

AFTER THE RAIN

Written by

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BLACK FRAME
QUOTE APPEARS:

In the summer rain
the path
has disappeared

-Yosa Buson

QUOTE FADES:

FADE IN:

INT. SALOON - DAY(RAINING)

A STRANGER(30's) stands by the entrance to an old western saloon, complete with creaking wooden floorboards, a wide boardwalk flanking the muddy streets, a couple of hitchin' posts out front for your horse, and the ever present wooden swinging doors, which are being held open by a spittoon.

The Stranger wears a duster and a mean look upon his face. The rain is coming down like hellfire. The dirt road now a mucky miry swamp.

Across the street, a lively brothel full of lights, music, people and excitement.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

In the doorway stands THEODORE TILTMEN(late 40's). Unlike the Stranger, he wears a fancier attire. He checks the time on his expensive silver pocket watch, which is attached to his classy red vest.

The two men stare at each other, both ready to rip each other's throats out.

Muffled by the rain, piano music plays as saloon girls dance for the patrons.

Mr. Tiltmen puts the watch back in his vest pocket and steps away from the entrance.

INT. SALOON - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger spits into the spittoon and walks over to the bar. The saloon isn't as full as the brothel, some cowboys and railroad workers playing an on-going game of poker.

They eye the Stranger as he passes them. We can hear the music from the brothel across the street.

Some saloon girls stand on the balcony, watching the Stranger, giggling to each other.

INT. SALOON BAR - CONTINUOUS

The Stranger takes a seat at the bar. The BARTENDER walks over to him.

BARTENDER
Name your poison.

STRANGER
Cactus Wine?

BARTENDER
Yeah, we got it. Never had no one
ask for it sober though.

The Bartender grabs a bottle and pours the Stranger a drink.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Mr. Tiltmen sits down on an old fashioned red settee couch. He lights up a cigar and has himself a drink to go along with it.

DORA(30's) walks over with a sexy smile and a fresh bottle of bourbon.

DORA
Howdy, Mr. Tiltmen. You fancy
havin' a drink with me?

He smiles and quickly finishes off his glass of spirits.

MR. TILTMEN
I was wonderin' when you'd come
down and see me, Dora.

DORA
Had to get myself lookin' nice,
didn't I?

MR. TILTMEN
You always look nice to me.

She takes a seat on his lap and fills his empty glass.

INT. SALOON BAR - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger finishes off his drink.

STRANGER
How much for the bottle?

BARTENDER
A dollar.

The Stranger hands the Bartender two dollars.

STRANGER
Here's two.

BARTENDER
Mighty kind of ya.

He walks over to the piano.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
We ain't got no one to play it.
Fella came down with a case of
cholera.

STRANGER
He die?

BARTENDER
All I know is he ain't here no more
to play it.

The Stranger rubs his hand across the dusty piano.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
You play?

STRANGER
Me? No.

The Stranger walks around with his bottle of Cactus Wine.
Which is a mix of cheap tequila and peyote tea.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
A bottle for these fellas, too.
Whatever they like.

The guys playing poker tip their hats to him.

He takes a seat by the entrance, looks out at the rain.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Dora kisses Tiltmen's neck. He finishes his drink.

DORA
The girls are worried.

MR. TILTMEN

About what?

DORA

You really gonna duel this man?

MR. TILTMEN

He called me out, everyone heard it. I have to.

DORA

What if he kills you?

MR. TILTMEN

Ain't no one gonna kill me, Dora.

EXT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

The SHERIFF(50's) stands outside in the pissing rain. He looks across the street to the saloon. We see the Stranger sitting down, waiting by the entrance.

The Sheriff tips his hat to him and the Stranger does the same.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff steps into the crowded and bustling bordello. Some saloon girls swoon over some gamblers playing dice games like chuck-a-luck and high-low.

In a corner by the entrance sits Tiltmen and Dora.

MR. TILTMEN

Howdy, Sheriff.

The Sheriff brushes some rain off his hat. He speaks with a slight Swedish accent.

SHERIFF

(Swedish accent)

Mr. Tiltmen.

MR. TILTMEN

I take it you're here to see me?

SHERIFF

It's about your friend across the street.

MR. TILTMEN
I wouldn't call him a friend,
Sheriff.

SHERIFF
What would you call him?

MR. TILTMEN
A man with ill will towards me.

SHERIFF
You know him?

MR. TILTMEN
Never seen him before in my life.

SHERIFF
Why would a man you've never met
have ill will towards you, Mr.
Tiltmen?

MR. TILTMEN
Please, Sheriff. How long have you
known me? Call me Theodore.

Mr. Tiltmen lights up another cigar.

SHERIFF
5 years.

MR. TILTMEN
What's that?

SHERIFF
I've known you for 5 years. It's
those years I haven't known you
that bothers me.

MR. TILTMEN
In those 5 years have you known me
to cause anyone any harm?

SHERIFF
Not to my recollection.

MR. TILTMEN
I'm a simple man, Sheriff. I enjoy
a good cigar.
(shows his cigar)
A fine woman and a nice aged
brandy.
(motions to Dora and tips
his glass)
(MORE)

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Which I have neglected to offer
you.

Mr. Tiltmen pours the Sheriff a drink. The Sheriff walks over
and takes it.

SHERIFF
Trying to figure out why this
stranger wishes you harm.

MR. TILTMEN
I've stopped trying to figure
peoples intentions out long ago.

They both down their drinks.

SHERIFF
This duel of yours, when you think
it will take place?

MR. TILTMEN
As soon as this rain stops.
(beat)
I take it you'll be visiting our
friend over at the old saloon next?

SHERIFF
It crossed my mind.

Mr. Tiltmen hands the Sheriff a bottle of brandy.

MR. TILTMEN
When you do, give him this bottle.

SHERIFF
A peace offering?

MR. TILTMEN
Pretty sure that man is dead set on
killing me. But I figure if either
man is going to die, they might as
well die with a belly of brandy.
Not that rotgut they serve over
there.

INT. SALOON - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger looks out at the pouring rain. The fellas
playing cards all have a drink in front of them now thanks to
the Stranger.

The Sheriff walks through the rain, traverses the muddy swamp
that is the town's road and heads for the saloon.

The Sheriff takes his hat off and tries to dry himself off a little.

STRANGER
You here for me?

SHERIFF
I am.

STRANGER
Have a seat.

The Stranger kicks a chair out for him.

The Sheriff takes him up on his offer and has a seat at the table with the Stranger. He lays the bottle of brandy out on the table between them.

SHERIFF
A gift.

The Stranger takes the brandy and smells inside the bottle.

STRANGER
That's a good bottle. I take it
this is from him?

SHERIFF
If you're referring to Mr. Tiltmen,
then yes, sir. You plan on drinking
it?

The Stranger pours himself a drink of the brandy.

STRANGER
I don't see why not. I'm not one to
waste a fine drink. Bartender, can
you bring me another glass for the
Sheriff here?

BARTENDER (O.C.)
Sure thing, mister.

SHERIFF
Unlike most parts around here, this
town hasn't seen much violence.

STRANGER
They're about to see some today,
Sheriff.

The Bartender comes over with a clean glass for the Sheriff. He pours some brandy for him.

SHERIFF

I don't know if I can have you
gunning someone down in my streets.

The Stranger tosses some silver down for the Bartender. He takes it and goes back behind his bar.

STRANGER

I ain't gunnin' anyone down,
Sheriff. I challenged him good and
fair. At least 20 people heard me
do it. It's in my right to
challenge who ever I take issue
with.

SHERIFF

What issues would that be, mister?

STRANGER

That's between me and him, ain't
it?

The Sheriff gulps down his drink.

SHERIFF

Is it worth dying over?

The Stranger takes a drink.

STRANGER

It's sure as hell worth killin'
for.

INT. SALOON - UPSTAIRS - DAY(RAINING)

THREE SALOON GIRLS watch as the Stranger talks and shares a drink with the Sheriff.

SALOON GIRL #1

I think he's cute.

SALOON GIRL #2

Ain't nothin' cute about him. He's
a regular curly wolf, that one is.

SALOON GIRL #3

I sure wouldn't mind spendin' some
time with him. Think of all he
might do to you.

SALOON GIRL #1

Think of all he might tip ya.

BETSY(19) walks out of her bedroom with a customer. She's pretty and young. The customer tips her and walks down the stairs.

Betsy walks over to the Saloon Girls.

SALOON GIRL #2
He a good tipper that one?

BETSY
Railroad worker. A cheap one at that.

She crams the money down her cleavage, takes notice of the Stranger.

BETSY (CONT'D)
He still here?

SALOON GIRL #1
Sure is.

BETSY
He really gives me the creeps. You girls talk to him yet?

SALOON GIRL #1
Was thinkin' about it.

BETSY
Don't. He's trouble, you can tell by lookin' at him he ain't no good.

SALOON GIRL #1
You'd know.

They snicker.

BETSY
Where's Ada?

They point to a closed door.

BETSY (CONT'D)
She with someone?

SALOON GIRL #1
Not that I saw.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - DAY(RAINING)

ADA(20's), sits in her room, looking at herself in front of a mirror, while putting on makeup. She's young, beautiful, and in her underwear.

Betsy knocks then shows herself in.

BETSY
What are you doin'?

ADA
I'm gonna go down there and see
that stranger.

BETSY
The hell you are.

ADA
Watch me.

BETSY
He looks like a killer, Ada.

ADA
Don't be ridiculous, Betsy. I know
how to take care of myself.

BETSY
God, you're stubborn.

ADA
Got that right. Can't tell me
nothin'.

She gets up and holds up a pretty red dress.

ADA (CONT'D)
Now help me get on my dress.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Mr. Tiltmen stands by the entrance, watches the Sheriff leave the saloon.

The rain has yet to let up any. If anything it's raining even harder now.

DORA (O.C.)
Theodore, come play.

Tiltmen turns around and sees Dora at the craps table. He smiles and walks over to her.

INT. SALOON BAR - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger finishes off his bottle of Cactus Wine. He takes his duster off and lays it on a stool beside him.

Ada walks down the stairs, her eyes following the Stranger with every step.

The other Saloon Girls giggle as she makes her way over to the bar.

ADA
(to the Stranger)
I'd like a drink.

The Stranger looks over at her, then takes notice of the girls upstairs gawking at them.

STRANGER
Seems like you got an audience.

ADA
All eyes are on you, outlaw.

STRANGER
I'm no outlaw, ma'am.

ADA
And I'm no ma'am.

She takes a shot of the Stranger's last drop of Cactus Wine.

ADA (CONT'D)
The name's Ada.

STRANGER
Nice to meet you, Ada.

ADA
Would you like some company?

The Stranger smiles.

STRANGER
What I'd like is for this rain to stop.

ADA
You gonna kill Mr. Tiltmen when it does?

STRANGER
That what he calls himself now?

ADA

That's what we know him as. What do you know him by?

STRANGER

I'm thinkin' that don't really matter anymore.

(beat)

You like another drink?

She smiles.

ADA

Sure would.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The Stranger walks away from the bar, over to the table by the entrance.

He takes a seat, holds up the bottle of brandy.

STRANGER

I still got half a bottle left.

Ada walks over to him and sits down.

The Stranger pours her a glass of the good stuff.

ADA

You know, this is the most excitement this little town has had in a while.

STRANGER

That so?

ADA

You got all the girls talkin'.

STRANGER

Do I dare ask what they're sayin'?

ADA

Some say you're a killer. A gunslinger from Oklahoma.

STRANGER

Oklahoma, huh? And what do the others say?

ADA

Some seem to think you're a
Pinkerton man hired by the Central
Pacific Railroad company.

He smiles and downs the last of the brandy.

STRANGER

A Railroad Watchman, huh? Never
heard that one before. And what do
you think?

ADA

I ain't one to gossip.

STRANGER

That a fact?

ADA

It is.

STRANGER

That why you're the only one brave
enough to come down to talk to me?

She smiles.

ADA

Could be.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Mr. Tiltmen places some chips down on the craps table. Dora
looks over his shoulder, kisses his cheek for luck.

MR. TILTMEN

Play the field.

The shooter rolls the dice, hits a 3.

Mr. Tiltmen loses.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

Craps just isn't my game, Dora.

He drops some more cash on the table. The dealer takes it and
replaces it with even more chips.

DORA

You're being a big spender tonight,
Theodore.

MR. TILTMEN
These might be my last days on
earth. I can't take my money with
me when I'm dead.

DORA
Don't joke about that.

She wraps her arms around him.

MR. TILTMEN
It breaks my heart when you get
that serious look on your face.

DORA
Then stop doing it.

MR. TILTMEN
But I enjoy it so much.

The shooter rolls, hits a 7.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Winner seven!

Mr. Tiltmen wins.

Dora celebrates by jumping up and down, clapping her hands in
excitement.

DORA
Who said this wasn't your game?

MR. TILTMEN
Guess my luck is changing.

INT. SALOON - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger spins the empty brandy bottle on the table. It
stops at Ada.

ADA
You know what this place needs?

He looks around.

STRANGER
People? Less cobwebs?

ADA
Music.

STRANGER

I hear your piano man died.

ADA

We don't need no piano man.

She takes his hand, leads him over to the dusty piano. She sits him down in front of it.

STRANGER

I sure as hell don't know how to play.

ADA

Last guy didn't either. C'mon, I wanna dance for you.

STRANGER

Dance, huh?

The Stranger carefully hits a key.

ADA

Again. It ain't gonna break.

The same key.

She throws her head back, stretches her arms out.

ADA (CONT'D)

Again.

He hits the same key over and over at a slow steady pace.

Slowly she dances seductively to the key on the piano being struck over and over.

Everyone at the table playing cards look over at her.

The music across the street dies down.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

The piano man stops playing as he listens in on what's going on across the street.

Some of the patrons stop doing what they're doing, walk over to the windows and entrance.

Tiltmen stands up from the craps table and walks over to see what all the fuss is about.

He sees Ada dancing in the saloon, slow and sexy, nothing like the wild atmosphere being had by the ladies in the brothel.

Dora walks over.

MR. TILTMEN
What is she doing?

DORA
Dancing.

MR. TILTMEN
Did you teach her that?

She smiles.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The Stranger feels a little more comfortable behind the keys and tries pressing down a few more.

She dances, swishes her hair around, taking in each key stroke he makes on the piano.

She accidentally nicks the table the brandy bottle is on and it smashes to the floor. The loud crash stops the music and her dancing.

Everyone across the street goes back to what they were doing. Their music starts up again and the Stranger gets up.

STRANGER
Where did you learn to do that?

ADA
You can't learn something like that, it just comes naturally.

She kisses him on the mouth. This for some reason staggers him.

STRANGER
What was that?

ADA
Something I felt like doin'.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Tiltmen sits in his usual spot, a fancy couch by the entrance door.

Dora pours him another drink.

Fixing his suspenders and nourishing a bottle of absinthe, ELIJAH(40's) comes down the stairs. He looks like a man that's had some alone time with a harlot. His hair shuffled, clothes ruffled.

Elijah smiles when he sees Tiltmen down the stairs.

ELIJAH
Theodore! You fucking cunt!

Elijah stumbles over to him.

MR. TILTMEN
Elijah. How are you?

ELIJAH
What is this I hear about you
buying everyone a drink?

MR. TILTMEN
You seem to have had too many as it
is.

Elijah takes a seat next to them. He drinks down Tiltmen's drink and fills the glass with absinthe.

ELIJAH
Nonsense! You must try this,
Theodore. Sugar! I need sugar!

MR. TILTMEN
(to Dora)
Would you be a dear and get my
friend Elijah some sugar cubes?

DORA
Sure.

They share a kiss, she gets up and walks off.

ELIJAH
She is a peach, Theodore.

MR. TILTMEN
You're drunk.

ELIJAH
I'm more than drunk.

He takes a few swigs from the absinthe bottle. A cringe or two sneaks off his face, a normal reaction from drinking it straight from the source.

MR. TILTMEN

I heard you finally found someone
worthy to court.

ELIJAH

You must be referring to the lovely
Ms. Fields. Formally Mrs. Fields.

MR. TILTMEN

A widow, Elijah?

ELIJAH

Indeed!

He takes another drink.

Cringes.

MR. TILTMEN

And how does the widow Mrs. Fields
feel about you fucking whores?

ELIJAH

You see, I need to, Theodore.

MR. TILTMEN

That so?

ELIJAH

For my sanity.

MR. TILTMEN

Your sanity? I'm afraid you lost
that long ago, my friend.

ELIJAH

My mind is gone but my desire for
cunt remains intact.

MR. TILTMEN

Poor widow Mrs. Fields.

ELIJAH

The poor widow Mrs. Fields is drier
than the fucking desert. I like my
women to be as wet as the mud
outside.

MR. TILTMEN

Then why court her?

ELIJAH

She's rich!

He takes another drink from his bottle of absinthe, sucks air through his teeth like a bullet is being pulled from his body.

MR. TILTMEN
Crude as ever, I see.

ELIJAH
There are two things in life that are thoroughly enjoyable to me. One, women of course. And the other-

MR. TILTMEN
Money.

ELIJAH
--Exactly.
(beat)
Where the hell are my sugar cubes?

INT. SALOON - DAY(RAINING)

Ada wears the Stranger's cowboy hat. He leans back in his chair, smiling at her.

She pours him a drink.

ADA
I wanna play a game.

STRANGER
Have we not played enough games already?

ADA
This one is a drinking game.

STRANGER
What kind of drinking game?

ADA
There are three basic rules. You need a bottle of whiskey, two people and the truth.

STRANGER
This doesn't sound like a very fun game.

ADA
You'll love it.

She slides over the shot of whiskey and pours herself one too.

STRANGER

How do you play?

ADA

We each tell something about ourselves. If you think what I tell is false, you say false. If you're right, I take a shot. But if it's true, you take the shot. Understand?

STRANGER

Easy enough. You first.

ADA

My first passionate kiss was with a woman.

STRANGER

False.

She smiles.

ADA

True.

The Stranger takes a shot and pours himself another drink.

STRANGER

I feel there's more to that story.

She smiles.

ADA

Sure is, but it's your turn.

STRANGER

Not sure I can beat that. Let's see.

(beat)

I once met the president.

ADA

False.

STRANGER

True.

ADA

You met the president?

STRANGER

I was a kid when Buren came to my town. I think that means you take a shot.

She takes a shot.

ADA

Okay.

(smiles)

My first sexual experience was with a woman.

STRANGER

You're killin' me here.

(beat)

I say true.

She smiles and shakes her head.

ADA

False.

The Stranger takes a shot. After refilling his glass, he fills hers as well.

ADA (CONT'D)

Do yours.

STRANGER

Mine?

ADA

Your first.

He smiles.

STRANGER

My first sexual experience was with my Sunday school teacher.

ADA

Hmm. Tough one. But I'm going to say... True.

Beat.

STRANGER

Drink up.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Elijah has his sugar cubes. Dora is by the bar, letting the men have their chat.

Tiltmen chomps down on a sugar cube.

ELIJAH
No. Not like that.

Elijah pats around on his person.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Damn it, I had it somewhere.

MR. TILTMEN
What are you looking for?

ELIJAH
My spoon, damn it.

MR. TILTMEN
We have spoons.

ELIJAH
Ha! Found it!

He reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a flat perforated spoon made especially for absinthe drinking.

Elijah drops a sugar cube on the spoon, over the glass of absinthe, pours a glass of ice water very slowly over the cube until it dissolves.

He takes the spoon, stirs the drink and hands the glass over to Tiltmen.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
Here.

He drinks it.

MR. TILTMEN
God, it's disgusting.

ELIJAH
Keep drinking, ignore the taste. It gets better.

MR. TILTMEN
I'll pass.

ELIJAH

It never works when I tell women
that either.

MR. TILTMEN

You know I'm dueling someone after
the rain falls, right?

ELIJAH

I might have heard something
whispered about that.

MR. TILTMEN

Last thing I need is my head
clouded by this dreadful drink.

ELIJAH

Fine, I'll have it.

He takes the drink and gulps it down.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

You know, Theodore, this could be a
chance for us to make a lot of
money.

MR. TILTMEN

How do you mean?

ELIJAH

Your duel.

MR. TILTMEN

You want to gamble on my duel?

ELIJAH

Don't act like you haven't thought
about it.

MR. TILTMEN

I can assure you I haven't.

ELIJAH

Fine, then it was just me. But
think of all there is to be made
from this. The whole town is
talking about it already.

MR. TILTMEN

We're talking about you literally
gambling with my life.

ELIJAH
 You're already gambling with it.
 You might as well make a profit
 from it.

Beat.

MR. TILTMEN
 If you bet against me, I'll kill
 you.

ELIJAH
 Not if he kills you first.

INT. SALOON - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger takes another shot of whiskey. Ada smiles and refills his glass.

STRANGER
 I'm about at my limit.

ADA
 Nonsense. One more.

STRANGER
 Nonsense, huh? Fine, but it's your
 turn.

ADA
 I want to take you upstairs and
 fuck your brains out.

STRANGER
 True.

She smiles and downs the shot.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Elijah stands by the stairs. Men have gathered around.

ELIJAH
 Gentlemen, gentlemen.

A saloon girl holds up a chalkboard.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)
 As you may know, the honorable Mr.
 Tiltmen was challenged to a duel.

The crowd boos.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

I thought why not make a little
wager. I bet a thousand dollars on
Mr. Tiltmen. Anyone wish to bet
against me?

Like rabid dogs, they all jump at the opportunity, wagering
their bets for and against Mr. Tiltmen.

INT. SALOON - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger and Ada head up the stairs. The Stranger stops
and looks over at the whorehouse across the street.

STRANGER

What the hell is going on over
there?

He walks over to the entrance. Some people have gathered
around outside.

Ada walks over by his side.

ADA

I'll go find out.

She smiles and lifts up her dress, heads out into the rain.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

Ada pushes through the crowd. Everyone is holding up money as
some saloon girls hold up chalkboards. On them, a bunch of
bets.

She walks over to Dora.

ADA

What's going on?

DORA

They're betting on who will win the
duel.

ADA

Are you serious? You're okay with
that?

DORA

I ain't got much of a choice,
darling. Let's go upstairs.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - DAY(RAINING)

Dora takes a seat in front of a cracked mirror. Ada walks in behind her, takes a seat on a used bed.

DORA
What's he like?

ADA
The Stranger? He's nice.

DORA
You find anything out?

ADA
He's a hard person to get a read on.

DORA
He mention anything about my Theodore?

ADA
He's being pretty tight lipped about it.

DORA
Has he slept with you yet?

ADA
Was about to until this bosh happened.

DORA
What have you found out?

ADA
He says he's from El Paso.

DORA
Texas?

ADA
He don't sound it though.

DORA
Theodore's never mentioned anything about Texas or El Paso.

ADA
I reckon that ain't how he knows him then.

DORA
 If he knows him.
 (beat)
 Is he married?

ADA
 He didn't seem it. No ring, nothin'
 mentioned.

DORA
 Men don't tend to talk about their
 wives to whores, Ada. What about a
 name?

ADA
 Jesus, Dora.

Ada gets off the bed and looks out at the hubbub going on
 down stairs.

Dora gets up and walks over to her.

DORA
 What's wrong?

ADA
 I don't like spyin'.

DORA
 Do you want my Mr. Tiltmen to die?

ADA
 No. Of course not.

DORA
 Then sleep with him. Once he's been
 inside ya, he'll spill his heart
 out to ya, they always do.

Dora shuts the door, kisses Ada's neck.

Ada pushes her away.

ADA
 Not now.

Being rejected, Dora walks over to change out of her dress.

DORA
 Help me.

Ada walks over and unties the back of Dora's dress.

DORA (CONT'D)

You ever been in love, Ada?

ADA

I haven't been as lucky as you,
Dora.

DORA

Mr. Tiltmen is going to take me
away from here one day. I'll do
anything and everything I can to
make sure that happens.

ADA

What do you suggest I do? Take the
bullets from his gun?

DORA

That's a start.

ADA

I'm already gettin' him drunk off
his ass. He won't be able to even
stand no less hold a gun.

Dora slips her dress off, turns to face her.

DORA

As soon as the rain stops, someone
is going to die.

Dora caress Ada's face, kisses her on the lips.

DORA (CONT'D)

If it's my Theodore, you know what
will happen to you.

She pushes Ada onto her bed.

INT. SALOON BAR - DAY(RAINING)

The crowd has died down some outside. The rain still pouring.
The Stranger sits at the bar, having himself another drink.

The Bartender cleans a glass and adds it to the others.

BARTENDER

Betting on a man's life. Now I've
seen it all.

STRANGER

Money seems to be the only thing
people truly believe in these days.

BARTENDER

Town folk aren't normally like this around here.

STRANGER

I guess my presence is a bit of an unwelcomed one.

(beat)

You wouldn't happen to have some food behind that bar of yours, would you?

The Bartender tosses his cleaning rag over his shoulder and leans over the bar.

BARTENDER

I'm sure I could scavage somethin' up.

The Stranger pulls out a wad of money, puts it on the bar.

STRANGER

I'd be mighty grateful if ya did.

The Bartender smiles.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

People stuff cash into a potato sack. Elijah lights up a cigar and counts the money.

Tiltmen walks over with a drink in his hand.

MR. TILTMEN

Whenever it comes down to making money, you never cease to amaze me.

ELIJAH

You flatter me, Theodore. By the way, where's that peach of yours?

MR. TILTMEN

Off doing whatever it is girls do when we aren't around I presume.

He looks up at the closed door to Dora's room.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - DAY(RAINING)

Ada lies on the bed as Dora lays on top of her, licking and fondling her breasts.

ADA

Is this the right time to be doing something like this?

DORA

I thought you might need some kind of incentive.

Dora moves down, kisses her inner thighs.

ADA

How did you know you loved him?

She looks up at her.

DORA

You just know. It's somethin' you get in your gut.

She moves her head back down.

ADA

I wanna know what it feels like. To fall in love.

INT. SALOON BAR - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger and the Bartender share an apple pie.

STRANGER

No lie. This is the best apple pie I ever ate.

BARTENDER

This burg used to be known for its mining. Now I guess it's for the pie.

STRANGER

What did this town mine?

BARTENDER

Silver. Place was booming a few years back.

STRANGER

What happened?

BARTENDER

All dried up. Now the only thing this town has going for it is the railroad.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Tiltmen tosses his cigar to the ground and finishes off his drink.

He stumbles over to his red couch by the entrance and lays his head down for a rest.

Elijah walks over with more brandy.

MR. TILTMEN
No more drink, Elijah.

ELIJAH
Facing ones mortality makes him
thirsty.

MR. TILTMEN
If I drink anymore, it will pour
from my eyes.

ELIJAH
Then we will collect it into a
fucking glass and drink it again!

Tiltmen smirks.

MR. TILTMEN
The Iman drives forth the drunken
man from out the marble prayer-
shrine.

ELIJAH
What?

MR. TILTMEN
It's poetry.

ELIJAH
I never had an ear or the tongue
for that stuff.

Elijah sits down on the couch with him, nursing the bottle of brandy.

MR. TILTMEN
The drunkenness of extreme
pleasure, filled from sin's amazing
cup.

Elijah laughs.

ELIJAH
 Have you lost your mind as well,
 Theodore?

INT. SALOON BAR - DAY(RAINING)

The Stranger looks out at the entrance. The rain is still coming down hard. The sky is pitch black, it might as well be night out.

The Bartender takes a shot of whiskey to wash down a bite of apple pie.

BARTENDER
 Ever since Lily's Place opened up across the street, they've been bleeding me dry. They took most of my girls, after that my best customers followed.

STRANGER
 Mr. Tiltmen, he a customer?

BARTENDER
 Was. But now he spends his time and money over there.
 (beat)
 Can I ask? What he do to you to make you wanna kill him?

Beat.

STRANGER
 You ever kick a starving dog lookin' for scraps?

BARTENDER
 No.
 (beat)
 Mr. Tiltmen kill your dog?

The Stranger smirks.

STRANGER
 No. But it shows the kind of character you are. If you'd kick a starving dog, what exactly does that say about you?

BARTENDER
 I guess that depends. Am I starving too?

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

The music has stopped, Mr. Tiltmen stands on a table, reciting a poem from heart. People have gathered around, listening...

MR. TILTMEN

Void of the ecstasies of art it
were in life to have lain by thee.
And felt thy kisses rain on me and
the hot beating of thy heart.

Elijah looks up at him with a drunken smirk upon his face.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

When thy warm sweat should leave me
cold and my worn soul find out no
bliss in the obscenities I kiss and
the things shameful that I hold.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ada lays naked in Dora's bed, covering herself up with a bed sheet. Also unclothed, Dora stands by the doorway, listening in on Tiltmen's poem.

MR. TILTMEN (O.C.)

My nostrils sniff the luxury of
flesh decaying. Bowels torn of
festive worms, like Venus, born Of
entrails foaming like the sea.

ADA

What is he saying?

DORA

Poetry. He likes poetry.

ADA

That ain't any kind of poetry I
ever heard.

DORA

No. I guess it isn't.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - DAY(RAINING)

Tiltmen jumps off the table, grabs a bottle of whiskey and pours it down the blouse of a portly but extremely busty whore.

The crowd laughs, she doesn't seem to mind. He buries his face in between her giant bosoms.

MR. TILTMEN

To gnaw thy hollow cheeks, and pull
Thy lustful tongue from out its
sheath. To wallow in the bowels of
death and rip thy belly, and fill
full.

He walks over to a DANDY MAN wearing a fancy powder blue suit and top hat. Tiltmen takes the man's hat and tosses it on the floor.

He paws at the Dandy Man's face.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

My hands with all putridities. To
chew thy dainty testicles. To revel
with the worms in Hell's Delight in
such obscenities.

Everyone in the crowd has their smiles turn to disgust. They look at each other, not sure what to think.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

To pour within thine heart the seed
mingled with poisonous discharge.
From a swollen gland, inflamed and
large with gonorrhoea's delicious
breed.

Mr. Tiltmen stomps on the Dandy Man's hat, flattening it. The crowd gasps.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

To probe thy belly and to drink the
godless fluids! And the pool of
rank putrescence from the stool thy
hanged corpse gave, whose luscious
stink!

He walks back over to the woman he poured drink on. Startled now, she backs away from him.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

Excites these songs sublime. The
rod gains new desire.

He grabs her by the hair, rips her blouse, exposing her giant breasts.

He takes them in his hands, squeezes them.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
 Dive! Howl! Cling! Suck! Rave!
 Shriek! And chew! Excite the fuck!
 Hold me, I come! I'm dead! My God!
 I am Dead!

He lets her go. Tears run down her face. Everyone backs away from him in shock and outright horror.

Elijah claps.

ELIJAH
 That was fucking disgusting,
 Theodore. I fuckin' loved it!

Everyone backs away from him.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - DAY(RAINING)

Dora gets her clothes back on. Ada rests in the bed watching her.

ADA
 He's insane.

DORA
 He's drunk is all.

ADA
 What if he's done somethin' wrong?
 Somethin' appalling.

DORA
 It don't matter. Even if he did,
 I'd forgive him. That's what love
 is.

ADA
 What if it's somethin' you can't
 forgive?

Dora stops getting dressed and looks over at Ada.

DORA
 You need to get back to your
 stranger.

EXT. SALOON - DUSK(RAINING)

The Stranger stands outside, eating the remainder of his pie. The rain keeps falling, the sun dropping. Everything orange.

Across the street we see the Sheriff having himself a smoke outside his office.

The Stranger finishes off his pie and pats himself looking for a cigarette.

The Sheriff walks across the street, over to the Stranger.

SHERIFF

You sure picked a fine day to come
to town and duel someone.

The Sheriff hands him a tiny hand rolled cigar, helps him light it.

The Sheriff tosses the match out into the rain.

STRANGER

He seems to be enjoying himself
with all things considered.

The two share a smoke together.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Where you from, Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Hälsingland.
(looks at the Stranger)
Sweden.

STRANGER

What's it like there in Sweden?

SHERIFF

It's beautiful. A lot of green.
Mountains there that seem to go on
forever. Lakes are as blue as the
ice cloud filled sky. Some places
in America remind me of home.

STRANGER

Family? Kids?

SHERIFF

A sister.

STRANGER

She back in Sweden?

SHERIFF

She came with me to America. She's
still in New York. City life wasn't
for me.

(MORE)

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

(beat)
What about you?

STRANGER

El Paso.
(looks at the Sheriff)
Texas.

SHERIFF

I've never been.

STRANGER

You ain't missin' much.

SHERIFF

That how you know our Mr. Tiltmen?

Beat.

STRANGER

How well do you know him?

SHERIFF

I've known him going on 5 years
now.

STRANGER

That how long he's been here?

SHERIFF

Sure is. Came in and flashed his
money around.

STRANGER

Take it he's well liked here.

SHERIFF

People tend to like those who are
generous with their money.

STRANGER

He ever talk about his life?

SHERIFF

Some. Said he used to be a
professor. Taught in Massachusetts.

STRANGER

Boston to be exact.

SHERIFF

So you do know him.

STRANGER

Oh, I know him.

Ada walks outside the brothel across the street. She sees the Stranger and smiles.

She dashes across the street, over to the Sheriff and the Stranger.

SHERIFF

Good day, ma'am.

He tips his hat to her.

ADA

Good day, Sheriff.

STRANGER

You sure were in there awhile.

She smiles.

ADA

You miss me?

The Sheriff finishes off his cigar, stomps it out.

SHERIFF

See you folks later.

ADA

Bye, Sheriff.

He smiles and walks back to his sheriff office.

Ada whips her hair, shaking out the rain.

STRANGER

You're soaking wet.

ADA

You have no idea. So, where did we leave off?

She grabs him by the collar and plants a kiss on his lips.

ADA (CONT'D)

You taste like this town's famous apple pie.

She leads him back into the saloon.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Mr. Tiltmen takes a bottle from someone standing next to him and collapses onto the couch with Elijah.

ELIJAH

That was dark, Theodore. Very dark indeed.

MR. TILTMEN

People in this fucking town don't appreciate good fucking poetry.

The Dandy Man whose hat was crushed by Tiltmen, walks over with HUBBARD, his well dressed, giant black slave.

DANDY MAN

Excuse me, Mr. Tiltmen. You owe me for my hat you destroyed.

MR. TILTMEN

Fuck off.

DANDY MAN

Excuse me?

MR. TILTMEN

You heard me, you fuckin' cunt. You think you and your fuckin' nigger can come over here and intimidate me? Is that what you fucking think?

DANDY MAN

You are a crude man.

Tiltmen spits with vexation, points his finger at him.

MR. TILTMEN

And you sir are a fucking cunt!

DANDY MAN

That's it! I want my money back!

ELIJAH

What money are we talking about?

DANDY MAN

The money for the bet. I would like it back.

ELIJAH

All bets are final.

DANDY MAN

The hell they are, I want it back
now!

Tiltmen stands up with a death grip around a bottle.

MR. TILTMEN

How about I crack your fucking head
open?

Hubbard gets between them.

DANDY MAN

Hubbard, be careful.

MR. TILTMEN

Where are you two from exactly?

DANDY MAN

And what does that matter?

MR. TILTMEN

I sense you're from North- No!
South Carolina, am I right?

DANDY MAN

I am from the great state of South
Carolina. Yes.

MR. TILTMEN

You know, I heard an interesting
word around in your parts.
Motherfucker. Ever hear of it?

Elijah laughs.

DANDY MAN

Vulgar.

MR. TILTMEN

(to Elijah)

You see slave masters sometimes
like to play these little jokes on
their plantations.

Tiltmen drinks from his bottle and walks around.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

They like to tie up a nigger stud,
blindfold him and force him to
fuck.

ELIJAH

That sounds like a fun game to me.

MR. TILTMEN

Doesn't it? But when they remove
that blindfold it's revealed to him
he's been fuckin' his own poor
nigger mother.

Elijah laughs.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

Hence coining the word.
Motherfucker.

Hubbard leaps after Tiltmen. He's quick to react, bashing the
bottle over Hubbard's head.

Hubbard falls to his knees, dazed. Tiltmen grabs him by the
ear, blood drips down his face.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

Is that what you are? A
motherfucker? They ever make you
fuck your own mother, Hubbard?

DANDY MAN

Let him go! Hubbard, can you hear
me? It's time to leave.

MR. TILTMEN

You think you can leave now?

ELIJAH

Yes, what about your money?

DANDY MAN

Keep it.

ELIJAH

Keep it? Are you sure?

DANDY MAN

Yes! Forget I mentioned it.

Tiltmen kicks Hubbard over, walks over to the Dandy Man.

MR. TILTMEN

Come here.

He runs for the entrance, Tiltmen chases after him, grabbing
him, spinning around and caving in his nose with his fist.

EXT. LILY'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

Tiltmen tosses the Dandy Man out. He lands face first into the mud.

The Dandy Man scoops mud out of his eyes.

MR. TILTMEN
Don't forget your nigger.

BLACK FRAME
QUOTE APPEARS:

 Holding back the night
 with it's increasing brilliance
 the summer moon
 -Yoshitoshi

QUOTE FADES:

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada stands by the bedroom window, looking out. She wears only her undergarments. A corset with striped thigh high stockings. She looks beautiful in the moonlight.

DANDY MAN (O.C.)
You are a scoundrel!

The Stranger lies on her bed.

STRANGER
What's going on out there?

ADA
Drunks getting into some trouble.

She turns her attention back towards him.

Like a panther stalking its prey, Ada crawls on the bed, over to the Stranger.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Elijah stumbles over to Tiltmen, puts his hand on his shoulder.

ELIJAH
I'm enjoying this side of you,
Theodore. Something dark has
awakened inside of you.

MR. TILTMEN

Through my drunken haze, I've realized I am without a pistol to duel with.

Elijah throws his whole arm around him.

ELIJAH

We can't have you out there dueling with your pecker, Theodore. These are savage times.

MR. TILTMEN

Would not having a pistol lower me to rank of savage as well?

ELIJAH

To kill a savage, you must first become one.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada and the Stranger have sex in her bed. The only light, the moon shining through the window, breaking through the dark rain clouds.

On the Stranger's bare chest, long and painful looking scars.

Ada caresses them. He kisses her breasts.

ADA

What are these?

STRANGER

Reminders.

ADA

Reminders of what?

STRANGER

The past.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Elijah and Tiltmen stumble out of the brothel and head down the block.

Dora steps out and runs after them.

DORA

Theodore, where are you going?

They turn around with drunken looks etched on their stupid faces.

MR. TILTMEN
Dora! You've returned!

She runs up to them, covering her head from the rain.

DORA
What are you doing?

MR. TILTMEN
I need a pistol.

DORA
I'm coming with you.

MR. TILTMEN
Splendid. More the merrier.

They lean off each other as they laugh.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada drinks from a bottle of whiskey as she grinds on top of the Stranger.

She spits some out onto his chest.

INT. SALOON BAR - CONTINUOUS

Betsy pours herself a drink at the bar.

BETSY
Sounds like Ada and that Stranger are finally getting to know each other better. I warned her, he looks like trouble. She won't listen to me though.

The Bartender pops up from behind the bar and lays down two fresh, unopened bottles of booze.

BARTENDER
He seems nice enough.

BETSY
You only say that because he pays for his booze.

He takes her bottle of hooch away from her.

BARTENDER
Unlike some folks I know.

BETSY
Will this rain ever stop? I hope it
doesn't start thunderin'.

BARTENDER
Still afraid of a few cracks of
lightning, love?

BETSY
Will you come up to my room if I
get frightened?

He smiles and fills her glass.

BARTENDER
Of course.

The Sheriff walks into the saloon. The place is empty, even
the card table is vacant.

The Sheriff walks over to the bar.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Evenin' Sheriff. Nice night we're
havin'. Heard a ruffle going on
over at Lily's Place.

SHERIFF
No one has come to complain to me
yet. Must have not been too bad.

BARTENDER
What can I get ya?

SHERIFF
That Stranger, he still around?

We hear them upstairs having sex.

BARTENDER
Spending some alone time with Ada.

The Sheriff takes off his hat.

BETSY
Would you like some alone time with
me, Sheriff?

He shies away.

SHERIFF
No thank you, Betsy.

He presses his cowboy hat close to his heart.

BETSY
What's wrong, Sheriff? Don't like me?

SHERIFF
I like you plenty, Betsy.

BETSY
Then why don't you ever spend any time with me?

BARTENDER
Did ya need a word with that Stranger, Sheriff?

SHERIFF
Me? No. Wanted to let him know Mr. Tiltmen took off from Lily's.

BARTENDER
Where did he take off to?

SHERIFF
He's at the old trading post. Seems he forgot he don't own a gun.

The Sheriff chuckles.

The Bartender smirks.

BARTENDER
Can you believe that? What man agrees to a challenge but ain't got no cutter to do it with?

EXT. OLD TRADING POST - NIGHT(RAINING)

Elijah bangs on the door. Dora stands behind Tiltmen, trying her best to keep out of the rain.

ELIJAH
Jedediah! Open up, you old scoundrel!

INT. OLD TRADING POST - CONTINUOUS

JEDEDIAH(60's) walks out with a lamp in hand.

JEDEDIAH
What you want?! We're closed!

ELIJAH (O.C.)
Open up, Jedediah. We're here to
buy a pistol.

Jedediah walks over, unlocks the door and sees them all in.

JEDEDIAH
What do you want?

ELIJAH
A pistol, good man. We need a
pistol.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Stranger runs his finger down Ada's bare back, kisses her
shoulder.

STRANGER
It always amazes me.

She looks back at him.

ADA
What does?

He rubs his hand over her body.

STRANGER
Women's skin. How soft it always
is. Like you bathe in buttermilk.

ADA
That's how we are.

She flips over on her side. He kisses her breast, there's a
mole down her cleavage, he moves his mouth over and kisses
the mole.

STRANGER
You see this spot? This is my
favorite spot.

She smiles.

ADA
My mole? There aren't other spots
you'd rather prefer?

STRANGER

This spot makes you perfect. No one else has this exact mole in this exact spot, in this exact size.

ADA

It's just a dumb ol' mole.

She rests her head back on the pillow.

STRANGER

We're so different. I don't see how it's possible for men and women to understand each other.

ADA

The best way to understand someone is to share a bed with them.

STRANGER

That so?

ADA

It's what I've come to believe.

He climbs back on top of her and the two have sex again.

STRANGER

What am I sayin'?

ADA

I think you'll need to speak up a little.

She smiles and he kisses her on the lips.

STRANGER

Guess you ain't lookin' for a conversation but an argument.

He goes faster.

ADA

I win most of my arguments.

STRANGER

That a fact?

ADA

Sure is.

She pushes him over, gets on top and takes control.

INT. OLD TRADING POST - NIGHT(RAINING)

Jedediah holds up a pistol. On a table, a collection of even more pistols.

JEDEDIAH
This here is the Colt revolver.
Best one I got in my whole damn
store.

Mr. Tiltmen takes the gun, holds it up, looks it over.

MR. TILTMEN
I was looking for something a
little bigger.

JEDEDIAH
It ain't about size, it's about
accuracy. This revolver could shoot
the cock off a bull fly.
(to Dora)
Pardon my French, ma'am.

MR. TILTMEN
You got any fast draw pistols?

JEDEDIAH
All I got is everything you see
here.

Tiltmen takes his time to look over the Colt, ponders it for a few seconds then agrees.

MR. TILTMEN
Fine. I'll take the Colt. I'll also
need bullets and something to
holster this thing.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada lies on the bed naked. By the bedroom window, the Stranger rolls a cigarette.

ADA
Can I have one?

He looks over at her and smiles.

STRANGER
You can have this one.

He walks over, sits down beside her and strikes a match for the cigarette.

He reaches over and lights a lamp on a night stand by the bed.

ADA
You ever kill a man before?

STRANGER
We still playing your drinking
game?

She smiles and hands him the bottle of whiskey.

ADA
Have you?

STRANGER
Yeah.

She touches the scars on his chest.

ADA
From the war?

STRANGER
Shrapnel. Shit cut through me like
I wasn't even there.

He turns his back to her, he has even more scars down his back.

She sits up and wraps her arms around him.

ADA
Are you afraid?

STRANGER
To face him?
(beat)
No.

ADA
You're that sure you can win?

STRANGER
No. It ain't that.

ADA
What is it then?

STRANGER
It's hard to really explain. This
is something I have to do. It don't
matter if I live or die.

ADA

I don't want you to die.

STRANGER

Who's to say I don't deserve to?

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Sheriff watches as Elijah, Tiltmen and Dora head back to Lily's Place.

The rain is still pouring down.

Betsy walks over to the Sheriff, leans against the doorway.

SHERIFF

Why wait?

BETSY

What's that, Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Say someone did something terrible to you. Killed your pa, something worse. When you find the person who done it, why wait to challenge him? Why wait until he arms himself? Why not walk right up to him and put a bullet between his eyes?

BETSY

He must have his reasons.

SHERIFF

His reasons don't make much sense to me, Betsy.

BETSY

Do you really think Mr. Tiltmen could have done something like that to him?

SHERIFF

Mr. Tiltmen's never done nothing to raise my suspicions, but something about him never sat right with me.

BETSY

He always seemed like a good enough man to me. Dora is smitten with him.

SHERIFF

Back in my village, there was this man. Nice fella. He'd always pick vegetables from his garden to give to his neighbors. One day his wife went missing. It looked like she upright left him, the poor guy was devastated. Years went by, he'd always smile and be generous with whatever he had to give. But every year on the same day, he'd get some drink in him, start talking about his wife. One time he slips up, starts bragging about how he drove a knife into her skull. Buried her in the same garden he's been feeding the village with.

BETSY

What happened?

SHERIFF

We dug up his garden and there she was. The damn knife still stuck in the top of her skull.

BETSY

My, that's horrible. Why'd he do it?

SHERIFF

Said something about her refusing to cook him anymore eggs.

BETSY

What? That ain't true.

He looks over at her and smirks. She shakes her head and lets out a tiny laugh.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada finishes off a cigarette, empties the butt in a whiskey glass. She hands it to the Stranger and he puts it on the night stand next to the lamp.

She's at the opposite side of the bed, her feet pointing his direction.

He runs his fingers up her feet, down her legs.

ADA

You sure can hold your liquor.

STRANGER

I've always been able to hold my own when it comes to the bottle. Not sure what it is.

ADA

A natural born drinker. You sure could drink me under the table.

Beat.

STRANGER

Tell me about yourself, Ada.

ADA

That's not fair. You've told me nothin' about you.

STRANGER

I'm not that interesting.

ADA

You think the life of a whore is?

STRANGER

I wouldn't know. Is it?

ADA

Okay. So what you wanna know?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Two men riding horseback jaunt through town. They pass by the Sheriff as he heads back to his office.

They head to the saloon.

EXT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The two men hitch their horses to a post outside the saloon.

WESLEY, late 30's, looks mean as a rattlesnake, wears all black with a white cowboy hat.

By his side is SAM, 20's, rough, wears a mustache and all black. His hat falls into the mud.

SAM

Fuck.

He picks it up and slaps some of the mud off it.

SAM (CONT'D)
 God damn town. God damn rain.

Wesley ignores him and heads for the saloon.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Tiltmen and Elijah stagger over to their favorite drinking spot, the couch by the entrance.

MR. TILTMEN
 We have returned!

Everyone having a good time immediately has a look of disgust on their faces.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada is still in the same position, end of the bed, facing the Stranger.

ADA
 My mom. Now she was a character.
 She was tough as nails, I tell ya.

STRANGER
 Like you.

ADA
 Would you believe I was born like
 Jesus?

STRANGER
 Immaculate Conception?

He grins.

ADA
 God no. I was born in a barn. The
 same place horses use to shit.

STRANGER
 What happened to her?

ADA
 She died a while back. Smallpox.

STRANGER
 Shit. Sorry.

ADA
 It's okay.

STRANGER
How did you become...

ADA
A whore?

STRANGER
Yeah.

ADA
Needed money. No real glamorous
story about how I ended up here.
Took a train, it stopped here. Met
Dora and the rest is what you
imagine it would be. A lot of
drinking and a whole bunch of
fuckin'.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT(RAINING)

Wesley and Sam enter the saloon. The place is empty, the
Bartender cleans off the bar, puts some dirty glasses behind
the counter.

BARTENDER
Can I help you fellers?

WESLEY
God damn, this fuckin' place is
emptier than a shithouse on fire.

Sam takes a seat at the empty card table.

Wesley walks over to the bar.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Dora sits down next to Tiltmen, who is trying his best to
pull a cork out of a bottle.

MR. TILTMEN
This fucking thing.

DORA
Theodore, maybe you should lay off
the bottle.

MR. TILTMEN
What?

DORA

At least for a while. Maybe save it for the celebration. After you win of course.

MR. TILTMEN

Are you mad, woman? This is the perfect time to celebrate.

DORA

There's nothing yet for you to celebrate.

MR. TILTMEN

What about life? Is living not reason enough to celebrate?

ELIJAH

Let him be, Dora. If the man wishes to drink, let him drink.

DORA

Stay out of this, Elijah.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada gets up, the wooden floorboards creaking under her feet. She walks over to a closet, pulls out a small wooden box.

STRANGER

What's that?

ADA

My treasure.

She walks back over to the bed holding the box. Slowly, she opens it up.

She hands him a seashell and an old photo.

STRANGER

Who is this?

ADA

My mother.

STRANGER

She's beautiful.

She has some other items in there that she doesn't show the Stranger.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

What about your father?

ADA

I never knew him. Not even sure my mom even knew who he was.

STRANGER

I never knew either.

ADA

Yeah?

STRANGER

He died before I was born. At least that's what my ma told me. But she was a bit of a liar when it came to things like that.

ADA

You know what scares me the most?

STRANGER

What?

ADA

What scares me the most is that my pa will walk through that door and ask for a night with me. Not even realizing who either of us are of course. The thought of that keeps me up some nights. What if it's already happened? I wouldn't know.

STRANGER

Come here.

ADA

Why?

He reaches over and she lays her head down on his chest. Slowly he strokes her hair, running his fingers through it.

ADA (CONT'D)

This is nice.

STRANGER

What is?

ADA

This. You and me.

She sits up.

ADA (CONT'D)
I got something for you.

She searches her wooden box, pulls out what looks to be an Indian necklace.

STRANGER
What's this?

ADA
For luck.

INT. SALOON BAR - NIGHT(RAINING)

Wesley takes a seat at the bar. Sam takes his muddy hat and tosses it on the table.

SAM
I'd like a girl.

BARTENDER
Girls! Customer!

INT. SALOON - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

The Three Saloon Girls, still sleepy eyed, walk out of their rooms and lean over the railing to get a look at their potential payday.

Sam points to the first one.

SAM
Her. I want that one.

She smiles and goes downstairs.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Mr. Tiltmen stands up, takes his newly bought gun from its holster and uses it to crack open the neck of the wine bottle.

Red wine spills down his hand. He holsters his pistol and pours himself a glass of wine.

MR. TILTMEN
See, it's only wine, Dora. I think
I can handle a bottle of
Chardonnay.

ELIJAH

That's a red wine, Theodore. A fine Chardonnay would be a white wine. That dripping down your hand is a fine Merlot. Which you've ruined with shards of glass.

He looks at his hand, the blood red wine dripping off it.

MR. TILTMEN

You're quite right, Elijah. Thanks for educating me.

ELIJAH

Think nothing of it. Christ, I'm bored. Where are all the women?

DORA

They're afraid of you two.

MR. TILTMEN

Afraid? Of us? Why?

DORA

You broke a bottle over a man's head.

MR. TILTMEN

A nigger slave's head.

DORA

You bashed a man's nose in, Theodore. People are frightened of you.

MR. TILTMEN

Nonsense. They love me! The people in this town fucking love me!

DORA

Not when you're drunk.

MR. TILTMEN

I'll prove it! I challenge anyone here to a game of darts.

(beat)

Anyone?

He pulls out some money from his pocket.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

What about now?

DORA
What are you doing?

MR. TILTMEN
One hundred dollars. Any takers?

He slams another hundred on the table.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Two hundred then.

A CHALLENGER presents himself.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
You sir. Do you wish to challenge
me in a game of darts?

CHALLENGER
Yeah. Sounds like easy fuckin'
money.

MR. TILTMEN
I'm glad you think so. Step up,
sir.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Stranger wears Ada's good luck Indian necklace. He takes
a sip from his whiskey bottle as Ada smokes another hand
rolled cigarette.

ADA
The first person you killed was
during the war? Same place you got
your scars?

He touches the necklace.

STRANGER
The Battle of the Little Bighorn.
(beat)
Seventh Cavalry.

ADA
What happened?

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. FOREST BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A younger version of the Stranger rests by a splintered tree.
He wears his military outfit, bloodied and tattered.

STRANGER (V.O.)
I was knocked to my knees by a
blast.

Cannon fire explodes in the background behind him. Soldiers
run through the forest, firing at war painted Indians.

STRANGER (V.O.)
All I could see was smoke and
trees. I could hear them still
fighting. Some were yelling out in
pain.

Thick white smoke clouds the forest, the soldiers battling
the Indians disappear into it like ghosts.

STRANGER (V.O.)
That's when I saw him runnin' at
me.

An Indian boy runs as fast as he can towards the Stranger,
armed only with a rifle and bayonet.

BACK TO PRESENT

Ada blows some smoke.

STRANGER
He looked no more than 14. He must
have taken the rifle off a dead
soldier. All I saw was him comin'
for me, bayonet headed right for my
chest.

ADA
What did you do?

STRANGER
I shot him.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. FOREST BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The Stranger quickly aims his revolver at the boy and shoots
him in the chest. Instantly, the boy is tossed back.

STRANGER (V.O.)
He went down like he hit a brick
wall.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. SALOON BAR - NIGHT(RAINING)

Wesley looks over at Sam who's grinning from ear to ear with Saloon Girl #1 on his lap.

BARTENDER
Can I get you somethin' too?

WESLEY
Betsy. She around?

BARTENDER
She's resting. Had a tough day.

WESLEY
I got money burning a hole in my pocket. So why don't you go on and bring her down here.

The Bartender smiles, slaps two glasses down.

BARTENDER
How about a drink first?

WESLEY
Yeah. I don't see why not.

BARTENDER
If I'm rememberin' right, you're a tequila man.

The Bartender pours him a glass of tequila.

WESLEY
You remembered right.

SAM
Wesley, I need a fuckin' drink.

WESLEY
Then get it your damn self.

SAM
Fuck.
(to the Saloon Girl)
Girl, get it for me.

The Saloon Girl gets off his lap and walks over to the bar. She grabs the bottle and walks back over to Sam.

BARTENDER
Sometimes I remember people by
their drinks.

WESLEY
That so?

Wesley drinks it down.

BARTENDER
I also remember whenever someone
leaves a mark on one of my girls.

Wesley cautiously glares up from under the brim of his cowboy
hat.

WESLEY
That a fact?

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

Tiltmen walks over to a dartboard. He grabs 6 darts off it
and hands three to the Challenger.

The Challenger gets into place. Everyone in the brothel
watches him.

MR. TILTMEN
Are you confident?

CHALLENGER
I am.

Mr. Tiltmen paces around behind him.

MR. TILTMEN
You seem like a railroad worker.
Smell like one too.

CHALLENGER
You got a problem?

MR. TILTMEN
No, no problem. You don't seem like
the type this place normally gets.

CHALLENGER
I heard you were taken bets in
here.

MR. TILTMEN
That so? Did you make a wager?

CHALLENGER

Sure did. Bet six hundred dollars
you'd get shot dead in the street
by that stranger.

Mr. Tiltmen smiles.

MR. TILTMEN

I hope I don't disappoint you.

The Challenger shoots, hits it dead center in the bullseye.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

Good shot, my man. Good shot.

The Challenger shoots again, hitting another high score.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

One more and that makes 80.

INT. SALOON BAR - NIGHT(RAINING)

Wesley finishes his drink, tosses some coin down for it.

WESLEY

I think you got me mistaken for
someone else, padre.

BARTENDER

No, I think I'm talking to the
right guy. You left her with a
black eye last time you was here.
You understand why I can't have
that?

WESLEY

I do. But I think you got me
mistaken, sir.

Wesley fidgets with the handle of his revolver. Sam sees this
and slides his gun under his hat without anyone noticing.

The Saloon Girl sits on his lap, drinking from the bottle.

BARTENDER

Alright. I hope I do.
(beat)
Betsy!

Beat.

INT. SALOON - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Betsy walks out of her room, which is next to Ada's. She looks down.

BETSY
What?

BARTENDER
Customer for ya.

BETSY
Fine. Send him up.

INT. SALOON BAR - CONTINUOUS

The Bartender has his hand on a sawed off shotgun under the bar.

BARTENDER
Alright. Go on up. But remember
what I said.

Wesley tips his hat and heads upstairs.

SAM
Wesley, don't take so fuckin' long.
We ride out after this fuckin' rain
stops.

WESLEY
Sam, enjoy your girl and mind your
own fuckin' business would ya.

As he leaves to go upstairs, he takes notice of the Bartender with his hands on a shotgun under the bar.

He taps on his gun belt to Sam. A signal to forget about whatever it was they were thinking about doing.

Sam slides his hand out from under his hat and grabs the bottle away from the Saloon Girl.

SAM
Don't drink it all, girl. Save some
for me.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada rests her head back on the bed's wooden banister. She blows smoke into the air, looks over at the Stranger.

ADA
I don't think I could have done
that. Hell, I've never even held a
gun.

The Stranger reaches over and grabs his gun belt from off the floor.

ADA (CONT'D)
What you doin'?

He smiles and takes his revolver out of the holster, tosses it to Ada.

STRANGER
Here.

ADA
Jesus!

She catches it like it's a hot coal.

STRANGER
Careful.

ADA
It's heavy.

STRANGER
That's a cavalry revolver. They
really didn't have women in mind
when they designed those things.

She points the gun at him.

ADA
I got you in my sights, Stranger.

INT. BETSY'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Betsy lights a lamp by the bed. Wesley takes his hat off, tosses it on a chair by the window.

He undoes his gun belt.

WESLEY
You remember me?

She avoids any eye contact with him.

BETSY
Take your pecker out.

He slides the belt off, tosses it on the chair.

He walks over to her, touches her face.

WESLEY

Yeah, you remember me.

BETSY

We gonna fuck or not?

WESLEY

You healed up nice.

She slaps his hand away.

BETSY

Stop.

He snaps at her, grabs her around the throat, punches her in the face.

She collapses to the floor.

A sinister smile grows on his face. He walks over to the chair holding his hat and gun belt.

WESLEY

You don't remember my name, do you?

He takes his coat off, lays it over the chair, rolls up his sleeves, cracks some knuckles, preys over Betsy.

WESLEY (CONT'D)

My name is Wesley. I want you to say it.

She holds the side of her face in pain, looks up at him.

WESLEY (CONT'D)

Say it or I make the other side of your face look identical to the one you're holding.

BETSY

(crying)

Wesley. Okay? Wesley.

He smiles and kneels down in front of her. She flinches as he reach out to wipe away some of her tears.

WESLEY

Betsy Klein, Betsy Klein. You girl, are all mine.

Wesley grabs her by the hair.

BETSY

Stop!

He picks her up, tosses her onto the bed.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

It's Mr. Tiltmen's turn at the dartboard. He gets into place and readies himself.

MR. TILTMEN

80 is the number to beat, am I correct?

CHALLENGER

Sure is.

MR. TILTMEN

Here goes.

He hits the bullseye.

Shoots again-

Hits it in the green. A good 25 points.

He holds up the dart.

CHALLENGER

One more.

MR. TILTMEN

Do you know why I only bet two hundred dollars? Why not a thousand? Why not two thousand?

CHALLENGER

I ain't got that.

MR. TILTMEN

That's one reason. But another is-

He drops the dart on the floor. It sticks into the wood.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

--Because I don't give a fuck about losing two hundred dollars.

The Challenger smiles.

CHALLENGER

You lose.

In a flash and without looking, Mr. Tiltmen quickly pulls out his revolver and BLASTS a hole in the dartboard bullseye.

With some style, he puts his gun back in its holster.

INT. BETSY'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Wesley lies on top of Betsy, strangling her. He lets her inhale then wraps his giant fingers around her tiny neck again, choking her.

Her lip bleeds down her face, onto the white bed sheets.

We hear the shot being fired from across the street at Lily's Place.

He stops and looks around.

WESLEY

What the fuck was that?

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Stranger stands by the window, looking out.

STRANGER

I thought I heard a gunshot.

ADA

It was just thunder. Get back in bed with me.

He looks over at her, she's naked and beautiful.

INT. BETSY'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Betsy scratches Wesley's face, clawing at him. He belts out in pain.

WESLEY

You fuckin' whore!

He punches her off the bed. She hits with a loud THUD.

BETSY

Help me! Someone help me!

Still stunned, she crawls on her hands and knees to the door.

WESLEY

Come here, you fuckin' whore!

He grabs her by the leg and drags her back over to him.

INT. SALOON BAR - NIGHT(RAINING)

We hear Betsy upstairs crying out in pain. The Bartender reaches for his shotgun under the bar.

Sam tosses the Saloon Girl off his lap and draws his gun on the Bartender.

SAM

Don't you fuckin' think about it!

INT. LILY'S PLACE - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Sheriff walks into the brothel with his gun drawn. The Challenger runs past him.

CHALLENGER

I've had enough of this shit, I'm outta here!

Tiltmen holds up the four hundred dollars, the take for the bet they made.

MR. TILTMEN

You forgot your damn winnings!

The Challenger runs out of the brothel.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ, what the fuck is wrong with you people?

SHERIFF

What the fuck is wrong with you?

The Sheriff walks over with his gun pointed at Tiltmen.

MR. TILTMEN

Easy, Sheriff.

Mr. Tiltmen shows the Sheriff his hands.

SHERIFF

Who the hell you shooting at, Tiltmen?

MR. TILTMEN

You got me. I must confess my crime. I shot and killed the dartboard. Take me into custody immediately.

The Sheriff holsters his gun.

SHERIFF

You can't be shooting off guns in places like this. You're scaring the ladies.

MR. TILTMEN

I apologize.
(to the ladies of the house)
I apologize.

He drops down the winnings.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)

For any damages.

SHERIFF

Dora, maybe it's best you two went upstairs and slept for the night. It doesn't look like this rain is ending any time soon.

DORA

That sounds like a great idea, Sheriff.

She wraps her arm around Tiltmen's. The Sheriff tips his hat and walks out.

DORA (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's take this party upstairs.

ELIJAH

What about me?

DORA

You stay down here or go home. I don't care which one you choose.

She drags Tiltmen away up the stairs to her room.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

We hear Wesley being rough with Betsy. She cries out...

BETSY (O.C.)

Help me!

The Stranger runs over to the door and opens it up. A shot fires, misses his head.

STRANGER

Shit.

He ducks behind the wall.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Sam has the Saloon Girl held hostage. He points his gun up at Ada's door.

The Bartender hides behind the bar.

SAM

You stay right where you are,
mister!

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Sheriff walks out of the brothel and heads back to his office when another shot is fired.

He stops and looks around.

SHERIFF

Christ, what now!

He runs over to the saloon.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Stranger gets on his pants. Ada hides behind her bed.

ADA

What are you doin'?

STRANGER

Stay down.

He grabs his gun.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Sheriff runs into the saloon, sees Sam has taken the girl hostage. Swiftly, he draws his gun and shoots Sam in the back.

The Saloon Girl breaks free from Sam's grip and runs over safely to the Sheriff.

Sam writhes in pain, stumbling over to the piano. He lands on the piano keys almost making music.

The Bartender pops up from behind the bar, armed with his shotgun, and BLASTS a hole in Sam the size of a fist.

Blood and splinters from the piano fly everywhere.

INT. SALOON - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

The Stranger carefully jumps out of Ada's room, gun aimed at whoever is below.

The Sheriff and the Bartender quickly aim their guns at him.

He raises his gun and the others take their aim off him.

Slowly, he walks over to Betsy's door.

He knocks.

A shot is fired through the door.

WESLEY (O.C.)
Who the fuck's out there!

STRANGER
The Sheriff is for starters! Time
to come out!

WESLEY (O.C.)
Where's Sam?

STRANGER
(to the Sheriff)
Who's Sam?

He looks over at the Sheriff and the Bartender.

SHERIFF
Sam's dead.

BARTENDER
But don't fuckin' tell him that.

SHERIFF

Come on out, son! You ain't done nothin' wrong yet.

WESLEY (O.C.)

Let me talk to fuckin' Sam right the fuck now!

STRANGER

(to the Sheriff)

This is getting us nowhere.

The Stranger kicks in the door.

INT. BETSY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wesley holds Betsy captive. He points his gun to her head. Her mouth is bleeding, face bruised and swollen.

BETSY

Help me.

WESLEY

Shut the fuck up, whore!

The Stranger aims his gun at Wesley, unable to get a clear shot.

STRANGER

Let her go.

WESLEY

Fuck you. I'm getting the fuck out of here and there ain't-

Taking the risk, the Stranger shoots Wesley in the head. Brains splatter all over Betsy's face.

She drops to her knees, face covered in pieces of Wesley and terror.

The Stranger runs over to her, wipes the blood from her pretty but abused face.

STRANGER

Are you okay?

We hear footsteps running up the stairs.

Betsy looks up at the Stranger and hugs him.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Tiltmen stands by the bedroom window, looking out. He smiles to himself.

MR. TILTMEN

Seems like someone is having
themselves some fun over there.

He turns around, sees Dora standing by the bed, looking sexy.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada consoles Betsy as she cries hysterically. The Bartender drags Wesley's body down the stairs. His bullet holed head bouncing down each step.

The Stranger places Sam's cowboy hat over Sam's face.

The Sheriff walks back into the saloon holding two wanted posters.

SHERIFF

Over there next to his friend.

The Bartender slides the body next to Sam.

The Sheriff drops a wanted poster on Sam's body. He walks over to Wesley, drops a poster on his body.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Both wanted for murder and horse
theft.

BARTENDER

That mean we get a reward?

The Stranger walks over to Ada and Betsy.

STRANGER

She okay?

Betsy downs a few shots of whiskey.

ADA

She will be. She's tough.

BETSY

Thank you.

STRANGER

For what?

BETSY
Saving my life.

STRANGER
You don't need to thank me for
that. You should get some rest.

Betsy and Ada get up and walk upstairs.

Ada stops and turns around.

ADA
You comin' back to bed later?

STRANGER
Yeah. After a bit.

They continue up the stairs. The Saloon Girls quickly run
over and help try to comfort her.

The Stranger walks back over to the Sheriff.

SHERIFF
When you said there'd be some
violence in this town tonight, you
weren't kiddin'.

STRANGER
Now what?

SHERIFF
I reckon they're the undertaker's
problem now.

The Sheriff takes notice of his Indian necklace and the scars
on his chest.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
Jesus, son. What happened to you?

The Bartender looks over his destroyed piano.

BARTENDER
Well, this is fucked to hell.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Tiltmen hungrily stares at Dora as she slips out of her
pretty dress.

DORA
Where'd you learn to shoot like
that?

He takes off his gun belt and grabs her into his hands. He tosses her over onto the bed and unbuttons his red vest.

MR. TILTMEN
Guess you can say I'm full of
surprises.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

The Stranger walks into Ada's room. She rests in her bed, lights out.

He takes his pants off and climbs into bed with her. Ada rubs her hand across his scarred chest.

STRANGER
You're awake?

ADA
I can't sleep.

STRANGER
Me either.

ADA
You saved that girl's life. I don't
think you deserve to die.

He grabs her hand.

STRANGER
I'm glad you think that, Ada.

ADA
Tell me what he did to you.

STRANGER
It ain't about what he done to me.

ADA
Then who?

He looks over at her.

STRANGER
You really wanna know?

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Dora climbs on top of Tiltmen and the two have sex.

DORA
I love you.

MR. TILTMEN
And I you.

DORA
When this I over, take me out of
this town. Make me your bride.

MR. TILTMEN
Is that what you really want?

DORA
Yes.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Ada and the Stranger have sex again. He runs his fingers
through her hair, down her back, kisses her neck.

ADA
She loves him.

STRANGER
Who?

ADA
Dora. She's one of the girls
working at Lily's Place.

He looks her in the eyes as they continue to have sex.

STRANGER
Okay.

ADA
She wants you to lose.

STRANGER
That's understandable.

ADA
She wants me to make sure you do.

STRANGER
What do you get out of it?

ADA
She says if I help her, I'll get to
work over there.

STRANGER

Is working there such a big deal?

ADA

In a few years, I'd be able to make enough money to get out of here. Start a new life for myself.

STRANGER

And if I win?

ADA

She'll ruin me.

STRANGER

What will you do?

ADA

I don't know yet. If you do win, take me with you.

She kisses him on the mouth.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - NIGHT(RAINING)

Dora washes up, drenches a washcloth in a bowl and cleans her legs.

Tiltmen sits naked at the edge of the bed. Tears run down his face.

Dora takes notice and walks over to him.

DORA

What's wrong?

She touches his face, he grabs her wrist.

DORA (CONT'D)

Stop. You're hurting me.

He lets go of her arm. She kneels down in front of him.

MR. TILTMEN

You ever seen a man cry?

DORA

No, I haven't. Why is it you're cryin'?

MR. TILTMEN

I've done terrible things, Dora.

DORA
What kind of terrible things,
Theodore?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. WOMEN'S COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Neatly dressed girls, about 16 of age, swoon over a younger looking Mr. Tiltmen.

Looking dashing as ever, he wears professor black robes, powdered wig.

He reads from a book.

MR. TILTMEN
If questioning would make us wise.
No eyes would ever gaze in eyes.
If all our tale were told in
speech. No mouths would wander each
to each.

The girls all have lovey dovey eyes.

He looks up from the book and sees them all hanging on to every word he says.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Were spirits free from mortal mesh.
And love not bound in hearts of
flesh. No aching breasts would
yearn to meet. And find their
ecstasy complete. For who is there
that lives and knows. The secret
powers by which he grows? Were
knowledge all, what were our need.
To thrill and faint and sweetly
bleed? Then seek not sweet, the if
and why. I love you now until I
die. For I must love because I
live. And life in me is what you
give.

He snaps the book shut. It echoes through the halls of the silent classroom.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
That ends today's class.

He smiles and the girls all get up to leave.

He walks over to his desk, tosses the book down and takes off his ridiculous wig.

MESSALINE, 16, drop dead beautiful, walks over to him.

MESSALINE
Professor?

He turns around, smiles when he sees who it is.

MR. TILTMEN
Messaline, correct?

MESSALINE
Yes, sir.

She shies away, looking at her shoes.

MR. TILTMEN
What can I do you for?

MESSALINE
I wanted to say, you're really great.

He sits on the edge of his desk, crosses his arms.

MR. TILTMEN
Am I?

MESSALINE
Everyone thinks so.

MR. TILTMEN
Messaline, do you like poetry?

MESSALINE
I love it!

MR. TILTMEN
That's great. I wish I had more students like you.

MESSALINE
I'm not that great at writing it yet. I love it when you read us some of your favorites, professor.

MR. TILTMEN
Maybe one day I'll be reading one of yours to the class instead.

MESSALINE
Gosh no.

MR. TILTMEN
Can I ask you a question?

MESSALINE
Okay.

MR. TILTMEN
It's personal.

MESSALINE
That's fine.

MR. TILTMEN
Have you ever been in love?

She blushes.

MESSALINE
Professor.

MR. TILTMEN
I only ask because when you read these great poems, they all have something very much in common with each other. And that is life's little experiences.

MESSALINE
There is someone I like very much.

MR. TILTMEN
Good. That's very good. Work with that. Experience everything life has to offer you, Messaline. You know, if you like, I could always help tutor you after class.

Messaline smiles a big grin.

MESSALINE
Really?

MR. TILTMEN
Of course.

BLACK FRAME
QUOTE APPEARS:

Coming, all is clear, no
doubt about it. Going, all is
clear, without a doubt.
What, then, is all?

-Hosshin

QUOTE FADES:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

The rain has finally stopped and the sun has peeked its head up to say good morning.

The Sheriff checks his pocket watch. Some men on horses ride by. The streets have been turned into a thick mud.

Some of the towns folk come out to see if the duel is starting.

The morning church bells ring off in the distance.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - MORNING

Dora looks out her bedroom window. She clutches Tiltmen's silver pocket watch close to her chest.

Looking out the window across the street, we see the Stranger.

Tiltmen gets out of bed, rubs his hand down his face stubble.

MR. TILTMEN

The rain finally stop?

She looks back at him.

DORA

Yeah.

MR. TILTMEN

I could use a shave.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - MORNING

The Stranger drinks hot coffee from a tin cup. Ada is in her underwear, she pours hot water into a bowl.

The Stranger walks over to her and moves the hair out of her eyes.

STRANGER

You're beautiful, you know that?

ADA

Come on. Take a seat.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - MORNING

Dora throws a sheet over Tiltmen. He looks at his reflection in her cracked mirror.

She lathers up a small bowl of shaving cream.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - MORNING

Ada soaks a washcloth, cleans the Stranger's feet. She looks up at him.

His focus is somewhere else, eyes fixated on the clear morning sky we see out the bedroom window.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - MORNING

Tiltmen has his face lathered up, a sharp hot razor pressed against his cheek.

INT. ADA'S ROOM - MORNING

Ada helps the Stranger get on his boots. He touches the top of her hair, she looks up and takes his hand.

He kisses her on the forehead.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - MORNING

Dora gives Tiltmen a shave, washing the razor off in a bowl of hot steaming water.

She leaves only his mustache.

MR. TILTMEN
Do you forgive me?

INT. ADA'S ROOM - MORNING

Like a samurai being prepped for battle, Ada helps the Stranger put on his gun belt and duster. With his back turned, she hugs him from behind, resting her head on his back.

ADA
Don't go.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - MORNING

A clean shaven Mr. Tiltmen looks himself in the cracked mirror, his reflection fractured.

He aims his gun at the mirror/himself.

INT. SALOON - UPSTAIRS - MORNING

The Stranger and Ada walk out of her room. The Saloon Girls stand and watch.

Downstairs, the saloon is packed full of people. They each hold a drink up in his honor.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The Stranger and Ada walk down the stairs and pass through the crowd.

They hand the Stranger a drink as he passes them, gulping it down and tossing the glass on the floor.

At the end, the Bartender and Betsy.

She walks over to him, her face swollen.

BETSY

Good luck, mister.

He touches her hurt face.

STRANGER

Thank you.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - MORNING

Mr. Tiltmen, freshly shaven, comes down the stairs. The brothel is empty. The only other soul is Elijah, asleep on the settee couch, cuddling an empty bottle of booze.

Dora walks over.

MR. TILTMEN

Where is everyone?

DORA

Across the street.

Tiltmen kicks Elijah awake. He wipes some drool from the side of his mouth and stands up.

ELIJAH
What's going on?

MR. TILTMEN
Rain stopped.

ELIJAH
Shit. It's happening?

MR. TILTMEN
Yeah.

Tiltmen walks for the entrance.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

The Stranger moves through the crowd, walks over to the Sheriff.

SHERIFF
You still doing this?

STRANGER
Can't back out now.

The whole town seems to be out to witness the gun duel.
Mr. Tiltmen walks over, checks his silver pocket watch.

MR. TILTMEN
You ready to die?

The Stranger takes off his duster, gets in place.

SHERIFF
Everyone, give them some room.

The town folk spread out.

The Stranger and Tiltmen face off. They glare at each other, hands on the ready for their revolvers.

MR. TILTMEN
Why are you doing this?

STRANGER
You know why.

MR. TILTMEN
If you're that dead set on fuckin'
dyin', I might as well oblige you.

INT. SALOON - MORNING

Ada steps backwards away from the entrance. She runs into the Bartender.

BARTENDER
Can't watch?

ADA
No.

INT. LILY'S PLACE - MORNING

The brothel is completely empty, the sack of money is left unguarded. Elijah runs over and counts all that's inside.

He smiles.

EXT. LILY'S PLACE - MORNING

Dora stands outside the entrance. She looks across the street, sees Ada who's refusing to watch.

Dora turns her attention to the two men about to draw down on each other.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

Mr. Tiltmen holds up his watch to show the Stranger. The Stranger eyes the silver watch, biting his lip, choking on his anger.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. WOMEN'S COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Messaline stands in front of Mr. Tiltmen, trying her best to hide the schoolgirl crush she has on him.

MR. TILTMEN
You know, if you like, I could
always help tutor you after class.

Messaline smiles.

MESSALINE
Really?

MR. TILTMEN
Of course.

She checks a silver pocket watch.

MESSALINE

Thanks, professor. I should get going to my next class.

MR. TILTMEN

That's a pretty watch you got there.

MESSALINE

Thank you. It was a gift.

MR. TILTMEN

From who?

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A bruised and disheveled Mr. Tiltmen sits in a wooden chair. His clothes are ripped and covered in dirt.

His dirtied hands are cuffed together.

A LAWYER berates two POLICE OFFICERS.

LAWYER

Do you know who this man is?!
Release him right this minute!

POLICE OFFICER #1

He is a killer of women!

LAWYER

That is slander, sir! We will sue you!

POLICE OFFICER #2

Don't you threaten us, you fuckin' worm!

LAWYER

That's it, I'm writing your names down. The Mayor will hear about this.

Police Officer #2 grabs the Lawyer by his shirt.

POLICE OFFICER #2

You listen here, we ain't lettin' this maniac go.

LAWYER

Unhand me, you damn animal!

The Police Officer lets him go.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Maniac? He is a well respected professor of this city's fine university, I demand you take those cuffs off him now! Immediately!

While his Lawyer is busy arguing with the officers, Tiltmen pulls out Messaline's silver pocket watch. He flips it open and checks the time.

BACK TO PRESENT

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

Mr. Tiltmen holds up Messaline's watch.

MR. TILTMEN

Every morning at this time, a train comes. Before it arrives, a whistle is blown. When it does, we fire. Agree?

STRANGER

Agree.

The Stranger closes his eyes, waits for the whistle. The town folk quiet down. Everyone listens in for the train.

Tiltmen puts the watch away and readies himself...

Beat.

Nothing yet-

Beat.

Still nothing-

Beat.

A very long silence...

THEN-

--THE WHISTLE-

The Stranger draws, he's quick. But not quick enough. Tiltmen puts a bullet in his heart.

The Stranger spits blood, falls back into the mud.

Ada runs over to the Stranger's aid. He lies dying in the mud, blood pouring from his mouth and bullet wound.

Tears run down her face.

Tiltmen has his back to her. He smiles and basks in his accomplishment.

MR. TILTMEN
What do y'all think of that?!

His left ear explodes.

Everything goes silent.

He turns around, sees Ada pointing the Stranger's gun at him.

He holds his ear, nothing but ringing. The Sheriff runs over and yells something to Ada. She yells something back but everything is muted.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
What's going on?

Mr. Tiltmen stumbles around.

Elijah runs out of the bordello holding on to all the money the people used to bet on the duel.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Elijah, what are you doing?

Elijah makes a run for it with the money.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Come back here. I said come back here!

Mr. Tiltmen aims his gun at Elijah and shoots him in the back.

Elijah falls face first in the mud, money flying everywhere.

Dora quickly runs over and tries to pick up as much money as she possibly can out of the mud.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
You're all betraying me! All of you! Good for nothing whore!

Tiltmen aims his gun at her.

Ada shoots him again, this time in the back through the chest.

The Sheriff wrestles the gun away from Ada.

Tiltmen looks at the blood leaking from his chest. He drops to his knees...

Dora looks over her shoulder, sees Tiltmen gushing blood. She quickly goes back to collecting the money, stuffing it down her blouse.

Tiltmen looks down at the silver pocket watch, sinking into the mud.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Shameless flower of the damned.

Ada wrestles with the Sheriff, fires again, hits the mud beside Tiltmen.

Tiltmen coughs up some blood.

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
Not till the sun...
(coughs)
Excludes you.

He drags himself through the mud, closer to Dora. She nervously gathers as much money as she can, crying...

MR. TILTMEN (CONT'D)
...do not forget me.

He reaches out to her, she runs off.

Ada gets a beat on Tiltmen, shooting him once again in the back.

He falls down dead, face first in the mud.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END