

F O R S A K E N

screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT BRUSH - DAY

A snake slithers through some weeds.

BANG! The snake's head explodes.

Super: "New Mexico Territory - 1881"

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

KAL STANTON, mid 30s and rugged, crosses a desert road lined with dry weeds.

He holds a rope to a second horse.

Stanton has three-day beard stubble on his face and wears a long rider coat that is caked with dirt and grime.

EXT. ASTER CITY - DAY

Stanton passes the Aster City Church of Christ at the edge of town.

EXT. ASTER CITY - MAIN STREET - DAY

He passes the general store, the saloon and a hotel.

A few FOLKS glance at him.

A dog heads in the opposite direction wanting no part of him.

EXT. ASTER CITY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Stanton ties up the horses to the tie rail in front of the wooden building.

SHERIFF ARTHUR WATSON, late 40s, is on the front steps.

Watson chews a wad of tobacco with a six point star pinned on his chest.

SHERIFF WATSON

Good day, sir. What can I do for
you?

Stanton chews on a wooden matchstick.

STANTON

This.

Stanton hands him a "Wanted" poster with a crude drawing of Winston Hawks, wanted for murder.

The reward is for \$1,000 dollars.

SHERIFF WATSON
That's a lotta money.

Watson smiles, hands it back.

SHERIFF WATSON
So you're one of 'em trackers?

STANTON
Been told you know Hawks.

Stanton folds the paper and places it in his coat pocket.

SHERIFF WATSON
What makes you think that?

Watson spits tobacco on the wooden porch.

STANTON
Jethro Holkins tells me Hawks was a
deputy of yours.

SHERIFF WATSON
That so.

STANTON
Says you 'n him are partners now.

Watson laughs and exposes his brown teeth.

STANTON
Says half of any money Hawks steals
goes straight in your pocket.

Watson sees Stanton's ivory-handled Colt Peacemaker in his
holster.

SHERIFF WATSON
Holkins is a drunk and doesn't know
his ass from his mouth.

STANTON
Holkins tells me Hawks is ready to
move out, that you're hiding him
until that happens.

SHERIFF WATSON
Son, best if you get back on your
horse and leave now. Before I
arrest you for somethin'.

STANTON
I haven't done anything.

Watson points.

SHERIFF WATSON
One of your horses just shit on my
public street. Can arrest you for
public stinkin'.

Stanton shakes his head, sees the barrel of a gun just inside
the open door.

STANTON
I've had a long ride and I'm
thirsty. Gonna get me a drink over
at the saloon.

SHERIFF WATSON
I'd advise you against that.

Stanton scratches the stubble under his chin.

STANTON
Maybe gives you a chance to
remember where Hawks might be
hiding out.

Watson spits, hits Stanton's boot.

Stanton looks down at the tobacco stain, then at Watson.

He bites down on the matchstick, walks away.

SHERIFF WATSON
Don't walk away from me.

A young DEPUTY, late 20s, comes out of the sheriff's office
with his gun in hand.

DEPUTY
Had my gun on 'im the whole time,
Sheriff.

They watch Stanton walk to the other side of town.

DEPUTY
Should we go warn Hawks?

Watson spits.

SHERIFF WATSON
Go get me ma rifle.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Two young boys in an open field surrounded by hills of nut pine trees.

NATHAN MITCHELL, 18, pounds a fence post with a sledgehammer as he stands in the tall grass.

His 13-year-old brother, COLBY MITCHELL, looks up at the mountains.

There is a long fence behind them leading back to their home about a half mile away.

NATHAN
That should do it.

Colby scans the hills.

NATHAN
What you lookin' at?

COLBY
Not sure, thought I saw somethin'.

Nathan squints into the sun.

NATHAN
I can't see nothin'.

He throws the sledgehammer in their wagon, wipes his forehead.

NATHAN
Let's go.

INT. ASTER CITY SALOON - DAY

Stanton enters the saloon.

Mostly empty except for a few MEN scattered about including some POKER PLAYERS at a table.

Stanton gets a dirty look from CLEM the bartender, late 40s, as he walks up to the bar.

STANTON
Whiskey.

Clem flips over a glass, pours him a drink.

Stanton drops a coin on the bar.

Clem grabs it, studies the gunslinger a bit too closely.

STANTON
You aimin' to kiss me?

Clem chuckles.

Stanton downs the drink, sees the saloon entrance on the bar mirror.

Sheriff Watson and the Deputy enter with weapons drawn.

Everyone runs out of the saloon.

CLEM
Hiya, Sheriff.

They stand on either side of Stanton.

SHERIFF WATSON
You need to leave now.

Watson raises his rifle.

STANTON
I have a right to be here same as
any other.

CLEM
Thought I wanted to give 'im a peck
on the cheek. Is he wanted for
somethin'?

Watson stares down Stanton.

SHERIFF WATSON
It's time for you to go.

CLEM
Who is this cowpoke?

SHERIFF WATSON
Shut your trap, Clem.
(to Stanton)
Did ya hear me?

Stanton looks up at their reflection in the mirror.

STANTON
Where's Hawks?

SHERIFF WATSON
Son, you either crazy or just plain
ignorant. Looks to me like we got
the guns here.

CLEM
This crazy sumbitch is lookin' for
Winston?

Stanton's jaw tightens.

STANTON
Where's Hawks?

DEPUTY
Shut your mouth, mister.

Stanton looks at him.

STANTON
You had your gun on me from inside
the office. Man's gotta know when
to point and when to shoot.

DEPUTY
I know the difference.

SHERIFF WATSON
Last week we found a dead body full
of holes behind the saloon. Some
gambler who made a few enemies in
town. Ain't that right, Clem?

CLEM
That's right, Sheriff.

SHERIFF WATSON
Now I believe you was playing poker
when I walked in here. Ain't that
right, Clem?

CLEM
I recollect he was.

Stanton shakes his head.

STANTON
So this is the way you want to play
this?

Stanton looks at Clem.

STANTON
You like cleaning up blood, Clem?

Clem laughs, turns to Watson.

CLEM
Best not to make a mess in my --

Stanton grabs the barrel of Watson's rifle, points it in the air and kicks him in the groin.

Watson grunts, lets go of his rifle and drops.

Stanton turns.

The Deputy is frozen with gun extended.

DEPUTY

Hold it!

Stanton swings his leg and trips the Deputy.

Watson tries to grab his rifle from Stanton who holds it.

Stanton kicks Watson in the chest and throws the rifle away.

CLEM

Kill 'im!

The Deputy gets up, scrapes his gun on the wooden floor and is about to raise it.

Stanton whips out his gun, turns and fires.

The Deputy is blown backwards.

Clem grabs a pistol from underneath the bar and jumps up but Stanton is ready for him, pulls the trigger.

BANG! The bar's mirror is sprayed with blood.

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - DAY

Colby and Nathan wrestle in the dirt in front of their log house.

ANGELA MITCHELL, early 40s, stands at the doorway.

She smiles and wipes her hands on her apron.

She looks much younger than her age except for a few wrinkles on her face.

ANGELA

You boys wash up, supper's almost ready.

Nathan has Colby down on the ground.

Colby gets free from his brother's grip, grabs some dirt and flings it at him.

NATHAN

Hey!

Colby runs away from Nathan.

ANGELA

Play fair now, boys.

She shakes her head and heads back in the house.

EXT. BEHIND THE BARN - DAY

Colby runs up to an old wooden door laying in the dirt just underneath a large tree.

He pushes the door and jumps inside a large hole in the ground, covers himself with the door.

INT. BARN - DAY

Nathan searches for something in a pile of haystacks.

He pulls out an old six shooter and admires it.

Colby comes up behind him.

COLBY

Can I hold it?

Nathan points the gun at a horse.

NATHAN

You're too young.

COLBY

I am not.

ANGELA (O.S.)

Boys!

Nathan places the gun back inside the haystack.

EXT. ASTER CITY - DAY

Stanton holds his gun to Watson's back as they walk to the edge of town.

They head for the Aster City Church of Christ.

SHERIFF WATSON

Murdering a deputy's a capital offense. You're gonna be a wanted man.

Stanton presses his Peacemaker into the Sheriff's back.

SHERIFF WATSON
They'll hunt you down like a dirty
criminal.

STANTON
Why are you headed this way?

SHERIFF WATSON
You want Hawks, don't you?

STANTON
He's hiding in the church?

The church is a few yards away.

SHERIFF WATSON
Best place to be.

STANTON
Call him out here.

Watson looks at him, squints.

SHERIFF WATSON
You ain't going in?

STANTON
No.

SHERIFF WATSON
Don't want God to see what a
murderer you are, huh?

STANTON
Call him.

SHERIFF WATSON
You afraid? Think Hawks will kill
ya?

STANTON
I haven't been inside a church in a
long time. Ain't about to start.

Stanton looks up at the church, takes a deep breath.

SHERIFF WATSON
No cover for you out here. I
thought you was smarter than that.

Stanton places the barrel on Watson's neck.

STANTON
Walk or I shoot.

Stanton lets the Sheriff get a few steps in front of him.

STANTON
(yells)
Hawks! Watson sold you out!

The Sheriff takes a step forward with hands in the air.

STANTON
Didn't even think twice about it!

SHERIFF WATSON
He ain't coming inside! Shoot 'im!

Glass explodes from a church window.

WINSTON HAWKS, an ugly bastard with rotting black teeth points a rifle at them through the broken glass.

STANTON
Watson says you ain't his partner!

SHERIFF WATSON
Shoot 'im!

STANTON
Says you're on your own and he
ain't gonna help you!

Hawks shoots.

Watson jerks back, a hole in his forehead.

Stanton aims his gun and fires two shots into the window.

Stanton runs up to the window, sees Hawks headed out the back door.

He runs around to the back of the church.

Hawks kicks a door open and runs out with a gun in hand, heads for his horse.

STANTON
Hawks!

Hawks turns around and fires at Stanton as he runs.

Stanton ducks out of the way as the shot misses him.

He fires and Hawks falls back.

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - DAY

Colby and Nathan wash up in front of a well bucket.

AUGUST MITCHELL, late 40's, blocks the sun, looks down at them.

His skin is rugged and dark from all the work he's done out in the sun.

COLBY

Hiya, Pa.

August pats him on the head.

AUGUST

You boys finish placin' them posts?

NATHAN

Yes, sir.

AUGUST

Good.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

With Aster City behind him, Stanton rides out of town.

Winston Hawks is draped over the second horse -- his lifeless body under a blanket.

Stanton hears a HISS from below, sees a rattlesnake pass by in the brush.

He takes out his Peacemaker and points it at the snake.

His horse is restless.

STANTON

Settle down!

He pulls the trigger.

BANG! The snake is split in half.

Stanton twirls the gun in his finger and holsters it in one quick move.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

The Mitchell family sit at the table with their heads bowed in prayer, faces illuminated by two kerosene lamps.

ANGELA

Thank you lord for providin' this meal. We know there are many folk that starve and we thank thee for our blessing. Amen.

Angela notices her husband looks worried -- more than usual.

ANGELA

What's the matter now, dear?

AUGUST

How was I to know them cattle had the disease? I just can't make a good decision these days.

ANGELA

You just keep your faith in the Lord and he'll provide.

AUGUST

Ah, damn me to hell.

ANGELA

There will be no swearing at the table, August Mitchell!

Colby and Nathan try not to laugh.

ANGELA

Boys, so help me, don't listen to your father.

AUGUST

I'll remember that next time you lose the church baking contest.

She throws her napkin at him as the boys laugh.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

August stands in the doorway, smokes a pipe.

He pats his full stomach as the family dog BARKS outside.

INT. BOYS ROOM - NIGHT

Angela puts the boys to bed.

COLBY

Good night, Ma.

She kisses Colby and he snuggles inside the covers.

ANGELA
Good night, my boy.

She walks over to Nathan and kisses him on the forehead.

NATHAN
Ma, is everything all right?

ANGELA
What makes you think something's wrong?

NATHAN
Just the way you were both talkin' at supper.

She runs her fingers through Nathan's hair.

ANGELA
Everything's fine.

NATHAN
Then why'd Pa make us put them fence posts up today?

ANGELA
Oh my boy, you know how your father worries about things.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

Angela closes the door to the boys room and grabs a kerosene lamp.

She sees the front door open, takes a step out on the porch.

ANGELA
August?

She waits and then sees her husband's face appear in the lamp's glowing light.

ANGELA
What is it, dear?

AUGUST
Dog was barking out there, thought maybe he heard a coyote or somethin'.

He leads her back inside and closes the door.

ANGELA

You need to stop worrying, look at these wrinkles on your face.

She grabs him by the cheeks.

ANGELA

I don't need anything else in the world but you and my boys ... and don't care about money.

AUGUST

Just seems like everything I touch goes to damn hell.

ANGELA

What'd I tell you about swearing?

AUGUST

That's not swearing.

ANGELA

Oh no?

AUGUST

The word damn appears throughout the good book. If it's in there, then it's not a swear word.

ANGELA

That word's not in the bible. It's damnation you're thinkin' of.

AUGUST

Damn right woman!

He slaps her bottom and she leaps forward with a laugh.

EXT. OPEN LAND - NEAR A RIVER - NIGHT

Stanton sits in front of a fire with a dirty coffee cup in hand.

He glances over at the two horses tied nearby, Hawks in the blanket under them.

Stanton takes a sip of coffee and spits it out, flings the coffee on a cactus bush and drops the cup.

He lays his head back on his horse's saddle, uses it as a pillow.

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

The Mitchell's dog is on the front porch, raises his head -- something out there.

EXT. HILLY PATH - NIGHT

Four horsemen ride down the hill.

They wear handkerchiefs across their faces, just below their eyes.

The horses kick up mud as they ride.

EXT. LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

As the horsemen approach, the dog BARKS and runs in their direction.

INT. LOG HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

August and Angela are awakened.

AUGUST
That fool dog again!

August gets out of bed and looks outside the window, squints, sees the horsemen in the distance.

AUGUST
What the blazes? Get to the boys
room and stay with 'em.

She leaps out of bed.

ANGELA
The boys, why?

AUGUST
Go now!

ANGELA
But --

He grabs her.

AUGUST
Angela, please, go get the boys and
don't come out until I tell ya.

INT. BOYS ROOM - NIGHT

Angela runs into the room.

Colby and Nathan are already awake.

NATHAN
What's happening, Ma!

Colby runs into her arms.

ANGELA
It'a all right my boy.

Nathan looks through the window and sees his father.

ANGELA
Nathan, get away from the window.

NATHAN
Where's Pa going?

ANGELA
We need to stay together!

NATHAN
But he's all alone out there.

ANGELA
Stay in here.

NATHAN
He needs me, Ma!

He climbs out the window in his long underwear.

ANGELA
Nathan!

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

A few yards away from the house.

The lead rider takes out his Smith & Wesson Schofield and points it at the barking dog.

His name is KIP COREWOOD, late 30s, a tall lanky man who wears a derby.

He fires two shots and keeps moving.

The SECOND and THIRD RIDER, young and with full beards, follow Corewood's horse as they charge to the house.

The last rider is KEMPER BROCKTON, early 40s, with premature gray hair.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

August grabs his rifle.

As he leaves, Nathan climbs through the back window and goes to his haystack.

EXT. LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

August runs for cover but trips and hits the dirt face first.

He looks up and sees Corewood with his gun pointed.

COREWOOD
Hold it, Mitchell!

August gets to his feet, his long underwear covered in dirt.

COREWOOD
Drop the rifle.

AUGUST
What do you want?

Corewood dismounts.

Nathan comes out of the barn with gun raised.

Corewood turns on instinct, fires a shot in his direction.

Nathan is blown back against the barn and shoots into the ground several times.

August sees his son drop to the dirt as blood spits out of his throat.

AUGUST
No!

August turns to Corewood with rifle pointed at him.

The Third Rider fires.

August is blown back against a post, a shot to his chest.

COREWOOD
(turns)
You idiot, we need 'im alive!

The Third Rider jumps off his horse.

THIRD RIDER
He was gonna shoot!

Brockton sees Nathan on the ground.

BROCKTON
He's just a kid.

COREWOOD
That kid was about to shoot us.

INT. BOYS ROOM - NIGHT

Angela pushes Colby towards the door.

ANGELA
Colby, go go to your hiding place.

COLBY
But Ma, what're you gonna do?

He resists going -- she tries to be strong.

ANGELA
My darling, darling, boy. Don't
come out until we come get you.

She pushes him.

ANGELA
Go! Go!

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

Colby runs out and heads for his hole in the ground.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

The bright moonlight shines through the window as Angela looks inside an open trunk.

She throws clothes and books out of the basket as tears stream down her face.

ANGELA
(whispers)
Oh, dear God, please help us.

She comes across a photograph of the family.

She in her best dress and August in a suit, the boys at their feet in their Sunday clothes.

She reaches underneath and finds what she's been looking for.

She pulls out a small pistol.

Two arms grab her from behind.

SECOND RIDER

Now, now little lady, ya don't want
to be playin' with guns.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

Brockton picks up August's rifle.

BROCKTON

We weren't supposed to kill
anybody.

COREWOOD

You shut up and get 'im inside.

August crawls to his son.

AUGUST

Nathan.

Corewood walks up to Nathan.

COREWOOD

Ya don't want to suffer, kid.

He raises his gun.

AUGUST

No!

Corewood shoots him in the head.

August buries his face in his hands.

BROCKTON

We didn't want this to happen, Mr.
Mitchell.

COREWOOD

Get 'im in the house before he
bleeds to death!

Brockton looks at Corewood.

COREWOOD

Something on yer mind?

Brockton is silent.

COREWOOD

Get 'im inside.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

They drop August in a chair in front of the dining table.

SECOND RIDER
Look who I found foolin' with a
gun.

ANGELA
(to her husband)
Where's Nathan?

August lowers his head, cries.

Angela realizes what it means and gets hysterical.

ANGELA
Oh, Lord! No, dear God! No! My
boy! My boy!

She screams.

COREWOOD
Shut her up!

The Second Rider holds her tight as she kicks and scratches.

SECOND RIDER
Quiet, little lady.

Corewood takes out a piece of paper from his coat.

He grabs a match and lights a kerosene lamp, moves it close
so they can see.

COREWOOD
You're going to sign this.

August can barely see straight, looks at the paper in front
of him.

AUGUST
This is what you killed my son for?

Corewood takes out a pen, hands it to August.

COREWOOD
You sign this over to Kemper
Brockton.

Brockton steps up.

BROCKTON
What the hell are you doin'?

COREWOOD

He can't sign it over to Wainwright
now can he? And I'm a wanted man.

August looks up at him.

AUGUST

Wainwright sent you?

Brockton shakes his head.

BROCKTON

I never agreed to this.

COREWOOD

Don't matter, this is the way he
wants it.

INT. COLBY'S HIDEOUT - NIGHT

Colby quietly moves the door and gets out.

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

As Colby turns the corner, he sees his brother dead in a pool
of blood.

COLBY

(whispers)

Nathan.

(looks to house)

Ma, Pa.

The youngster grabs Nathan's gun and runs to the house.

He peeks in the window, sees Corewood with his gun pointed at
his father.

BANG! Angela screams as Corewood shoots August in the head.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

The Second Rider places his hands under Angela's dress as she
lays on the ground.

Corewood walks up to him, places his gun under the man's
armpit.

COREWOOD

He's not paying you for this.

The Third Rider takes a step closer.

SECOND RIDER

Let us have some fun.

THIRD RIDER

Come on, Kip, we'll be fast. Just
cause your pecker don't work don't
mean we can't have some.

SECOND RIDER

We deserve a little piece.

Corewood points his gun at her head.

BANG!

COREWOOD

No point now is there?

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

Colby covers his mouth and drops down to the ground as the
tears flow.

He looks around in a panic, not sure what to do so he runs
back to his hiding spot.

He almost trips over his dead brother.

INT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

Corewood drops the handkerchief down to his neck, exposes his
face for the first time.

He has a scar that runs down his left cheek with a smaller
one across it making it look like a cross embedded in his
face.

He reloads his Schofield and shakes his head at the Second
and Third Rider.

COREWOOD

One thing I learned in this
stinkin' life is ... ya can't trust
any man.

Corewood raises his gun.

BANG! BANG!

He puts a bullet through each man's head.

Corewood turns, sees Brockton with gun in hand.

COREWOOD

Ya aim a gun at me, Brockton,
better be prepared to shoot.

BROCKTON

Don't know why in the blazes I'm
here.

COREWOOD

Should I tell you?

BROCKTON

You just killed Mitchell's family
for no reason. I have a family
too.

Corewood laughs.

COREWOOD

I didn't see you thinkin' 'bout
your family last night when you was
inside that whore.

BROCKTON

Gimme the deed.

Corewood smiles.

COREWOOD

The boss sure do like yer young
Señorita. She sure is pretty.

BROCKTON

I'm tired of you 'n Wainwright and
all this killin'.

COREWOOD

Then do something about it.

Brockton's hand trembles.

Corewood is fast, raises his gun and fires.

Brockton falls back into the wall with a hole in his chest.

BROCKTON

You ... bastard.

Brockton drops his head and stops breathing.

INT. COLBY'S HIDEOUT - NIGHT

Colby slowly moves the door and gets out.

EXT. LOG HOUSE - NIGHT

Colby crawls around the tree in the dark.

COREWOOD (O.S.)
Hello, boy.

Colby looks up and sees the Schofield pointed at his head.

COREWOOD
I remember somebody in town tellin'
me Mitchell had two sons.

Corewood squeezes the trigger.

BANG!

EXT. PINE TRAIL - DAY

Kal Stanton rides his horse through a trail with scattered pine trees around him.

He holds a rope tied to a second horse, another dead body draped over the saddle.

He passes by a herd of cattle grazing on what little grass there is around the trail.

EXT. TOWN OF SUNCREST - DAY

Stanton rides the horses by a sign post that reads: "Welcome all to Suncrest. A friendly town."

INT. SUNCREST MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

MARSHAL SAMUEL TOLLIVER, early 50's, sleeps in his chair with feet propped up on the desk.

Stanton sits in front of him, grabs a tin coffee pot and pours himself a cup.

Tolliver opens his eyes and smiles.

STANTON
Don't seem right any criminal could
walk in here and catch you with
your pants down.

Stanton hands him a "Reward" poster.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
You got Atkins?

Stanton points outside.

Tolliver stands up, looks out the door and sees the horses.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

Stiff?

Stanton scratches his beard.

STANTON

Don't have to feed 'em on the way
back if they're dead.

Tolliver laughs.

He rips the poster for Taylor Atkins off the wall.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

One less murderer going around
killing I suppose.

Stanton stands up.

STANTON

I'm gonna go get me a shave.

He points outside.

STANTON

You better go take care of the dead
snake before he stinks up the town.

Stanton stands, reaches into his pocket and hands Tolliver
some coins.

STANTON

For the burial.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

You wanna say a prayer for him
during the service?

Stanton laughs and heads for the door.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

Glad you're back.

Stanton nods and leaves the office.

EXT. STANTON'S CABIN - DAY

A log cabin just outside of Suncrest in the early morning.

EXT. BACK OF CABIN - DAY

Three empty bottles are lined up on a fence post.

Stanton wears his old long-johns and has his riding boots on.

He holds his Peacemaker steady and blasts the bottles.

He stands with feet apart and stares at a tree stump in front of him.

He kneels down, reaches into his right boot and flings a Bowie knife into the stump.

EXT. STANTON'S CABIN - DAY

Stanton stands at his doorway, smokes a cigar.

Marshal Tolliver rides up on his horse.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
Mornin', Kal.

Stanton blows smoke in the air.

STANTON
Figure you come this early, you're
bringing me something good.

Tolliver gets down, hands him a wad of bills.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
For Atkins.

STANTON
Thank you, Marshal.

He pats him on the shoulder, a grim look on his face.

STANTON
Why the grim mood?

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
I could use some coffee.

INT. STANTON'S CABIN - LATER

Tolliver drinks from a dirty ceramic cup and spits it out.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
Tastes like cow shit.

STANTON
Good to me.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

You need to settle down with a good woman ... one who can make a cup of coffee.

STANTON

What good woman would want to?
(blows smoke)
Anyway, the one's I pay are no good at making coffee.

Tolliver drops the cup on the table and pulls out a telegram.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

Just got back from the Judge's ranch.

Stanton places his cup in a cabinet near the iron stove.

STANTON

How is the old man?

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

He's fine.

STANTON

Good.

He hands Stanton the telegram.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

He received this yesterday from a man named Deakins, lives in Copper Canyon. It's for you.

STANTON

Don't know anyone by that name.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

I always thought you were alone in this world.

Stanton reads the telegram.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

Bad news I'm afraid.

Stanton looks up at the Marshal.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

I'm sorry.

A train whistle BLOWS.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

A train travels between two mountains on the Southern Pacific Rail Road.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

The stopped train HISSES and SMOKES at the station as Stanton steps off.

Nobody around except for an old-timer with a cigar.

This is HENRY DEAKINS, late 60s.

The old man walks up to him.

DEAKINS
Are you Kal Stanton?

STANTON
You Deakins?

The old man extends his hand, Stanton shakes it.

DEAKINS
Henry Deakins. Glad to meet you, sir. I'm glad you came, Mr. Stanton.

STANTON
Appreciate you letting me know.

DEAKINS
Been tryin' to track you down for about six months now.

Deakins points to his horse-drawn wagon.

DEAKINS
I sent a telegram to every part of this state. Was starting to lose hope I'd ever find ya.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

The wagon travels down a muddy road.

Deakins holds the reins as Stanton sits next to him.

DEAKINS
My misses and I heard quite a bit about you, Mr. Stanton.

Deakins chews on his cigar.

DEAKINS
Angela said you was a deputy
somewhere in the state?

STANTON
I was a while ago.

Deakins looks at him.

DEAKINS
You kill anyone?

Stanton looks out at the landscape.

STANTON
Some.

DEAKINS
I bet they deserved it.

STANTON
Some.

Deakins points to the Mitchell's log house up ahead.

DEAKINS
The one's that did this to them, if
they're still alive ... they
deserve it.

EXT. MITCHELL'S LOG HOUSE - DAY

Stanton walks out of the house, Deakins right behind him.

DEAKINS
Marshal thinks the dead men were
part of the posse.

Deakins points to the dirt.

DEAKINS
There was one horse trail leading
out so he figured one man was left
standing.

STANTON
Can I talk to this Marshal?

DEAKINS
He came from Mariposa, take you
'bout two days to get there.

Stanton looks around and inhales deeply.

DEAKINS

I'm sad to say I was the one who found 'em. Didn't show up for Sunday service so came out here to find out why.

Stanton looks at him, lost in thought.

STANTON

I'd like to see them.

Deakins throws his cigar away.

EXT. CEMETERY - SMALL HILL - DAY

A small cemetery plot surrounded by a picket fence on all sides.

Stanton kneels down in front of his sister's grave.

There are some dead flowers in a tin can underneath her wood grave marker with these words:

"Angela Stanton Mitchell 1843-1881 -- a fine mother, wife and child of God."

Another marker next to it:

"For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river."

Behind hers are the graves of August and the boys.

A tear drops from Stanton's eye, he wipes it off.

Deakins replaces the dead flowers with some new ones.

DEAKINS

Such a damn shame.

Deakins hands Stanton a piece of paper.

DEAKINS

The deed to a copper mine that August owned. Found it on a dead gambler over in Grover County.

STANTON

How'd you come across this?

DEAKINS

Ben Fields, the bank manager, is a friend of mine.

(MORE)

DEAKINS (CONT'D)

When I told 'im you was comin' he
thought you should have it.
Sheriff from Grover sent it to 'im.

They walk down the hill.

DEAKINS

Fields says this was never
recorded. Says the mine's
worthless.

STANTON

Then what good is it?

DEAKINS

Dunno but thought you'd like to
have it.

Deakins points to the deed.

DEAKINS

Looks like August signed the mine
over to this Kemper Brockton.

Stanton looks at the signature.

DEAKINS

The interesting thing is ... this
was signed around the time they was
massacred.

STANTON

So this gambler named Brockton had
it on 'im?

DEAKINS

No, the gambler's name was
Sullivan.

STANTON

They know why he had it?

DEAKINS

Nope.

They get to the wagon at the bottom of the hill.

STANTON

Suppose you don't know who this
Brockton is?

DEAKINS

Never heard of the name.

STANTON

Maybe he was one of the dead men in the house?

DEAKINS

Perhaps.

Stanton looks at the deed.

DEAKINS

It's the good Lord, Mr. Stanton. He wanted us to have this.

STANTON

We'll see.

EXT. TRAIL -- ALONGSIDE THE WAGON - DAY

Stanton and Deakins in the wagon.

DEAKINS

Angela left most of her belongings to the church. Most'll go to poor families or to the Indian reservation. Hope you don't mind since you're next of kin?

STANTON

Wouldn't have any use for them anyway.

DEAKINS

Such a nice family. My misses and I were torn about it.

Stanton looks out at the landscape.

STANTON

I need to find this man Brockton.

DEAKINS

I'm sure you will, if he's still alive.

STANTON

I reckon but ... sometimes I don't find the men I'm looking for.

DEAKINS

Angela told me once that when her brother Kal set his mind to somethin' he was the best at it.

EXT. SAN MADERA MAIN STREET - DAY

MARIANA BROCKTON, mid 30's, walks out of the general store.

Although she is not a striking beauty, there is something about her that would hypnotize any man that crosses her path.

Her 9-year-old daughter, ROSA, is behind her.

They walk in front of a city office.

WAINWRIGHT (O.S.)

Mariana!

Mariana smiles and speaks with a slight Hispanic accent.

MARIANA

Hello, Lance. How are you?

LANCE WAINWRIGHT, late 40's, walks out of the office and smiles at them.

He is dressed in a dark blue suit and tie and looks like a man with confidence.

WAINWRIGHT

So nice to see you here.

He has a touch of gray in his hair and is of slender build -- looks like a man who hasn't worked a day in his life.

MARIANA

You too.

WAINWRIGHT

Can we continue our discussion?

MARIANA

Lance, you know how --

Wainwright bends down to Rosa.

WAINWRIGHT

Hello, Rosa.

He pulls out a coin and shows it to her.

WAINWRIGHT

Go get yourself a candy. Your mother and I have to talk.

MARIANA

We have to go.

He straightens up.

WAINWRIGHT

It's not right you being all alone.

Mariana smiles, pats his arm.

MARIANA

We're not alone. We have each other.

WAINWRIGHT

At least give it more thought.

MARIANA

Very nice of you but we are fine.

She leads Rosa away.

Kip Corewood steps out of the office and watches her leave.

COREWOOD

You give up too easily.

WAINWRIGHT

I haven't given up. She'll come around on the idea.

COREWOOD

Maybe I should come a callin'?

Wainwright turns to him, smiles.

WAINWRIGHT

She's not your type. You don't have to pay 'er on the way out.

They see Mariana and Rosa get to their horse and buggy wagon.

COREWOOD

I had a young gal like her once. Was even thinking about marrying her.

Wainwright laughs.

WAINWRIGHT

You married?

COREWOOD

She was raped and killed right in front of my eyes.

WAINWRIGHT

Is that why you don't trust anyone?

COREWOOD

When I see a man, I only think one thing ... here's a fellar who's just waiting for the right time to kill me.

WAINWRIGHT

Is that what you think of me?

Wainwright flips the coin in the air, Corewood catches it.

COREWOOD

Yes ... that and that you pay very well.

Wainwright shakes his head, smiles.

WAINWRIGHT

You're a son of a bitch.

COREWOOD

Men like you made me that way.

INT. DEAKIN'S HOME - DAY

Stanton sits at a very formal dining table.

MRS. DEAKINS, mid 60s, walks in with two pieces of apple pie on fancy plates.

MRS. DEAKINS

Here you go, Mr. Stanton.

She hands him one of the plates.

STANTON

Thank you.

She hands the other plate to her husband, sits down.

STANTON

That was a lovely meal, ma'am.

MRS. DEAKINS

It's the least we could do.

Stanton takes a bite, smiles.

STANTON

That's good.

MRS. DEAKINS

Mr. Stanton ... I don't want to pry but Angela always talked about how you and her didn't see eye to eye and then --

DEAKINS

Ethel, that's none of our business.

MRS. DEAKINS

I know, I know, Henry but --

STANTON

It's alright.

MRS. DEAKINS

Said you left to become a lawman and ... you must know how she detested killing ... and then you both drifted apart and that you lost your faith in the Lord.

Stanton stops eating, lowers his head and takes a deep breath.

DEAKINS

Oh, doggone it, woman, you're making the man uncomfortable.

STANTON

I know Angela never told you but ... our folks were shot to death in a church.

Mrs. Deakins covers her mouth in shock.

STANTON

Men came in lookin' for the offering plates after the service. Shot everyone who was there.

DEAKINS

Good God.

MRS. DEAKINS

Oh, heavens.

STANTON

I didn't want to have anything to do with the Lord after the funeral.

MRS. DEAKINS

Angela told us your father had died
an old man and then years later
your mother was taken by the fever.

STANTON

She didn't want anybody to know.
Said people should only think nice
things when they think of their
folks and not ... think of them
dying in that way.

MRS. DEAKINS

We didn't know.

STANTON

The only question I've asked since
then is ... where was God when they
needed him?

MRS. DEAKINS

Oh, but he does --

DEAKINS

Ethel, quiet.

STANTON

Angela could never understand, all
I ever wanted to do after that was
to hunt down the same type of men
who killed them.

Mrs. Deakins is about to say something when her husband grabs
her arm, nods his head so she stops talking.

DEAKINS

Let's just finish this fine piece
of pie shall we?

EXT. DEAKIN'S HOME - FRONT PARLOR - DAY

Stanton shakes Mrs. Deakins hand.

MRS. DEAKINS

I'm sorry I misjudged you, Mr.
Stanton.

STANTON

Thank you for your hospitality,
ma'am.

MRS. DEAKINS

Contrary to what you think, God
would never forsake his children.

DEAKINS
Ethel, stop it.

STANTON
You have a good heart, Mrs.
Deakins.

She lets go of his hand.

MRS. DEAKINS
It was nice finally meeting you
after all these years. Only wish
it would've been under different
circumstances.

DEAKINS
He's got a train to catch.

Mrs. Deakins raises her hands.

MRS. DEAKINS
Oh, wait! Darn my memory, almost
forgot.

She runs to a fancy cabinet, throws open a drawer.

MRS. DEAKINS
Found some things in a trunk got
sent to the church. Thought ya'd
like to have them.

She hands him the family photo, the one Angela found in the
trunk.

STANTON
Thank you.

MRS. DEAKINS
And you should take this.

She hands him a brown leather-covered bible.

STANTON
This was hers.

MRS. DEAKINS
I think she wanted you to have it.

He opens it.

MRS. DEAKINS
I hope you don't mind, but I looked
inside and ... she wrote you a
note.

He closes the book, looks at Mrs. Deakins.

MRS. DEAKINS
Please take it ... for her.

He nods.

STANTON
Thank you, ma'am.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Deakins shakes Stanton's hand.

STANTON
I was away ten years. Don't think
I'll forget about that for the rest
of my life.

DEAKINS
Don't kick yourself over it, son.
This land's a sumbitch, makes
strangers of us all.

Stanton lowers his head.

DEAKINS
Son, I would never want my wife to
hear this coming out of my mouth
but ... you find whoever did this,
Mr. Stanton ... and you make sure
they end up dead.

Stanton nods and heads for the train.

INT. RAILROAD COACH - NIGHT

Stanton holds his sister's bible, runs his fingers along the
leather.

His eyes get moist as he opens the first page, can hear her
voice as he reads.

ANGELA (V.O.)
To my dear brother, Kal. May God
watch out for you. I hope one day
you'll let him enter your life
again. Love, Angela.

He looks out at the dark landscape and sees his reflection in
the window.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The hot sun beats down on Stanton as he crosses open land on his horse.

STANTON (V.O.)
I'm looking for a man named Kemper
Brockton.

INT. CANTINA - DAY

Several FOLKS sit at tables, some Mexican and some Pueblo Indians.

Stanton stands at the counter with the OWNER, an overweight Mexican.

The Owner yells at everyone in the place.

OWNER
Anybody know of *un hombre que se llama* Brockton?

STANTON
Kemper.

OWNER
Kemper Brockton?

Some shake their heads no. Some yell out "no".

OWNER
Sorry, *señor*.

Stanton folds the deed and places it in his pocket.

STANTON
Drink.

OWNER
Si, señor, of course.

He pours him a drink.

Stanton walks to a table and sits down alone.

EXT. OPEN LAND - NEAR A RIVER - DAY

Stanton on his horse, looks like a tired man.

His face is covered by a few week's worth of whiskers.

STANTON (V.O.)
The man's name is Kemper Brockton.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Don't know anybody by that name.

Stanton looks up at the dark clouds.

ANOTHER VOICE (V.O.)
Never heard of no man named
Brockton.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Stanton crosses the river on his horse.

STANTON (V.O.)
His name is Brockton, Kemper
Brockton.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Never heard of 'im.

ANOTHER VOICE (V.O.)
Nope, never heard of Brockton.

EXT. OPEN LAND - NIGHT

Stanton sits at a campfire, his beard is a little more
thicker now.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
No one here by that name.

ANOTHER VOICE (V.O.)
No Brockton, sir.

Stanton holds the family photograph in hand.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Stanton exits a hotel.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
Sorry, Mr. Stanton, don't know the
man.

He walks to the saloon and enters.

INT. BANK - DAY

Stanton sits with a BANK MANAGER, 50s.

The Bank Manager thumbs down some pages in a big thick book
that he has laid out on his desk.

BANK MANAGER
Awfully sorry, sir. Did you try
Albuquerque?

STANTON
Been to every bank and city office
I reckon.

BANK MANAGER
How long has it been since your
family passed?

STANTON
About a year.

The Bank Manager shakes his head.

BANK MANAGER
Maybe he's using a different name
if he owns any land? I mean all
you have is the name on that deed.

Stanton stands up.

BANK MANAGER
Could be that's not his real name.

STANTON
It's all I have to go on. Much
obliged.

EXT. COUNTY OFFICE - DAY

Stanton comes out, folds the deed in his pocket and jumps on
his horse.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Sorry, mister, don't know any
Kemper Brockton.

He heads out of the town as it starts to rain.

STANTON (V.O.)
I'm looking for Brockton, Kemper
Brockton.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY

A TELEGRAPH OPERATOR hands Stanton the deed and shakes his
head "no".

He takes it and walks out of the office, passes a bunch of
"Wanted" posters on a bulletin board.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

As rain pours down, Stanton rides his horse through a small mining town.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Nope, no Brockton here.

ANOTHER VOICE (V.O.)
No, sir.

He looks like a tired and worn out man.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stanton sits at the edge of the bed, stares out a window, lost in his thoughts.

A WOMAN, early 20s, finishes getting dressed in the corner of the room.

She walks up to him.

WOMAN
Mister?

Stanton is elsewhere.

WOMAN
You haven't paid me.

Stanton snaps out of it, reaches over and hands her some bills.

WOMAN
I'm sorry.

He looks up at her.

STANTON
For what?

WOMAN
For whatever's eating at you.

He turns back to the window as she leaves.

EXT. MEXICAN VILLAGE - DAY

Stanton walks away from some MEXICANS, gets on his horse.

MEXICAN VOICE (V.O.)
No se quien es Brockton.

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

Stanton wanders away from a saloon.

He is drunk as he holds a bottle of whiskey in hand.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
I'm sorry, Mr. Stanton. There's
nothing we can do.

He ends up in front of a church.

He looks up at the wooden cross above the door and takes
another drink.

He looks up to the sky.

STANTON
Are you still up there?

EXT. OPEN LAND - NIGHT

Stanton sits in front of a campfire with an empty bottle of
booze at his feet.

He looks up at his horse.

STANTON
We've been chasing a ghost.

INT. A SALOON - DAY

Stanton sits at a table by himself. He nurses a bottle of
whiskey in his fingers.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
I reckon this man's hard to find?

STANTON (V.O.)
Been looking for a long time now.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Then I'm sorry to tell you I've
never heard of the man.

He downs the last of the whiskey.

EXT. OPEN LAND - DAY

Stanton rides his horse down a snow-covered trail, his coat
and full beard covered in snowflakes.

EXT. A TOWN - DAY

As snow falls, Stanton walks down a long wooden porch that connects several stores.

Right in the middle of these businesses is a small church.

Some FOLKS enter the tiny place. As Stanton walks by, a YOUNG MAN, 20s, hands him a program.

YOUNG MAN
Merry Christmas, sir.

Stanton stops and looks at him but doesn't take the paper.

YOUNG MAN
We're about to start our Christmas
Eve service. Would you like to
come in out of the cold?

STANTON
I don't think God would be too
happy if I enter.

The Young Man has a puzzled look on his face.

YOUNG MAN
Oh, certainly not, sir. God
welcomes all.

STANTON
The Lord and I aren't seeing eye to
eye these days. But thanks for
offering, son.

Stanton keeps walking and enters the saloon.

EXT. SUNCREST - DAY

Stanton rides his horse through town, oblivious to everyone around him.

INT. SUNCREST MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Stanton stands in front of the "Wanted" posters on the wall.

One is for a gunslinger named Jonas Jenkins -- another is a Pueblo Indian named Tall Cloud -- and one of a Mexican bandit named Alejandro Rojos, wanted for stealing.

The last one he sees is one for Kip Corewood -- \$2,000 dollar reward for several murders and bank robberies.

Stanton pulls off the ones for Tall Cloud and Kip Corewood.

Tolliver enters.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
Hiya, Kal. Good to see you.

Stanton nods.

STANTON
Marshal.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
We missed you over Christmas and
New Years. How'd it go?

STANTON
I'm beginning to think this
Brockton fella doesn't exist.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
Damn shame. We'll the Judge and I
are still lookin' ourselves. He's
been sending out telegrams all over
the state.

Stanton shows him the posters.

STANTON
I pulled these off your wall. I
best start making some money.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
That's fine. Always appreciate the
help.

STANTON
I'll see you around, Marshal.

Stanton heads for the door.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
Kal?

STANTON
Yes.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
We'll find him.

Stanton looks at him, nods in agreement but his heart doesn't
seem to be in it.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Stanton sits in a chair, face covered in foam as he studies the posters he just pulled off the wall.

The BARBER, 50s, starts to shave him.

INT. STANTON'S CABIN - NIGHT

Stanton, clean shaven, watches rain fall outside his cabin.

He grabs a kerosene lamp and sits down at his dining table with a whiskey bottle.

The family photograph lays on the table.

He picks it up and looks at the family.

Several SHOTS are fired.

EXT. SUNCREST - DAY

Several MEN shoot guns in the air down main street.

FOLKS everywhere.

There is a banner displayed across two buildings: "Happy 4th of July!"

Stanton rides down the street, face covered in a full beard again.

INT. SUNCREST SALOON - DAY

The place is full of MEN, drinking, gambling and raising hell on the fourth.

Stanton sits alone at a table in the back, glass in one hand, whiskey bottle in the other.

He's in his own world, alone in his thoughts as he looks down at the whiskey in the glass.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

The Barber files his razor as Stanton waits in the chair.

BARBER

How long you been away this time,
Mr. Stanton?

STANTON

Reckon about three, four months.

Marshal Tolliver appears outside the window, sees Stanton and rushes in.

BARBER
Hiya, Marshal.

Tolliver grabs Stanton's shoulder.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
When you'd get in town?

STANTON
Just got back today.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
I been ridin' to your house damn
near a week now.

STANTON
Why?

The Barber steps up to Stanton.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
I have some news from Billings over
in Pueblo.

STANTON
Gary Billings?

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
He caught some skunk named Jimenez
last week. Real nasty fella.

The Barber gets ready to shave Stanton.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
Jimenez starts telling him all
sorts of stories under questioning.
(smiles)
You know how Billings questions
them with his hickory stick.

Stanton looks at Tolliver, moves his head so the Barber pulls
the blade back.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER
Jimenez starts babbling that if he
lets him go, he'll take him down to
San Madera. Tells him he belonged
to this posse called themselves *Los
Pistoleros*.

The Barber tries to shave him again but stops when Stanton moves.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

Says the gang broke up cause their leader, some weasel named Alejandro Rojas, left them in the wind a while back.

Tolliver pulls out a poster, hands it to Stanton.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

I recognized the name. This Rojas has been on my wall for a long time.

The Barber finally gives up trying to shave him and drops the razor in his pocket.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

Jimenez tells Billings that Rojas is the man he should really go after.

Stanton looks at the poster, \$750 dollar reward for Rojas.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

Says that Rojas went down there to work for a *gringo*. Some chicken farmer.

Tolliver steps closer to him.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

The farmer's name is Kemper Brockton.

Stanton looks up at him.

MARSHAL TOLLIVER

I think we found your ghost.

EXT. OPEN LAND - DAY

Dark clouds above as Stanton rides his horse through an open field.

EXT. CARDWELL TRADING POST - DAY

As a light rain drops, Stanton gets off his horse outside a small cabin.

He looks tired, his coat caked with dirt.

A crooked wooden sign above the door reads: "Cardwell Trader."

There is a tiny barn next to the cabin.

Stanton strokes his beard as he chews on his usual wooden matchstick.

He spits out the matchstick, walks inside.

INT. CARDWELL TRADING POST - DAY

Stanton enters and sees a young INDIAN WOMAN at a table with an OLD INDIAN MAN.

He smokes from a pipe with a long thin stem.

Standing next to them are two men named LANDON and JOHNSON, mid 40s.

Landon is a tall large man and Johnson is small with a long beard.

CARDWELL, 50s, is behind the counter.

CARDWELL
Welcome.

STANTON
You have any food?

CARDWELL
I let my cook go home.

STANTON
Been eating out of a can for three days now.

Stanton sees a bottle of whiskey behind him on a shelf.

STANTON
Can I buy a drink at least?

Cardwell grabs the bottle.

CARDWELL
Of course.

He pours him a drink.

Landon and Johnson wander up.

LANDON
How long you planning on staying
here, mister?

STANTON
What can I do for you, gents?

Landon leans in and whispers.

LANDON
You see that Pueblo Injun gal
behind us with her Grandpa

JOHNSON
We were in the middle of something
with her.

LANDON
Best if you leave now.

Stanton flips a coin on the counter.

STANTON
Don't mind me, just passin'
through.

CARDWELL
Now, boys --

JOHNSON
Quiet, Cardwell!

STANTON
(to Cardwell)
I'm looking for a fellar named
Brockton. Kemper Brockton.

LANDON
Mister, maybe ya didn't hear me?

Cardwell sees the Indian Woman and the old man leave.

CARDWELL
Kemper Brockton. Sure, think I've
heard the name although ... no
one's mentioned it in a while.
(scratches chin)
Do you know Brockton, Mr. Johnson?

JOHNSON
How the hell should I know?

CARDWELL
I believe he has a small farm out
west.

JOHNSON
Are you gonna leave or do we push
you out?

Stanton downs the drink, places the glass back on the
counter.

CARDWELL
Oh, Mr. Johnson there's no need --

JOHNSON
Shut up!

Landon turns around, sees that the woman and old man are
gone.

LANDON
She's gone!

He turns back to Cardwell.

LANDON
Why didn't you tell us they left?

Landon punches Cardwell in the jaw and he falls.

The two men run out.

CARDWELL
Those two animals spend all their
money here so I put up with 'em.

Cardwell checks his jaw.

CARDWELL
Meant what I said. Just head west
through town and you'll end up at
Brockton's place.

Stanton drops two coins on the counter.

STANTON
Much obliged. This is a dangerous
establishment.

EXT. CARDWELL TRADING POST - DAY

Rain pours down now as Stanton gets to his horse.

He is about to mount it when he notices that the Old Indian Man sits up against the barn.

Stanton looks at him and the old-timer points inside, a sad look on his face.

INT. BARN - DAY

Landon lays on top of the Indian Woman, tries to take her clothes off as Johnson watches.

JOHNSON
Off with them clothes, you red
bitch!

She tries to get away from Landon and slaps his face.

LANDON
You filthy heathen!

She tries to fight him off.

STANTON (O.S.)
I don't think she wants to.

Johnson turns, smiles.

Landon gets up to his knees.

As he does, the woman runs out of the barn.

LANDON
Let me have him.

Landon stands up.

STANTON
I've been after devil serpents like
you all my life.

JOHNSON
You're dead, mister.

STANTON
Worthless critters, snakes.
Whenever I see one, I shoot 'em
dead.

Johnson laughs as Landon takes a few steps forward.

Johnson reaches behind his back and pulls out a Derringer pistol.

Stanton whips out his gun, fires a shot that rips into Johnson's shoulder.

Stanton turns back to Landon but the big man is on top of him too quickly.

He grabs Stanton in a bear hug, Stanton drops his gun.

LANDON

I'm gonna squash you like a fly.

Johnson gets up, points his Derringer at them.

Stanton can barely breathe, arms stuck as Landon squeezes.

Landon sees Johnson point the gun at them.

LANDON

Careful with that!

JOHNSON

I got my sights on 'im.

LANDON

You got me in your sights too!

As Landon turns to Johnson, he loosens his grip.

Stanton drops through his arms and down to the ground.

He reaches into his muddy boot, pulls out his Bowie knife and sticks it in Landon's neck.

Johnson fires but misses.

Stanton grabs his Peacemaker and uses Landon as a shield.

He fires just as Johnson runs behind some cows.

Stanton is about to fire again when Landon grabs his arm and prevents him from firing.

Stanton pulls the knife out of the big man's neck, blood shoots out as Landon drops.

Stanton sees Johnson escape through a window as Cardwell enters the barn with a rifle.

They look down at the pool of blood which forms under Landon.

CARDWELL

You just killed off a good customer.

Stanton reaches into his pocket and hands him some coins.

CARDWELL
Where's Johnson?

STANTON
Went out the window.

CARDWELL
I'm gonna have to clean this up and
bury 'im.

Stanton hands him more coins.

STANTON
I was never here. You understand
me?

CARDWELL
Whatever you say, mister.

Cardwell looks down at the dead man.

CARDWELL
Best you leave now. They have a
lot of friends and none are any
good.

EXT. SAN MADERA MAIN STREET - DAY

Stanton's horse gallops in the deep mud as he passes through
the small town.

EXT. MUDDY TRAIL - DAY

Stanton's longrider coat is drowned with rainwater as he
rides his horse down a trail.

EXT. SMALL HILL - DAY

Down below a small hill sits a farm house -- smoke comes out
of the chimney.

Stanton rides down.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Stanton at the door.

It's slightly open with a rifle barrel pointed at him.

STANTON
My name is Stanton. I'm looking
for the man of the house.

Mariana Brockton holds the rifle.

MARIANA
There's no man of the house.

STANTON
Is this the home of Kemper
Brockton?

MARIANA
You a friend of his?

STANTON
No, ma'am, just want to ask him
some questions. I've been looking
for him for quite some time.

She opens the door slightly with the rifle's barrel.

MARIANA
Kemper's been gone for over two
years.

Stanton sees her daughter Rosa behind her.

STANTON
Sorry to hear that. Took me some
time to get here.

MARIANA
You a lawman?

STANTON
No, ma'am.

MARIANA
Sorry you came all this way for
nothin'.

Stanton sighs.

STANTON
I reckon so.

Mariana lowers the rifle.

MARIANA
Come inside, it's cold out there.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Stanton wipes off his muddy boots as Rosa stares at him.

MARIANA
Rosa, no lo mires asi.

STANTON
 She can look at me if she wants.

MARIANA
 You can take off your boots.

STANTON
 Thank you, ma'am.

Stanton takes off his muddy boots.

MARIANA
 I was making supper.

STANTON
 I'll be on my way as soon as this rain lets up.

MARIANA
 No sense going out in this. You can stay and eat. We don't mind the company.

STANTON
 Thank you, ma'am.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - LATER

The sun peeks through the clouds, no rain for now.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

All three sit at the dining table after supper.

Mariana hands the deed back to Stanton.

MARIANA
 I'm sorry about your family. I hope he had nothing to do with this.

She gets up, picks up the plates.

MARIANA
 Rosa, go play in your room.

ROSA
No quiero.

MARIANA
 Rosa.

Rosa gets up. Mariana waits until she's gone.

MARIANA

Kemper was out there. I can tell by the date on that paper. That's when he left us.

STANTON

Left?

MARIANA

He and this man Carlton went out there on a cattle run for Lance Wainwright. You ever heard of Lance?

STANTON

Nope.

MARIANA

He owns most of this land including the town. Kemper worked for him every now and then.

STANTON

So you don't know where he went?

MARIANA

Carlton said he was heading to Texas. Says he didn't even care he was leaving us. Rosa thinks her Papa died. I had to tell 'er that to keep her from learning the truth.

Mariana dunks the plates in a bucket of water.

MARIANA

He was no good. Can you imagine him leaving his little girl?

STANTON

I'm sorry, Mrs. Brockton.

MARIANA

Call me Mariana, Mr. Stanton.

STANTON

Then call me Kal, ma'am.

She smiles, nods.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Stanton swings an axe and splits a log in half.

Mariana watches him from the window.

MARIANA

You don't have to do that.

He turns, wipes his brow.

STANTON

The least I could do for your
hospitality.

He grabs another log.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - LATER

Stanton has finished cutting all the logs.

He looks behind the house, sees something under a tree, walks
over.

A wooden cross with a sign below it, written crudely in
paint: "Alejandro Rojas -- Born 1858 -- Died 1882".

Mariana comes up behind him.

MARIANA

My younger brother.

STANTON

How did he die?

MARIANA

Got in a bar fight in town. The
next day they found him behind the
saloon with a bullet in his head.

STANTON

Not a good way to leave this world.

MARIANA

He was always in trouble but he was
my brother so I loved him. And he
was good to Rosa. He said if
Kemper ever came back, he'd kill
him.

STANTON

So your husband leaves and your
brother is shot.

MARIANA

Always has been rough for me out here. This land's hard but I don't like to complain.

STANTON

You were born in Mexico?

Mariana starts walks away, Stanton follows.

MARIANA

People always thought Alejandro and me were Mexicans. We were born in Madrid, Spain. My father accidentally killed a man in the Spanish Army and was a wanted man back home. Our mama died when we were young so he brought us here. He came looking for gold and work the copper mines.

She turns to him.

MARIANA

Papa always thought he was going to be rich but he died without a penny to his name.

They walk away from the house.

MARIANA

But we were always a happy family. No matter how difficult it became for us, we always survived. That's what I do ... survive.

STANTON

Surviving's a good thing.

Mariana looks up at the dark sky as the wind picks up.

MARIANA

I don't think you should be riding out in this cold. There is a bed in the barn.

STANTON

I'm used to all sorts of weather.

MARIANA

But one sleeps better with a roof over one's head.

STANTON

Thank you.

MARIANA

Besides, I think Rosa will be happy that you're staying.

She heads back to the house.

He pulls out her brother's poster and rips it into pieces, opens his hand and the wind blows the paper away.

INT. ROSA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mariana tucks Rosa in her bed. Rosa smiles.

ROSA

I think he'll stay with us.

MARIANA

You do? *Porque, mi hija?*

ROSA

Because he likes you.

Mariana pats her head.

MARIANA

Oh, he does?

ROSA

Si. And you like him too.

MARIANA

Oh, I do? Why do you think that?

ROSA

Because you smiled today.

MARIANA

Such a smart little girl I have.

ROSA

Are you lonely?

MARIANA

Why do you ask that, *mi hija?*

ROSA

Mr. Wainwright always says you are.

MARIANA

I have you. That is all I need.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Stanton lays in a bed of hay, can't sleep.

INT. MARIANA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mariana sits in front of a mirror, combs her long hair with a brush and smiles.

INT. BARN - DAY

Stanton shaves with a razor in front of a tiny cracked mirror that lays on some logs.

Rosa sits on a barrel, studies him closely.

ROSA

Your face was hiding but now it came out.

STANTON

Never thought of it that way.

Stanton wipes his face off with a towel, looks at himself in the mirror.

STANTON

Hardly recognize you myself.

Rosa laughs.

ROSA

You are funny.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Stanton enters.

STANTON

Buenos dias.

MARIANA

Buenos dias. So there is a face under all that hair?

He strokes his cheeks.

STANTON

Can feel it now.

MARIANA

I hope you're hungry.

STANTON

I am.

Mariana pours him a cup of coffee.

STANTON

Gracias.

Chicken noises from outside.

A horse NEIGHS.

Stanton stands up, sees two men on horseback outside the place.

Mariana looks out the window and sees them.

Stanton reaches for his gun belt which is draped on a chair nearby.

MARIANA

No trouble, those are Lance's men.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Mariana greets them at the front door.

TRAVIS, 30's, is a tall bony fellow with crooked teeth, wavy red hair makes him look younger than he is.

The other man is SAMUELS, 40's, dark skinned and with one gold tooth which can be seen as he smiles.

TRAVIS

Good mornin', ma'am.

MARIANA

Good mornin', Travis.

(nods)

Samuels.

TRAVIS

We come with an invitation from the boss.

Samuels takes out a knife, removes dirt from underneath his fingernails as he listens from behind.

TRAVIS

He's having a *fiesta* today and made it very clear that you're to come.

Stanton steps up to the window, munches on bacon strips.

TRAVIS
He said if you refuse, he'd ride
back here himself.

He taps the brim of his hat and salutes Stanton.

TRAVIS
Mornin', sir.

Mariana sees Stanton at the window.

TRAVIS
Don't believe we've had the
pleasure?

MARIANA
Oh, this is a friend of Kemper's.
Rode in last night.

TRAVIS
That so?

MARIANA
Kal, this is Mr. Travis and Mr.
Samuels.

Stanton nods.

MARIANA
This is Kal Stanton.

SAMUELS
I don't think Kemper ever mentioned
you, sir.

STANTON
We were distant friends.

Travis smiles.

TRAVIS
I'm sure when Mr. Wainwright hears
of this, he'll welcome you as well.

MARIANA
Well I suppose since he's insisting
I come, I have no choice.

Travis touches the brim of his hat.

TRAVIS
He'll be happy to hear that ma'am.
It starts at four o'clock.

Travis smiles, looks at Stanton.

TRAVIS

You're also welcome to come along,
sir.

Travis kicks his horse and heads out, Samuels behind him.

Mariana turns back to Stanton.

MARIANA

You don't have to come if you plan
on riding home.

STANTON

Mr. Wainwright has peaked my
interest ... as well as those two
pilgrims.

She turns around and looks back at the riders in the
distance, a smile crosses her face.

EXT. TREE-LINED TRAIL - DAY

Late in the afternoon, Mariana's horse and buggy wagon heads
through a wooded trail.

EXT. TRAIL - WAGON - DAY

Mariana holds the reins, wears a very nice dress.

Stanton sits next to her in a suit, looks very uncomfortable
as he adjusts his collar.

Rosa sits in the back seat in her best clothes.

STANTON

Kemper and I ain't the same size I
reckon.

Mariana smiles as he loosens the collar.

MARIANA

You're wearing his only fine suit.
Glad I kept it.

STANTON

I haven't had one of these on in a
long time.

MARIANA

How long?

STANTON
Oh ... never.

She laughs.

STANTON
I feel like a rooster.

Rosa laughs behind them. Stanton turns to her.

STANTON
Oh, that's funny, *muchacha*?

He tickles Rosa and she laughs.

EXT. WAINWRIGHT RANCH - DAY

The Ranch is a large Spanish style home out in the middle of nowhere.

A wooden fence surrounds the entire property.

Rows of wagons and horses tied up near the front.

MARIACHI MUSIC can be heard from inside.

Stanton gets down, helps them off the wagon.

STANTON
Wealthy man this Wainwright.

ROSA
He asked Mama to marry him many times.

STANTON
He has?

MARIANA
He's felt bad since Kemper left --
(looks at Rosa)
-- died ... that he keeps wantin'
to take care of us.

STANTON
And you never accepted?

MARIANA
I am old fashioned and believe one
has to marry when one is in love.

STANTON
Not hard to love a man with so much
money.

MARIANA
You're not a woman.

STANTON
I reckon not.

They walk to a big wooden gate at the entrance.

Travis sits at a table with some men.

TRAVIS
You'll have to leave your gun.

Stanton takes off his gun belt and drops it on a table, full of them.

Travis watches him as Mariana leads him inside.

Many dance to the music of the large Mariachi band which plays in the center of the square.

Tables all around with food and drink.

Some of the men shoot off FIRECRACKERS, having a grand old time as women scramble away.

Stanton notices a small church nearby.

STANTON
A church?

MARIANA
It was already here when he bought the land. He just built his home around it.

STANTON
He's a religious man then?

Mariana laughs.

MARIANA
Only thing he worships is *dinero*. You should go inside, it's a beautiful little *iglesia*.

STANTON
I haven't been inside one since I was little.

MARIANA
Well, we should change that.

Stanton sees a couple of kids fight nearby.

STANTON

Who keeps the law around these parts?

MARIANA

Lance is the law here. He ran the last Marshal out of town, man was a drunk and a gambler so he said. Travis and Samuels mostly handle those matters now.

A Mexican man who goes by the name EL CAPITAN, early 50s, smiles at her.

He wears a military uniform.

EL CAPITAN

Buenas tardes, Mariana.

He clicks his heels together.

MARIANA

Buenas tardes, Capitan. This is Kal Stanton.

El Capitan extends his hand and they shake.

EL CAPITAN

Buenas tardes, señor.

STANTON

Buenas tardes. A military man?

EL CAPITAN

I was years ago in our grand army of *Mehico*.

Stanton nods.

EL CAPITAN

Were you a soldier yourself, sir?

STANTON

No.

EL CAPITAN

Too bad, *mi amigo*. I always am sad when I hear of men who have not gone through military training.

Some CHILDREN run to him and grab him by the arm.

EL CAPITAN

If you will excuse me. My grandchildren want me to play with them.

MARIANA

Of course. We will talk later.

El Capitan smiles as they lead him away.

Mariana takes hold of Stanton's arm, chuckles.

MARIANA

He likes to remind everyone of his years in the military.

WAINWRIGHT (O.S.)

Mariana!

Lance Wainwright walks over to them, dressed in his best duds as usual.

WAINWRIGHT

I knew you'd come!

He grabs her by the waist and lifts her in the air.

MARIANA

Oh, put me down.

He lowers her to the ground and smiles at Stanton.

WAINWRIGHT

Don't believe I know you, sir?

Stanton shakes his outstretched hand.

STANTON

Kal Stanton.

WAINWRIGHT

Lance Wainwright at your service.

MARIANA

Kal was a friend of Kemper's. He rode into town yesterday.

WAINWRIGHT

Splendid.

(smiles)

Well, I don't mean to leave you here but ... Mariana may I have this dance?

MARIANA

I'm a little tired from the ride.

He laughs.

WAINWRIGHT

You, tired? Mr. Stanton, don't let her fool you by her short stature. This lady's as tough as they come. I'm not willing to give up just because you say you're tired!

He takes her by the arm.

MARIANA

You're a mule.

WAINWRIGHT

When it comes to you, yes.

He leads her out to the dance floor.

Stanton watches them dance.

Wainwright is a good dancer and everyone else stops to look at them.

Mariana glances over at Stanton every now and then.

The other dancers circle around Mariana and Wainwright.

Stanton smiles when he sees Rosa playing with some kids.

He walks over to a table full of food, spoons up a big plate of roasted pork and sits.

Mariana and Wainwright walk back to him.

She fans herself as Stanton stands to offer her his seat.

STANTON

That was some dancing.

Just as Wainwright is about to say something to them, Samuels taps him on the shoulder and whispers in his ear.

WAINWRIGHT

Excuse me, I need to attend to some business.

They walk away.

MARIANA
Didn't mean to leave you alone.
Lance is a stubborn man.

STANTON
I think he's more in love than
stubborn.

MARIANA
Well, it takes two people to dance.

Stanton smiles.

MARIANA
What about you, Kal? Do you like
to dance?

STANTON
Only when there's a rattlesnake at
my feet.

She smiles.

He points to the plate of roasted pork.

MARIANA
I'll get Rosa and we can all eat
together.

STANTON
I'll be back in a moment.

MARIANA
Where you going?

STANTON
I just saw someone I thought I
knew.

MARIANA
One of your old lady friends?

STANTON
Yes and she has a beard now.

She laughs.

EXT. BEHIND THE CHURCH - DAY

Stanton hides behind some haystacks, sees Wainwright and El
Capitan talking.

Travis and Samuels stand with them.

Wainwright nods his head in agreement and plays with the ribbons on the front of the Mexican's uniform.

Suddenly, Wainwright slaps him in the face.

Stanton feels a gun pressed to his back.

STANTON

My understanding is no guns at this
fiesta.

Kip Corewood holds his Schofield, smiles with his derby on top of his dirty hair.

COREWOOD

Well, you were misinformed.

STANTON

I reckon so.

COREWOOD

Looking at something are we?

STANTON

Man's gotta know when to point and
when to shoot.

Stanton turns around and gets a look at him.

STANTON

Do I know you?

COREWOOD

Oh, you don't want to know me,
mister.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Wainwright is about to hit the Mexican again when he sees Corewood walk up with the gun on Stanton.

COREWOOD

I thought you might like to know
that this man was watching you,
hidin' like some cowardly coyote.

WAINWRIGHT

Mr. Stanton?

El Capitan takes a few steps away but listens.

WAINWRIGHT

Don't you know it's not polite to
sneak up on folks, sir?

STANTON

Also not polite to slap old men in the face.

Wainwright smiles.

WAINWRIGHT

My men tell me you spent the night at Mariana's? That doesn't look good, spendin' the night at a married woman's house.

Stanton's never going to back down from anybody.

STANTON

Just like askin' for a woman's hand in marriage when her husband could show up any day.

TRAVIS

You got some mouth.

Corewood places the barrel of his Schofield on Stanton's neck.

COREWOOD

How's about I wait til one of 'em firecrackers go off again.

Wainwright smiles, pulls Corewood's gun down.

WAINWRIGHT

Mr. Stanton is my guest.

Corewood steps back.

WAINWRIGHT

May I ask you, sir, exactly what are your intentions with Mrs. Brockton?

STANTON

What're yours?

WAINWRIGHT

I'm going to marry her some day.

STANTON

Seems to me she said she's turned you down several times.

Corewood smiles, El Capitan still listens nearby.

COREWOOD

Why don't you tell 'im how both men
in her life just happened to
disappear all of a sudden and --

WAINWRIGHT

Quiet.

Travis and Samuels laugh.

WAINWRIGHT

You stupid fools.

Stanton looks into Wainwright's eyes, grits his teeth.

STANTON

You know anything about a murdered
family in Copper Canyon?

WAINWRIGHT

No.

STANTON

My sister and her family were shot
in their own home.

WAINWRIGHT

I don't know what you --

ROSA (O.S.)

Señor!

Rosa rounds the corner, runs up to Stanton.

WAINWRIGHT

Hello, Rosa darling.

Rosa ignores Wainwright, looks up at Stanton.

ROSA

Mama is lookin' for you.

She grabs Stanton's hand and pulls him away.

WAINWRIGHT

Rosa, I'm not finished speaking
with --

Stanton passes Corewood.

COREWOOD

Saved by a child.

El Capitan steps up to Wainwright.

EL CAPITAN
Wainwright, I am --

He turns to him.

WAINWRIGHT
You shut up, old man! And remember
what you have to do *mañana*. Back
to grand ole *Mehico* where they
belong.

EXT. AROUND THE CORNER - DAY

Rosa leads him to her mother.

Wainwright comes up behind them.

WAINWRIGHT
Mariana, what's wrong?

MARIANA
We're leaving.

WAINWRIGHT
But you promised me another dance.

MARIANA
Rosa's not feelin' well. *Adios*.

Wainwright watches them leave. Corewood is behind him.

COREWOOD
Looks like he and yer woman are
gettin' along just fine. Ya want
him to disappear like her brother
and dear old Kemper?

WAINWRIGHT
No. Not yet.

EXT. TRAIL -- ALONGSIDE THE WAGON - NIGHT

It is now early evening as Stanton holds the reins, Mariana
next to him.

Rosa sleeps in the back of the wagon.

STANTON
Why did you send Rosa after me?

MARIANA
She told me she watched you go
behind the church and then saw Mr.
Carlton put a gun on you.

STANTON

So that's Mr. Carlton? The one who came back without your husband?

MARIANA

Why did he have a gun on you?

STANTON

How long has Carlton been working for Wainwright?

MARIANA

A long time. Rosa's never liked 'im, says he scares her with his scar.

INT. ROSA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Stanton lays Rosa in her bed as Mariana holds a lamp.

MARIANA

She's very fond of you.

INT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Stanton takes the lamp from Mariana and places it on the dining table.

He reaches into his overcoat and pulls out a small leather pouch, takes out several folded "Wanted" posters.

MARIANA

So you're a lawman? Why did you lie to me?

STANTON

I didn't ... was a deputy once but now I just hunt wanted men.

He finds what he's looking for.

STANTON

This is why I recognized him. This is the Mr. Carlton that you know.

He shows her the "Wanted" poster for Kip Corewood.

STANTON

His real name's Corewood. Rosa's right, he is a scary man.

MARIANA

Kip Corewood. So Lance employs a murderer? That *hijo de puta!*

She lowers her head.

MARIANA

Maybe I should have known ... I feel like a fool. This means that possibly my Kemper did some of these things you may have suspected? *Hay, Dios mio.*

STANTON

I'll have to go back tomorrow and get Corewood.

MARIANA

But Lance has several men. We can go into town and wire for a Marshal?

STANTON

I can't wait that long.

MARIANA

You can't fight all his men.

STANTON

I've been fighting men like them my whole life.

MARIANA

I can talk to Lance. Convince him to get rid of him.

STANTON

Don't think he'll listen.

She steps up to him and tries to say something but the words don't come out.

STANTON

I need to do this for you and little Rosa.

MARIANA

But not if it's worth losing your life over it.

STANTON

I'm not a good man myself, Mariana.

MARIANA

Don't say that.

STANTON

I've seen and done bad things in my life.

MARIANA

Everyone can say --

STANTON

I've killed many men. I gave up on God a long time ago. Some say I'm just as bad as the men I go after.

She turns away from him.

MARIANA

You may have done these things but I do not believe you're a bad man.

STANTON

But you don't really know me.

MARIANA

I know enough ... what I see with my own *ojos* and ... the fact that Rosa likes you. That means more to me than --

STANTON

Look, I'm very fond of you and Rosa but I have to go tomorrow and nothing's gonna change my mind.

Marian takes a deep breath, lowers her head.

STANTON

Good night.

She looks at him.

MARIANA

Good night.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Under the light from a kerosene lamp, Stanton thumbs through his sister's bible.

He hears a noise outside, grabs his gun and sees El Capitan enter the barn.

EL CAPITAN

Hello, *señor*.

STANTON
I nearly shot you.

EL CAPITAN
Perdoname for coming so late.

Stanton lowers his gun.

STANTON
That can be dangerous, *señor*.

EL CAPITAN
I overheard what you ask Wainwright
about the *familia* in Copper Canyon.

STANTON
Yes?

EL CAPITAN
I recall a while ago, his men were
drunk, talking loud. Travis say
about a murder in Copper Canyon.

Stanton looks at him.

EL CAPITAN
He said Carlton got back from there
with blood on his hands.

Stanton sits down on the bed.

EL CAPITAN
But I did not know it was a *familia*
and that it was yours.

Stanton looks at him.

STANTON
You're certain about this?

EL CAPITAN
Travis admires him, always talks
about what a tough *hombre* Carlton
is.

STANTON
He is a murderer is what he is.

El Capitan sits down next to him.

STANTON
Why did Wainwright slap you?

EL CAPITAN

Because I told him he was no better than *el diablo*.

STANTON

Why'd you tell him that, *señor*?

EL CAPITAN

My two daughters live on his land. They owe *mucho dinero* and he has given them until *mañana* to pay him or else he is going to throw them out.

STANTON

Can they pay him?

EL CAPITAN

They have no money. So instead he said they can pay him in other ways. That is when I told him he was the devil. They both have husbands and my *nietas*. So I have decided to kill him in the morning.

STANTON

They will kill you.

El Capitan stands up.

EL CAPITAN

I am not afraid to die! I am a military man! Besides, this is my *familia* and I am willing to sacrifice myself for my daughters.

STANTON

Just stay home tomorrow, *Capitan*. I am going there myself.

EL CAPITAN

Would you not do the same if it was for your *familia*, *señor*?

Stanton stands up.

STANTON

I see we are both too stubborn to change our ways.

EL CAPITAN

I wanted you to know about Copper Canyon.

STANTON
Gracias. You are a brave man.

Stanton shakes his hand.

EL CAPITAN
 Glad to have met you, *señor*.

El Capitan steps out into the dark.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

It's early morning as Stanton stands with Mariana.

His horse drinks water from a trough.

MARIANA
 Rosa will be wondering where you
 are when she wakes.

STANTON
 Tell her that she's going to be as
 fine a woman as her mother.

MARIANA
 You tell her yourself.

Stanton walks to his horse.

MARIANA
 Don't waste your life like this.
 It's not worth a reward money to
 lose it.

She paces, looks around desperately.

MARIANA
 This is foolish.

He checks his saddle bags.

MARIANA
 Is it that you prefer this life of
 yours to a ... to a normal family
 life?

He tries not to listen as he checks his saddle.

MARIANA
 You can't admit that you prefer
muerte to anything else?

He turns around and steps up to her.

STANTON

You and Rosa have had too much
death in your lives already.

She lowers her head.

STANTON

My whole life I been surrounded by
it.

MARIANA

Rosa will miss you terribly.

He gets on his horse and looks down at her.

STANTON

Goodbye, Mariana.

Stanton kicks his spurs and rides away.

Mariana looks up as a tear drops down her cheek.

EXT. TREE-LINED TRAIL - DAY

Stanton rides through the trail, heads for Wainwright's
property as the morning sun beats down on him.

EXT. DUSTY TRAIL - DAY

Stanton moves down a dusty trail, chomps on a matchstick.

BANG! A gunshot just misses him and throws him off his
horse.

He hits the ground hard and rolls over behind a tree.

Across the way are three BANDITS with loaded weapons.

There is a fourth man with them with a bandage on his
shoulder.

This is Johnson from the trading post earlier.

They hide behind some trees.

JOHNSON

Give us your money!

STANTON

I ain't got any money!

Bandit One fires a shot.

BANDIT ONE

Just throw it out and you can go on
your way!

Stanton sticks his head out.

STANTON

You hard o' hearing?! I don't have
any money!

Johnson spits like a dog as he yells.

JOHNSON

Don't lie to us or we'll have to
kill ya!

More shots.

Stanton almost gets hit.

Across the way, Johnson yells at the men.

JOHNSON

Just charge 'em! There's four of
us you idiots!

BANDIT TWO

Maybe he don't have any money?

BANDIT THREE

Yeah, Johnson, maybe you're wrong?

JOHNSON

He's headed for Wainwright's ranch.
Only rich folk go up there! Now
move you weasels!

Bandit Two and Three move in opposite directions behind the
brush.

All three Bandits fire.

Stanton hides behind a tree as shots ring out all around him.

Stanton shakes his head in anger, yells.

STANTON

I don't have time for this!

He extends his gun arm and follows Bandit Two through the
trees, sees an opening and pulls the trigger.

BANG! Bandit Two drops dead.

Across the path, Johnson cowers behind Bandit One who has a rifle in hand.

JOHNSON
Let's go, you sumbitch!

BANDIT ONE
Shut up!

Bandit Three hides behind a slim tree.

Stanton fires a shot above his head, bark explodes all around him.

Bandit Three drops down, exposes his head.

Stanton pulls the trigger and shoots him through the ear.

Bandit One raises his rifle.

BANDIT ONE
This cowpoke can shoot.

JOHNSON
Shut up and go!

Johnson pushes him forward and through the trees.

Bandit One yells back at Johnson for pushing him.

BANDIT ONE
You weasel!

He turns back and Stanton shoots him in the face.

Bandit One drops dead, exposes Johnson behind him.

MR. JOHNSON
Don't shoot! I'm unarmed.

Stanton raises his Peacemaker and pulls the trigger.

Click.

Johnson laughs, pulls out his Derringer from behind his back, suddenly recognizes him.

JOHNSON
Yer that sumbitch from the trading
post?!

He fires and misses.

Stanton runs behind a tree, sees Bandit Two's gun next to the dead body.

JOHNSON
Come out you coward!

Johnson fires, hits a tree.

Stanton doesn't have time to reload his gun.

With lightning speed, Stanton rolls over, grabs the dead bandit's gun and fires a shot into Johnson's head.

Stanton walks up to Johnson's dead body.

STANTON
Another dead snake.

He spits the matchstick and hits Johnson's head.

EXT. WAINWRIGHT RANCH - DAY

SERVANTS, both men and women, pick up the mess from last night's party.

EXT. WAINWRIGHT'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Wainwright sits down at a table on his large porch, a napkin in his collar.

Travis leans on a porch post, rubs his head.

WAINWRIGHT
Where's Samuels and Corewood?

TRAVIS
They're sleeping in the church.
(smiles)
At least I made it to my bed.

WAINWRIGHT
I want you boys to start collecting
money this morning.

Wainwright looks out and sees a rider get off his horse just outside the property, can't make out who it is.

TRAVIS
I'm gonna go get me some coffee.

Travis disappears inside the house.

One of Wainwright's servants, PABLO, comes out and hands him a glass of milk.

WAINWRIGHT
Thank you, Pablo.

Pablo leaves.

Wainwright takes a sip and sees Stanton.

WAINWRIGHT
Mr. Stanton.

Stanton comes up the steps.

WAINWRIGHT
What can I do for you this fine morning? And how is Mariana today?

STANTON
You never answered my question last night.

WAINWRIGHT
Refresh my memory, sir.

STANTON
You buy land all over this state?

WAINWRIGHT
Yes, I'm a business man.

STANTON
You buy copper mines?

WAINWRIGHT
If there's any value to them.

Stanton takes out the family photograph and shows it to him.

STANTON
This is my family from Copper Canyon.

He looks at the photo in Stanton's hand.

STANTON
What did Mr. Carlton tell you?

WAINWRIGHT
You don't give up do you?

Stanton nods, sees he's getting nowhere.

He reaches into his coat pocket, takes out the "Wanted" poster of Corewood.

He unfolds it and places it in front of Wainwright on the table.

STANTON

I'm sure you know this already but you're employin' a wanted murderer.

Wainwright looks down at the paper then back up at him.

WAINWRIGHT

So, you're a ... a bounty hunter?

Wainwright laughs. Stanton takes the poster.

WAINWRIGHT

Not very polite walking in here with these accusations. Just like last night, you like to make a habit of this I see.

Stanton places the poster back in his pocket.

STANTON

Also not polite to kill the husband of the woman you're after. And her brother.

Travis stands at the door with his gun pointed at Stanton.

TRAVIS

Let's end this right now.

WAINWRIGHT

I know nothing about all this nonsense, sir.

Travis comes closer but Stanton ignores the gun pointed at him.

STANTON

What if I tell you that you're a goddamned liar, Wainwright.

Pablo comes out to clear a plate for him, stops when he sees Travis with the gun.

WAINWRIGHT

Oh, Pablo, go to the *iglesia* and wake Mr. Carlton. Tell him someone is here for him.

Pablo takes a step back, looks scared.

WAINWRIGHT
Go you lousy Mexican!

Travis laughs.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Pablo runs down the steps, stumbles and kicks some chickens.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Wainwright throws a piece of bread in his mouth.

Travis gestures with his gun.

TRAVIS
Grab that chair over there and
plant yer ass in it.

Stanton takes a chair nearby and sits down at the table.

TRAVIS
Why don't you hand me yer gun while
you're at it?

Stanton looks at Travis.

STANTON
Man's gotta know when to point and
when to shoot.

Travis laughs.

STANTON
Maybe you're the one who pulled the
trigger?

Travis smiles.

TRAVIS
Wasn't me, fool.

STANTON
So it was Corewood?

WAINWRIGHT
Mr. Stanton, I cannot control what
my men do.

Travis laughs, Stanton's jaw tightens.

TRAVIS
I don't want to wait for Kip, boss.
Let me do it right now. I can --

WAINWRIGHT

Travis.

Travis looks at Wainwright, points with his gun.

Stanton reaches into his boot, pulls out his Bowie knife and flings it in Travis' neck.

Travis accidentally shoots Wainwright in the left shoulder.

Wainwright falls and the table lands on him.

Travis turns, Stanton has his Peacemaker in hand.

He shoots Travis in the upper chest.

Travis falls down the steps.

The porch posts suddenly explode into pieces.

Stanton ducks and sees Corewood and Samuels run toward him, guns pointed.

From the side, two of Wainwright's HIRED GUNS shoot at Stanton but miss.

Stanton is too fast -- he fans the trigger and kills them both.

Two others appear on opposite sides.

Stanton fires and kills one of them as the other gunslinger shoots back.

Stanton jumps out of the way and rolls on the porch.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHURCH - DAY

The Mexican servants scramble all around as they try to not get hit by the blasts.

Corewood fires several shots up at the house then reloads his Schofield behind a tree.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Stanton reloads his Peacemaker, rolls the cylinder.

He is now surrounded on all sides by several shooters.

Wainwright throws up his breakfast and tries to crawl away.

Stanton grabs him.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHURCH - DAY

Corewood and Samuels push some of the Servants out of the way.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Stanton heads down the stairs with Wainwright in front of him.

WAINWRIGHT

Hold your fire!

Corewood takes a few steps forward, adjusts his derby.

He wobbles a bit, still with a nasty hangover.

There are now two other men on either side of Stanton.

Stanton has no way out.

Suddenly, one of the men is shot in the head.

Stanton looks off to the side and sees El Capitan, decked out in his military uniform, with a double-barreled shotgun.

EL CAPITAN

I have them, *señor!*

He has two belts draped across his chest filled with shotgun shells.

The other gunslinger fires at El Capitan as he rolls over.

El Capitan hides behind a water trough, reloads his shotgun.

Stanton shoots the gunslinger in the chest.

Corewood fires at Stanton and almost hits Wainwright.

Everyone shoots in different directions.

Pandemonium.

The gun to Stanton's left is shot by El Capitan.

Shots everywhere.

More of Wainwright's men drop.

Only Samuels and Corewood left alive now as all of Wainwright's gunslingers are dead on the ground.

Samuels fires at the Mexican.

El Capitan hides behind the trough as the shots miss him.

SAMUELS
You're dead, old man!

EL CAPITAN
Callate!

El Capitan yells, jumps up and shoots Samuels in the chest.

For just a moment, the old man stares at Samuels as if he enjoyed his shot.

El Capitan smiles at the dead body.

This gives Corewood enough time -- he shoots El Capitan in the head and kills him.

Wainwright gets himself loose from Stanton and hides behind a tree.

WAINWRIGHT
Kip, throw me a gun!

Corewood turns back just as Stanton fires and misses.

Corewood fires back, clips Stanton in the shoulder.

Stanton rolls behind a tree.

Corewood grabs a young SERVANT GIRL who hides behind a barrel and uses her as a shield.

Corewood laughs as he fires at Stanton behind the tree.

The girl bites Corewood's hand.

COREWOOD
You *puta!*

He kicks her away, takes his focus away from Stanton.

Corewood flies backward as he's hit in the stomach.

He screams in pain and fires back at Stanton then hobbles back towards the church.

Stanton shoots him in the leg just as Corewood gets to the church doors.

He turns and pulls the trigger on his Schofield but it's empty.

Stanton shoots Corewood in the chest and he falls backwards into the church.

Nearby, Wainwright goes after El Capitan's shotgun laying beside the dead Mexican.

He picks it up, turns to Stanton but gets shot in the neck.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Corewood, covered in blood, reloads his Schofield.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHURCH - DAY

Wainwright lays on the ground, holds his neck as blood streams through his fingers.

Stanton points his gun at Wainwright's head.

Wainwright looks at him, mumbles and dies.

Stanton holsters his gun and grabs the shotgun.

He takes one of the belts off El Capitan and looks down at the dead military Captain.

STANTON
Gracias mi amigo.

He reloads the shotgun, looks up and sees Corewood at the church doors with gun raised.

Stanton unloads with the shotgun.

The church doors explode as Corewood jumps back inside.

Stanton runs to the church, sees Corewood hobble up to the pulpit.

He reloads the shotgun with two more shells and looks inside the church.

He lowers his head, takes a deep breath and then steps inside the church.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Stanton looks up at the large wooden cross above the pulpit.

Suddenly, Corewood's head pops up and he fires.

Stanton rolls and hides behind some of the pews.

Silence.

Stanton waits but no more shots ring out.

He gets to his feet and goes up to the pulpit.

Corewood lays on his back behind the organ, blood flows around him as he raises his Schofield.

COREWOOD

If I wasn't drunk last night ...
you'd be dead.

Stanton kicks his Schofield away.

COREWOOD

I'm a wanted man ... worth a load
of coins.

Stanton takes out the family photo and hands it to him.

Corewood looks at the photo as his hand shakes.

COREWOOD

They looked ... better in person.

STANTON

All for a lousy mine.

COREWOOD

(smiles)

Found out ... mine was worthless so
I ... bet it in a poker game ...
boss man never believed me.

He laughs and coughs up blood.

COREWOOD

Was gonna kill him one day too.

Stanton takes the photo.

COREWOOD

My hat ... I want my hat with me if
... if I'm gonna bleed to death.

Stanton throws the "Wanted" poster on Corewood's stomach.

COREWOOD

I'll see you ... in heaven.

Stanton raises the shotgun and points it at Corewood's head.

STANTON

You ain't goin' there.

COREWOOD

(smiles)

I have a cross on my face ...
proves I get in.

Corewood laughs and spits blood.

STANTON

It took a serpent like you to
finally get me back in church.
Want you to do me a favor.

COREWOOD

What could I possibly ... do for a
... a coward like you?

STANTON

Greet me at hell's door when I get
there.

He fires and blows Corewood to kingdom come.

A pool of blood forms under Corewood.

The blood heads for a bible that fell on the floor.

Stanton picks it up before it can get stained with blood.

He places it on the pulpit and looks up at the wooden cross.

STANTON

Forgive me, sister, for not being
there for you.

EXT. CHURCH/FRONT YARD - DAY

Stanton walks out of the church and sees several servants
kick Wainwright's body.

He throws the shotgun on the ground as he passes Pablo the
servant.

Pablo smiles at him.

PABLO

Gracias.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Rosa feeds some chickens outside the house.

She raises her hand over her eyes to shield the sun and
squints.

ROSA
Mama, mira!

Rosa points as Mariana comes out of the house with her rifle in hand.

Stanton rides up to them, gets down off his horse.

He holds his wounded shoulder with his arm.

STANTON
You won't need that rifle.

Mariana smiles and leads him inside the house.

EXT. SAN MADERA CHURCH - DAY

Stanton walks with Mariana and Rosa to Sunday service as FOLKS enter.

He wears a sling on his injured shoulder.

INT. SAN MADERA CHURCH - DAY

He whispers in Mariana's ear.

STANTON
You mind if we sit in the back?

MARIANA
Of course not.

STANTON
The Lord and I have to work things out a bit at a time.

They sit in the very last row.

Stanton pulls out his sister's bible from his coat pocket, lowers his head in prayer.

EXT. SMALL HILL - DAY

Under a bright afternoon sun, Mariana's farm house sits in the distance.

Super: "Five Years Later"

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Stanton feeds some chickens inside a coop.

He wipes his brow and smiles at Rosa, now a young lady who looks just like her mother.

STANTON
Go tell Mama that we're hungry.

ROSA
You mean, you're hungry.

STANTON
Si.

Stanton looks up, sees a rider in the distance.

He washes his hands in a bucket of water then walks around the chicken wire.

MARIANA (O.S.)
I hear you're hungry, husband?

He looks up, sees Mariana at the window.

STANTON
If you don't feed me soon, I might kill one of these chickens and eat it raw.

MARIANA
Well, we don't want that now do we.

STANTON
That's right, so start cooking, *mujer.*

She laughs, pokes her head back inside.

The rider, MONAHAN, reaches Stanton.

He wears a tin star on his vest as he looks down from his horse.

MONAHAN
Good day.

Monahan is young, maybe twenty-five at most.

STANTON
Good day.

MONAHAN
The name's Monahan. I'm the new City Marshal of San Madera.

STANTON
You look awfully young to be a Marshal, no disrespect.

Monahan smiles.

MONAHAN

I was appointed by the governor.

STANTON

I stand corrected then.

MONAHAN

I hear you used to be a deputy, Mr. Stanton?

STANTON

That was a while ago.

MONAHAN

Got two men inside Anderson's ranch.

Monahan points.

MONAHAN

They robbed the bank this morning and now are aiming to shoot Anderson and his wife.

STANTON

Why'd they go there?

MONAHAN

I chased them and the ranch just happened to be in their way.

STANTON

Well, then what're you doing here, Marshal?

MONAHAN

I got Charley Joiner and his son outside with rifles on 'em but not sure how long they can hold 'em.

STANTON

Why me? Plenty of men in town.

MONAHAN

Joiner tells me you win the shooting contest every year at the church fair. Says you're the best shot in San Madera.

Stanton looks towards the house, thinks about it.

MONAHAN

Could use a good shot on my side.
The Andersons might be dead soon.

Stanton looks up at Monahan, takes a long breath.

STANTON

It's been a long time since I went
after anyone.

He looks at the house then at Monahan.

STANTON

I'll get my gun.

MONAHAN

Much obliged, Mr. Stanton.

Stanton rounds the corner, stops when he sees Mariana at the door.

MARIANA

The Andersons are good people.

She raises her arm and holds Stanton's gun belt.

MARIANA

Just come back to me in one piece
this time.

He takes the belt and kisses her.

Monahan comes up to them on his horse, touches the brim of his hat.

MONAHAN

Thank you, Mrs. Stanton.

MARIANA

You just take care of him, young
man.

MONAHAN

I will, ma'am.

Stanton puts on his gun belt and enters the barn.

Monahan smiles at Rosa as he waits.

Stanton comes out of the barn with his saddled horse.

He kisses Rosa on the head.

STANTON
Let's get to it, Marshal.

He jumps on his horse, turns to Mariana.

STANTON
This won't take long. I'll be home
for supper.

He kicks his horse with his spurs and they ride away.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Stanton and Monahan ride on a dirt trail, weeds all around.

MONAHAN
I was asking in town about you,
sir?

Stanton bites down on a wooden matchstick.

STANTON
That so.

MONAHAN
Everyone tells me that you're a
good family man. Go to church
every Sunday, help out whenever
anyone needs anything.

STANTON
That's kind of them to say.

MONAHAN
They tell me you're a man that can
be trusted.

Stanton smiles.

MONAHAN
I could use a good deputy.

STANTON
You asking, Marshal?

MONAHAN
Are you interested, Mr. Stanton?

STANTON
I'll have to think on that.

Monahan nods.

MONAHAN
Fair enough.

They ride for a bit then ...

MONAHAN
I'd like to take these two alive if possible.

STANTON
Anything you say, Marshal.

Something catches Stanton's eye nearby.

Without stopping, he whips out his gun and fires a shot into the ground.

BANG!

He twirls his Peacemaker and in one quick move, drops it back in the holster.

Monahan smiles.

MONAHAN
I take it you don't like snakes?

Stanton spits out the matchstick.

STANTON
Never have.

They ride away.

Between some rocks below, a snake split in two.

FADE OUT.