

CASSIDY RED

by

Matt Knudsen

| | |
|-------------|----------|
| 1st Draft: | 12/10/14 |
| 2nd Draft: | 1/18/15 |
| 3rd Draft: | 3/8/15 |
| 4th Draft: | 4/1/15 |
| 5th Draft: | 5/10/15 |
| 6th Draft: | 5/21/15 |
| 7th Draft: | 7/7/15 |
| 8th Draft: | 7/25/15 |
| 9th Draft: | 3/3/16 |
| 10th Draft: | 3/15/16 |

310-562-7844
knudsen.matt@gmail.com

"To be angry is to revenge the faults
of others upon ourselves."

-Alexander Pope

SUPER: Ruby, Arizona Territory, 1899

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT ["NOW" - 1899]

It's late.

The dank, cavernous saloon is quiet but thick with stale sweat and smoke. Sounds from a lazy piano are barely audible.

An upstairs door opens, revealing a pair of greasy boots. They step out of the room, stub a cigar, and exit.

The door opens again to reveal 2 thin, shoeless feet in torn stockings. The feet pad softly across the landing.

It's **QUINN**- 19, a mop of curly black hair and exhausted eyes. Dried sweat and tears streak her face. Quinn descends the stairs and crosses the empty saloon.

A proscenium arch lines the back wall of the saloon. Quinn drags a chair onto the stage and flops into it. She looks down at the musician seated below her:

It's **CRICKET**- early 50s, hunched over the keys of his piano. His skin is tan and calloused but his long white hair is thick and shiny, tightened in a pony tail.

CRICKET

Long day?

Quinn helps herself to the bottle on the piano.

QUINN

Long life.

Cricket chuckles to himself and taps away at his keys.

CRICKET

Well if a wilted daisy like you
can't catch a break what hope is
there for a rusty nail like me?

QUINN

Hrmph.

CRICKET

What's yer name?

QUINN

Susanna.

CRICKET

Lovely.

Cricket launches into a rousing rendition of "Oh Susanna".

CRICKET (CONT'D)

What's yer real name, shug?

QUINN

I don't even tell my customers that. Why should I tell you?

Cricket shrugs and keeps playing.

CRICKET

Don't tell me, then.

QUINN

Quinn. I suppose.

CRICKET

Even lovelier.

QUINN

What's yours?

CRICKET

Can't remember. Make it "Cricket".

Cricket pulls a pristine, white kerchief out of his vest pocket, dribbles whiskey on it, and hands it to Quinn. She presses the moist fabric to her lip. She winces.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

Them boys outta Texas- know a lot more about cow hide than they do about a woman's, don't they?

Quinn dabs at her lip and takes another drink.

QUINN

Didn't stop him trying to tan mine.

CRICKET

Men who come in this place got a lot more in common with a cow than they do with a woman.

Quinn winces.

QUINN

Your wit don't stop the swellin', Cricket.

CRICKET
Where ya from, Q?

Quinn mumbles through her kerchief.

QUINN
What, originally?

CRICKET
Yeah.

QUINN
New Orleans.

Cricket erupts into a rousing rendition of "Dixie".

CRICKET
Well, iffing we ain't got a bona
fide belle in the Belle-Vue-Saloon.

QUINN
For what they paid my momma- I
oughta be bona-fide

Cricket stops playing.

CRICKET
Who paid your momma?

QUINN
What's it to you?

CRICKET
Just curious is all.

QUINN
Doesn't matter.

Quinn holds up the soiled handkerchief. Cricket nods.

CRICKET
My gift to you.

QUINN
Obliged.

Quinn stuffs the fabric into her bodice.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Krauts outta Houston needed
Southern gals so they started
spreading money around Storyville.
Too much for my momma to say no to.

Quinn smiles nervously and wipes away some of her makeup.

QUINN (CONT'D)

How else was she gonna feed my little brothers?

CRICKET

So then you come out here from Houston.

QUINN

Why you so curious?

CRICKET

In my next life I plan on ticklin' ivory in a Kraut Kat House. And I wanna be prepared.

Quinn smirks.

QUINN

Place burnt down before my stage made it to Texas. So- Amarillo, El Paso, Tombstone. Then Charlie bought me at a discount out of Bisbee and shipped me down here.

CRICKET

You may have seen more of the territories than I have-

QUINN

Well they can keep them territories. Got any smoke on ya?

CRICKET

Just ain't proper for a young gal like yourself to be poisoning your-

QUINN

Either you give it to me or I start scratching around on the floorboards for a soggy stub.

Cricket pulls a cigarillo, lights it, and hands it to Quinn.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Obliged.

Quinn reaches down to her leg and pulls a small Derringer pistol out of her garter. Cricket notices.

CRICKET

My playing may be poor. But I'm not entirely sure that's necessary.

Quinn smiles and fondles the weapon.

QUINN

Miner from Colorado. First John of the night. Nice fella, high pitched voice. This fell out of his trousers when he was puttin' 'em back on. Found it under my bed.

CRICKET

I suppose a little friend in your garter couldn't ever hurt.

Cricket begins to softly play "Just a closer walk with thee".

QUINN

Don't play that.

CRICKET

I like this tune.

QUINN

Well I don't. Stop playing it.

CRICKET

Gotta play somethin'.

Quinn points the derringer at Cricket's head.

QUINN

You lookin' to play it with a harp? I told you to stop.

Cricket stops playing. He locks eyes with Quinn.

CRICKET

I ain't them boys, Ms. Q. I ain't ever even been to Texas.

Quinn lowers the weapon. She examines it.

QUINN

You suppose a gun this small would be enough to put me down? I'd need to put one in my head, obviously. But do you think it'd kill me outright or would I have to bleed to death? Think I'd still be awake?

Cricket begins playing a somber tune.

CRICKET

So much tawdriness comin' from such
a lovely place.

Quinn points to her swollen lip and facial bruises.

QUINN

Find this lovely? This how you like
your women, piano man?

CRICKET

Everything looks much lovelier when
the sun comes up.

Quinn tightens her grip around the Derringer.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

Or at least less ugly.

QUINN

If you had seen or felt or tasted
half of what I have tonight you'd
know for a fact that there is no
place uglier than this.

CRICKET

Can't disagree with you there.
Sometimes it feels like that ornery
desert spits out the vilest of the
vile right onto our doorstep. Scum
of all size and shape squeak them
hinges nightly.

QUINN

And squeak them bed springs...

Quinn finishes her drink and winces. Cricket examines her.

CRICKET

This territory can be punishing.
Especially on women. But you strike
me as especially stubborn.
Survivors are stubborn.

QUINN

Oh I'm a survivor. Against my best
judgement.

Cricket stands up from his stool and leans on his piano. He
pours himself a drink from Quinn's bottle and sips from it.

CRICKET

I knew a survivor like you once:
The meanest, stubbornnest, most
savagely beautiful, hellfire and
brimstone- spittin' she-devil to
ever smear hateful blood on the
same boards you're staining now.

QUINN

You offering me a bedtime story?

CRICKET

I thought you had a date with a
Derringer.

Quinn sets the weapon on the piano. Cricket smiles, sits down
and continues playing.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

Some years ago. When the brass on
that bar wasn't quite so tarnished
and the flys in them whiskey
bottles still had protein in their
wings--

QUINN

Wait.

Cricket stops playing.

CRICKET

What?

QUINN

Have you told this story before?

CRICKET

Reckon I have.

QUINN

And that's the way you start it?

CRICKET

That's the way it starts.

QUINN

Ain't you gonna give it a name? Any
good story's gotta have a name!

Cricket fidgets in his seat. He glares at Quinn.

CRICKET

(Ahem) "The tale of Cassidy Red"- A ballad of love and hate...

As Cricket's tempo ramps up we pull back out of the saloon and onto the street.

A change in atmosphere and texture signals a change in time period. We transition from "Now" to "Then":

EXT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

A stranger with a dark hat pulled low, covering their face, approaches the saloon and pushes the swinging doors open:

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

The bar is crammed with miners, ranchers, and farmhands clamoring for drinks. Above the bar, a noisy brothel operates out of the rooms along the landing. Customers come and go.

The stranger approaches the bar, leans over, and whispers something to the grizzled bartender (**KEARNY**, late 30s) who motions toward the second floor landing.

ROWENA (mid 20s), strong, brassy, not gorgeous but attractively confident, responds to Kearny's signal. She flits downstairs and sidles up next to the stranger.

ROWENA

You had me worried you weren't gonna make it tonight, handsome. What's a girl gotta do to get you alone?

The stranger leans in and whispers into Rowena's ear.

ROWENA (CONT'D)

Sounds fun. Waddya say we go upstairs and get a little cozier?

Rowena leads the stranger through the crowd, gland-handing the regulars along the way. The couple ascends the staircase. They disappear into a room.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

Rowena locks the door. The stranger ducks behind a dressing screen and begins removing clothes.

It's clear via the silhouette that the stranger is actually a woman (**JOE**).

JOE

"Handsome"? You've had weeks to think about this and you come up with "handsome"?

ROWENA

Maybe I shoulda just called you ginger?

JOE

(sarcastically)

Think we could have taken a little longer route to get up here?

Joe throws garments over the screen. Rowena collects them.

ROWENA

If I don't glad-hand the regulars then someone's gonna wonder what's so special about you. I thought you wanted to be invisible.

JOE

Invisible like water. Not molasses.

ROWENA

Well, they don't serve either in this place.

Rowena pulls a wrapped parcel out of an ornate chest. She hands it carefully around the screen to Joe.

JOE

He is gonna be here any minute...

ROWENA

Don't bust your Momma's corset. He ain't comin' in here until I says so. And not without this here key.

JOE

Waddid you tell him?

ROWENA

Don't worry. I told him only what he needed to hear.

JOE

But he'll definitely be here?

ROWENA
Waddid I say?

JOE
I need a brush.

Rowena passes over a hair brush. A wave of blood red locks cascades over the top of the screen as Joe teases it.

ROWENA
Gimme the belt.

Joe stops brushing. Her silhouette is rigid behind the screen.

JOE
You have to be joking.

ROWENA
Where you gonna hide holsters in that frock? Gimme the belt!

Joe finally complies and passes her gun belt over the screen. Rowena produces a garter with a leather holster.

JOE
I'm just gonna drop him the minute he closes the door.

ROWENA
You try that from across the room and his deputies are gonna hear the blast from downstairs. But if you get close enough to feel the tickle of that hayseed then you can choke the sound of this little bastard off in his beard.

Rowena passes the garter, holster, and Derringer to Joe.

JOE
It's a whore's gun.

ROWENA
Well you ain't exactly dressin' up like a laundress, honey. Are you ready?

Joe slips the garter up her thigh. She cocks the weapon with a loud CLICK. Rowena accepts this as an answer.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

Rowena descends the stairs, works the crowd on her way back to the bar, and greets Kearny, the bartender.

KEARNY
That was fast.

ROWENA
Too drunk to get his boots off.
Left him passed out in my bed.

KEARNY
Want me to get Elle and Davey to
toss him out?

ROWENA
Let him sleep it off for a few.
When he wakes he won't remember he
already paid me.

Rowena winks at Kearny.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
Whiskey me, honey?

Kearny busies himself with a bottle.

KEARNY
You may wanna rathole some of that
silver, Roweens. He's here early...

Rowena's eyes dart to the front door of the saloon. In walks Tom "Hayseed" **HAYES**- early 30s, ruggedly handsome but cursed with empty, glassy eyes, like a porcelain doll.

His gleaming badge peaks out from beneath his trench coat. His hat- more of a bowler than a fedora, is canted off to the side of his head. A leather-clad, bearded posse (**BOGGS, SLIM, LEFTY, CHICK, HORACE**) slinks in behind him.

Hayes approaches Rowena. He smiles and snatches her drink.

HAYES
Yours?

She smiles back at him.

ROWENA
Yours, Sheriff.

He polishes the drink in one gulp. His eyes dart upwards toward Rowena's room. His smile fades.

HAYES

She here?

ROWENA

She certainly is.

HAYES

Think I'll like her?

ROWENA

Oh, I think you'll be very...
what's that word you always use?

HAYES

Satiated?

ROWENA

You'll be that.

Hayes' hand darts out and grips Rowena by the chin. His thumb traces her lower lip.

HAYES

You give her a twice-over? I don't
wanna walk in there and get a
switchblade between the ribs.

ROWENA

Dontcha trust me Sheriff?

Hayes keeps his eyes on Rowena. She drops him a key.

HAYES

You got somethin' for me Kearny?

KEARNY

It's um, it's Saturday, Sheriff.

HAYES

Has been all day. Will be for a few
hours more.

KEARNY

What I mean is-- well isn't Monday
the day--?

Hayes taps at the glass in front of him. Kearny refills it.

HAYES

I'm gonna be busy on Monday,
Kearns.

(MORE)

HAYES (CONT'D)

You can't expect me to cancel my plans just so I can come all the way across the street to settle something that coulda been sorted Saturday evening?

Hayes finally looks at Kearny.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Can you?

KEARNY

You gotta give me some time to get my affairs in order, Sheriff...

Hayes looks upstairs toward Rowena's door

HAYES

I can give you an hour to get your affairs in order. Howsabout that?

Hayes walks toward the staircase. Rowena and Kearny watch.

ROWENA

An hour? That man is lucky iffing he lasts fifteen minutes.

INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

As Hayes ascends the stairs, the prostitutes avert their eyes. Hayes dangles the key from a piece of ribbon and lets it drag lazily over the exposed skin of the girls (**ANNIE, JANE, STAR, and WILLA**).

He inserts the key into the lock and lets himself in.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

There is no light save for the lantern behind the dressing screen that illuminates Joe's silhouette.

HAYES

Apologies for my rudeness. But I must admit I selfishly hoped I might catch you in a state of impropriety.

Hayes removes his hat, coat, and gunbelt. He hangs them on the bedpost and reclines onto the mattress.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I just want you to know how happy I am to have you with us. I pride myself on being a good host and any new girls who will be joining us here in a professional capacity... I like to welcome them. Personally. I think of myself as the "royal food taster"- risking harm to my person so as to shelter our customers from any potential... poison in the product.

Joe dims her lantern, moves into the room, hidden by shadow.

HAYES (CONT'D)

There's no cause to sequester yourself in the shadows. If an egotist like Rowena admits to a new hire being attractive then it isn't a matter of opinion. Come out here and let's have a look at you.

Hayes strikes a match and lights the lantern next to the bed. The firelight flickers in Joe's eyes. Hayes adjusts the level before looking back at her.

Joe perches on the railing of the bed- a gleaming revolver pointed at Hayes' forehead. She is stoic, motionless.

We finally see her face- mid 20s and beautiful. But her scowl and sharp features give her a masculine visage. A tangled mess of red hair sits atop her head.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Well. If it isn't Miss Josephine Cassidy. And here I thought we were past all of this.

JOE

Make peace with your God, Tom.

HAYES

And for what crime do I owe this death sentence? Loving you?

JOE

How about shooting an innocent man in the back?

HAYES

Ah. Of course.

Hayes rummages in his vest pocket. Joe fingers the trigger.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Calm yourself. Doesn't a dying man deserve one last smoke, Cass?

JOE

Don't call me that.

Hayes pulls out his tobacco and rolls a cigarette.

JOE (CONT'D)

How'd you do it?

Hayes finishes rolling his cigarette. He lights it up.

HAYES

How'd I do what?

JOE

How'd you kill him?

Joe quivers. Sweat glazes her cheekbones.

HAYES

The red-skinned paramour?

Joe fingers the trigger of the revolver. Hayes locks eyes with her and exhales a cloud of smoke in her direction.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Where did you get that? Wasn't Rowena supposed to talk you into using a Derringer?

JOE

You think I'd trade my only weapons for an empty garter gun?

Hayes smiles.

HAYES

I suppose the daughter of a whore ought to be smart enough to know never to trust one.

Joe leaps up. She steps forward- the barrel of her revolver practically touching Hayes' forehead.

JOE

You've got five seconds to unburden yourself and confess to me how you killed him.

(MORE)

INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

Joe and Hayes struggle, violently. He drags her to the railing overlooking the saloon. The girls watch in horror.

Hayes grabs Joe by the corset and hurls her over the bannister. There is a violent crash then silence.

Hayes wipes the sweat from his face and composes himself. He examines Joe's revolver, then wedges it under his belt. He descends the stairs into the saloon.

HAYES

Y'all remember Joe Cassidy!?

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

Hayes approaches Joe's body. She is laid out in a pile of splintered wood and broken glass- the table that broke her fall is shattered around her. Blood stains her clothes.

HAYES

Course you do. Who could forget a prickly pear like her?

Hayes kneels down in front of Joe.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I like ya new hair, darlin'.
Softens your face.

Joe's body convulses. She winces at the ceiling. Hayes leans in close enough to whisper at her.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if I hurt you, Joe. But
you hurt me first. Matter o' fact
you shattered my heart into jagged
shards then you sprinkled the
pieces all over that campfire.

Joe grits her teeth, violently. Blood oozes out of her gums.

JOE

If you got any heart still left to
beat. I aim to silence it for good.

Hayes smiles, impressed.

HAYES

That's m'girl. Staunch to the last.

Rowena looks on from across the saloon. She makes eye contact with Joe who winces at her. Rowena can't bear to watch.

HAYES (CONT'D)
 Let's find this heartbreaker a soft
 place to lay down them fiery locks,
 shall we, boys?

The deputies grabs Joe by the hair and drag her away.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

Hayes deposits Joe into an empty cell. Her body tumbles into a heap on the ground. She spits blood onto the floorboards.

HAYES
 How did you think this was gonna
 end exactly?

JOE
 With your blood on my boots.

Hayes lifts Joe's body off the floor like a rag doll and spins her into the open jail cell. He tightens his fingers around her throat. Joe remains stoic.

Hayes smiles. He fastens an iron cuff on a chain to Joe's left wrist. The chain is bolted to the cell's bars.

HAYES
 Well, I'll be damned. This bracelet
 fits better than that ring you lost
 interest in so quickly.

Hayes releases Joe's body. She slumps on the floor. Hayes locks Joe's cell before he and his deputies exit the room.

HAYES (CONT'D)
 Ain't neither of you long for this
 world. I hope you enjoy your last
 night together...

SLAM! Hayes slams the door behind him. The room is pitch black save for a few shafts of moonlight throwing shadows.

JAKOB (O.S.)
 Joe...

Joe freezes. She looks up to realize that the voice is coming from the adjacent cell.

From the inky darkness emerges **JAKOB**- late 20s, rusty skin, and tangled, greasy hair. He has sad, deep-set eyes.

JOE

Jake...

They lunge for each other but Joe's wrist manacle and Jakob's ankle cuff stop them in their tracks. They fall to the ground, arms outstretched toward one another. Inches apart.

JOE (CONT'D)

You're alive.

JAKOB

I am now.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT ["NOW" - 1899]

Quinn and Cricket sit under a cloud of smoke. Quinn rests her upper body on the piano, leaning into Cricket's story.

QUINN

Alright so your fateful lovers are reunited only to remain cruelly separated- inches from one other. Lemme guess: they share poison berries that Jakob had holstered just in case this ever happened?

CRICKET

You know not everyone in every story is quite as hung up on martyrdom as you are.

QUINN

Since I don't know what that word means I'll take it as a compliment.

CRICKET

I'll chance that you're familiar with the word "cynic" and I'd feel sorry for you if I didn't think you had a pretty decent reason for becoming one.

QUINN

Is that like being "worldly"?

Cricket sighs, exhausted.

CRICKET

They say that when lovers are pulled apart by fate and circumstance their bond is only strengthened. As if the heart responds to challenge with resolve.

QUINN

Who says that?

Cricket cocks an eyebrow at Quinn. She sips her drink.

CRICKET

I say that, alright?

QUINN

Because it's convenient for your story?

CRICKET

Because it's the truth, dear.

QUINN

You an authority on love, Cricket?

CRICKET

I'm an authority on tellin' this here story, twit. May I continue?

Quinn smirks.

Cricket re-sets. He plays a happier tune.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

Josephine Cassidy was conceived and delivered in that room right there.

Cricket nods to the corner bedroom on the upstairs landing.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

Daughter of Harley O'Houlihan- one of the founding members of The Belle Vue's most profitable enterprise, and Cort Cassidy- her most faithful customer: Part time killer, full time drinker.

EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1868]

A sun-scorched compound in the desert- sparsely populated with Adobe style structures and a modest corral.

Behind the ranch, deep into the sagebrush, 2 figures stand out against the barren horizon facing a length of fence that trails into the distance. Empty bottles balance on the fence.

A muscular male in soiled denim (**CORT**) stands next to an adolescent girl. It's **YOUNG JOE**, 13 years old and toe-headed.

Cort pulls an ivory-handled revolver from his holster and fires off a few rounds in the direction of the fence line.

CRICKET (V.O.)

By the time Joe was born, Cort was making a better living as a gun for hire than he ever did off his livestock. The railroad paid him enough to keep him in drink and even when he was half in the bag he was still a sinister shot.

Cort hands the gun to Joe and helps her spin the barrel.

Nearby, another child (**YOUNG ROWENA**, 12) flits around the perimeter. She is wearing Rowena's trademark shade of pink.

CRICKET (V.O.)

Occasionally, when her mother had to work, Joe would run off to the ranch, looking for a meal. And while he wouldn't acknowledge her as his child, Cort did pass some things along...

Cort's hand steadies Joe's. He helps her to line up her eye with the site on the revolver. He whispers in her ear.

Rowena whistles at Joe to get her attention. She nods at something she sees in the distance.

Joe's focus shifts from the empty bottle perched on the fence post to someone standing behind it: An Apache boy- filthy skin, tattered clothes, terrified (**YOUNG JAKOB**, 14-ish).

The boy is hovering near the fence, staring at Joe. The two children lock eyes.

Cort raises his other revolver toward the boy and hollers. Jakob takes off- racing through the sagebrush.

Cort turns from Joe and locates the nearest bottle. He sits down on an upturned log and pours himself a drink. Joe watches Jakob disappear into the distance, fascinated.

Joe and Rowena approach the fence line. Some crude but ornate pictographs are visible on the flat wood. Empty bullet casings and blood red stones flank the fence line.

EXT. DESERT - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1868]

Jakob rushes through the desert until he reaches an ugly tree. At the base of the tree is a circle of the red stones. A flat one lies in the center like a bullseye.

The child drops to his knees in front of the cactus and starts digging at the sand inside the stone circle. He uncovers a rusty chest. He opens it and begins rummaging.

YOUNG HAYES

(o.s.)

You!

Jakob looks up in terror. He clutches something in his hands.

From out of the desert emerges **YOUNG HAYES**, 16. He's well-dressed for a kid but too lanky to fill out his expensive clothes. He chews on a comically long hayseed.

YOUNG HAYES (CONT'D)

What have you got there?

Hayes approaches Jakob. He's much taller than the Apache boy but looks out of place amongst the Saguaros.

YOUNG HAYES (CONT'D)

You're trespassing on my father's land and that dirt you're diggin' in belongs to us. So whatever ya have there is now my property.

Jakob remains frozen.

YOUNG HAYES (CONT'D)

Hand it over.

Jakob doesn't move.

YOUNG HAYES (CONT'D)

You hearin' me, cochise? I said hand it over.

Jakob stands like a statue.

YOUNG HAYES (CONT'D)

Give it to me!

Hayes lunges at Jakob and wrestles with him. The two boys kick up a dust cloud as they struggle against one another. Hayes knocks Jakob to the ground but can't pry his fist open.

Hayes struggles and claws at Jakob's hands but he resists.

YOUNG HAYES (CONT'D)

I said--

YOUNG JOE

(o.s.)

Hey!

Hayes looks up in time to see Joe's fist careening toward his face. She connects- sending his body flailing into the dust. Jakob coils into a ball. Protecting his treasure.

Joe stands over a dizzy Hayes, kicking rocks at him.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

Tom Hayes you're a bully and thief!
Leave that poor Apache alone. Can't
you see he's a half wit?

Hayes picks up a jagged stone and raises it over his head.

YOUNG HAYES

I'll knock the teeth out of your
head your little whore!

Joe pulls a revolver and points it directly at Hayes' chest.

YOUNG JOE

Call me that again.

Hayes turns tail and scurries off into the desert.

Joe turns to face Jakob. He is terrified, quivering. Joe kneels in front of him.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

He's just a jack ass. You know? A
donkey, a burro? Do you talk?

Jakob finally looks at her. He stops shaking.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

You really are a half wit aren't
you? What's so important you were
willing to get your face kicked in
by that donkey?

Joe reaches out to Jakob's clenched fist. He recoils.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 I'm not gonna take it, you silly
 redskin. I just wanna see it!

Jakob hesitates. He stares at Joe. She stares back. He opens his fingers to reveal 3 spent, polished cartridges tied together with a length of twine. Joe is flabbergasted.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 All that for a handful of trash you
 picked up under Cort's fence?!

Joe looks off in the direction that Hayes fled.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 You'd better light out of here.
 Tom's gonna be back with his daddy
 soon and then you've really had it.

Jakob is frozen in place. Joe looks him over, annoyed.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 You hear me?

Joe shakes her head. She releases the chamber of her revolver, dropping 2 empty cartridges into Jakob's hands. He accepts them and seals them in the chest.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 Tom knows where you hide that thing
 now. Can't very well leave it
 behind. It'll be gone by morning.

Joe surveys the desert. She motions for Jakob to follow her.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 Well c'mon then.

Jakob stays planted. Frustrated she points her gun.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 C'mon!

This motivates Jakob, he starts to move. Joe looks down at her gun, impressed by its power.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1868]

Rowena watches from a distance as Joe and Jakob jog through the sagebrush. Joe is laughing as she yells back at Jakob. He struggles to keep up.

Finally the 2 children arrive at an outcropping of rocks. Joe leads Jakob to a shaded spot. They sit in the dirt.

YOUNG JOE

That jackass would never look in here. He's scared of snakes.

Jakob's fear returns. His eyes widen.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

Ha. I *knew* you could understand me. Maybe you're only a half-half-wit.

Jakob surveys his surroundings, paranoid.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

What's in there that's so damn important, anyway?

Jakob slowly loosens his grip on the chest. He sets it in front of him and Joe opens it. She begins pulling out items. The first thing she finds is a tattered bible.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

Them missionaries teach ya to talk? Y'all scalp em afterward?

Joe makes herself laugh. Jakob doesn't react. Joe pulls a mouth harp from the chest.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

The hell's this for?

Jakob sheepishly takes the instrument from Joe. He holds it to his mouth and plucks at the metal. The sound echoes through the canyon. Rowena reacts from a distance.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

That might be the prettiest ugly sound I've ever heard.

Jakob fiddles with his harp as Joe keeps digging. She pulls out a strip of burlap. Apache symbols are inscribed on it.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

What's it say?

YOUNG JAKOB

Ya-zzie.

Joe is aghast that the boy has finally spoken.

YOUNG JOE
Yazzie. What's that? Yer tribe?

YOUNG JAKOB
No.

Jakob touches his hand to his chest.

YOUNG JOE
That's *your* name?

YOUNG JAKOB
No.

Jakob touches both hands to his chest. Then he points to the pictographs of humans inscribed in the burlap.

YOUNG JAKOB (CONT'D)
Yazzie.

YOUNG JOE
That's your family? It's your family's name?

YOUNG JAKOB
Yes.

YOUNG JOE
What's *your* name?

Jakob doesn't answer. Joe rummages around in the chest.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
It's probably something silly like "Maize Muncher". Cort says all you Apaches got silly names.

Joe picks up the weathered copy of the Bible. Only the Old Testament is intact. She flips through it.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
Everybody knows all the best names come outta this here book. That's where my name comes from. See?

Joe has the book opened to Genesis, chapter 37. She points at the name, "Joseph".

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
Guess my folks were expectin a boy.

Jakob points to the word "Jacob" on the page.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 "Jacob". What, you like that name?

Jakob draws out "J-A-C-O-B" on the sand in front of him.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 You can't be "Jacob". Jacob is
 Joseph's daddy and I already got me
 a daddy, see-

Joe pulls a locket out from beneath her dress. She opens it
 to reveal two pictures. She hands the locket to Jakob.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 That's Cort. That there's Harley.

YOUNG JAKOB
 Your family...

YOUNG JOE
 Yeah I guess so. They don't like it
 so much when I call 'em that.

Jakob looks back down at the name in front of him.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 Fine, you can be "Jacob". But at
 least do this-

Joe scratches a line next to the C making the name: "JAKOB".

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 Otherwise it's just plain weird.

Joe looks up to see Jakob, fascinated, examining the locket.
 She takes it off and hangs it around his neck.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 Here. I've been carrying this
 around for way too long. You wear
 it for awhile.

Jakob is surprised but clearly moved to receive a gift. Joe
 positions the locket on Jakob's chest. She sees a scar and
 reaches for it.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 Wassat?

Jakob recoils, slightly, and grabs Joe's hand.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
 I ain't gonna hurt cha.

Jakob remains stoic.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
Look. I got one too.

Joe grabs Jakob's hands and runs his fingers over the scar on her forearm. He examines it. She reaches out to touch the scar on his chest. He lets her.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
Them Saguaros sure letcha know
iffin' you get too close. Don't
they?

Joe's hand flattens against Jakob's bare chest. The two children make sustained eye contact.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
Got any more scars, Jakob Yazzie?

Jakob is frozen.

Nearby, Rowena spies on the intimate exchange from behind a tree. She breaths heavily.

CORT
(o.s)
Josephine! Rowena!

Startled, Rowena looks back toward the Ranch.

Joe exhales, frustrated. Jakob recoils from Joe's touch.

CORT (CONT'D)
(o.s.)
Where'd you run off to?

YOUNG JOE
Hear the drink in his voice?

Jakob looks toward the ranch, afraid.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)
Don't worry, he won't come out
here. He's even more scared of them
rattlers than you are. You take
care of that locket. Tom Hayes sees
it, you gonna lose it.

Joe turns to leave, Jakob grabs her by the wrist. She turns back toward him. He drops the bullet casing necklace into her hand. This makes Joe giggle.

YOUNG JOE (CONT'D)

That might be the ugliest goddamned
thing I've ever seen.

Joe examines the contours of the boy's face, the color of his skin, and the shape of his eyes behind his greasy bangs.

She thrusts herself forward and gives Jakob a sloppy but forceful kiss on the cheek. Then she turns and runs away. Jakob watches her, fascinated.

Joe and Rowena meet up on the hillside and rush away together.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1868]

Someone approaches- boots in the dirt, a drawn pistol. But Jakob is so consumed with his new necklace that he doesn't notice the intruder until a hulking shadow falls over him.

Jakob looks up and is struck frozen with terror to see:

Hank Hayes, early 50s- A mountain of a man, sharply dressed and imposing, but with a soft, almost cherubic face. Young [Tom] Hayes stands next to him, bruised and brooding.

CRICKET (V.O.)

A local mining baron whose wife
died shortly after their son Tom
was born found Jakob...

Rage builds behind Tom's eyes. He lurches towards Jakob. Hank flicks his wrist and plants the barrel of his gun against Tom's chest, stopping him in his tracks.

Tom halts obediently but breaths heavily. He looks up at his father, appealing to him.

YOUNG HAYES

Ain't you gonna plug him for what
he done?

HANK HAYES

What he *did*. What *did* he do to you,
Tommy?

YOUNG HAYES

Little red bastard gammie this-

Tom points to his black eye. Hank examines the wound. He looks at Jakob and chuckles.

HANK HAYES

Sure'in you wanna stick to that story?

Hank motions to the top of the hill. Tom looks up to see Joe and Rowena observing from behind a tree. When they realize they've been noticed they flinch against one another.

Hank approaches Jakob. His gun still drawn.

HANK HAYES (CONT'D)

This poor, hopeless, little squirrel couldn't kick his own ass... Reckon it was them gals gave you the shiner.

Hank crouches in front of the Apache. Jakob's eyes dart, considering an exit strategy.

Joe moves toward Jakob and Hank but Rowena catches the hem of her skirt and stops her. Rowena and Jakob lock eyes.

Hank examines the boy's calloused feet, his ashen face, and suburnt lips.

CRICKET (V.O.)

Most of the members of Jakob's tribe had been wiped out when the railroad charged through. He knew it was only a matter of time before Jakob caught a bullet.

Jakob is petrified. Hank lowers his weapon. The boy and the man size each other up and down.

HANKS HAYES

When's the last time you ate?

Jakob remains frozen. He says nothing.

HANKS HAYES (CONT'D)

Got a name?

Jakob says noting.

HANK HAYES

You understand me, boy?

Jakob looks from Rowena to Joe to Tom to Hank.

YOUNG JAKOB

...yes.

HANK HAYES
What's yer name, son?

Jakob looks down at the name scrawled front of him.

CRICKET (V.O.)
So he took him in.

EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1868]

Joe and Rowena dash down the hill back to the ranch. Cort stands, waiting for them, bottle in hand.

Rowena veers off toward the house, avoiding Cort completely. Joe stops in front of her father. She's wearing the necklace.

CORT
The hell's that thing around your
neck, Josephine?

Joe is frozen, looking at her father, weighing her options.

CORT (CONT'D)
Give it here.

Joe holds and holds and holds.. then- She's off and running!

CORT (CONT'D)
Josephine!

Joe's takes off down the fence line as fast as her legs can carry her.

CORT (CONT'D)
Josephine you come back here!

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1868]

Montage:

-Joe runs through the fields, kicking up her feet.

-Joe and Rowena playing on the hillside.

-Joe and Jakob running through the grass together.

-Jakob plays his mouth harp for Joe while she lounges next to him, her head resting against his leg.

-Joe and Rowena climbing trees.

-Joe and Jakob lying together in the tall grass. Their hands mingle as they watch the clouds.

-Rowena watching Joe and Jakob from afar.

-Joe and Rowena cross a stream while balancing on a log.

-Joe's fingers are intertwined with Jakob's. They slowly slip apart. Hayes' hand enters frame. He clutches Joe's hand tightly and pulls her away.

EXT. HAYES RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

CHOP! A thick, knotty log is split by a rusty hatchet. 20-something, clean-shaven JAKOB- slender but muscular, handsome but severe, is accumulating firewood.

Nearby- lovely, youthful, Sunday best-clad JOE exchanges romantic platitudes with strapping, well-manicured HAYES.

Hayes slips a ring onto Joe's finger. She accepts it politely and kisses Hayes. Hayes whistles to get Jakob's attention. Jakob looks up.

HAYES

You look after my fiancée, Jake.
She's the most valuable thing on
this ranch.

Jakob walks with Hayes as they near the gates of the ranch.

JAKOB

How long you reckon you'll be?

HAYES

Shouldn't take more than a few
weeks. Tucson, Phoenix, Bisbee.
Collect on the old man's claim.

Jakob puts down his hatchet.

JAKOB

I'm sorry, Tom. Your father was
good to me.

HAYES

Let's hope he's good to us beyond
the grave. I've got a feeling it's
gonna cost a fortune to buy that
woman a new family tree.

Jakob looks back toward the house:

Joe stands on porch, out of earshot but watching the men.

JAKOB

What're you talking about?

HAYES

Well I can't very well have the entire territory knowing who my wife's parents really are. That's the kind of scandal we're gonna have to bury under sand and gold.

JAKOB

Well. If that's what she wants...

Hayes snickers at his brother's naivete and walks toward the gates of the ranch. He yells loud enough for Joe to hear him.

HAYES

You look after this ranch, little brother. If things aren't exactly the same as I left 'em when I get home, you and me are gonna have words!

Hayes disappears into the prairie.

Jakob surveys the compound. His eyes fall on Joe who ignores him and enters the house.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

Joe, still clad in her dress, walks out across the compound, bathed in the warm glow of the sunset.

She pulls a tin can out from beneath her dress and places it gently on the vertical bar of the split-rail fence.

She steps back, looks around on all sides to ensure that she's not being watched, and lifts a rifle site level with her eye. She aims toward the can.

KA-PONG! The tin can explodes off of the fence line, swirling into the distance.

Joe, rattled, swirls around, wildly, searching for the source of the gunshot. She discovers Jakob over her left shoulder, holding a pistol and smiling.

JAKOB

The hell you doin' out here
pointin' your rifle at cans?

JOE
Nunyer goddamn business!

JAKOB
You're gonna get black powder all
over that frock, you know?

Joe, furious, points her rifle at Jakob's face.

JOE
I'll spray powder all over that
red, smirking face of yours!

JAKOB
You oughta be thankin' me, Cassidy.
You're far too dignified a specimen
to be dentin' cans in public!

JOE
Sneakin' up on a woman like the
savage sonofabich you are. No
wonder they pay good money to pick
your people off this prairie.

JAKOB
Your daddy took that job seriously.
Man found pleasure in his work.

JOE
You don't know 'nuthin 'bout my
daddy.

Jakob chuckles to himself. He empties the cartridges from the
pistol into his palm, pockets them, and reloads the weapon.

JAKOB
You're right. But just think- if
Tom's daddy hadn't paid such good
money to your daddy to use this
here thing on my daddy-

Jakob spins the barrel, snaps it into place, and points the
gun, handle-first toward Joe. She lowers her rifle and
accepts the pistol.

JAKOB (CONT'D)
-then you'd be missing the pleasure
of my company right now.

Jakob smiles, turns, and heads back toward the house. Joe
yells after him.

JOE

If that story's supposed to make me feel sorry for you-!

JAKOB

Don't need your pity, Mrs. Hayes.

JOE

It's ain't "Mrs. Hayes" yet.

JAKOB

Pardon me, Ms. Cassidy. I won't make the mistake again, I promise.

Joe looks down at the pistol in her hands. A distant thunder signals a storm in the distance.

EXT. HAYES RANCH - AFTERNOON ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

The storm has arrived and water cascades around the porch of the house. Jakob stands on a ladder, repairing a shingle.

The rain flows through the hole in the porch, stinging Jakob's eyes. He squints and swings a hammer, making contact his thumb. He yelps, falling backwards off the ladder.

JAKOB

Damnit to hell!

Joe emerges from the house, looking dry and lovely.

JOE

What's all the singing!?

Jakob shakes out his throbbing hand as he hops up and down.

JAKOB

Cottenfurginsofabitchin-!

JOE

Isn't it a little late to be doing a rain dance?

JAKOB

Can't get the goddamned nail driven unless I got my face right under the goddamned hole. But the goddamned rain is pounding in like goddamned buck shot!

JOE

Do I have to get up on that ladder
and do the job for you?

JAKOB

Well I wouldn't want you to rip
your corset.

JOE

I ain't wearin' a corset, squinty.

Jakob leers at Joe, skeptical.

JOE (CONT'D)

Well it ain't tightened up, anyway.

Joe is becoming impatient. She storms into the house. Jakob presses his lips to his aching finger. Joe re-emerges, carrying a frying pan.

JAKOB

Don't you dare hit me with that
thing.

JOE

Hold this! Gimme that!

Joe trades the pan for the hammer and mounts the ladder.

JOE (CONT'D)

C'mon, get up here!

Joe positions herself under the hole. She instructs Jakob to shield her face from the rain with the pan as she works.

JOE (CONT'D)

Get it higher. Can't see the nail.

Jakob positions the pan but can't take his eyes off of Joe as she works. She doesn't notice him and finishes the job. The raindrops pinging loudly off the pan finally subside.

Joe offers the hammer back to Jakob. He accepts it but doesn't break eye contact with her. She snags the pan.

JOE (CONT'D)

Gimme that. Reckon it's only a
matter of time before you start
complainin' about being hungry.

Joe hops off the ladder and lands gracefully as Jakob watches. She disappears inside the house.

EXT. PRAIRIE - AFTERNOON ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

The late afternoon sun is casting long shadows. Joe, overdressed and perspiring, straddles the split rail fence in a very unladylike position. Jakob perches next to her.

JOE

What's that one?

JAKOB

What's what one?

JOE

That one! The big black sumbitch that keeps circling that same spot over and over?

JAKOB

Oh. We call that one "Angel who draws salt from the Earth".

JOE

Really?

JAKOB

No.

This breaks Joe up. She laughs so hard she almost falls off of the fence.

JOE

You ass! I completely believed you!

JAKOB

Why do you just assume that I know what every bird, snake, or rodent is called?

JOE

Don't your people have some kind of sacred bond with the land, the sky, and every animal in between?

JAKOB

My people? You were born here too, y'know? And I've lived with your people a hell of a lot longer than I ever did with mine. Don't you know what that thing is?

JOE

Of course not. That's why I asked.

JAKOB
It's a turkey vulture, obviously.
What are you, thick or somethin'?

JOE
Ah to hell with you.

JAKOB
To hell with you.

The two watch the turkey vulture make lazy loops in the sky.

JOE
What's he circling?

JAKOB
Food.

JOE
I know THAT. What kind of food?

JAKOB
Hell if I know. Somethin' that
ain't dead yet. The weaker it gets
the lower the vulture gets. See the
circles gettin' tighter?

Joe takes her eyes off of the bird. She looks at Jakob,
examining his profile.

JOE
Remember when I pulled that gun on
Tom for you?

Jakob keeps his eyes trained on the vulture.

JAKOB
What?

JOE
We were kids. Nine, ten years old.
It was out in that prairie, between
the creeks. Tom was beatin' you
senseless. I got the drop on 'em.

Jakob's eyes remain skyward.

JAKOB
Reckon you're confusing dreams for
memories.

Joe doesn't force it. She looks back out toward the sunset.

JOE
I do that sometimes.

Jakob finally looks at Joe. She doesn't notice. He examines her dress.

JAKOB
Comfortable in that?

Joe looks down at her wardrobe.

JOE
How do you mean?

JAKOB
You're soaked with sweat twice over. Your hands are swellin' up in them frilly manacles.

Joe is incredulous. She makes fists with her fingers and peers at Jakob, defiantly.

JAKOB (CONT'D)
That dress making you happy?

Joe breaks eye contact. She examines her dress.

JOE
He gave it to me.

Jakob nods, accepting the answer. He motions upward.

JAKOB
Looks like it's dinner time.

Joe follows Jakob's glance out into the desert: The vulture is circling lower and lower. The bird turns silhouette against the horizon and disappears behind a cactus.

Joe nods, satisfied. She turns to address Jakob but is surprised to discover he has disappeared. She scans the compound for him to no avail.

Her eyes focus on something hanging from the fence post: A loop of twine and 7 glistening, evenly distributed cartridges hanging from it like necklace charms.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

A dark figure stands in front of a roaring fire, he seems to be admiring it.

EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

Joe rushes through the darkness, she is panting, determined.

EXT. HAYES RANCH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

Hayes walks swiftly out of the darkness and approaches the porch of the house. He is nervous, excited, expectant.

INTERCUT: EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Joe runs faster. She is perspiring, nearing her destination.

INTERCUT: EXT. HAYES RANCH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Hayes shadow can be seen darting around inside the house, hoping to find a friendly face. But his excitement drains as he discovers it to be empty.

INTERCUT: EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Joe runs as fast as her legs will carry her. She sees the person she is racing toward.

INTERCUT: EXT. HAYES RANCH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Hayes emerges onto the porch. He sees something far out in the PRAIRIE.

INTERCUT: EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jakob turns from the fire to face the darkness.

Joe launches herself out of the darkness and careens into Jakob's arms. They fall into a clinch in the dust, rolling dangerously close to the fire.

INTERCUT: EXT. HAYES RANCH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Hayes walks in the direction of a distant fire light.

Joe's engagement ring sits, abandoned on the porch railing.

INTERCUT: EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Joe and Jakob roll around on an messy tangle of woolen blankets. They tear at each other's clothes, feverishly.

INTERCUT: EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

On a nearby outcropping of boulders, Hayes watches the lovers. He is far enough away so as to not be seen. But the firelight spikes his eyes.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (LATER) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

The fire has burned down to a pile of glowing embers. The lovers, swaddled in blankets, grin in postcoital bliss.

JAKOB

How did they meet?

JOE

She was a pro. He was a customer.
Not difficult to make friends on
the second floor of The Belle Vue.

JAKOB

Does he still visit her?

JOE

Once a week, every week, for the
last twenty years.

JAKOB

Does she charge him?

Joe and Jakob smile at the implications of this question.

JOE

Not a detail I've ever been
especially interested in discussing
with my mother.

JAKOB

But you must be curious.

JOE

She ain't never charged him.

JAKOB

How do you know?

JOE

Because I heard she and Skinny arguing about it one night and Harley threatened to move all the gals over to The Sultana if he kept on harpin' about it.

Joe runs her lips over Jakob's chest.

JAKOB

How often you visit 'em?

JOE

Why are you so curious about Harley and Cort?

JAKOB

Because I'm curious about you. And Tom mentioned that you didn't want folks knowin' Harley and Cort were your folks.

JOE

Tom doesn't want anyone knowing they're my folks. I could give a shit. But he can't have people knowin' his in-laws are a whore and her steady drunk.

Jakob runs his hands through Joe's hair.

JAKOB

Do you love him?

EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1878]

Tom is listening intently to the lover's conversation. He leans in, intrigued by this question.

INTERCUT: EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Joe shakes her head.

JOE

Of course not.

INTERCUT: EXT. PRAIRIE- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The hateful inferno has been stoked inside of Hayes. He pulls the pistol from his holster and confirms that it's loaded.

INTERCUT: EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

JAKOB

Then why are you marrying him?

JOE

I thought there was a chance he might be able to take me away from all of this. Away from this town. Does that make me a horrible person? To use someone like that?

JAKOB

Not necessarily.

Joe props herself up to stare Jakob in the eye.

JOE

I'm relieved you think that.

JAKOB

Why?

JOE

Because I'm not marrying him, Jake.

INTERCUT: EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Hayes clutches his gun firmly. He hangs on the lover's words.

INTERCUT: EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

JAKOB

I don't know if I can take you away from all of this Joe.

Joe cradles Jakob's face.

JOE

And yet... here I am...

The lovers embrace, pressing their lips tightly against one another. They roll against the fire pit, knocking a log into the embers, and sending sparks and smoke upwards.

INTERCUT: EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Hayes has heard enough. He returns his gun to its holster before standing and walking back toward the ranch house. The crackling fire behind him silhouettes his determined stride.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT ["NOW" - 1899]

Cricket plays a somber tune on his piano. Quinn is perched atop the piano. Her expression has turned melancholy. She examines her ripped stockings.

QUINN

How did that bastard become Sheriff, anyway?

CRICKET

There were rumors that when Tom Hayes realized that his fiancée was fixin' to leave him for his adopted brother that he used his daddy's fortune to buy himself a badge.

QUINN

Who would vote for a monster like that?

CRICKET

Mines had dried up. Railroad hadn't passed through here yet. Tom Hayes was the only person in this town with any seed. So he planted it in all the right pockets.

QUINN

Why didn't people just leave?

CRICKET

Lot of 'em did. Before Hank Hayes passed on, this town was fixin' to be another Bisbee. Plenty of farms, homesteaders, ranches, promise.

Cricket pours himself and Quinn another drink.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

But when his son became Sheriff this palatial establishment we're currently residing in, as well as Harley O'Houlihan's pleasure parlour upstairs became the center of this town and the only profitable business left in it.

Quinn scans the upstairs landing.

QUINN

Quite the proud lineage planted in them splintered headboards.

Quinn cocks her head at Cricket. She raises her glass to Cricket in a mock toast.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Dug in like termites.

CRICKET
Not that Harley, any of her gals,
or her daughter ever saw any of
that profit...

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe enters the saloon and crosses through the crowd. Jakob sits drinking with a table of jovial miners.

CRICKET (V.O.)
With the engagement called off and
the town pressed more tightly under
the new sheriff's thumb, Joe and
Jakob knew their flight was
necessary. They made escape plans.

As Joe passes Jakob she slides her hand across his shoulder blades secretly but affectionately.

Sheriff Hayes holds court at a nearby poker table. He eyeballs Joe as she passes. Joe ascends the staircase.

CRICKET (V.O.)
But when Harley fell sick the plan
was delayed.

INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING - DAY (CONTINUOUS) ["WAY BACK WHEN"-1879]

Joe crosses the landing toward the corner room.

CRICKET (V.O.)
Cort's visits had ceased and Joe
couldn't bring herself to leave her
mother to die alone in a brothel.
Even one she'd helped to build.

Joe pushes past a throng of worried prostitutes. Rowena stands against the railing, smoking. She notices Joe pass then looks pensively down into the saloon.

Rowena spots Jakob. He looks up to catch her glance and holds eye contact.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

The room is eerily still. The bed is empty and the sheets have been neatly folded. Joe stands by herself, peering out the window.

Joe turns to notice her mother's evening "work attire"- A frilly silk and leather frock. It's been recently laundered, pressed, and hung like a monument on her dressing screen.

Jakob approaches from behind Joe. He wraps his arms around her waist and buries his face in her hair.

CRICKET (V.O.)

When Harley passed and the lovers were finally free to run away they decided to do so separately.

Joe pulls her body away from Jakob, letting her hands linger on his. They smile at each. Joe rushes out of the room.

CRICKET (V.O.)

Worried that they might be seen by Hayes, Joe left first and Jakob stayed behind to collect on a gambling debt they could use for travelling money.

Jakob stands by the window. He sees Joe running past, outside. She disappears into the distance. Jakob smiles.

CRICKET (V.O.)

Once he had the money in hand he would ride out to meet her and they would head west together.

The door to the room swings open.

CRICKET (V.O.)

That was the plan...

Jakob turns toward the door. His expression changes from surprise to horror. The door slams closed.

EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

In the distance a female figure appears as a mirage on the horizon. As she approaches it becomes clear that it's ROWENA.

JOE watches Rowena, apprehensively. Joe's body is stoic, rigid, as if she doesn't take a breath.

Rowena finally gets close enough to Joe to speak to her. We can't hear the words but Rowena's news is painful to deliver. She can't bear to make eye contact with Joe.

Joe collapses to the ground. Rowena rushes to catch her and the two women end up in a tangled heap in the dust.

EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY (LATER) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Rowena and Joe sit on upturned water pails outside of a dilapidated barn. Joe looks blankly out toward the horizon.

JOE
How did he do it?

ROWENA
He shot him.

JOE
In the street?

ROWENA
In your momma's room.

JOE
Did you see it?

ROWENA
No. I didn't need to.

JOE
Then how do you know--?

Joe turns to Rowena, the tears refusing to come.

ROWENA
He's dead, Joe.

Rowena can't bear to hold eye contact. She looks down.

Joe struggles to retain her composure. She stares intently into the distance as if searching the sky for answers.

JOE
I need to go back.

ROWENA
You can't do that.

JOE
I'm going back to Ruby.

ROWENA

His guys will be on you the moment
you set foot onto Main Street.
There's no place in that town he
doesn't have eyes.

Joe stands up, defiantly. Her sadness turning abruptly into
anger. She paces.

ROWENA (CONT'D)

If you go back to Ruby and get
yourself shot then what did he die
for?

JOE

He *died* for nothing!

ROWENA

He died because he wouldn't tell
Hayes where you'd gone!

Joe stops pacing. Rowena stands up and strokes at Joe's hair,
affectionately.

ROWENA (CONT'D)

If he were still alive he would beg
you not to do anything foolish. He
would have wanted you to stay away.

Joe's expression goes blank. The life drains out of her eyes.

EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY (LATER) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe sits on the porch of the ranch house watching Rowena
disappear into the desert.

CORT

(o.s.)

You'd best take that little whore's
advice to heart, Josephine.

CORT leans against the post of the porch stoop, smoking a
pipe, and looking out in the same direction as Joe.

JOE

Harley was a whore.

CORT

She'd be the first to admit that.

JOE

Is that how you think of them? As whores first and women second?

CORT

I'd trust the judgment of a whore over just about anyone.

JOE

You trusted Harley? Think she actually loved you?

CORT

Why you so concerned with whether your momma and I loved each other?

JOE

Because she's dead, Cort! Thought you oughta know that there won't be a warm body and a bottle waiting for you above The Belle any more.

Cort is clearly rattled by this news.

CORT

Your momma... she was a-

Joe stands up quickly, pushing past Cort. She stomps down the porch, angrily.

JOE

Spare the eulogy. Maybe you can get together with all of Harley's regulars. Who knows how many brothers and sisters I have scattered all over the territory!

BANG! BONG!

A bullet ricochets off of a cast iron triangle that hangs from the porch frame. It stops Joe in her tracks.

CORT

I'll pick your eyebrows off if you don't watch your mouth about your momma. Harley-O was the decentest woman I ever had the... the--

JOE

If you loved her then why didn't you take her away from all of this?

Cort lowers his weapon. He slips it back into its holster.

CORT

I told her every time I saw her
that I loved her.

Joe takes a step toward her father.

JOE

She didn't wanna give up the life,
did she?

CORT

She helped build that place. She
cared for them gals. She trained
them, she looked after them.

JOE

Never came to visit you, did she?

CORT

Sent that Rowena out here to
deliver a few letters.

JOE

We've both had someone taken from
us. You can't hunt down
consumption. But I can put a bullet
in the heart of that seed-sucker
who shot Jake and made a slave out
of Harley.

CORT

Good. Just leave me out of it.

Cort staggers back to a nearby table. He retrieves his pipe.

JOE

Coward. You're so busy swimming in
your bottle and pining for a whore
to come and rescue you that you
can't even shoot straight.

CORT

I shoot just fine, young lady. But
stomping into a suicide mission to
avenge some bastard Navajo who
gives you the vapors just ain't how
I planned on--

Before Cort can react, Joe has retrieved both revolvers from
his holsters. She presses one to his temple, one to his chin.

CORT (CONT'D)

--ending my life.

JOE

Sure you want your last words to be a slur about a man who died today?

Cort stares defiantly back at his daughter.

JOE (CONT'D)

As far as I'm concerned, that boy's the only family I ever had.

CORT

Well then, you've got every right to go and seek you revenge. But I don't owe him nuthin'.

Cort's glare burrows into Joe's eyes. She looks away, placing his guns on the table.

JOE

I used to think there might actually be a man buried deep inside that poisonous husk.

CORT

Well, you have me confused with someone else.

JOE

I shouldn't have come here.

CORT

You may have thought that Nav was the only family you had. But now I'm really the only family you got.

At this revelation, Joe's body deflates.

CORT (CONT'D)

So consider that barn your own personal palace.

Cort points in the direction of the ramshackle building out in the corner of the compound.

JOE

I'm going back to Ruby to kill this man. With or without your help.

Cort considers this. He nods, deliberately.

CORT

Well then you'll get to see your Momma again before I will.

Cort exits, leaving Joe on the porch by herself.

She runs her fingers across the smooth ivory handles of her father's matching revolvers. She lifts one up, aims it, and narrows her eyes at its sight. She pulls back on the hammer.

INT. BARN - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Bottles explode, showering glass and liquid down onto the sawdust floor.

Joe raises the gun toward another bottle. She narrows her eyes. Her hand quivers. She is tense, apprehensive. BANG! She takes the neck off of the bottle. The body remains.

CORT

(o.s.)

Hayes woulda already plugged you
twice in the time it took you to
aim your first shot.

Joe looks up into the rafters of the barn and sees her father, bottle in hand, legs hanging over the railing.

JOE

I thought you said you didn't want
anything to do with this.

CORT

I don't. Doesn't mean I'm adverse
to entertainment.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Joe sprays rounds all over the back wall of the barn.

CORT (CONT'D)

What sick sense of humor sumbitch
taught you how to shoot?

Cort hurls the bottle into the air. He whips a pistol out of his holster and begins popping off rounds.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Joe's target bottles explode.

BANG! The airborne bottle is obliterated while falling through space. Shattered glass showers Joe.

CORT (CONT'D)
 Hell. Maybe some people just can't
 be taught.

Cort, barely able to stand upright, staggers away.

EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe practices shooting at a horse collar that hangs from the
 outside of the barn. She shoots wide.

The chickens that wander the compound are clucking nearby as
 if ridiculing Joe. She points a pistol at them.

CORT
 (o.s.)
 If you want poultry for supper I
 suggest using a hatchet. Smoke them
 hens with a bullet and the meat
 just ends up tasting of antimony.

Cort is sitting on the nearby porch, tilting lazily.

JOE
 You ever do any actual "ranching"?

CORT
 This spread is about as useful for
 ranching as cactus is for a saddle.

JOE
 So then how did you pay for this?

PING! PING PING!

Cort's bullets ricochet off of the collar. Joe looks back in
 his direction but he has already put his pistols away.

JOE (CONT'D)
 So killing still pays well?

CORT
 Pays a helluva lot better than
 conspiring.

JOE
 So all them unarmed Navajo,
 Chinese, Apache- Women and children
 the railway pays your blood money
 to cut down... They deserve it?

CORT

You'll forgive me if the judgement of a petulant child smacks of hypocrisy, considering her current bloodlust.

JOE

There's about an ocean of difference between taking money to clear-cut Navajo off their land when they won't move for a railroad and wanting satisfaction from someone who killed an innocent man.

CORT

You think killing Hayseed Hayes is gonna give you that satisfaction?

JOE

I'll let you know after I do it!

Joe turns back to the collar. She raises the gun upwards and closes one eye as she aims. Her hand throbs on the grip.

Suddenly Cort is standing directly in front of Joe's weapon. He is cavalier, unafraid. He startles Joe.

CORT

What're you closin' yer eye fer? You close one eye you're gonna see half as much. Plus you're gonna end up sprayin wide cuz you ain't got no depth perception. Look-

BANG, PING!

BANG, PING!

BANG, PING!

The cast iron triangle that hangs from a frayed piece of hemp over the porch, swings back and forth erratically.

CORT (CONT'D)

You think I'm an ancient, bigoted, drunken fool. And you know what-you're not wrong.

Joe gawks at her father's marksmanship.

CORT (CONT'D)

But tell me, Lady Vengeance- how is it that someone twice as old and twice as drunk as you can get three dead eye shots off in the time it takes you to get one?

JOE

Because you've been practicing your whole life.

CORT

Wrong.

JOE

Because you're so drunk you're not even trying to aim.

CORT

Close.

JOE

I'm not listening to the ramblings of a lonely, pickled reptile.

Joe walks toward the porch. Cort follows her.

CORT

You're so busy looking, you're not seeing. For every second you spend crossing your eyes at your target you lose two split seconds you coulda spent firing.

JOE

So what are you suggesting? To fire off wildly, hoping to god that one of the rounds finds a target?

CORT

Is that what it looked like I was doing?

JOE

Tell me how, Daddy!

Joe mashes her eyelids together, tightly. She seethes, dramatically and her breathing is labored.

JOE (CONT'D)

Tell me how to shoot like you.

Joe and Cort lock eyes. They both hold the stare, stubbornly.

JOE (CONT'D)

I've never asked you for anything.
You ain't never given me
anything...

CORT

I gave you my name-

JOE

Give me something I can use, Cort.
Give me something I can use to
defend myself.

CORT

You don't wanna defend yourself.
You wanna take a life. Why should I
help you do that?

Cort looks past his daughter. He scans the horizon.

EXT. DESERT - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

At least a dozen whiskey bottles are perched along an uneven,
knotty fence. Joe and Cort stand twenty feet away from it.

Joe touches her pistol, gingerly. Cort swats her hand away.

CORT

The momentum of your hand reaching
for your gun is what propels it out
the holster. If your hand is next
to the confounded thing how are you
ever gonna build up any momentum?

Joe nods, receptively.

CORT (CONT'D)

Your hand is on its way from
wherever it was to pointing
directly at your target. The weapon
is just something it happens to
pick up along the way. Your holster
is tossing you the gun as your hand
rides by it. The gun matches the
speed of your hand and joins it.

Cort paces around behind his daughter, kicking at the dirt.
He examines her- up and down.

Joe's eyes drift from the bottles in the distance to her
father, then back to the fence.

CORT (CONT'D)

Go then!

Joe lifts the gun, squints her eyes, aims and:

BLAM!

The bottle shatters, beautifully. Joe beams.

CORT (CONT'D)

What was that?

JOE

I shattered the sonofabitch--

CORT

No you didn't!

JOE

I did! Look-

CORT

No-you-did-not. You took three to the chest--

Cort taps two fingers hard against Joe's sternum.

CORT (CONT'D)

--before you even had a chance to get a shot off. How you gonna hit somethin' when you're already splayed out in the sand?

Joe is incredulous.

CORT (CONT'D)

Go again!

BLAM!

Joe misses and is disappointed but Cort is pleased.

CORT (CONT'D)

Better.

JOE

But I-

CORT

Your eyes don't aim. Your arm aims. When you blink does your weapon discharge?

JOE
No.

CORT
What discharges your weapon?

JOE
My hand.

CORT
Your arm!

Cort grabs Joe's arm, tapping his fingers along it.

CORT (CONT'D)
Hand is an extension of your arm.
Fingers an extension of your hand.

JOE
Alright.

CORT
Your arm aims the gun, your finger
pulls the trigger. They do the work
so they make the rules. Your eyes
should hardly even factor into it!

JOE
Alright.

CORT
Alright, then.

INT. BARN - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Empty bottles are now perched on the upper landing of the barn. They catch the shafts of midday sun and sparkle.

BLAM! BLAM! Two of the bottles explode into shards.

On the ground floor Joe re-holsters her smoking pistol.

CORT
You're letting your arm kick up.
That's why you're always catching
the second bottle on the neck.
Control the weapon, even when it
pushes back. Yes?

JOE
Yes.

INT. BARN - DAY (LATER) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe keeps her gun trained upward. Her arm starts to quiver. Cort slides up behind Joe until his mouth is inches from her.

CORT

Ho-old.

Joe's arm shakes like a leaf. Sweat beads dot her cheekbones.

CORT (CONT'D)

Josephine, why is your hand quakin'
like a punch-drunk pugilist?

Joe grits her teeth.

JOE

There's no blood left in it.

CORT

Well then move the blood from your
shoulder to your hand. Tell your
veins to pump the blood where it's
needed. Are you in charge of your
hand it or is it in charge of you?

Joe drops her hand to her side. She exhales, defeated.

Cort walks away.

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

Guess that answers that question.

EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

BLAM! Joe fires off toward the hanging triangle but misses.

CORT

Go!

BLAM! Joe's aim is true but she narrowly misses again.

CORT (CONT'D)

Go again!

BLAM! Joe's shot ricochets off the wooden bannister.

CORT (CONT'D)

What're you doing, Cass?

JOE

Don't call me that.

CORT
Why not?

JOE
He calls me that.

CORT
Who?

JOE
You know who.

CORT
You hate that crooked,
sonofabitchin' badge-polisher?

JOE
Yes.

CORT
You wanna put two between them
blank, beady eyes of his?!

JOE
Yes.

CORT
You want him to answer for Jakob?!

JOE
Yes!

CORT
Well, then draw that Colt!!!

BLAM, PING! BLAM, PING! BLAM, PING!

Joe dead-eyes the triangle. She stares at it, stunned.

CORT (CONT'D)
(o.s.)
Better.

INT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe enters the room. She looks eager until she notices something. She approaches it apprehensively.

Cort is collapsed in a rocking chair with a bottle dangling from his fingers. He is fading in between asleep and awake.

JOE
You alright?

CORT
What's it look like?

JOE
Looks like you haven't slept.

CORT
What's it to you?

JOE
Are we gonna go shooting or do you
want to get into bed?

CORT
I want you to leave me alone.

Deflated, Joe walks in front of Cort to address him.

JOE
I thought you were gonna help me.

CORT
Help you do what? Help you get
yourself killed?

JOE
I'm not like Harley, Cort. I'm like
you. I never wanted to believe it
but I can't ignore it any longer.

CORT
So what?

JOE
You're the best shot I've ever
seen. If you can make me half the
shot you are then I'll be twice the
shot Hayes is. So I--

CORT
So you can what?! You ain't killin'
nobody, Josephine. All you're gonna
do is walk back into that town,
fire off one round into the
floorboards of The Belle, then get
cut down by Hayes' posse.

Cort takes one last swig off his bottle and finishes it.

JOE

Why don't you put down that bottle
and come with me back to Ruby?

CORT

Are you listening to me, girl?!!

Cort stands up and hurls his bottle as hard as he can at the wall. Glass and liquid rain over the hearth.

CORT (CONT'D)

If you think I'm going back to that
town just so I can see my only- my
only--

Cort pulls a scummy handkerchief from his pocket. He wipes his face and attempts to compose himself.

Cort's emotions overwhelm him. He collapses into his chair. Joe can't bear the intensity. She storms out of the room.

INT. CORT'S ROOM - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe busies herself, collecting pieces of her father's wardrobe and laying them out on his bed.

EXT. DESERT - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe searches the ground, collecting various rocks and stones at the base of the fence. She shoves a few into her pockets.

She stops to run her fingers over the faded red pictographs on the fence post.

INT. BARN - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

CRACK!

Joe is huddled over a milk pail, bashing the rocks against each other, over and over again, violently. The impact creates sparks and smoke but Joe doesn't seem to notice.

CRACK! CRACK CRACK!

INT. BARN - DAY (LATER) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

A pile of red dust created by smashing the rocks, covers the bottom of the pail. Joe pours a small amount of water over the residue and stirs at it until it becomes a thick paste.

INT. BARN - DAY (LATER) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe is dunking her head into the pail. She is submerged all the way to her forehead. She massages her scalp.

INT. BARN - DAY (LATER) ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe pours a full bucket of water over her head. The red paste streams down over her face and stains her shirt. A puddle of red dye forms around her bare feet.

Joe tousles her hair and rings the liquid out of it. She examines herself in a shard of mirror: Her hair is now BRIGHT RED- the color of a desert sunrise. Joe runs her hands through her hair as if she's touching someone else's scalp.

INT. / EXT. CASSIDY RANCH - DAY ["WAY BACK WHEN" - 1879]

Joe, now dressed in her father's clothes, retrieves her guns, fastens the belt around her waist, and exits through the front door of the house.

When she is barely a speck in the distance, Cort finally approaches the door. He leans against the threshold and watches his daughter disappear into the desert.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

Back in the jail, the lover's are both lying on the ground of their respective cells. Their hands are stretched as far as their bonds will allow but they can't reach one another.

Jakob's dust-stained face makes him almost invisible against the dark wooden floor.

JAKOB

So that was your plan? Get him alone and shoot him in the head?

JOE

The beauty is in the simplicity.

JAKOB

He could have killed you.

JOE

What do you think I was trying to do to him? Light his cigar?

JAKOB

Plug Tom Hayes in The Belle on a Saturday night with a wall of his goons between you and daylight. How could you possibly be so stupid?

JOE

She told me you were dead.

JAKOB

Who told you that?

JOE

Rowena.

JAKOB

Why would you believe her?

JOE

Why wouldn't I!?

Jakob cocks his head backward to see Joe's silhouette.

JAKOB

You shouldn't have come back.

JOE

Why?

JAKOB

Because you were safe. You got away. You should have stayed there.

Jakob relaxes his neck and looks up toward the ceiling.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

But you just couldn't bear the thought that he had won. Could you?

JOE

Whether he shot you yesterday or hung you tomorrow. I should just let him get away with it?

JAKOB

To hell with him!

Joe strains her wrist against the manacle.

JOE

Well I knew I couldn't trust you to look after yourself.

JAKOB
To hell with you too.

Joe's body goes limp, defeated.

JOE
I leave you alone for five minutes
and you get your skinny ass caught!

JAKOB
Nobody asked you to come back here!

JOE
If I hadn't come back you'd have a
noose around your neck by now!

JAKOB
I can take care of myself!

JOE
Clearly!

JAKOB
So you bump off Hayes and then
what? You shoot your way out?

JOE
I didn't care what happened after I
killed him!

JAKOB
Joe you have to be smarter than--

JOE
No I don't, Jake! I really don't
have to be the smart one. You're
the smart one. And I thought you
were dead so I didn't give a damn
if they plugged me the minute I
left that room!

Joe seethes, attempting to control her anger. Jakob calms.

JAKOB
Harley's room.

JOE
Hell, that's where she died. Worse
places to take my last breath.

Joe and Jakob take a moment to compose themselves. They
breathe heavily into the darkness.

JOE (CONT'D)

He's never gonna leave us alone, is he?

JAKOB

Not as long as we're both still alive.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT ["NOW" - 1899]

Cricket stretches his hands dramatically out over the keys of his piano. He lowers his fingers softly and as soon as they make contact with the ivory he plays a slow, romantic tune.

Quinn's body is stretched out over the top of the piano. Her arm dangles over the side, cigarillo between her fingers. Cricket leans forward and drags off of it.

QUINN

You ever spent any time in a lockup?

CRICKET

I have. Didn't care for it much.

QUINN

They didn't let you bring your piano in with you?

CRICKET

If memory serves, my jailbird days preceded my ivory tickling days.

QUINN

You didn't play piano as a child?

Cricket laughs to himself at this.

CRICKET

No. Weren't a lot of pianos where I come from.

QUINN

Where's that?

CRICKET

Not far from here.

Cricket plays a jazzier tune.

QUINN

This town is like a well. Anything gets too close to it ends up falling in and never climbing out.

CRICKET

That's why smart folks keep their distance... even if they're dying of thirst.

QUINN

Why haven't you left?

CRICKET

What?

Quinn exhales more smoke.

QUINN

What's keepin' you here? You got family?

CRICKET

Family? No...

Cricket stares blankly at his keys.

QUINN

Are you hog-tied to this piano? Gettin' a lot of satisfaction serenading drunken lowlifes on their way to Nogales?

Cricket looks up at Quinn. Shaken.

CRICKET

Ask me another question.

QUINN

What made her believe that Jake was dead in the first place?

CRICKET

She made a mistake.

QUINN

And what was that?

CRICKET

She trusted someone.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

Joe and Jakob slumber on the floor of their cells. Joe's hair is long enough that she has tossed it back within reach of Jakob. The strands wrap around his fingers.

Joe's eyes flutter open long enough to notice Hayes- perched on a chair in the corner of the room. Joe sits up, slowly.

Hayes looks down at his hands. Dried sweat and tears stain his cheeks. He is reassembling a revolver, meticulously. A half empty whiskey bottle shares the bench with him.

Joe looks over at Jakob who is still asleep.

HAYES

You know, when my father died...
Before he died... Told me that he
wished I could have been more like
my younger brother. Said I could
have learned a lot from my brother.

JOE

This was never about you, Tom.

Hayes takes a swig off of his bottle. He stands up and leans against the bars of Joe's cell.

HAYES

Show's what you know about a man's
heart, Cass.

JOE

Don't call me tha-

HAYES

A man loves what he loves because
that's what he loves!

Hayes locks eyes with Joe through the darkness.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Ain't got nuthin' to do with
whether or not it loves him back.

The drunkenness drains out of Hayes face. He suddenly appears highly lucid.

HAYES (CONT'D)

You holsterin' a rejoinder, hard-
breather?

Hayes cocks his head in the direction of the other cell.
Jakob is awake and eavesdropping on the conversation.

JAKOB

You don't have to do this, Tom.

Hayes takes a nip off his bottle.

Joe holds stoically against the wall.

Jakob wraps his fingers around the bars of his cell.

JAKOB (CONT'D)

Why don't you let her go, Tom?
She's innocent.

HAYES

Innocent, says you!?

Hayes guffaws in Jakob's direction.

HAYES (CONT'D)

You realize she started her evening
by pulling a gun on the publicly
elected lawman of this here
municipality?

JOE

Who exactly elected you?

Hayes shoots an icy cold glare back in Joe's direction.

HAYES

And the penalty for attempted
murder of a Sheriff in Hachatoa
County is death by hanging.

JOE

Then what's his crime? Just keep me
here and let him go.

HAYES

Tell you what. Why don't we just
make this easier on ourselves?

Hayes snaps the chambers back into the revolver in his hands.
He sets the gun on the floor between the two cells and drops
back into the chair with his bottle.

HAYES (CONT'D)

There. Now you got two bullets. Two
bullets to change your world.

Joe and Jakob eyeball the gun.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I mean the way I figure it, one of you can pick it up, shoot the other, shoot yourself, and shuffle off in a real blaze of glory- Romeo and Juliet fashion.

Joe and Jakob discuss this option, wordlessly.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Or... One of you can pick it up, shoot me, shoot the other one, toss the gun back at my lifeless body, and try and convince the person who finds us in the morning that I was consumed by a fit of homicidal, suicidal jealousy-

CLICK! Joe holds the weapon in her hand. The barrel pointed directly at Hayes' forehead.

Hayes and Jakob turn to face the armed prisoner.

JOE

Or I could just shoot you twice in the head and not give a shit what anyone thinks when they find your drafty remainders.

Jakob holds his breath. Hayes grins.

HAYES

It's gonna be pretty hard to convince anyone that I managed to get two bullets in my own head before I went down, Cass.

JOE

Don't call me tha--

HAYES

And when they figure out who was responsible then you're both gonna swing anyway.

Joe is undeterred. She leans forward, the gun still trained on Hayes' head.

JOE

Then maybe just one in the head and
Jake and I make your suicide sound
real convincing.

Hayes points at the scattered bullets around his feet.

HAYES

I dropped four rounds at my feet-
popped myself with the fifth- and
left a live one in the barrel?
Ain't no deputy in this town gonna
believe I was drunk enough for
that. Sorry, Cass.

Joe keeps the gun trained on Hayes' forehead. Jakob's
expression changes to genuine concern.

JAKOB

Joe... don't--

HAYES

C'mon Cass. Put us all out of our
misery. Make Daddy Cort proud.

Joe grips the pistol so tightly her knuckles go white.

JAKOB

Joe!

CLICK! No discharge. Hayes doesn't even flinch.

CLICK. CLICK. The chambers are empty.

Hayes smiles. He lifts his boot to reveal the fifth and sixth
bullets that had been on the floor the entire time.

Joe channels her frustration, and swings the revolver like a
hammer. The handle of the gun makes solid contact with her
wrist manacle, breaking it loose.

She tosses the gun at Hayes chest. He catches it with one
hand and winks at her. He looks to Jakob.

HAYES

You see that? She didn't even think
about giving you the dignity of a
quick, painless way out. I just
told her you're gonna get your neck
stretched in a few hours and she
still couldn't help but use those
precious, imaginary bullets on me.

Joe slides her body down the wall and looks away, mortified.

Hayes drops down to retrieve the ammo. He loads the revolver and slips it back into his holster.

HAYES (CONT'D)

You might think that woman really loves you, Jakob. And maybe she does. But I can godamn-well guarantee you she ain't got the faculties necessary to love your ass half as much as she hates mine.

Hayes leans against Joe's cell, examining her. She doesn't look up from the floor.

HAYES (CONT'D)

She is truly her father's daughter.

Hayes takes one last pull from his whiskey bottle and stumbles into the doorway. Hayes leans on the door frame and leers at Jakob.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I suppose the most important question of the evening is: Who gets to be the lucky one and go first tomorrow? Because the second one gets to watch.

Hayes exits.

The lovers sit in silence, bathed in darkness for what feels like an eternity.

Joe stretches her arm through the bars of Jakob's cell and finally reaches him. They clasp hands and squeeze tightly.

JOE

Big night for him. Getting to see us suffer. I wonder if it was as good as he imagined it would be.

JAKOB

That man has suffered because of us, Josephine.

JOE

He's not a man. He's a boy. He's always been a boy.

JAKOB

He didn't deserve what we did to him. He never recovered.

JOE

We may have caused him pain. But the difference is we never took joy in making him suffer.

Jakob squeezes his eyelids tightly. He strains his face.

JAKOB

His father had a saying: "An open door might attract the bad but a closed door rejects any possibility of the good."

JOE

It's alright to be angry, Jake. You can let it in. It could help.

Jakob relaxes his face. The tears leak out over his cheekbones. He looks back at Joe and smiles.

JAKOB

Reckon you got enough anger in you for the both of us, Joe Cassidy.

JOE

You beautiful, half-wit, stargazer. How did we get here, you and I?

JAKOB

Ain't no one else I'd rather spend the last night of my life with.

Joe squeezes Jakob's hand.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

Rowena bursts into the room with a high pitched squeal.

A sleeping **SOOTIE**, the rotund, bearded, 30-something turnkey, jumps up with a start. An empty whiskey bottle hops off of his chest and explodes on the floor.

ROWENA

Oh I'm sorry darlin'. Did I wake ya up? Didn't mean to frighten you.

Rowena rounds the corner of Sootie's desk revealing a full bottle in her hand.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
I brought some hooch but it looks
like you started without me.

Rowena steps over the puddle of glass and liquid.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
That's alright. As long as you're
not too drunk to rub my tired feet.

Rowena hops up onto the desk and shoves Sootie down into his chair with a foot to his waist. She pushes her other foot hard against his chest, pinning him.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
Sheriff Hayes sent me, honeysuckle.
Got me up outta bed! Said his best
man was stuck in here all night,
cold and bored. Doin' his job-
guardin' the condemned and all.

Sootie looks toward the door to the jail cell. Rowena grabs him by his jowls and pulls his face back toward hers.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
He said I oughta come and keep you
company. Said I was to do whatever
you asked, whatever you wanted for
as long as you wanted. And I said
"Yes sir, Sheriff, sir".

Sootie finally relaxes. He smiles sheepishly at Rowena. She runs her fingers up and down his stubbled face.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
Did I do wrong? You're not gonna
send me all the way back up to The
Belle before sunrise, are you?

Sootie traces his hand up Rowena's stocking from her ankle to her calf to her thigh, before finally wrapping a hand around her ass and pulling her to the edge of the desk.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
That's what I thought.

Rowena smiles, satisfied with herself. She swings the bottle as hard as she can toward Sootie's head. Glass, liquid, and blood explode all over the desk.

Sootie's body falls in a heap on the floor. Whiskey cascades off the desk and over his carcass. Rowena hops to the ground and retrieves the key ring off of Sootie's belt.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT ["THEN" - 1879]

Rowena quietly opens the door to the office, revealing ANNIE and JANE dressed in shawls and holding blankets. Rowena invites them inside.

Rowena uses Sootie's key to open a large cabinet door. Inside is a small arsenal of rifles and shot guns. The ladies begin to help themselves to the cache.

ROWENA

Don't get greedy. We ain't got enough blankets to carry this whole goddamn arsenal.

JANE

Where do we stash 'em once we get 'em back to the Belle Vue?

ROWENA

Have I gotta do everything for you two?? Use your imagination. Oh, don't forget them shells.

Jane reaches for a small cardboard box.

ANNIE

Not those.

JANE

Waddo you mean "not those"?

ANNIE

That's a Spencer Rifle. Them Spencer's take a fifty six, fifty six cartridge.

Rowena and Jane both stare, incredulously. Annie finds a different box and hands it to Jane.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

It's a fifty-two caliber rifle.

Jane accepts it and shrugs.

JANE

Okay then.

Rowena motions to Annie.

ROWENA

Hand me that satchel, trigger finger.

INT. JAIL - MORNING ["THEN" - 1879]

The sky is beginning to turn blue outside the window.

THUMP. Rowena drops a bulging leather satchel in the corner of the room. She lights a lantern. The flickering candlelight awakens the lovers. Jakob sits up, delirious.

JAKOB

Rowena?

Rowena begins fiddling with the keys, trying to find the right one.

ROWENA

Well you may have lost your looks
Jake, but at least you still got
your eyesight.

Joe stands up, she eyeballs Rowena, suspiciously.

JOE

The hell are you doing here?

ROWENA

What's it look like, Red? I'm
springin' ya.

JOE

Why?

Rowena furrows her eyebrows in Jacob's direction.

ROWENA

I mean she's got a real gratitude
problem don't she?

Rowena cocks her head at Joe. She drops the keys to her side and approaches Joe's cell.

ROWENA (CONT'D)

Well maybe I just spring him and
leave your ass for Hayseed to
string up?

JAKOB

Rowena. Listen to me--

JOE

Why in the hell should I ever trust
you after what you did last night?
You're the reason we're in here.

Rowena and Joe get close enough to feel each other's breath.

ROWENA

He used me, alright? He lied to me.
I made a mistake. Now I'm tryin' to
make it right.

JOE

You told me Jake was dead.

Rowena and Joe stare each other down.

JOE (CONT'D)

You told me he was DEAD!!!

Joe's hand darts past the bars, grabs a tuft of Rowena's hair
and pulls it back into the cell.

Rowena's scalp slams violently against the metal. Joe holds
on tightly and twists her wrist.

JAKOB

Joe!

JOE

You left me out there believing he
was dead this whole time! Then you
helped Hayes trap me!

ROWENA

Arggh!

JAKOB

Joe! Stop!

JOE

Why should I ever trust you again!?
Why shouldn't I just wash these
bars with your brains?!

BONG! Joe slams Rowena's scalp against the metal again.

JAKOB

Joe!

JOE

You helped that sonafabitch and now
we're in here! Why should-?

ROWENA

It's not my fault. He lied to me!

JOE
You lied to me!

ROWENA
He promised me--

JOE
He promised you what? That he'd let
me go?!

ROWENA
He promised me I could have Jake!

Joe stops tugging but doesn't release Rowena's scalp.
Jakob's face is pressed against the bars of his cell.
Tears stream down Rowena's face.

JOE
The hell you say?

ROWENA
He promised me, that if I helped
him lure you back that he'd let
Jake go...

Joe's face is flushed with confusion. Jakob is aghast.
Joe releases Rowena. Rowena stumbles backwards. Her hair is
tousled and streaked with blood. Tears muddy her makeup.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
I thought if he knew that I loved
him enough to... if he knew that I
was the reason...

Joe and Jakob's eyes are trained on Rowena. Their hands are
curled tightly around the bars of their respective cells.

ROWENA (CONT'D)
Well then maybe some day he might
look at me they way he's always
looked at you.

Rowena finally opens her eyes and stares at Jakob. He stares
back at her.

Rowena wipes the tears from her face. Dark streaks spread
across her cheek. She picks up the key ring.

CRACK! The lock clicks open and Joe's cell door swings open.
Rowena locks stern eyes with Joe.

ROWENA (CONT'D)

You both need to get out of here.
Right-now.

Jakob and Rowena make eye contact.

Joe sees something behind Rowena that terrifies her.

JOE

No!

BANG! A bullet pierces Rowena's back. Her blood splatters Joe's face.

Jakob slams himself against the bars of his cell in desperation.

Rowena's shock and pain melt into calm acceptance. She smiles at Jakob as her body goes limp and tumbles into Joe's cell.

Joe lunges forward and catches Rowena's body before it can hit the ground. Joe cradles the dying woman. Rowena smiles up at Joe. The two woman clasp hands.

Tears emerge from Rowena's withering eyes. Joe opens her mouth but no sound emerges.

ROWENA

Take care of him for me...

Rowena looks toward Jakob. Her body goes limp in Joe's arms.

Hayes leans in the doorway holding a smoking revolver. LEFTY and SLIM stand behind him.

HAYES

Poor little whore. And just when I had started to trust her.

Joe sets Rowena's body down gently. She seethes in Hayes' direction. Fire crackles behind her eyes.

HAYES (CONT'D)

But aiding in an attempted jailbreak is punishable by death. Law of the land, I'm afraid.

Joe loses it. She launches her body in Hayes' direction, shouting like a banshee. Hayes slams the cell door shut in her face before she can get to him.

HAYES (CONT'D)

You really confound me, Cass.
Shedding tears for that little
turncoat who was more than happy to
trade your life for a chance to dig
her claws into your redskin.

Joe is panting, furiously. She grits her teeth and narrows her eyes at Hayes.

JOE

I'm gonna kill you.

HAYES

You're in no position to be making
threats, my old friend.

Joe doesn't look away. Her stare burrows into Hayes' eyes.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll just tighten the noose
up right about here.

Hayes wraps his fingers around Joe's throat and squeezes it, tightly.

JOE

I wish you would. I really do.

HAYES

And that's exactly why I won't.

Lefty retrieves the key ring and opens Jakob's cell. Slim grabs Jakob by his collar and drags him toward the door. Joe squeezes her bars, helplessly.

HAYES (CONT'D)

If you look out that window, Cass,
you should be able to make the
gallows at the end of Main.

Jakob doesn't struggle as Slim escorts him. Jakob catches Joe's eyes one last time.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Hope you enjoy the show.

Hayes shoots a wicked smile in Joe's direction before slamming the door behind him.

The room is still and silent. The only noise is Joe's tortured breathing. She wheezes and gasps, arms outstretched in the direction of the door.

She slides down the bars of her cell and collapses in a heap on the floor of the empty room. She wraps her arms around Rowena's lifeless body and cradles her head.

EXT. DESERT - MORNING ["THEN" - 1879]

The sun begins to rise over the rolling hills in the distance. The first warmth of daylight curls around the arms of the Saguaros.

Dusty boots pound the sand with purpose. They're headed out of the desert and into Ruby.

INT. JAIL - DAY ["THEN" - 1879]

SLAM! Joe's body is shoved violently against the bars of her cell. Blood trickles from her nose.

Sootie is in the cell with Joe. He smiles as he tosses her around the room. Joe falls into a pile on the dusty floor.

Sootie hovers over her, grinning. She spits a dark streak of blood and bile into his face. Furious, Sootie grabs Joe by the hair and tosses her back up against the bars.

He ties her hands to a railing over her head and kicks her feet out from under her. She dangles by her wrists.

Sootie rips away at Joe's frock until her entire back is exposed. Joe pants and sputters. Sootie grabs a handful of her hair, and jerks her head back, hard.

At that moment the door to the room bursts open and large figure looms in the threshold.

Sootie barely has time to look up before--

KA-BLAM! He takes two rounds to the chest. His body is thrown backward against the wall, collapsing in a pool of blood.

The stranger crosses the room, enters the cell, and unties Joe's hands. Her limp frame falls backwards but CORT catches her before she can land.

CORT

Well you ain't lookin' your best,
Josephine. But I guess you proved
me wrong. You're still alive.

JOE

No thanks to you.

Cort grins. He pulls the handkerchief from his pocket and wipes the blood and sweat from his daughter's face.

CORT
I'm sorry, darlin'.

Joe pushes off of her father and rises to her feet, wincing in pain as she does so. She exits the cell.

JOE
I've had just about all the apologies I can handle for one morning. Let's talk about how you plan on makin' it up to me..

Cort doesn't hesitate. He removes the gun belt, holding his ivory handled pistols, and tosses it to his daughter.

Joe eyes the weapons, hungrily. She squeezes the leather.

CORT
Think you can knock Hayes off the gallows with those before he strings up your Navajo?

The color returns to Joe's face. Her posture improves. She removes one of the pistols and admires it.

JOE
If you can keep those bastard deputies off me.

Cort relieves the fallen Sootie of his gunbelt. He straps it on himself.

CORT
Well I guess it's better to die standin' up in the street than layin' down in a bottle.

Joe tries to fasten the holsters around her corset but they look ridiculous. She knows it.

CORT (CONT'D)
I don't think you're gonna be exchangin' no gunfire wearin' that frock, young lady.

Joe is frustrated, she searches the room with her eyes. They land on a bulging leather satchel in the corner. Joe drops in front of it. She rummages, finding sensible clothing.

Joe is elated, she looks toward Rowena's body. Joe runs to the side of her fallen friend. She buries her face in Rowena's hair and kisses her head, tenderly.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY ["THEN" - 1879]

Joe- now clad in denim pants, a button-up shirt, and her gun belt, exits the jail with her father and steps into the street. She covers her head with Sootie's hat.

A warm wind whistles between the buildings. Joe's red mane swirls wildly beneath her hat. The pair make haste through the town- kicking up dust, saying nothing.

Business owners and residents peer out their windows and doorways at the determined assassins as they pass.

A blacksmith is stoking a flame in a fire pit outside of his lean-to. He pushes his branding irons into the flames which sends smoke billowing into the street.

Joe and Cort pass through the smoke and hot air to round the corner and approach the end of town.

In the distance they can see The Belle Vue Saloon and outside of it- GALLOWS have been erected in the street.

EXT. GALLOWS - DAY (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

Hayes sits in a rocking chair on the platform- a cartoonishly long hayseed balanced between his lips.

Next to him, one of the deputies (**BOGGS**) fits Jakob's neck into the noose. He tightens the knot. Joe and Cort stop short of the gallows. Hayes smiles at them.

HAYES

Well well. If it ain't the surviving members of the Cassidy Clan.

CORT

Why don't you let him go, Tom? The three of us will ride out of here. You'll never see us again.

HAYES

That's not a very strong bargaining chip, Cort. What makes you think I'd ever let this one--

Hayes points the seed stem in Joe's direction.

HAYES (CONT'D)

--get away again? You have any idea
how many guns are on you right now?

Joe and Cort work their peripherals but remain composed.

CORT

You have any idea how many eyes are
on you right now?

On the upper balcony outside The Belle Vue, the ladies lean
on the railing, watching the show.

HAYES

I own them eyes.

CORT

Nobody has to die here today. That
boy may be an arrogant, ornery,
redskin bastard. But that don't
make him no criminal. You really
gonna execute an innocent man in
front of all creation?

HAYES

And who's gonna stop me, Cort? You?
Your daughter? Them whores?

Hayes whips his seed in the direction of the saloon. He grins
at Joe and Cort.

HAYES (CONT'D)

You ain't gonna do a goddamned
thing. You're gonna watch me hang
this freeloadin', backstabbin' red.
Then you're gonna turn tail on
Harley's child and ride on back to
your dusty bottle in the desert.

Joe and Cort stand stoically. Cort's fingers twitch near his
holster. Hayes is bored. He grunts at Boggs.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Drop that door, Boggs.

JOE

He killed Rowena!

Joe yells up to the ladies in the balcony but she keeps her
eyes trained on Hayes.

Boggs stops. Hayes chews on his seed.

JOE (CONT'D)
She was unarmed and alone!

The ladies begin to murmur. Their postures change.

JOE (CONT'D)
And he shot her in the back like
the coward sonofabitch he is.

Hayes stops rocking. He keeps his eyes locked on Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)
Are you gonna live the rest of your
lives paying half your nut to a
murderer just because he carries a
badge, bought and paid for?

The ladies loom large over the street. They spread out across
the railing.

JOE (CONT'D)
When are you gonna say "enough"?

Hayes nods at Boggs who wraps his fingers around the lever.
Joe doesn't blink. She moves her hand behind her pistol.
Boggs squeezes the wood of the lever--

BLAM! CRUNCH!

A blast splinters the wood of the lever, nearly taking off
Boggs' hand. He falls backwards onto the gallows and looks up
in the direction of the shot:

ANNIE has a rifle pointed directly at Hayes' chest. She turns
her barrel toward Jakob. She fires off at the noose,
splitting the rope and freeing the prisoner.

Jakob drops to his knees. He and Joe lock eyes for a
fleeting, silent moment... Then the mayhem begins:

EXT. BELLE VUE SALOON - DAY (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

Joe draws her weapon and fires off a round in Hayes'
direction but he swings the rocking chair around and shields
himself from the blast. Wood splinters over the gallows.

Boggs fires off in Cort's direction but the shot goes wide.
Cort returns fire, sending Boggs' carcass flying.

Shots ring out from under the awning of The Belle Vue. A bullet grazes Joe's shoulder and sends her spinning. She makes a full turn and faces the saloon with guns blazing.

Two of the deputies fall under Joe's fire outside the saloon.

Jakob rolls off of the gallows platform and takes shelter.

Hayes hops to his feet and pulls his pistols. He leaps from the gallows into the street. He aims in Cort's direction but a shotgun blast at Hayes' feet sends him hopping backward.

Shots rain down from the upstairs balcony.

Joe and Cort take shelter on opposite sides of the street.

Jakob gnaws at his binds until his hands are free. Cort notices this. He hurls a pistol in Jakob's direction.

As the gun sails through the air Jakob notices a deputy burst out of the saloon with his weapon aimed at Cort's back.

The gun lands in Jakob's hand and he immediately fires it at the assailant. The impact of the bullet sends the deputy flying backwards through the swinging saloon doors.

Cort looks back, startled. But before Cort can lock eyes with his savior, Jakob takes a shot to the wrist. The pistol twirls out of his hand as Jakob clutches his wound.

Hayes and Joe are exchanging bullets on the sidewalk across the street. Their bullets ricochet off of wooden floorboards.

BOOM! CRUNCH!

A deputy on the landing overhead is firing downward toward Joe. Sparks and wood rain down on her head.

HAYES

Hold your fire!

BOOM! KRANCH!

HAYES (CONT'D)

I said hold your-!

BOOM! KRILL!

Hayes leaps from the sidewalk out into the street. He spins his weapon upward and fires on his own man. The deputy's body goes hurling backwards.

PIFF! PIFF! Bullets in the dirt next to Hayes.

Hayes turns toward Cort. They fire simultaneously- each putting one in each other's shoulders. Cort falls backward onto the sidewalk outside the saloon.

Hayes staggers backwards. He sees Jakob in front of him. Jakob points his weapon toward Hayes but doesn't fire.

Joe raises her pistol toward Hayes. She stares him down. She inhales. She fires--

THUNK! Hayes takes it to the chest. The impact sends him backwards against the gallows. He bounces off the wood and drops to his knees.

EXT. GALLOWS - DAY (CONTINUOUS) ["THEN" - 1879]

There is finally an eerie quiet. No sound pervades save for a lazy wind whistling through the street and the whiny creak of the wooden planks above the saloon.

Hayes finally blurts out an exhalation of blood and desperation as if he has been holding his breath.

HAYES

Gahh!

Joe steps down off of the sidewalk and approaches Hayes, slowly. Her gun still dangles from her right hand.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Cass!

CLICK! Joe preps her weapon to fire.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Joe. Listen to me...

She continues toward him.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Y'all can ride out of here. Right now. I promise not to follow you.

Joe approaches.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I mean it! Just get on out of here. Go now and you'll never have to see me again.

Hayes realizes Joe has no intention of leaving.

HAYES (CONT'D)

Alright then, finish me off. Kill an unarmed man. If loving you is punishable by death than I'll go with a clean conscience.

Joe is inches away from Hayes.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I love you, Joe Cassidy. I'll see ya in hel--

BAM!

A single bullet to the forehead puts Hayes down for good. Joe finally stops in her tracks next to Hayes' lifeless carcass.

Joe seethes and grits her teeth. Finally killing Hayes has clearly done nothing to quell her anger. Her face is flushed. Tears form in the corner of her eyes.

Joe looks around and sees that everyone is staring at her: Cort is propped up on the sidewalk outside the saloon. Jakob is frozen behind the gallows. The ladies look on from above.

Joe lets the pistol drop from her right hand. She locks eyes with Jakob. He moves toward her.

Jakob embraces her. They wrap their arms around each other, tightly. The blood from Jakob's wrist stains Joe's shirt.

Cort props himself up against the bannister outside of the saloon. He winces as he examines his injuries.

JAKOB

It's over. I promise. Come back to me, alright?

Joe allows herself to relax into Jakob's arms. She presses her face into his shoulder and closes her eyes.

CORT

Joe!!!

Joe's eyes snap open. She sees Boggs, a few breaths still left in him. He has propped himself up on the gallows and is pointing a pistol at Jakob's back.

JOE

No!

Keeping Jakob's body pinned against hers, Joe spins around to shield him. As she does so she pulls her other pistol from its holster, and fires backward toward Boggs.

BANG! BLAM!

Boggs takes one to the head and falls behind the gallows.

Joe clenches tightly at her weapon with one hand, and Jakob's neck with the other. Jakob smiles and runs his hands through Joe's wild red hair.

JAKOB
That was fast.

Joe looks deeply into Jakob's eyes and smiles. She cups his face with her hand. Her lip quivers.

JOE
Not quite fast enough...

A thin stream of red trickles over Joe's lip. She forces a laugh as she coughs up blood. Jakob looks on- horrified.

JAKOB
No. No no no.

Joe and Jakob fall into a pile on the ground. Her hat rolls off. Jakob paws at Joe, helplessly.

The blood from the wound in Joe's backs gushes around Jakob's trembling fingers. She drops her gun.

JAKOB (CONT'D)
Joe!

Joe's body convulses, violently. She forces a smile and holds on tightly to Jakob's collar.

JOE
I'm sorry, Jake.

JAKOB
Joe, don't you dare leave me again.

Joe looks up at Jakob. Her breathing is pained but the smile is plastered on her face.

JOE
I thought you were dead.

The tears well up in Jakob's eyes.

JAKOB
Joe, please...

JOE
And that was so much more painful
than this...

Jakob chokes back his tears and cradles Joe's head.

JAKOB
I can't do this without you.

JOE
Sure you can...

Joe squeezes Jakob's fingers with one hand and cradles his face with the other.

Jakob is losing control of his emotions. Joe closes her eyes. The pain appears to be lessening.

JOE (CONT'D)
For me you can.

Jakob nods as the first tears escape his eyes.

JAKOB
Anything for you, Joe Cassidy.

Joe opens her eyes and smiles into Jakob's.

JOE
I love you, Jake.

Joe closes her eyes for the last time. Her body goes limp in Jakob's arms. The wind sends her wild locks dancing.

A dark red pool has grown under Joe's body. It extends outward, soaking into the yellow dust of the street.

Jakob looks on at his fallen lover. The weight of his head drops onto her chest as he chokes and gasps on his tears.

Cort observes from the steps of the saloon. When he can't bare to look any longer his eyes drop to the ground.

Bodies litter the thoroughfare. Spent cartridges, broken glass, and splintered wood quiver in the dust. The wind rolls a tumbleweed out of town and off into the desert.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - NIGHT ["NOW" - 1899]

CRACK! A lit match illuminates the darkness. Cricket raises the flame to light his cigarillo. He takes a long drag and hands it off to his guest.

Quinn accepts it gratefully as she wipes tears from her blood-stained face with Cricket's kerchief.

QUINN

You stopped playing.

Cricket looks down at his piano as if seeing it for the first time in years.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Were you just trying to make a point or is that story true?

CRICKET

I'm afraid it's true. And if I was trying to shine you on I suppose I could have blown some fairy dust up your bloomers about Joe and Jake riding off into history together.

Quinn passes the smoke back to Cricket who balances it between his lips as he talks.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

But that ain't the way the world works. And a lady like yourself, who's seen what you've seen and lived where you've lived... She deserves the truth.

Quinn beams at him, affectionately.

QUINN

I appreciate that, Cricket.

CRICKET

Least I can do, Q. Least I can-do.

He hands the cigarillo back to Quinn. She twists the stub between her fingers. Smoke curls up around her face.

QUINN

Earned me some scars tonight.

CRICKET

A good scar is like a tattoo you
didn't volunteer to receive. As if
the fates conspired to brand you.

QUINN

Not sure if I'm convinced the fates
know what's best for me.

CRICKET

Gotta put your faith outside
yourself sometimes. Otherwise
you'll twist your heart into knots
believin' you're the center of this
here universe.

Quinn joins Cricket on his bench. She plays a simple tune on
her end. The two improvise a ditty. The somber sound of the
piano echoes in the cavernous, empty saloon.

QUINN

Gettin' awful drafty in here.

Cricket surveys the empty saloon- it's dark, lonely, and sad.

CRICKET

This time of night there ain't
nothin' but leftover ashes to keep
this place warm.

Quinn inches closer to Cricket, down the bench.

QUINN

It's gonna awful be cold in my
room. And I don't know where you
plan on sleepin'--

Quinn looks up at Cricket in an attempt to catch his eye. He
stares directly into his piano keys.

QUINN (CONT'D)

--but we could fight off that chill
together...

Cricket smiles, flattered. He runs his open palm over his
keys but can't bring himself to make eye contact with Quinn.

CRICKET

That's the finest offer I've had in
many years, Q. And I'd be the
luckiest man in the territory if I
were to accept such a gift...

Cricket finally looks up at Quinn. They hold each other's stare, neither able to breathe.

CRICKET (CONT'D)
 But I ain't loved but one woman.
 She's the only one I could imagine
 fallin' asleep next to.

Quinn smiles, impressed. She cradles Cricket's face with her hand and runs an affectionate thumb over the deepset grooves that outline his cheeks.

QUINN
 You think of her when you play them
 melancholy love songs in here?

CRICKET
 Every single note.

Quinn smiles and drops her hand. She stands up from the piano bench and returns to her table. She pours out two more shots.

QUINN
 It's almost sunrise.

Cricket attempts to compose himself. He wipes a calloused hand across his face.

CRICKET
 Gettin' on to that time.

QUINN
 Ain't never seen a sunrise before.

Cricket's expression turns from melancholy to passionate.

CRICKET
 With all the things you've seen you
 ain't never seen a sunrise?! Well
 that- that's just tragic!

Cricket stands up from his bench. Quinn turns toward him.

CRICKET (CONT'D)
Tragic, I say!

Quinn hands Cricket a drink.

QUINN
 And why is that?

CRICKET

Well a sunrise is at least twice as beautiful as a sunset.

QUINN

Twice!?

CRICKET

It's more magical, more symbolic, and more deeply cleansing.

QUINN

Cleansing, says you!

Cricket puts a hand around Quinn's waist. She giggles so hard she nearly drops her drink. They lock eyes and raise their glasses in unison.

QUINN (CONT'D)

To the sunrise.

Cricket cocks a drunken eyebrow at Quinn.

CRICKET

May she never take a day off.

Quinn nods in approval and they both slurp down their shots. Cricket drops back onto his bench. Quinn puts her hands on his shoulders.

QUINN

You know I'm pretty sure that train depot faces east.

CRICKET

What are you sayin', young lady?

QUINN

I'm sayin' that platform would be a mighty fine place to see a sunrise. Watch the steam from that dawn train gettin' closer by the minute--

Cricket stares blankly at his instrument. He purses his lips.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Nogales behind. Tucson ahead.

CRICKET

Ain't nowhere but here, Q.

Cricket's eyes moisten. He puts a hand to his mouth.

QUINN

Leavin' this town don't mean that
you've left her behind, you know?

Quinn presses her lips to Cricket's rusty cheek. She walks back in the direction of the staircase.

Cricket eyeballs the Derringer, still sitting atop the piano.

CRICKET

Don't forget your little friend.

QUINN

Ain't my friend and I don't plan on
needin' him.

Quinn disappears up the stairs. Cricket composes himself.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING ["NOW" - 1899]

A flickering lantern illuminates the small space. Quinn busies herself- filling a carpetbag with belongings.

She shimmies out of her frock, rips the stockings from her legs, and cuts the garter from her thigh with a blade.

She piles the filthy garments in the corner of her room and blows out the lantern.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - MORNING ["NOW" - 1899]

Quinn, clad in travel attire, carpet bag in tow, descends the stairs and crosses the saloon, walking with purpose. As she approaches the doors Cricket calls out to her:

CRICKET

Hey Q!

Quinn places a hand on the saloon door. She turns to Cricket.

CRICKET (CONT'D)

Let a humble admirer pay your way?

Cricket pulls a coin purse from his breast pocket.

QUINN

Appreciate the offer. But I ain't
never bought myself a train ticket
before and I'm kinda lookin'
forward to it.

CRICKET

Don't you dare get off that train
'till you spot someplace out that
window you've never seen before.

Quinn smiles, broadly.

QUINN

You take care of yourself, ivory
tickler.

And she's gone...

Cricket looks back toward his piano- a familiar loneliness on
his face. He picks up the Derringer and examines it.

He points the weapon toward his face, staring intently into
the barrel. He releases his grip and lets the gun drop:

BONG! It lands in the spittoon at the foot of the piano.

Cricket folds back the music holder on the piano and
retrieves the "necklace" of cartridges behind it. He lays it
gently along the top of his instrument

CRICKET

This one's for you, Joe.

Cricket's fingers dance across the keyboard but the smile
never leaves his face. This is his favorite part of the day.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING ["NOW" - 1899]

Quinn walks down the empty street, her skirt dragging in the
dust. The first crimson light of dawn colors her face.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

Cricket bangs away on his piano. His eyes are closed and he's
wearing an enormous grin. He's lost in the music.

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

Quinn reaches the outskirts of town. The blood red sunrise
bathes her face. She smiles into it.

INT. BELLE VUE SALOON - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

Cricket closes his eyes as his song reaches its crescendo.

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - MORNING ["NOW" - 1899]

Quinn stands silhouetted against the magnificent sunrise. The wail of the approaching train echoes in the distance.

There is a look of giddy anticipation on young Quinn's beautiful face. She's ready.

END.