed.

They grab at him. Hands rip at his jacket. Flail at his arms.

He trips... goes down.

The possessed fall on him. He disappears.

JAMES

pulls his gun.

Lucy grabs at him.

LUCY

They'll come for us.

JAMES

He doesn't deserve to die like that. No one does.

LUCY

Wait...

Hoody drags himself out. Stands.

Lucy grins.

LUCY

Typical.

The possessed realise as one that their prey has escaped. They grab at him again.

He runs off toward the mountain. Really fast.

The possessed chase after him.

A FIZZ NOISE. Lucy looks down.

THE FUSE

sizzles past.

She looks up.

JAMES

grabs her. They run.

EXT. GUNSMOKE - NIGHT

By the coach, they stop. Watch

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Hoody runs.

The possessed chase.

CUT TO:

THE FUSE

runs to the first keg of dynamite.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Over on the right, the first building EXPLODES. Quickly followed by one on the left.

Then the right...

EXT. GUNSMOKE - NIGHT

Both James and Lucy recoil at the fury of the explosions. James shields her body with his own.

They are bathed in the ruddy glow of flames as night becomes day with each new explosion.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUNSMOKE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Like falling dominoes, the buildings explode in turn at an increasing pace. Hoody is just a step ahead of the chaos.

The town becomes a huge fireball. It races up the street, eating up the buildings. Engulfs the possessed. They burn.

HOODY

runs right into the mountain. Dives past the burning fuse as it reaches

VAST AMOUNTS OF DYNAMITE

the explosion is huge as the entire mountain face is destroyed in fire, flames and noise.

EXT. GUNSMOKE - NIGHT

They ride away on the coach.

Behind them, Gunsmoke burns.

LUCY

It's over. It's finally over.

James drives the horses.

A beat.

LUCY

Why did he do that? Sacrifice himself in that way?

JAMES

I guess at the end he wanted to do something right. Something not for his own greedy needs.

She snuggles against the lawman.

They ride.

INT. SALOON - DAY

A poker game in place. Three hard players. The fourth just a pair of boots at the edge of frame.

SUPER: SECOND CHANCE SALOON- TOMBSTONE. THREE WEEKS LATER

POKER PLAYER

I'm all in.

He pushes a stack of coins and notes into the centre of the table. A vast stack.

The other two throw their cards down in disgust.

The cowboy turns to the boots.

POKER PLAYER

Guess that just leaves you, stranger. You in or you just like these lily livered horse-dabblers?

A beat.

POKER PLAYER
Well, stranger?

A YELLOW ROCK

sails over the boots to land on the stack of cash.

The boots part to reveal

HOODY BROWN

Around his hat brim a sparkled band of diamonds. When he
grins, his smile is full of gold tapped teeth.

HOODY
I'm in.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END