

Spirits of the Western Wild



WRITTEN BY

David Schaub and Roger Vizard

There's no buddy like a ghost buddy

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ISBN: 9781690906629

ABOUT THIS SCREENPLAY

SPIRITS OF THE WESTERN WILD evolved over time as a labor-of-love for myself and story partner Roger Vizard. Both of us have been working in animation for years, first connecting on the production of "Stuart Little 2" back in 2001. Since that time we've been banging ideas around for stories we'd love to tackle, and this is one of them... all buttoned up.

During the production of "Surf's Up," Roger pitched me the idea of a buddy film about a young cowboy and a crotchety old ghost who refused to believe he was dead. The "Spaghetti Western" genre is near and dear to both of us, but it's really just a backdrop for a story that takes place in simpler times -- in the age of discovery. There was the additional consideration that (as a film) an empty desert would be cheaper to produce than something inside a lush environment, or elaborate cityscape.

Roger had some character sketches and a handful of drawings that I loved. We started riffing on where this story could go, and decided to join forces to see if we could make something of it. From there, a great partnership evolved.

We've been chipping away at this story over time, with each of us taking on new film projects along the way -- but always coming back to this one when inspiration struck. I always felt something intriguing was roiling around under the surface, yearning to burst through at any moment. So we continued stoking the fire to see what might emerge.

Then it finally came -- a series of epiphanies that tied everything together and gave this story the purpose and substance it needed. A reason for being.

In a final intensive push, all the loose ends were tied up, and we're happy to finally put it out there.

More details here:

www.spiritsofthewesternwild.com

WHY KINDLE?

The script is released here as a companion to the audio dramatization published on Audible. Not only can you follow along with the audio version, but you also get a first-hand account of how the adaptation evolved from print. It's also a convenient way to share some of the artwork we've collaborated on along the way.

ABOUT THE FORMAT

While the print version of the script is correctly formatted, Kindle does not offer a solution to display screenplays in the conventional industry-standard format.

The printed version is 112 pages, but will naturally appear much longer on Kindle. Also, the script is not presented in the traditional Courier 12-point font due to display limitations on the Kindle app and devices.

Dialogue blocks are specially INDENTED for readability on Kindle, but not CENTERED as we're accustomed to (for similar reasons). You'll find other formatting oddities along the way, but it's all in the interest of rendering a look that's easy to read on Kindle and the Kindle app for smartphone, iPad, PC, Macs and other eReaders.

WHY AUDIBLE?

With the screenplay complete, we were sitting on a precious pound-of-paper (1.13 lbs to be exact). Having drudged through hundreds of screenplays myself over the years, I fully acknowledge what a chore it can be for anyone to commit to actually READING these things (without it becoming a huge favor to do so).

In the interest of moving forward, I decided to make it super-easy for studio execs by producing the script as an audiobook for their commute. No reading required -- just straight-up entertainment for the listener. Self-funding the film wasn't an option, but as a director I could certainly self-produce an audio drama!

It was also an opportunity to demonstrate my directing chops with actors, and execute the production as intended - bringing it to life in a way that the written page alone couldn't possibly achieve.

The music tracks are licensed for the project, but still required retiming, retuning and recomposing instrumentation tracks to fit (back to my musical roots). And where the perfect track could not be found (or derived), I would whip out the slide guitar to execute those bottleneck transitions myself. The task was more than I bargained for, but I'm happy to say the movie is all there... minus the visuals ;-)

As a result, the film should play out clearly and precisely between your ears -- as intended -- from our brains to yours. And hopefully the audio is a much tastier alternative to digesting a pound of paper!

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SPIRITS OF THE WESTERN WILD

Written by

David Schaub

Roger Vizard

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - DESERT - DAY

High above a majestic desert, we're traveling with an OLD CROW, buffeting on the desert winds -- making our way toward a plume of SMOKE on the horizon.

NARRATOR (V.O.): There's been many a tall-tale written of adventures on the Great Western Frontier. Stories of gunslingers, prospectors and dreamers who crossed that Great Divide in pursuit of their destiny.

What you DON'T read about are the quiet whispers of the spirits that govern the land -- GHOSTS on the western wind that spell out your story the way it was meant to be told.

We're close enough now to make out that it's a TRAIN under that billow of smoke. Behind the train is a small DUST CLOUD in hot pursuit.

NARRATOR (CONT'D): Sometimes those voices are just a whisper in the wind. Other times, the message is scrawled out in writing just as plain as day, and there's nothing you can do to outrun it.

And when it comes on like that, the best you can do is just brace yourself... and go along for the ride.

A MAIL-COURIER on horseback emerges from the dust-cloud -- and the CROW sweeps down to join him -- KRAAA!! -- flapping ferociously to keep up.

Together, they close in on the passenger car, where a young COWBOY is slumped against the window -- sound asleep inside.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

This is LUTHER McCLERON, early twenties -- but a bit small for his age. He's the squeaky-clean picture of vulnerable innocence in freshly pressed western-wear straight from the costume-section of a Sears & Roebucks catalog.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK at the WINDOW. Luther blinks awake -- disoriented -- then startled...

What the---?! There's a GUY and a CROW outside his window!

Luther shoots nervous glances around the train car to see if anyone else is getting this, but he's the only one awake among the few scattered passengers.

The courier gestures for Luther to lower his window, which he does -- reluctantly. WHOOSH! A RUSH OF WIND and the raw CLACKING of the train on rails.

COURIER (over noise): ARE YOU LUTHER McCLERON...?!

Luther gives an apprehensive nod...

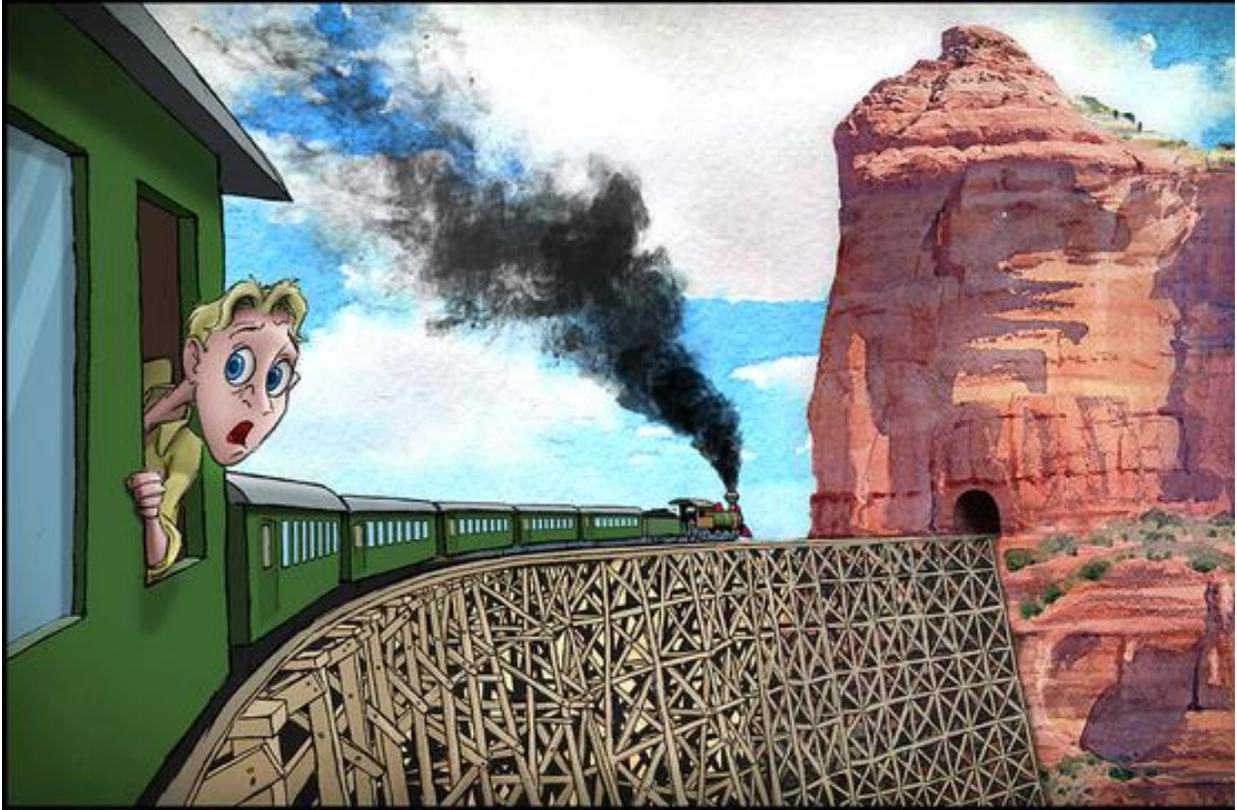
COURIER: GOT A DELIVERY FOR YA HERE!

The courier moves in closer, and passes off a WEATHERED ENVELOPE to Luther. With the hand-off done, the crow peels away -- KRAAA!!

Luther pulls the package into the cabin, and sees that his name -- LUTHER McCLERON -- is scrawled across the front.

When he looks back up, the courier is gone.

Luther edges his head out the window to see where he went. REVEAL: the train on a TRESTLE BRIDGE over a HUGE RAVINE. *There's no way a rider could possibly have been out there.*



BLAST of the TRAIN HORN -- and we plunge into the DARKNESS of a TUNNEL. The RATTLING and CLACKING sound of the train on rails transitions to the KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCKING sound that we just heard a few moments ago. Over BLACK:

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.): Excuse me... (KNOCK-KNOCK)... young man!

Luther blinks awake -- then bolts upright. The train is stopped safely at a station with all the NORMAL COMMOTION that you'd expect here. *Wow. That was weird. A dream...? I guess...?*

-- KNOCK-KNOCK --

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.): Hello...?

It's an ELDERLY WOMAN outside his window -- pointing at the seat across the aisle from his.

ELDERLY WOMAN: I think I left my hat on that seat over there. Can you see it...?

The train LURCHES, and Luther gathers his wits.

He bolts across the aisle -- retrieves the HAT. He rushes back to the window, but the train is already on the move.

He fumbles from one row of empty seats to the next, trying to pass the hat out one of the windows, but the train keeps picking up speed.

He bolts out the BACK of the passenger carriage, jumps across to the FREIGHT CAR -- through the inside and onto:

EXT. REAR PLATFORM - DAY

With the town moving away, Luther WHIRLS the hat over his head like he's *SPINNING UP A WHIP* -- then launches it off in the lady's direction -- a good fifty yards -- landing gracefully into her outstretched arms. She waves, and Luther returns the gesture -- pleased with himself.

(O.S.): Ahem -- Excuse me son... You're gonna have to move back inside now.

It's the CONDUCTOR -- standing at the edge of the rear platform -- mid-fifties, official-looking -- rolling up the green guard flag that he used to clear the train from the station.

LUTHER: Oh... I was just... that lady--

CONDUCTOR: Yeah... I saw that. Nice arm you got there, but I can't leave you back here by yourself.

The conductor steps forward and pushes the door open. Luther obediently steps back into the doorway -- then PAUSES for a last look at the little town fading away:

LUTHER: Uhh... what stop was that?

CONDUCTOR: That...? That was the town of Copper Creek Canyon--

LUTHER (deflates): Oh no...

CONDUCTOR (chuckles): Uh oh...

LUTHER: I must have dozed off up there.

CONDUCTOR: Happens all the time. Gotta stay on your toes or you'll be left in the dust out here.

LUTHER: So what am I supposed to do-- ?

CONDUCTOR (dismissive): Ah... we'll get you turned around tomorrow--

LUTHER: Tomorrow--?! I can't... I mean -- can't you just let me off here...?!

CONDUCTOR: Out here...? No-no-no. There's no stopping THIS thing once it gets rolling again...

The conductor gestures Luther into:

INT. FREIGHT CAR - DAY

LUGGAGE and SUPPLIES are stacked high to the ceiling. HANDGUNS and RIFLES line the walls.

CONDUCTOR: 'Got all these supplies need delivering before nightfall. BANDITS out there, you know...

LUTHER: *BANDITS--?!*

The conductor winks. *He's joking, right...?*

CONDUCTOR: (*chuckles*)

Luther remains uneasy as they pass through the freight car. He runs a finger along the cold barrel of a rifle--

CONDUCTOR: Ah-ah!! You ever handled one of them?

Luther recoils -- shakes his head, slack-jawed.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D): Didn't think so...

The conductor wipes off the smudge with his sleeve -- then buffs the barrel to a shine. They exit out to:

EXT. FREIGHT CAR - DAY

The conductor straddles the gap between the carriages. He holds a hand out for Luther, but Luther just BOUNDS across gracefully on his own -- then beams a cheerful smile back at the conductor.

CONDUCTOR (amused): Ha ha -- a little sure of yourself there, aren't ya...?! Someone oughta keep an eye on you before you go tripping into a ditch out here!

INT. PASSENGER CABIN - DAY

The conductor escorts Luther up the aisle --

CONDUCTOR: So what are you doing way out here anyway...? You got family back there in Copper Creek?

LUTHER: Sort of... my Grandad was there... once --

CONDUCTOR: Your Grandad, huh?

LUTHER: Prospector... back in the day.

CONDUCTOR: Oh... one of them, huh...? Did he have any luck with that?

LUTHER: Don't really know. We lost track of him years ago, so I'm coming out for the summer to see what I can find for myself.

CONDUCTOR: Ahh -- a little family project, huh...?

LUTHER: Sure would be good to know what happened to him... My folks said it'd be a good adventure for me -- coming out here and following his footsteps like this...

The conductor gives Luther a cynical glance:

CONDUCTOR (under his breath): Oh... it'll be an adventure, alright -- (then to Luther): So -- is this your seat here...?

He pulls out his ticket puncher:

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D): Need your ticket for the ride back.

Luther slides his suitcase out from under the bench. He rummages through and produces a TICKET and an old PHOTOGRAPH -- and hands them over:

LUTHER: See --? That's my Grandad right there.



The conductor lifts reading glasses to his nose:

CONDUCTOR: Hmm... Dapper ol' guy, isn't he...? Looks mighty pleased with himself.

Luther beams a crooked smile. The conductor holds the photo up to the side of Luther's face, looking for the resemblance. Sure enough -- same crooked smile.

CONDUCTOR: So... Copper Creek, huh?

LUTHER: Yup. Says so right there on the back.

He flips over the photograph. REVEAL official-looking stamp: "CITY OF COPPER CREEK CANYON."

CONDUCTOR: So that's it...? Just learning about your Grandad, huh...? Or you coming out for some of that FOOL'S GOLD of your own?

LUTHER: What's that...?

CONDUCTOR: You know that's why they call it *COPPER* Creek now, right?

A blank stare from Luther --

CONDUCTOR: *Copper*...? -- (nothing) -- Hmm... you sure don't have much to go on, do you...?

LUTHER: Well, I'm sure I'll figure it out once I get back there... (lamenting)... if I EVER get there.

CONDUCTOR: Tomorrow, son... it's no big deal. Sometimes things just go like this for a reason -- no telling why. That's why I just roll with the punches now!

He CLICKS his ticket puncher -- PUNCHES the ticket -- chuckles at his little joke. Luther is oblivious, contemplating the endless horizon outside his window --

LUTHER: Wow... I wasn't supposed to be out THIS far. THIS sure wasn't part of the plan--

CONDUCTOR: The PLAN...? You think your Grandad had a plan...?

LUTHER: Well... I suppose--

CONDUCTOR: Or he was just like the rest of us -- think you're taking a BIG ADVENTURE, but its the BIG ADVENTURE 'ends up taking you.

He hands back the ticket and photograph:

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D): Here ya go. You know... you can get all smart and go left instead of right -- or take a different fork along the way -- but chances are you'll just wind up at the same old train stop in the end anyhow.

The conductor sees that his wisdom isn't connecting--

CONDUCTOR (resigned): Ahh -- but what do I know...? I just work for the railcars now...

BLAST of a TRAIN HORN and SMASH into DARKNESS of another TUNNEL. KLACK-KLACK-KLACK of the rails over BLACK -- then out into daylight again on the other side:

INT. PASSENGER CABIN - DAY

Luther sits there alone, staring out at the vast and lonely desert -- uneasy as he travels farther from his destination.

Then, from out of nowhere -- a cocking gun: CHU-CHAK--!!

(O.S.): HEY -- STICK 'EM UP!

POP... KA-PLUNK! -- A CORK SMACKS into the back of Luther's head -- and he JOLTS --

MAYPO KID: You a bandit or sumpin'...?

LUTHER: Huh...?

REVEAL: A little pip-squeak-of-a-kid that looks a lot like the MAYPO CEREAL KID from the 1950's TV commercials -- three-feet tall in an over-sized cowboy hat that he keeps pushing up over his eyes so he can see.

His toy gun has a cork dangling from it --

MAYPO KID: You're kinda funny looking, Mister.

LUTHER: I'M funny looking...?!!

MAYPO KID: Yeah... so if you're not a bandit, then where's your MOM... ?

LUTHER: My mom's not-- what's my mom got to do with it...? Wait a minute -- where's YOUR mom?

The train rounds a corner, and outside the window we see a team of cowhands rounding up their cattle.

MAYPO KID (shouting out): Hey LOOK! THERE THEY ARE...!

The boy lunges to the window.

MAYPO KID: BANDITS!! GET DOWN!!

The kid is going nuts, shooting imaginary bandits outside the window. From this vantage point, we see a WEATHERED ENVELOPE sticking out the back of the kid's pants.

LUTHER: Hey-hey... where'd you get that?

Luther grabs the package --

MAYPO KID: Hey, that's mine! Give it back!

LUTHER: No it's not... see--?! It's got my name on it!

MAYPO KID: Yeah, but I found it!

Sure enough -- it's the package from the opening sequence!

MAYPO KID: GIVE IT BACK!

The boy jumps and flails to get it back, but Luther holds it above his reach. From overhead, he unwraps the twine -- and pulls out a LEATHER-BOUND BOOK, decorated in Native American artwork.

The kid calms down, and BRIGHTENS at the sight:

MAYPO KID: Oooh... a STORY!!

Spellbound himself, Luther slides into his seat, and the boy climbs up and snuggles next to him:

MAYPO KID: What's it say? Can you read it...?

Luther opens to the first line of text:

MAYPO KID: Go on... read it -- READ IT!

LUTHER: Okay... it says here: *"There's been many a tall-tale of adventures on the Great Western Frontier. Stories of gunslingers, prospectors and dreamers who crossed that Great Divide in pursuit of their destiny-- "*

MAYPO KID: ****sighs****

LUTHER (continues): *"What you DON'T read about are the quiet whispers of the spirits who govern the land... GHOSTS on the western wind that--"*

The boy LUNGES at the book -- SHUFFLES the pages and Luther fends off his grubby little hands:

LUTHER: heyheyHEY!!

MAYPO KID: That's BORING! I want to see the pictures!

He stops on the illustration of a RUGGED WESTERN HERO riding atop a GIGANTIC BLUE BULL.

MAYPO KID: Ooh! That's MONTY! -- Read this part!

LUTHER: Monty...?

MAYPO KID: Yeah! What's it say?

Befuddled -- like he's missing something -- Luther starts reading again:

LUTHER: Well... it says here: *"The most mysterious western hero of all was MONTAGUE MONTGOMERY who rode bareback on a great-- "*

MAYPO KID: Look -- that's Monty -- see?

LUTHER: Yeah -- I see that... (continues) *"--who rode bareback on a great SPIRIT BULL called BLUE. You always knew that Montague was coming 'cause he traveled with a LIGHTNING STORM on his tail. In the chaos of the storm, he'd WRANGLE things to make 'em right, then disappear again..."*

LUTHER & MAYPO KID (in unison): *...like a ghost in the night."*

LUTHER: Wait... you heard this before?

MAYPO KID: Yeah, from my Pa. He points a smudgy finger at the picture --

MAYPO KID (CONT'D): Hey -- look at that! His cow is really colored BLUE... just like his NAME!

LUTHER: It's not a cow -- it's a bull.

MAYPO KID: Looks like a cow.

Luther leans in and reads the caption:

LUTHER: *"Hoodlums can never outrun him -- 'cause they don't see him comin'..."*

MAYPO KID: Because Monty and his cow are ghosts, that's why.

LUTHER: Well... that's sort of what it says -- I mean, about the ghost part... but it's not a cow.

The forward cabin door SLIDES open --

MAYPO MOM: There you are! You had us worried sick! -- (to Luther) -- I'm sorry, he hasn't been a bother, has he?

LUTHER: No... I mean... well--

MAYPO MOM (to her son): I told you not to go wandering off like that without telling us...

She scoops up her son and he squirms to get loose --

MAYPO KID: Hey -- let me go! We just got to the good part about MONTY!

MAYPO MOM: Oh God, not Monty again. Honestly -- (rolling her eyes at Luther) -- this child and his imagination!

She tucks the boy under her arm like a small dog, and closes the forward door behind her.

Alone and quiet now, Luther gathers himself -- and shakes it off.

He thumbs through the pages of his book and abruptly STOPS ON A PICTURE -- STUNNED. Look at that! *It's the spitting-image of his Grandfather!*

He pops open his suitcase and pulls out the photograph of his Grandfather and holds it up next to the image in the book.

LUTHER: That... that's HIM!

He tosses the photo back into his bag, and flips through the pages to see what else he can find...

But as he flips, the drawings magically come alive as an animated FLIPBOOK of MOVING ILLUSTRATIONS. It's a band of HORSEMEN converging on a train.

He flips it again and again -- enjoying the novelty -- but oblivious to the REAL-LIFE BANDITS on horseback outside his window -- advancing toward the front of the train in exact synchrony with the action on the flipping pages.



A COMMOTION in the forward car STARTLES Luther from his trance. The BANDITS are on board now -- BARKING out their commands -- TERRORIZING the passengers -- making their way toward the rear.



Luther ducks to the floor, and frantically looks for an escape route from under his seat. He spots the rear door.

With his precious book in hand, he SCRAMBLES under the seats -- and out the back exit. He jumps across to the freight car -- and DUCKS INSIDE.

INT. FREIGHT CAR - DAY

His eyes scan the HANDGUNS and RIFLES that we saw earlier -- *Really? Does he have the nerve?!?* He hesitates for a moment, then--

CRASH -- BANG!! TOO LATE. The bandits BURST OUT the rear of the passenger carriage. Luther can see them clearly through the front portal of the freight car -- with SUITCASES and LOOT pilfered from the passengers up front.

Two of the men get to work on the coupling mechanism between the carriages. They PULL THE PIN and the freight car DETACHES from the rest of the train.



ON LUTHER: HORRIFIED -- realizing that he's being LEFT BEHIND -- DOOMED!

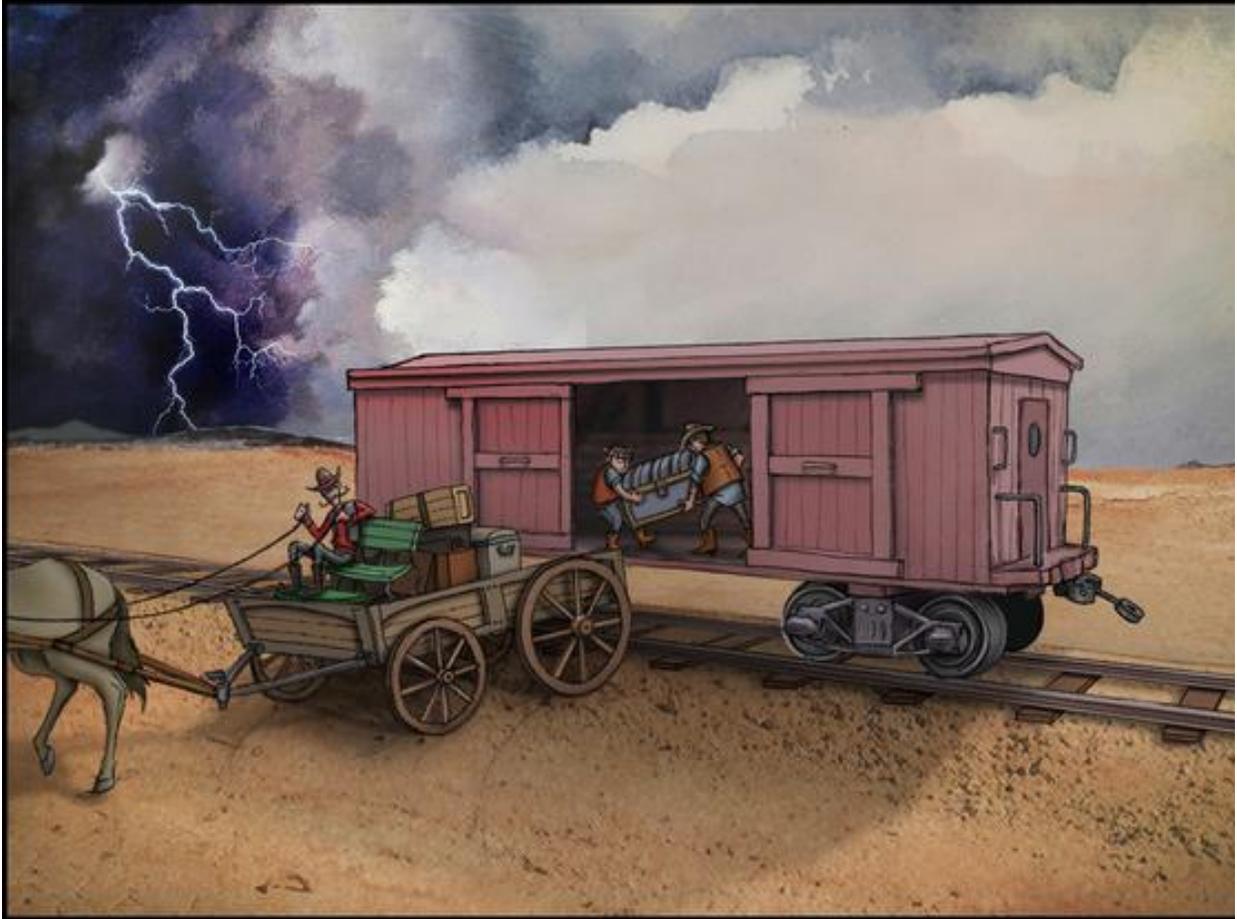
The bandits JUMP to their horses that were keeping pace at the rear -- and they converge on the freight car -- WHOOPING and HOLLERING as it rolls to a stop.



Luther SCRAMBLES for a place to hide -- and DIVES into a TRUNK -- just as the side doors of the freight car BURST OPEN.

The bandits round up everything on board -- including the trunk with Luther inside onto a FLATBED WAGON that was waiting outside. It seems like these guys have done this before.

Then a RUMBLE shakes the heavens.



OMINOUS BLACK CLOUDS form overhead. The men exchange worried looks, and they start working faster -- checking over their shoulders -- as if anticipating what's coming next.

They cinch up the last knot, and then -- THEY'RE OFF -- blazing across the desert with a LIGHTNING STORM on their tail.

SAND SWIRLS around them, and the bandits coax their horses faster. A BOLT of LIGHTNING strikes their path -- a rope SNAPS -- and it sends Luther's trunk CRASHING into the desert.



And his captors charge on -- doing their best to outrun the storm.

Luther emerges from the wreckage. He's free now -- but hopelessly lost in a SWIRLING sand storm.

He rummages through the wreckage for anything that might be useful against the elements: over-sized boots -- a hat -- a poncho. He looks like a pint-sized Clint Eastwood.

Through the HOWLING WIND a VOICE calls his name:

-- LUUUUTHERRRR--!! -- (*ghostly call*)

And the faint silhouette of a TALL FIGURE beckons him to follow.



Clutching tightly onto his book, Luther trudges toward the shadow, but makes little progress in the face of the storm.

A DUST-DEVIL swirls through and WHIPS the book from his grasp. The PAGES are WHISKED AWAY -- fluttering upward into the eye of the storm.

And with that --

An abstract display of SHADOW-THEATER is projected back onto the swirling sand. The silhouettes look just like the drawings we saw of MONTY and his BULL -- charging along with the FLICKERING ANIMATION STYLE that we saw back on the train.



Shadowy silhouettes of BUFFALO circle around Luther on the sand-storm tapestry -- spiraling faster-and-faster.

Luther himself is WHISKED OFF THE GROUND -- UPWARD and out of control. The shadows morph into MEN ON HORSE-BACK -- just like the bandits in the flipbook.

Then GUN-SHOTS -- BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG!!

And the storm suddenly SWIRLS itself back into the sky -- dropping Luther with a THUD -- somewhere out in the vast unknown.

It's DEAFENINGLY QUIET now -- a stark contrast to the chaos from just a moment ago. A SOFT ORANGE GLOW illuminates the remaining dust in the air.

Luther's head pops up out of the sand -- *What in the world just happened?*



A CHURCH BELL breaks the silence and Luther wheels around.

Through the clearing haze we can make out the shape of civilization: A STEEPLE, SPANISH ARCHWAYS...

Oh my God -- Salvation! *But honestly... where did THAT come from?*

With a burst of relief, Luther BOUNDS to his feet and HOPS OFF toward town -- emptying sand from each boot as he goes.

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - DUSK

Luther hobbles up to the first structure on the outskirts of town. A rickety WOODEN SIGN over the doorway says "TRAIN DEPOT" -- but the place is completely abandoned.

He pushes through the door, and it CREAKS into:

INT. TRAIN DEPOT - DUSK

Dark, dusty air illuminated by a few shafts of light through cracks in the ceiling.

We see a mess of COB WEBS, BROKEN RAFTERS, and a TRAIN PLATFORM only partially constructed.

Luther hops down into the track bed. It's just DIRT -- NO TRACKS. Actually... not a hint that tracks were ever even there. *What the heck is this place?*

A RATTLING SOUND -- SSSSSssssss -- it's a RATTLESNAKE at his feet!

He BOUNDS across to the other platform, rolls over, and comes face-to-face with ANOTHER SNAKE -- then ANOTHER! The place is FULL OF THEM -- they're EVERYWHERE!

In a scrambling panic, he CRASHES out the back side of the train depot -- TUMBLING into the street of a DESOLATE WESTERN TOWN -- rolling to a stop against a dusty old pair of WORK BOOTS.

(O.S.): I wouldn't go in there if I was you. Place is CRAWLING with rattlers.

Standing over Luther is a rickety, yellow-bearded gold-miner and village coot that we'll come to know as JASPER.



LUTHER: Huh...?

JASPER (louder): I said I would NEVER go inside of there -- on account of all them LEGLESS CREEPY CRAWLERS!!

LUTHER: Yeah... well I did... and I HATE them things. Where the heck is this place, anyways?

Jasper turns a full three-sixty to get his bearings -- then back to Luther with confusion... like he forgot the question:

JASPER: Come again...?

LUTHER: I said WHERE AM I...? And where's the TRAIN? There's no tracks running through there!

Jasper scratches his head for a good think:

JASPER (confused): Uhh... won't be no train coming with no tracks to ride on -- that's for sure.

LUTHER: Yeah, but I mean... (**sighs**) Are you alone...? Or is there someone else around here I can talk to...?

Jasper turns and ponders the deserted street behind them... then turns back, and gestures for Luther to follow. And together they head off down the main street.



EXT. WESTERN TOWN - DUSK

It's eerily quiet here, aside from the monotonous sound of a SQUEAKING WINDMILL -- long detached from the rusted pump that feeds the WOODEN WATER TOWER.

Dilapidated wooden structures are mixed with COLONIAL SPANISH ARCHITECTURE. Ominous RELIGIOUS RELICS are awash in the orange glow of twilight -- home of the classic SPAGHETTI WESTERN.

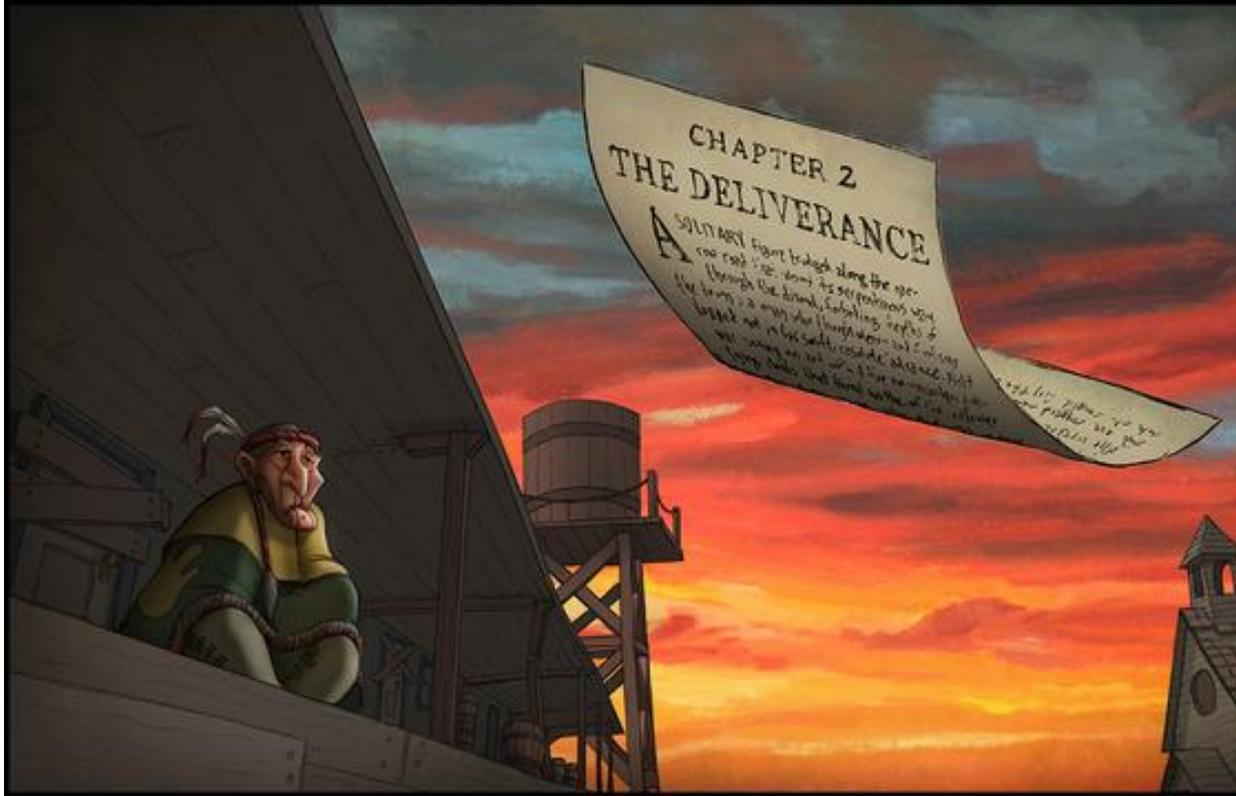
Jasper leads the way, mumbling nonsensical gibberish to himself. Luther tags along cautiously -- unaware of a stoic OLD INDIAN watching from the shadows of the abandoned POST OFFICE.

This is KICKAPOO -- eyes barely discernible inside the ancient crevices of his face.

From under his poncho, Kickapoo radiates the calm tranquility of an ancient spirit. All-knowing -- silent and still - moving only as much as required to breathe.

A small FLOURISH twists overhead -- a remnant of the storm -- and a PAGE from Luther's lost book swirls in and settles at Kickapoo's feet.

PUSH IN on the header: "CHAPTER 2: THE DELIVERANCE"



Kickapoo gives an appreciative nod skyward.

The plan is unfolding...

EXT. SALOON - NIGHTFALL

Luther and Jasper step into the warm light outside the SALOON window. There seem to be moving shadows inside.

Luther rushes up and BURSTS through the doors--

Everyone inside suddenly... *does NOTHING*. It's not the classic reception you'd expect here.

Luther is barely acknowledged with a raised eyebrow here and there.

A few silent card games underway -- and somber patrons mill around aimlessly... contemplating the backwash in their near-empty glasses. *What kind of dark cloud is hanging over THIS place...?*

Luther turns to Jasper and gestures for him to come in -- but Jasper backs away --

JASPER (nervously): Big trouble if I go in...

Luther finally gives up on this nut-bag, and winds his way up to the bar by himself -- squeezing in between a group of old geezers lost in their thoughts.

A BARMAID is busy rinsing glasses behind the bar. Her name is ANGELICA. She's about Luther's age -- pretty, but doesn't seem to be caught up in all that. No nonsense, all business -- but a welcome sight to Luther after all he's just been through.

He tries to get her attention with a meek little wave -- then finally speaks up:

LUTHER: Uh... S'cuse me -- Miss? Sarsaparilla... please...?



Angelica does a double take -- *what an odd looking boy*. He beams a goofy school-boy grin and waves a coin in the air.

She can't help but crack a smile at his endearing awkwardness... and her smile seems to put Luther at ease.

With renewed confidence, he turns to the old guy on his right:

LUTHER: S'cuse me, sir -- can you tell me how to get back to the train-tracks from here?

GEEZER #1: We don't got any train-tracks here.

LUTHER: Yeah, I know... but I mean -- out there in the desert where the train actually passes through --

GEEZER #1 (annoyed): There's no train passing through -- on account of no tracks. If we would have built tracks we might have got a train now and again...

The GUY on the other side chimes in --

GEEZER #2: That's what happens when you put all the money into that busted ol' water tower -- now we got neither... no tower... no tracks...

LUTHER: Yeah-yeah, but I mean--

GEEZER #1: Why'd we need a tower anyhow...? We got a perfectly good water hole down the way -

LUTHER: Can I uh--

GEEZER #2: That's what I'm saying! We should have built the tracks instead...

And another OLD GUY chimes in:

GEEZER #3: Ohh... now we're never gonna get that tower fixed -- with you two yammering on about TRAIN TRACKS again.

LUTHER: Uhh... can I--

CLUNK! -- Luther's drink is delivered.

He tries to escape this nonsense by getting Angelica's attention --

LUTHER: 'Scuse me... Miss...?

but she's already on the move -- back to business.

Luther holds for a beat -- then DUCKS TO THE FLOOR and disappears -- another smooth getaway.

Then he pops up again at the only open table in a darkened corner of the saloon. Scanning the room, he slides quietly into the seat -- bewildered -- trying to make sense of all this.

THWAP-THWAP-THWAP. Across the table, a dusty old MOTH is batting around inside the window.

It flutters across the window pane, leading Luther's eye to a shrine-like collection of memorabilia on the facing wall: DRIED FLOWERS and FRAMED IMAGES of... *MONTY* --?!

The pages look like they've been lifted straight from the lost book. Luther's jaw drops, and he leans in for a closer look.

ANGELICA (O.S.): Excuse me, this table is reserved.

Luther jolts --

LUTHER: Sorry, is... is that--?

ANGELICA: Yes. It's Monty. It's HIS table.

LUTHER: Wait... the REAL Monty? The one that--

ANGELICA: Yep. The one and only.

LUTHER: You mean... you EXPECTING HIM, or something...?

She startles briefly -- not a question she gets every day. She considers the shot glass on her tray -- draws a breath to gather herself, then affirmatively PLUNKS the shot glass down in the empty spot across from Luther --

ANGELICA (hopeful confidence): Yep. We're expecting him.

A patron hits the floor -- THUD. Drunk. Angelica runs off to deal with it, and Luther tries to follow, when --

(O.S.): SIT DOWN!



In the shadows across the table is the looming figure of the legendary MONTY. He's a gruff, hulk-of-a-man with a look of vengeance in his eye. Luther startles.

LUTHER: 'Scuse me... sir?

MONTY: I said SIT!

Luther slides down -- unnerved...

JASPER pops his head into frame outside the window, with a big toothless grin and BUG-EYES darting between Luther and Monty.

Monty raises the shot glass to his lips without breaking his cold, locked-stare on Luther.

Luther does the same with his glass -- hypnotically -- but his hand trembles, and his drink starts to splash and spill...

ANGELICA (O.S.): I thought I told you not to sit here --

Luther jolts from his trance -- spilling more of his drink. Angelica wipes the table. Noticing his vulnerability, she takes a softer tone:

ANGELICA: You got a name... stranger?

LUTHER: Oh, I -- I'm just... Luther.

ANGELICA (chuckles): JUST Luther, huh...?

LUTHER: Yeah... I'm not from around here--

ANGELICA: No kidding!

LUTHER: So maybe you could help me--

ANGELICA: Help you what? Find a different table...? Good idea.... Luther, was it--?

LUTHER: Yeah... but-- (struggles to keep up) -- this gentleman here asked me to sit with him, and--

ANGELICA: What gentleman...?

Luther motions discretely with his eyes toward the seat across from his. Angelica looks... but the only thing there is Jasper's face pressed up against the glass.

ANGELICA: Oh... him.

She swishes the bar towel at Jasper --

ANGELICA (calling out): Move along Jasper, there's nothing to see here tonight!

The weight of this moment hits Luther hard: *SHE DOESN'T SEE MONTY! This is a good time to get the heck out of here.* He gathers himself, and with an apologetic shrug to Monty:

LUTHER: Sorry... Sir.

Angelica whips around and SNAPS her BAR TOWEL at Luther, causing him to spill the last of his drink... not exactly what she intended, but --

ANGELICA (firmly): Ma'am or Miss will do, smarty pants.

LUTHER: I didn't mean you... I was just--

She tosses the bar towel at him, motioning to the spill.

ANGELICA: Every drop... got it? And don't leave any sticky spots.

She turns in a sort of flirtatious huff, leaving Luther with a wet bar-rag.

ANGELICA: I'll be back to see how you did...

The MOTH flutters past Luther's face, leading his eye back to... *THERE HE IS AGAIN* -- it's MONTY!



The moth flaps around over Monty's head, then gently settles to a landing on his back.

LUTHER: Are... are you really --

Monty begins a proud, affirmative nod...

LUTHER: Are you really -- a *GHOST...?!?*

Monty BRISTLES and lunges a FAT FINGER toward Luther's face.

MONTY: What are you incinerating there, boy...?

Outside the window, Jasper motions frantically for Luther to RUN.

Luther panics... BOLTS UP and makes a break for it. He winds his way through the maze of tables, then lunges at the front door -- CLUNK -- SLAMS to a stop.

Luther stumbles back -- as a tall official-looking character pushes through the doors -- holding his nose and checking to see if it's bleeding.

This is BIG WILLIE, mid-forties -- a well put-together Southern Confederate-type -- slick and imposing. He's reminiscent of Hedley Lamarr (Harvey Korman) with a chilling Lee Van Cleef edge about him.



WILLIE: Best you don't open doors around here without knowing what's behind 'em--

LUTHER: Sorry sir... I was just --

WILLIE: Making a break for it, were you? (calling out): ANGELICA--!! You know this guy? Did he pay up...?!

ANGELICA: Yes, he paid up... and his name is Luther -- (nervously trying to get Luther out of there) -- and he was just leaving -- WEREN'T you, Luther...?

Willie pushes a SHERIFF'S BADGE up to Luther's nose:

WILLIE: You know what THIS means, don't you?

LUTHER: Uhhhhhhh...

WILLIE: Means there's nothing that goes on around here that I don't know about -- (scans Luther up and down) -- and funny... I don't know a thing about you. You looking for something in PARTICULAR...?

LUTHER: Um... I was just trying to--

ANGELICA: Leave him alone, Willie.

WILLIE: Hey-hey! My town, my rules...

And with a sly wink at Luther:

WILLIE (discreetly): ...my girl too.

ANGELICA: I'm not your GIRL, Willie!

WILLIE: Whoa-whoa-WHOA there! Just on a brief inventory, I'd say you've got some kind of soft spot for this one, Anj'. Is there something going on here I should know about...?

There's COMMOTION in the street -- WHOOPING and HOLLERING gets louder as it approaches. It distracts Willie, and he pulls the curtain aside for a look.

WILLIE: Ah... look at that. The boys are back in town.

Through the corner window Jasper is now motioning frantically for Luther to STAY!! -- *DON'T COME OUTSIDE!*

Luther is confused... and CORNERED.

WILLIE: Alright you impudent little wise-apple... Lester--

ANGELICA: His name is LUTHER.

WILLIE: Ah... LOSER, right! That's a good one. Okay, LOSER, you're not going anywhere! In fact... I'm just gonna have you sit right over there where I can see you.

He points at Monty's table.

LUTHER: But... Miss Angelica said I can't sit over there --

WILLIE: I don't give the hind-end of a RAT what Miss Angelica said. I'M THE ONE that makes the rules around here. Now GET OVER THERE like I said so I can keep an eye on you.

Luther slinks back to the corner...

ANGELICA: You got no respect Willie.

WILLIE: For WHAT? That depressive little SHRINE you got constructed over there? When you gonna come to your senses and quit fussing over that pathetic old "HAS-BEEN?"

ANGELICA: That old "HAS-BEEN" is the only law this town has ever known.

WILLIE: I'm not deliberating with you on this again. SOMEONE'S got to take charge around here -- especially after that provincial fool turned his back on all of you--

ANGELICA: That's not how it went. He'll be back... you'll see.

WILLIE: Sure he will, darling. Sure he will.

Willie pulls out a chair from the main table at the head of the saloon -- and the card-players scatter like flies.

WILLIE (calling out): Bring on the feed and libations Angie -- we got a hungry mob coming in!

Willie notices Jasper signaling Luther at the window. He whips around to Luther -- then back to Jasper. *Something's up.* He points a threatening finger -- trying to sort out what's going on.

Monty GROWLS -- and Luther reels:

LUTHER: You -- again...

Monty is locked in a spiteful, hypnotic glare on Willie.

MONTY: That ol' weasel don't got a single regleaming quality inside of him...

LUTHER: Huh?

MONTY: 'Just breezes into town out of nowhere and acts like he OWNS the place all of a sudden. And I had it up to six feet over my head with him now.

LUTHER: He can't see you, can he?

Monty GROWLS again...

LUTHER (CONT'D): Why can't he see you?

The WILLIE GANG BURSTS through the door... a troupe of five bandits from the train: CHORIZO, QUIOTE, MEZCAL, ROACH and STENCH.

Luther FREAKS -- and ducks down for cover.

MONTY: Why you slouching like that? Sit up straight when I'm talking at you.

LUTHER: Th... those guys are train robbers!

Monty looks them over for a beat -- unmoved...

MONTY: Yeah... sounds about right.

The gang seat themselves around Willie's table.

LUTHER: Aren't you gonna do something?!

MONTY: Who... me? What do you want ME to do about it...?

LUTHER: But you're Monty, right? The guy with a LIGHTNING STORM on your tail...? The one that--

MONTY: What are you yammering about?

LUTHER: The GHOST STORY -- right there on the wall behind you!

MONTY: *GHOST STORY...?! You trying to stir up some kind of alterfication with me here...?*

LUTHER: Well if you're not a ghost, then how come no one sees you...?

Monty gestures his hand like a GUN, cocks back his thumb, and SHOVES two FAT FINGERS up Luther's NOSTRILS like a DOUBLE-BARRELED PISTOL:

MONTY: YOU see me, don't ya?



The MOTH flutters off of Monty's back, thrashing its wings against the glass -- THWAP- THWAP-THWAP. It gets Willie's attention.

WILLIE: What's this kid doing now...?

From Willie's perspective, Luther is sitting ALONE -- EYES BUGGING OUT -- FACE TWISTED up like he's making fun of Willie.

The gang burst into laughter -- as Angelica delivers a big PLATTER of SPAGHETTI to Willie's table.

Luther catches Jasper at the window -- flailing his arms -- trying to get Luther to run.

Mezcal notices:

MEZCAL: Hey Patron! Looks like we got dinner and a show out there...!

Everyone turns to crazy Jasper dancing at the window. Everyone APPLAUDS -- jeering him on. Jasper hams it up with a little soft-shoe -- trying to distract Monty.

Luther seizes the moment and BOLTS from his chair, but he slips and CRASHES into Willie's table -- launching SPAGHETTI into the air, and -- SPLAT -- into their laps and all over the floor.

Stunned SILENCE.

In this awkward moment, Luther lifts himself to his knees in the face of an angry mob. Pathetically, he gathers up plates, glasses, silverware, a gun... A GUN!!!

Willie jolts, and reaches for his own... but realizes that Luther has it.

The gun slips through Luther's soaked fingers -- and hits the floor -- BANG!!

The BULLET RICOCHETS through the saloon -- shattering every glass in its path.

The GANG lunges at Luther but he evades them -- incredibly nimble on his feet. Mayhem ensues. FOOD is flying, GUNS FIRING, plates and glasses CRASHING...

Then Luther is finally tackled, and the entire gang piles on. Game over.

The place is a wreck. Walls are splattered in RED.

It looks like a blood-bath from a Brian De Palma film... but in this case: *SPAGHETTI MARINARA*.



Willie reaches into the pile and pulls Luther out by the scruff of the neck. He raises him up -- nose to bloody-nose... and we CLOSE ON Willie's penetrating glare of contempt.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Luther sits alone -- thoughts racing -- completely beside himself. *How did he get into this mess...?*



There's CHATTERING and COMMOTION in the adjoining office as Willie and his gang decide Luther's fate.

Then a VOICE calls from outside his tiny barred window:

MONTY (O.C.): Hey you... Kid! What's your name?

Luther pulls himself to the window and peaks out. It's MONTY standing out there in the moonlight. Luther panics and ducks out of view.

MONTY: Hey Lester! Get back here!

Luther eases back to the window:

LUTHER: My name's *LUTHER*.

MONTY: Right. Whatever. Look... I need your help out here.

LUTHER: MY help--?! You see what's going on here...? They're in there talking about HANGING me for wrecking up the place.

MONTY: Yeah... well, we got a bigger fish to cook first--

LUTHER: *FIRST--?! So they're not kidding then, right...?! So they're not kidding then, right...?!*

MONTY: Don't worry about all that. Look... something's going on around here, and I gotta get to the bottom of it.

LUTHER: So why you coming to me?!

MONTY: 'Cause you're an outsider, that's why.

LUTHER: I sure am! I got nothing to do with any of this, and now I'm in the biggest trouble I've ever--

MONTY (interrupts): LUTHER!

LUTHER: What...?!

MONTY: You wanna get outta there, or not? I could use some answers, and nobody... I mean NOBODY in this town is talking --

LUTHER: So how's that gonna get me outta here...?

MONTY: I got a few strings I can pull on. You got a better idea...?

Luther thinks about it for a moment -- then gives Monty an apprehensive nod. Monty ducks around the corner, and a few moments later he struts into Luther's holding area:

MONTY: Snuck right past those idiot-fools -- didn't even see me come in. No wonder this town's gone down a stink-hole.

LUTHER: Really? They didn't see you come in...? Wow.

Monty misses the sarcasm...

LUTHER: So you got the key, right?

MONTY: Now how in the devil was I supposed to do that...?!

LUTHER: Don't you get it? You could just walk in there and grab it -- same as you walked in. They can't see you, remember...?!

Monty QUICK-DRAWS his guns --

MONTY: I told you to KNOCK OFF that insinundo!

The moth LAUNCHES off his back and FLUTTERS around the room -- ERRATIC and AGITATED -- like it's reflecting Monty's temperament from one moment to the next.

MONTY: They didn't see me come in 'cause they just mis-underestimate me, that's all. I always been sneaky that way. Everyone knows that.

LUTHER: You really don't know, do you?

MONTY: I know stuff...

Monty re-holsters his guns, then PLOPS down onto the bunk. He trails off into thought, as the moth gently alights on his back again.

LUTHER: So what IS that thing...?

MONTY: What's what...?

Luther gestures to the huge moth on his back. Monty turns away to hide it -- self-conscious.

MONTY: It ain't nothing. Quit staring like that.

Suddenly, Jasper's head pops up outside the window:

JASPER: Hey LUTHER! I'm gonna bust you outta there, friend!



He starts SAWING at the bars with a METAL FILE.

LUTHER: Shhhh -- QUIET--!! What are you doing...? They can hear that in there!

JASPER: Oh... (reconsiders) -- OKAY--!! (he's got this)

Then he ducks away.

Luther pulls himself to the window, and sees Jasper fumbling through a big leather bag -- pulling out a stick of DYNAMITE.

LUTHER: What--?! ARE YOU KIDDING--?! Don't even think about it!

Jasper contemplates again... mumbles some incoherencies, then drops it back in the bag.

He BRIGHTENS with another idea, and darts off around the corner.

He returns with TWO HORSES harnessed together. He jumps up to the window and ties the end of the rope to the bars.



JASPER (laughing): This'll be easy as yankin' out one of them BAD TEETH of mine.

Then he jumps back to his bag and lights a MATCH to see inside:

JASPER: And I got me a WHISTLE in here to make 'em giddy-up good -- (fumbles around) -- somewhere in here... Ooo -- lookey here!

He WHIPS out a TIN WHISTLE, and holds it up proudly for Luther to see -- dropping the MATCH back inside the bag.

He puts the whistle to his lips as... SPARKS start SPRAYING OUT OF HIS LEATHER SACHEL.

LUTHER: What's that--? Jasper -- *WHAT'D YOU DO...?!*

Jasper peeks inside -- then SLAMS IT SHUT again... FROZEN, WIDE-EYED PANIC:

JASPER: Uhp. I think we got TROUBLE in there...

LUTHER: GET RID OF IT -- QUICK--!!

Jasper tucks the bag under his arm and runs in circles -- undecided about what to do with it.

LUTHER: Just THROW IT, Jasper!!

He whirls around a few more times, then LAUNCHES the bag. It lands up the incline behind the jailhouse, and the dynamite bounces out of the bag. It rolls back down the hill -- right between Jasper's legs -- and straight back toward the jail house.

Luther JUMPS from the bunk and braces -- while Monty studies the lock on Luther's cell door.

MONTY: You know... if I only had one of them *bobble pins*...

LUTHER: FIRE IN THE HOLE, MONTY!

MONTY: Huh--?

KABOOM!!! -- DEBRIS CRASHES all around -- SMOKE and DUST fill the air.

Then we hear the SHRILL SOUND of Jasper's TIN WHISTLE -- Phweeeeep!! --

The horses charge FULL-FORCE -- tearing the ENTIRE JAILHOUSE structure away from the main street -- leaving a gaping HOLE between the buildings.



Willie and the gang are thrown around in the office -- grasping for anything solid to hang on to. Monty and Luther struggle between themselves to get up to the cell window.

The jailhouse is like a RUNAWAY STAGECOACH -- plowing a TRENCH through the desert, leaving a TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION in its path.



Monty gets to the window first, and CALLS OUT to the horses:

MONTY: Whoa! Whoa! WHOOAA!!

But the horses CHARGE ON -- completely unaffected -- for MILES into the desert with the jailhouse CRASHING ALONG behind.

Luther elbows Monty aside and manages to wedge himself in the window with one arm -- puts his fingers to his lips with the other -- and BLOWS:

-- WHEEeeew-wheeEET!! --

The horses BREAK SHARPLY, and the jail-house FISHTAILS -- tumbling end-over-end -- before settling in a THICK CLOUD OF DUST... now aglow in the morning sun.

There's SILENCE -- for a beat... until the METAL BARS that held Luther captive fall out of the window with an effortless "CLINK!"

On the other side of the jailhouse, Willie SCRAMBLES for the front door and PUSHES IT OPEN. The door SWINGS OFF ITS HINGES. It tumbles like a leaf into a DEEP CHASM -- then finally splashes into the RAPIDS far below.

EXT. DESERT CANYON - MORNING

Reveal the jailhouse teetering on the edge of a MASSIVE GORGE -- perilously rocking to and fro.

Willie and the gang scramble away from the front doorway -- tipping the structure back toward safety.

Monty and Luther seize their moment and scurry out the cell window in the rear -- and the structure CREAKS again as it tips back toward the gorge.



The gang SCRAMBLE around inside -- trying to shift it back again. CLOSE ON: a PANICKED WILLIE -- as he realizes the inevitable...

The jailhouse crosses the tipping point -- and OVER IT GOES -- free-falling end-over-end... for a long time -- until it SPLASHES into the raging river at the bottom of the gorge.

Willie's FURY echoes through the canyon --

WILLIE: *LUUUUTHERRR!!!!*

Luther and Monty watch in stunned silence -- mouths agape -- as the jailhouse bobs its way down the winding river. Luther fishes for the right words to break the silence:

LUTHER: I feel like this is the part where I come up with something clever to say...

MONTY: Forget about that. We need to clear out of here... NOW!

Monty looks around to consider their options. It's a vast and empty desert as far the eye can see.

LUTHER: So what do you suppose happened to Jasper...?

Monty considers the gaping trench carved by the jailhouse behind them:

MONTY (like talking about the weather): I don't know... looks like we might have plowed him over... maybe...?

AGHAST -- Luther scrambles onto one of the horses and coaxes him off in that direction.

MONTY: Whoa-whoa-whoa there, Greenhorn. You can't go back there. You'll be walking right into the hornet's nest for sure.

LUTHER: What do you mean? We just got rid of Willie.

MONTY: Oh, ya think you got rid of him, do ya? (chuckles) Trust me -- he'll be back.

He gestures to the trench:



MONTY (CONT'D): And from the looks of it, you won't be hard to find, neither.

LUTHER: But none of this was my fault! I was just minding my own business back there, and then-

MONTY: Well, if you want to go back and 'splain that to Willie, that's fine with me. Maybe he can help ya.

Monty starts off the other direction -- and calls back over his shoulder:

MONTY: Face it kid, you're up a creek without a saddle now!

LUTHER: What do you mean...?

MONTY: You're an OUTLAW, Luther!

LUTHER: OUTLAW--?! You're the one that got me into this mess!

Luther trots to catch up:

LUTHER (CONT'D): I'd be long gone from that town of yours if you didn't start messing with me back there!

Monty rides on, ignoring him...

LUTHER (CONT'D): What -- you got nothing to say...?!

MONTY: Nope. I had enough of all your bellyaching.

LUTHER: My what--?!

MONTY: Look, I got you out of there, just like I promised.

LUTHER: A lot of good that did -- look at me now!

MONTY: Well... you oughta be more careful what you wish for then.

LUTHER: Right! This is just what I wished for...

Luther continues RANTING to himself as they ride off toward the red rocks on the horizon.

They round a bend, and Monty settles to a stop at the edge of a magnificent, SPRAWLING VISTA.



LUTHER: Let me guess, you got no idea where we are, right?

MONTY: Wherever you go, that's where you are, kid. Somewhere SPECIAL you gotta be...?

LUTHER: Well, actually... as a matter of fact, I need to--

MONTY (interrupts): Ahh... Just LOOK at that down there.

A HERD OF BUFFALO charge through the valley --

MONTY (CONT'D): Used to be I'd wrangle and ride with packs TWICE that size. Ain't NOTHING like riding with the pack -- makes a man feel ALIVE!

LUTHER (laughing): Yeah... about that--

Monty TENSES and goes for his guns.

MONTY: Don't even THINK of busting up this precious moment I got going here...

The moth flutters up, and Luther watches it flapping overhead. But there's something different about it now:

With all the dust shaken off, it shimmers a sort of IRIDESCENT BLUE.

Wait -- that's not a moth... it's a BUTTERFLY! Luther is CAPTIVATED by this creature as it settles on Monty's back.

LUTHER: So what the heck IS that thing?

MONTY: It ain't nothing. Quit asking.

LUTHER (intrigued): How come he don't fly away?

MONTY: YOU JUST DON'T QUIT, DO YA?! Look... we got a BUSINESS DEAL here, and that's it --

LUTHER: Business deal--?!

MONTY: Yeah! Who busted you out of jail?

LUTHER: Jasper did.

MONTY: Yeah, well... I greased up the wheels on that one. Anyhow, you OWE ME.

LUTHER: Wait -- I think you owe ME!

Monty nudges his horse forward again, and Luther follows:

LUTHER (CONT'D): Why don't you just point me back to COPPER CREEK and I'll be on my way.

MONTY: That ain't how it's gonna work, Luther. We got a DEAL.

LUTHER: What do you want me to do, anyways?

MONTY: We'll get to that... and what the heck is COPPER CREEK anyhow...?

LUTHER: You know! Copper Creek Canyon--

MONTY: Never heard of it.

LUTHER: What's going on with all of you...? It's like--

MONTY (interrupts): Shhh -- QUIET! Don't move.

There's a PLUME OF SMOKE on the horizon -- and the crow circles high above -- KRAAA!!

LUTHER: That's it -- that's my TRAIN! I gotta get over there --

MONTY: That ain't no TRAIN, Luther. Get off your horse and take cover.

Luther is about ready to lose it now. *Is this guy messing with him, or what...?*

LUTHER: How do you think I got out here anyways? That's my ride back to Copper Creek Canyon -- I gotta GO--!!

MONTY: Don't you know nothing? Those are SMOKE SIGNALS.

LUTHER: *SMOKE SIGNALS...?!*

MONTY: We're being TRACKED.

LUTHER: You're making all this up, right? You're not gonna let me go no matter what, are you --?

Monty looks around to consider their options:

MONTY: We need to go up that way --

He motions toward the STEEP MAZE of rocks that lead to a plateau high above.

MONTY: Just stay close, and whatever ya do... keep out of sight of that smoke so they don't see ya.

Luther sighs -- gives in -- and reluctantly follows.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - DESERT TOWN - DAY

KRAAAA!! High on the wind we track with the old crow again. Up ahead we can make out the busted-up town we left behind.

We descend with the crow -- following it to a graceful landing atop the BROKEN WATER TOWER.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

FROM THE CROW'S PERSPECTIVE: A tattered Willie and his gang are hobbling up the street -- hauling as much of the jailhouse wreckage as they can carry.

They drag their scraps to where the jailhouse stood -- and dump what they have into a very unimpressive pile.

WILLIE: Alright... you two -- start building. The rest of you come with me.

The crow watches the gang make their way across the street and into the saloon.

INT. SALOON - DAY

The place is a wreck. Angelica is still wiping down the walls from the night before.

The gang move straight to the back room, and Willie elbows up to the counter -- completely tattered with a makeshift CRUTCH:

WILLIE: Looks like your little boyfriend's not quite what he seems.

Angelica stifles a laugh at the sight of Willie:

ANGELICA: Luther? Looks like he got the best of YOU...

WILLIE: I knew that little runt was up to no good the minute I laid eyes on him.

ANGELICA: You provoked him, Willie. That's what you get.

WILLIE: Now THERE YOU GO again, aligning yourself with the other side all the time! What's going on with you? You taking some kind of liking to this little degenerate...?

The gang BURST in from the back with their loot from the train -- SUITCASES, TRUNKS, JEWELRY and GUNS. They pile it high on the main table at the head of the saloon.

ANGELICA: Where'd you GET all that stuff...?

WILLIE: Just more paraphernalia left behind out there.

ANGELICA (cynically): Oh, just left behind, was it...?

WILLIE: Don't worry yourself about all that, Angie. Look... I got an important role to play in advancing our common prosperity around here. After all... when you spread the wealth around, it's good for everybody! But If you'd rather we not partake -- then I'm happy to put a LOST AND FOUND sign in the window. Anyone 'really WANTS this clutter can just come back here and CLAIM IT.

The gang forage through their plunder -- cracking open one suitcase after the next. They're a bunch of GOOFBALLS in high heels and jewelry, smearing lipstick on each other with frilly underwear on their heads for a laugh...

Willie reaches into the pile and pulls out a familiar looking suitcase -- one that we've seen before:

WILLIE: Well-well-WELL... Look at this, boys!

The name "LUTHER" is scrawled across the front in CRAYON MARKER.

Willie pops open the lid, and right there -- staring back at him -- is the PHOTOGRAPH of Luther's grandfather.

He SNATCHES it up for a closer look. His BUG-EYE bulges out as he studies it.

MEZCAL: What is it, Patron--? What you got there...?

We push in on Willie. His EYE TWITCHES -- then he scans the room in deep thought --

MEZCAL: Patron...?

WILLIE (out of his trance): Huh... what...?

MEZCAL: You got *GIRLY PICTURES* there?

Willie tucks the photo into his vest pocket.

WILLIE (dismissive): No... it's nothing.

The gang exchange smirks between themselves -- then they get back to digging.

Willie stays silent. Unsettled. TENSION rising with each heartbeat until he can't restrain himself any longer.

He SLAMS a fist on the table:

WILLIE: Alright -- THAT'S IT! You need to get back out there and find that impudent little squirt and get him back here for questioning!

Roach waves his hand in the air --

ROACH: Ooo-oo-oo -- do you want him *DEAD OR ALIVE*?

WILLIE: I said I got QUESTIONS Roach. What do you think...?

At the window, Jasper is straining to see what's going on. Willie catches sight of him -- and Jasper ducks out of view.

WILLIE: *JASPER!!*

Willie sprints to the door... pushes through, and--

EXT. SALOON - DUSK

No Jasper. He scans the empty street. All is QUIET. He pulls the photograph out of his pocket again and ponders -- then paces the deck to collect his thoughts:

WILLIE (muttering to himself): Just what is it that kid's got up his sleeve...?

CLOSE ON: Kickapoo -- the silent observer -- taking it all in from the shadows of the abandoned post office across the street.

EXT. DESERT BLUFF - DUSK

Monty and Luther arrive at the top of the ridge with horses in tow. Luther gazes out into the distance -- looking for remnants of smoke out there. There's nothing.

LUTHER: See...? It's gone now.

Monty takes a seat at the base of a scraggly tree. He pulls off his boots -- rubs his feet -- and ponders the empty horizon:

MONTY: Yup... looks like we fooled 'em pretty good -- thanks to my sharp intermission.

LUTHER: Your WHAT...?

MONTY: My six pennies -- you know...

LUTHER: Six... *PENNIES*...?

MONTY: *My SIX CENTS...!!* Come on... I'm talking 'bout my animal IN-SYNCS here -- my second sight-*ATIONS*... and all that.

LUTHER: Oh...

MONTY: Anyhow... you need to be thanking me. I just saved your skinny little butt cheeks TWICE today --

LUTHER: From who? Willie?

MONTY: *WILLIE*...? Ha-ha... Willie's the least of your problems now. He's for sure got a price on your head, and that means EVERYONE'S gonna be out for a piece of you.

LUTHER: See...? That's why I got to get back to that TRAIN -- and quick!

MONTY: Well how's THAT gonna help? Who you gonna TRUST out there? Besides, I told you there's NO TRAIN.

LUTHER: Well how do you think I got out here then?

MONTY: FORGET ABOUT IT! We got a DEAL!

LUTHER: Yeah... so that's what this is all about. So what do you want me to do, anyways?

MONTY (beat, pensive): Well, I... I still gotta collect my thoughts on that.

LUTHER: Wait... You don't even KNOW?! Look, I had enough of this -- I know which way to go from here...

He looks off to that place on the horizon where he saw the smoke...

LUTHER: I'm just gonna --

MONTY (draws his guns): HOLD IT right there, Luther.

LUTHER (exasperated): Really...? So this is how it's gonna go...? YOU'RE gonna take the bounty on me now? Ugh -- that's just great...

MONTY: I said... DON'T -- MOVE.

SSSSsssssss -- A RATTLESNAKE! -- just behind Luther -- poised and ready to strike.

Monty lifts his gun at the snake, and -- BANG-BANG!!

Luther BOUNDS up the tree -- just missing the SNAPPING JAWS of the snake.

Monty continues to shoot BANG-BANG-BANG!! But the snake just slithers away -- completely unaffected.

The tree BOWS OVER with Luther's weight, bringing the tree-top down over the venomous creature. Luther is still hanging on -- just inches from the ground now.

Monty flips over his gun to inspect it --

LUTHER (under his breath): GHOST bullets, Monty.

MONTY: GHOST bullets...?

The snake SLITHERS back up through the branches toward Luther! He RELEASES the tree and it SPRINGS UP -- catapulting the snake -- end-over-end -- far into the distance.

Luther gathers himself. A smile crosses his face... pleased with how he just disposed of the snake, despite Monty's best efforts.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT



Monty and Luther sit around a crackling fire under a full moon.

Luther quietly scans the horizon.

MONTY: You looking for smoke signals again?

LUTHER (defiantly): Train.

MONTY: You know... I think you're more than just a little ungracious there, Luther. I bailed your butt cheeks out THREE times now... and you still got no gratitude or depreciation.

LUTHER: Oh you saved me, did you? Okay, so what is it then? What's this big favor I owe you -- or you still got to THINK about it?

Monty stares into the fire to gather his thoughts.

MONTY: Okay... here it is... See -- ever since I got this MAGNESIA, I -- uh...

LUTHER: This what--?!

MONTY: MAGNESIA! COME ON!! I CAN'T REMEMBER NOTHING LUTHER! You need to put some meat on that brain of yours and learn you some good English! I'm saying -- ever since I lost my MAM-maries, I... uh--

LUTHER: --your MEM-ories...?

MONTY: THAT'S WHAT I SAID --

LUTHER (laughing): No trust me... you wanna get THAT one right.

MONTY: Anyhow... ever since I lost 'em no one pays me no attention no more. They all act like I'm not even there when I talk at 'em.

LUTHER: Why you having so much trouble piecing this together...?

Monty shoots another threatening look --

LUTHER (cautiously): You don't see some kind of... LIGHT out there... somewhere--?

MONTY: Wha... WHAT light...?

Luther motions toward the space around them --

LUTHER: Out there -- anywhere. A bright light? A TUNNEL? ...nothing--?

MONTY: Wha --? What are you BLATHERING ABOUT AGAIN...?!!

The butterfly AGITATES -- FLUTTERS overhead -- then settles again on his back. Luther stares -- amused every time this happens. Monty LOCKS EYES with Luther:

MONTY (sternly): Look... it's just an old flutterby, okay...? I can't get rid of him no-how. I keep swishing him away -- but he keeps coming back. What do you want me to do...?

He aggressively SWISHES at the butterfly, and it flutters up -- only to settle back again quietly. Luther stifles a laugh.

MONTY (CONT'D): Anyhow... you know that whole disastrophy you caused back there in town? Well, I been ruminating on this, and I'm thinking you're right -- it WAS 'cause of me.

LUTHER: THANK YOU! Finally!

MONTY: First time since I lost my mam -- my *MEM--ories*, I finally brought somethin' to pass around here. Think about it! If it wasn't for ME, none of that would have happened back there--

LUTHER: Right!

MONTY: And if it wasn't for YOU, none of that would have happened neither. You get what I'm saying...?

LUTHER: Ohhh... So you want me to be your dupe, do ya...?! Well I'm not your puppet! I'm already in enough trouble 'cause of that --

MONTY: *AND*... and you're the only one paying me attention. Now why's that, huh...?!

LUTHER: Yeah... why IS that? Why am I the only one stuck with the *dis*-pleasure of your company?

MONTY: That's what I'm SAYING! I got this whole... deep-down combobulation-feelin' -- this pack of flutterbies down here in my belly saying I can't let you out of my sight... not 'till I figure this whole thing out, anyhow.

Luther sighs despairingly, and glances off to that special spot on the horizon. Still no smoke out there.

LUTHER: Well, how long's THAT gonna take?

MONTY: I don't know, Luther. Like I always say -- "*THERE'S A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND EVERYTHING IN ITS TIME.*" As long as it takes, I guess...

Monty settles under his blanket.

MONTY (CONT'D): Just get used to it, young outlaw -- you and me gonna fritter away some time together while I try to reckon my way out of this ol' gunny sack we got ourselves into here.

Luther pulls his blanket up in a huff, and stares out at the starry sky. Wide awake... frustrated.

LUTHER: Aren't you just a little curious about what's out there, Monty?

MONTY: Out where...?

Luther ponders the stars --

LUTHER: Out there, you know... the other side... the great beyond--

MONTY: Shhh -- QUIET! -- You hear that...?

Luther FREEZES.

LUTHER (whispering): What is it...?

A beat

MONTY: That's the sound of me frowning over here in the dark.

LUTHER: ****sighs****

MONTY: Just give it up and go to sleep, Luther.

A CLOUD passes over the moon... and reluctantly, Luther shuts his eyes... and drifts off to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A SCRAP of PAPER blows across the desert floor -- tumbling along with the tumbleweeds in the moonlight.

The wind grows stronger, whisking the paper along until it SLAMS up against a CACTUS -- pinning itself -- FLUTTERING in the wind.

We PUSH IN and see that it's another page from Luther's lost book:

Page header: "CHAPTER 4: THE GREAT ESCAPE"

The SOUND of a TRAIN HORN in the distance:

-- WWOAOAOAOAOhhhh --

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Luther's eyes POP OPEN. *Is he hearing things?*

-- WWOAOAOAOAOhhhh --

A TRAIN...? He bolts upright -- listening in the dark. He shoots a look over to Monty -- sound asleep.

-- WWOAOAOAOAOhhhh --

THERE IT IS AGAIN. It seems to be getting *LOUDER!* Luther looks over at Monty again. There's a moment of debate, then... *yeah, this guy has screwed around with him enough.*

Luther gets up quietly, and gathers his belongings from around the campfire. He tip-toes to his horse -- unhitches - and begins to sneak away.

We push in on Monty as one eye POPS OPEN. He remains still -- keeping an eye on Luther as he quietly slinks away into the dark.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

KRAAAA!! Circling high overhead in the glint of moonlight -- we track along with the old crow -- following it down to a landing in a scraggly tree in the valley below.

Luther advances down the rocky trail with his horse in tow. He stops and listens -- straining to hear through the wind. Then he presses on past where the crow sits watching him from the tree.

Up on the ridge we catch the SILHOUETTE of Monty on horseback -- following Luther, but keeping a safe distance behind.

Luther comes to a fork in the road. *Hmm... which way?* He chooses the path to the right, and leads his horse down the trail.

SUDDENLY -- the crow LAUNCHES from the tree. It SWOOPS down in front of Luther -- STARTLING him backward -- landing on his butt in the dirt. *What the heck was THAT about?!*

He crawls forward in the moonlight -- and peers over the edge of a CLIFF. Wow -- one more step and he would have gone over! *That crow just SAVED him!*

-- WWOAOAOAOAOHhhh --

There it is again -- the other way! He gathers himself and rushes off down the alternate path.

A gust of WIND whips through the canyon --

-- WWOAOAOAOAOHhhh --

Hmm... even Monty notices this time.

Luther picks up the pace, and Monty follows on the ridge -- getting more curious himself.

Luther passes through a narrow channel in the valley where the wind FUNNELS through even stronger -- stirring up DUST and obscuring his vision like the SANDSTORM at the beginning of this adventure. And there's that VOICE calling his name again:

-- LUUUUTHERRR--!! (*blending together with the sound of the train*):

-- WWOAOAOAOAOHhhh --

And now the CLACKING sound of a TRAIN ON RAILS. *It must be just around the next bend!*

He runs ahead -- BURSTS into the clearing, and--

Nothing -- NO TRAIN!

He stands there confused. It's just an old MINE SHAFT out here.

The wind whips through again -- rushing past the open mouth of the CAVE... and it RESONATES like the sound of a TRAIN -- *like a jug when air is blown across the opening*:

-- WWOAOAOAOAOHhhh --

The "CONDEMNED" signs CLACK and RATTLE in the wind like the sound of a TRAIN ON RAILS.

Luther slumps. FOILED AGAIN.

In hopeless despair, he settles into a quarried shelter around the next bend. He curls up in a fetal position -- shivering -- lost and alone.

EXT. DESERT BLUFF - NIGHT

Monty watches down on Luther with shameful indulgence.

MONTY: THAT oughta learn him.

He unpacks his blanket and spreads out under the stars -- letting Luther languish alone by himself down in the quarry.

There's a FLUTTERING over Monty's head, and the crow settles to a landing on a rock just outside of Monty's reach -- KRAAAA!!

They make EYE CONTACT. The crow cocks its head quizzically -- and we linger here for the stare-down between them.

Wait... can the crow actually SEE Monty...?! Monty pulls a threatening grimace... and the crow steps forward as if to challenge him. KRAAAA!!

Hmm... Monty reaches out slowly... then:

MONTY: BOOO!! Heh-heh-heh...

The crow takes off into the blustery night -- KRAAAA!! And with the parting of the crow, the wind suddenly -- mysteriously -- fades to silence.

Out of the stillness, another page from the lost book swirls in under moonlight.

EXT. SHELTERED QUARRY - NIGHT

The page touches down on a berm just above and beyond the entrance to the MINE SHAFT.

We PUSH IN... but it's too dark to make out any of the details.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SHELTERED QUARRY - MORNING

Luther startles awake to an old INDIAN standing over him. He FREAKS -- and scrambles to find a weapon -- a rock -- *ANYTHING* --!!

JASPER (laughing): Settle down there, 'ol friend! That's just 'ol Kickapoo! He's not gonna harm ya none!

LUTHER: Jasper--?! What are you--? How'd you find me way out here...?

JASPER: I just followed ol' Kick' here. Seems he used his crazy magic to track you down, somehow -- and I can't quite figure it out...



Jasper leans in to Luther:

JASPER: So you SEEN him, didn't ya?

LUTHER: Who?

JASPER: MONTY! Back in town, right?

LUTHER: Oh, I saw him all right!

Jasper JUMPS UP and KICKS HIS HEELS with glee:

JASPER: *HA-- I KNEW IT--!!*

LUTHER: So you're okay then...? We thought you might have got run over by the jailhouse.

JASPER: Who-we...?

LUTHER: Huh?

JASPER: You said "WE."

LUTHER: Yeah... me and Monty.

JASPER: Monty...?

Jasper screws up his face, and scratches his head -- confused.

JASPER: Eh... but he don't go outside the saloon--

Just then, Monty comes out from behind a big rock -- pulling up his zipper and squaring up his pants. He feigns surprise at the sight of Luther:

MONTY: Heh-Heh -- well look at there, it's LUTHER! I thought for sure you'd be long gone on that TRAIN of yours by now...

Jasper STARTLES --

JASPER: *MONTY--!!*

LUTHER (to Jasper): You can SEE him?

JASPER: Well sure I can!

MONTY: See there, Luther...? No trains, no ghosts -- You ready to quit all them... halluci-*NUTIONS* of yours now?

Luther points to Kickapoo:

LUTHER (to Jasper): Can he see him too?

MONTY: You just DON'T QUIT -- do ya?

Monty steps over to Kickapoo and waves a hand in front of his face. There's no response.

MONTY: Ahh -- blind as a bat. Just like I thought...

Kickapoo reaches into his poncho and yanks out a handful of BLACK FEATHERS. He SHAKES his BEADS -- SWIRLS the FEATHERS -- and launches into a bizarre CEREMONIAL CHANT.

KICKAPOO: (**CHANTS** throughout this scene in the background).

Monty is taken aback, and steps aside to let him pass. Jasper is still perplexed:

JASPER (to Monty): So what made you come out of the saloon? You never come out of the saloon...

MONTY: Ahhh -- I had to follow THIS ONE here (gestures to Luther). Don't ask me why... he's been nothing but a PAIN IN MY BRITCHES since we started. I just can't shake this NAGGING FEELING I gotta keep him around.

Kickapoo's chanting turns to obnoxious HOWLING outside the quarried shelter. Monty is annoyed -- and goes to investigate.

Jasper holds Luther back:

JASPER: He's a GHOST, alright. Willie thought I been jabbering at myself this whole time -- 'till I told him I been talking to Monty.

LUTHER: You talk to DEAD PEOPLE...?

JASPER: Well.... those are the only ones talking BACK these days... mostly.

LUTHER: So that's what you STREET-PEOPLE are up to...? Rambling on-and-on at the empty space all day...? You're actually talking to *GHOSTS*--?!

JASPER: That's why Willie don't want me around no more. Says it gives him the creepies when I do that.

LUTHER: Well it gives me the creepies too! I don't talk to dead people. How come Monty's talking to me--?!

JASPER: Well... you must be some kind of special. I been trying to get him out of that saloon for YEARS...!!

EXT. MINE SHAFT AREA - MORNING

Monty rounds the corner in front of the mine shaft, and stops abruptly -- mouth agape. Kickapoo's chanting is coming from just over the berm, above and beyond the mouth of the cave. Monty stands silent as Luther and Jasper come up behind.

MONTY (perplexed): Is this--? Unless I'm mis-remembering, I think I've been here before.

The three of them scale the incline -- slowly -- toward the sound of Kickapoo's voice. Monty scours the area with every step -- looking for something -- searching for memories.

As they crest the berm we reveal Kickapoo chanting over the skeletal remains of a large BULL and its RIDER -- *WITH THE SAME CLOTHS THAT MONTY IS WEARING.*

Kickapoo stops chanting -- and the echoes fade to SILENCE.



Luther takes off his hat and bows his head respectfully.

LUTHER: Sorry... Monty.

MONTY: What are you 'pologizing about? That ain't nothing. That's just a stinky 'ol pile o' bones, that's all...

Monty looks around with furrowed brow. Thoughts racing --

MONTY (confused): I know this place... if I'm not mis-remembering -- I was just up here a few days ago, I think...

LUTHER: And those bones weren't there, were they?

MONTY: Well who dragged 'em up here then?

Luther and Jasper exchange looks -- wondering how to word this...

LUTHER: I think maybe -- (tentatively) -- it looks like maybe those bones might have been here for a long time... maybe years --?

MONTY: YEARS--?! That ain't right!

JASPER: Well, I been sneaky-peeking on you for at least that long. That's how long you been cooped up inside that saloon.

MONTY: Then how come I'm standing up here if that's my pile 'o bones down there...? And if I'm supposed to be a GHOST like you say, then how come you're all talking back at me like normal? That don't make any sense!

Monty goes in for a closer look:

MONTY (CONT'D): Besides, look at this guy -- he's all full up o' BULLET HOLES.

He leans in and puts a finger through one of the holes in the vest. An awareness comes over his face at the touch of the fabric.

MONTY: What the...?

We PUSH in -- slowly -- as he sinks deeper in thought. Luther and Jasper hold back, letting Monty have this moment.

MONTY (CONT'D): How did this...? Was this some kind of DUEL, or something?

LUTHER: Not with bullets in your back it wasn't...

Luther holds up a handful of shell casings --

LUTHER (CONT'D): Looks more like an AMBUSH to me.

MONTY: Then what are all them OTHER bones down there... ?

The butterfly LAUNCHES off his back and flutters overhead. All eyes on the iridescent BLUE WINGS SHIMMERING in the morning light.

MONTY (pointing upward): Is that --? It *CAN'T* be...

The butterfly descends gracefully to a landing on Monty's outstretched finger...

MONTY: Is that -- *OLD BLUE*...?

Monty holds the butterfly up close -- nose to nose.... mesmerized by this delicate creature that just wouldn't go away despite his best efforts to chase him off:

MONTY: My loyal BUDDY...? Is that really YOU inside of there...? You been following me this whole time...?

His eyes well up -- soul split in two...

MONTY: Who would have DONE THIS...?!

Jasper pulls a rusty old SPUR out of the dirt and holds it up for Monty to see.

Monty doesn't make the connection until Jasper puts it up to his lapel like a Sheriff's badge, and the LIGHT GOES ON:

MONTY: *WILLIE!!* -- I should have known!

He turns and stomps away -- a look of resolution on his face. The butterfly LAUNCHES AGAIN -- agitated -- CHASING after Monty.

LUTHER: Where are you going...?

MONTY: I got YEARS of rage bottled up inside of what I thought was a just a FEW DAYS! Now that I know where this anger's coming from, I'm gonna release my FURY on Willie's soul!

LUTHER: What are you gonna do -- ride into town and say "*BOO...?!*" No one can SEE you, remember?

Monty plops down on a CACTUS and slumps -- hopelessly defeated. We haven't seen him looking so vulnerable.

The butterfly flutters over to a landing again on his back.

Then Luther is suddenly struck by this odd connection he hadn't considered before:

Monty looks just like an over-sized cherub with a silly little pair of angel wings on his back.

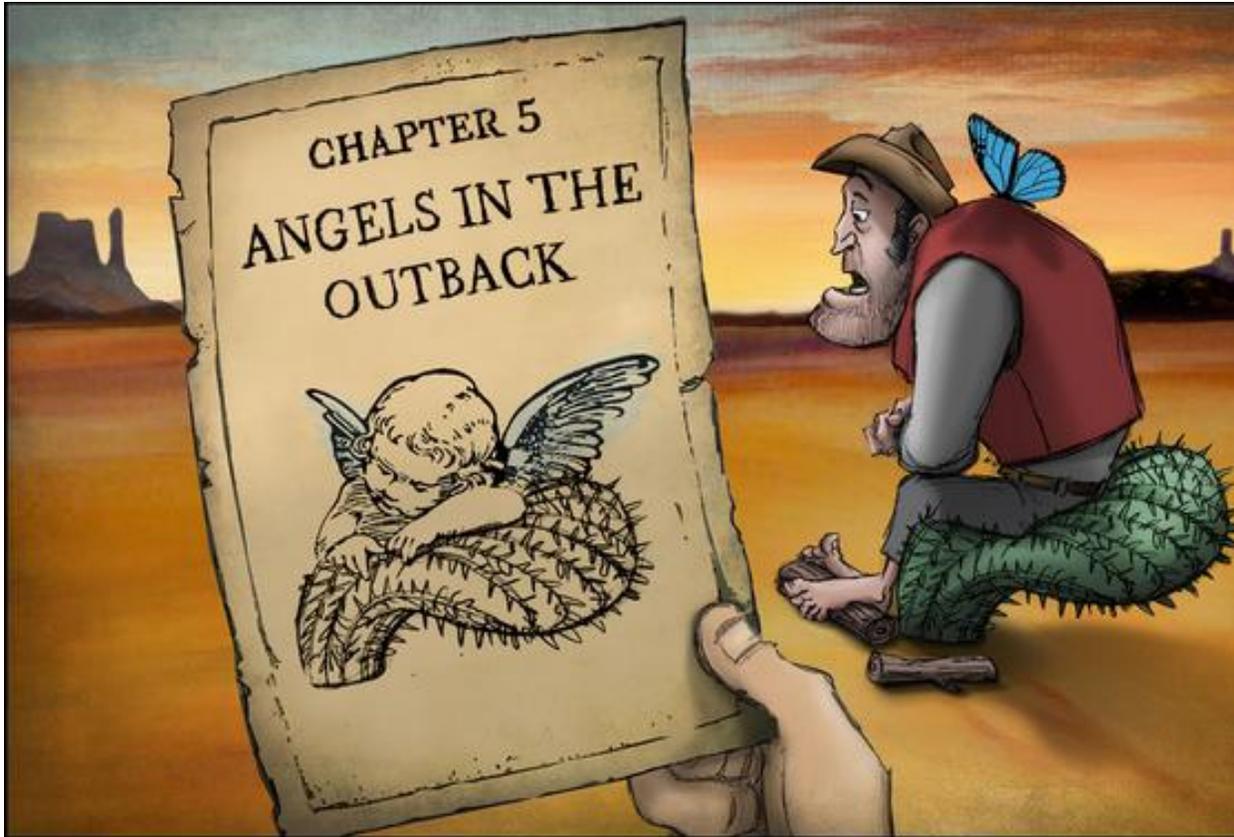
There in the dirt near Monty's feet is the PAGE from Luther's lost book that drifted in last night. He steps over and picks it up:

His eyes widen -- jaw drops -- shooting glances between the page and Monty:

LUTHER: Uh... Monty? I think I got an idea what might be going on here...

He turns the page over to show Monty:

"CHAPTER 5: ANGELS IN THE OUTBACK" -- with an illustration of a CHUBBY LITTLE ANGEL resting on a thorny CACTUS. It looks a lot like Monty in this moment.



LUTHER (hesitantly): You think maybe you're supposed to be... my GUARDIAN ANGEL -- or something?

MONTY: Wha... Huh--?

Monty's face drops.

MONTY: Your *GUARDIAN ANGEL*--?! (disgusted) -- *Ugh*.

Could things honestly get any worse for Monty?

CLOSE ON Kickapoo. A contented smile -- and satisfied nod of solace. *Finally -- the connection has been made!*

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - SAME DAY

TACK-TACK-TACK: a "WANTED" poster is being put on display -- with a FEEBLE DRAWING of Luther depicted as the OUTLAW.

We pull back to reveal FLIERS STREWN EVERYWHERE -- with the Willie gang posting them on every square-inch of wall-space in town.

Willie strolls down the wooden sidewalk with Mezcal, tapping each plank with a WALKING STICK as he goes --

TAP--TAP--"THOMP!" -- *Hmm... what was that...?*

He indicates to Mezcal -- who promptly drops to his knees -- pries up the plank, and checks underneath.

WILLIE: Anything?

MEZCAL: No, Patron.

He puts the plank back in place -- not quite as neatly as it was -- and they carry on down the street -- TAP--TAP--TAP...

MEZCAL: I think maybe we'll never find it...

WILLIE: That's why we gotta get ahold of that little half-pint.

MEZCAL: Luther? But we don't know where to find him either.

WILLIE: Well I got a sneaking suspicion he'll be finding *us*... just like a bee to the honey-pot. Just you watch.

They pass in front of the new JAILHOUSE. It's a shanty little construction about the size of an outhouse -- given the few scraps of wood brought back from the gorge.

WILLIE (CONT'D): And when he shows up... I got a spacious new home that just came on the market right here.

He peaks inside the tiny barred window:

WILLIE: He ought to be happy in there, what do you think...?

MEZCAL: (*snickers*)

Willie WHISTLES to Quiote -- then taps on the side of the shanty with his walking stick:

WILLIE (calling out): You MISSED a spot!

Quiote rushes over with his fliers to fill the empty space.

As they turn back down the street, something catches Willie's eye out in the desert.

Through rising heat ripples we can see a figure off on the horizon. Willie squints hard through the glare -- but it's too far away to make out any of the details. Is it a *RIDER*...?

He rushes across to the saloon with Mezcal on his tail. They disappear inside for a beat, then return to the front deck with a SPY GLASS.

THROUGH THE SCOPE: we can make out KICKAPOO coming toward town on his MULE.

MEZCAL: What is it, Patron?

WILLIE: Eh... It's just that crazy old feather-head.

He collapses the scope -- takes a step back -- and the floorboard SQUEAKS under his foot. We push in on the heel of his BOOT -- and we see that it *DOESN'T HAVE A SPUR!*

He JIGGLES the loose board with his foot, then steps aside for Mezcal -- who obediently pries it up to check underneath.

WILLIE: Anything?

MEZCAL: No, Patron --

Willie sighs... then goes back inside the saloon.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

In the alley behind the POST-OFFICE, Kickapoo arrives on his MULE. As he approaches the hitching-post, we can see that Jasper is riding on the back.

JASPER: I'm going 'round front now. You keep an eye out while I get Miss Angelica's attention.

A quiet nod from Kickapoo -- and Jasper darts off on a mission.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - DAY

Jasper's head pops out from behind a building at the edge of town.

He bounds down the wooden walkway, zipping from one hiding place to the next -- then scurries across the street and dives into a BARREL just outside the main window of the saloon.

Inside, Willie sits at a card game with his boys. Angelica is busy rinsing glasses behind the bar.

The crow flutters to a landing on the rooftop across the street -- KRAAAA!! -- and it distracts Willie from his game:

WILLIE: I swear I'm gonna SHOOT THAT THING one of these days. Come to think of it... (calls out) ANGIE!! -- you know where I deposited my SCATTER-GUN...?

ANGELICA: And what are you gonna do with THAT...?

WILLIE: I require it for the immediate dispatchment of a small feathered nuisance out there...

In this moment Angelica catches sight of Jasper waving at the window. Willie whips around -- and Jasper ducks back into the barrel. *What was that? Something's up.*

Outside the window, the BARREL wobbles its way across the front of the saloon. Willie smirks:

WILLIE: Ahh, this'll be good...

He gets up, and casually makes his way to the swinging doors and pushes through...

EXT. SALOON - DAY

The barrel comes to a stop against Willie's leg -- CLUNK! He knocks on the lid: KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK.

JASPER (muffled, O.C.): Miss Angelica...? That you out there...?

WILLIE: Miss ANGELICA? Let me see... No. No Angelica here -- You want me to go find her for you?

JASPER (muffled, O.C.): Uhh... Nope.

The barrel wobbles off the other direction, and Willie steps around to block him again -- CLUNK!

He POPS off the lid and pulls Jasper out by the scruff of the neck:

WILLIE: You know... you're a funny little guy, Jasper -- and there's something even FUNNIER going on around here.



WILLIE (CONT'D): I saw you fraternizing with that Luther character. What's he up to--? WHAT DO YOU KNOW that you're not saying--?!

JASPER: Nothing... honest! I don't know where they are!

WILLIE: What do you mean -- "THEY?" Is he WITH someone?

JASPER: You mean MONTY? I... I mean --

WILLIE: *MONTY...?! Why in the pluperfect dickens do you keep saying "MONTY" all the time...?*

His eye starts TWITCHING uncontrollably -- VEINS set to burst --

WILLIE (CONT'D): Is he still out there...?

JASPER: Who, LUTHER?

WILLIE: No -- I'm talking about MONTY now--!! Is he ALIVE? You see him somewhere...?

JASPER: You mean -- WITH Luther...?

WILLIE (snaps): I DON'T CARE! Either way... Sure -- WITH Luther, if you want...

Willie SHAKES him -- and the RUSTY SPUR that Jasper found CLANGS to the ground.

We PUSH IN as it spins to a stop at the heel of Willie's BOOT -- the one with the MISSING SPUR.

ANGELICA (O.S.): Why are you so sure Monty's not coming back?

Angelica stands in the doorway, arms folded. Defiant.

Willie STOMPS his foot over the spur to hide it, hoping she didn't notice.

ANGELICA (CONT'D): I think he's coming back... why are you so sure he's NOT?

WILLIE: Well, I -- (stammers) -- I was just assuming. He's been gone such a long time now -- and all...

A long uncomfortable stare between them. Tension builds as Willie's FACIAL TICKS get more pronounced. Angelica and Jasper both notice, and exchange looks.

Self-conscious now -- Willie breaks the silence:

WILLIE: Can I... ? Can me and Jasper... we just need a moment here Anj' --

Angelica holds her suspicious glare for another beat, then:

ANGELICA: You need to put him down first. And Jasper... don't let him BULLY YOU like that.

Willie drops Jasper back in the barrel -- CLUNK -- then scoots over to Angelica, dragging one leg to keep the spur under his boot.

He coaxes her back inside, then sticks his head into the saloon to make sure no one else is within earshot. All is clear.

Then he GRABS the spur from under his boot, and LUNGES back outside at Jasper --

WILLIE: *ALL RIGHT, WHERE DID YOU FIND--?*

No Jasper.

WILLIE (CONT'D): I'm talking to empty air. Where'd that flea-bitten weasel get off to now...?

A WANTED POSTER catches Willie's eye. He TEARS it off the wall, and we see that someone has scrawled a BIG MUSTACHE over the drawing of Luther -- and it looks a lot like Willie.

WILLIE: Alright... THAT'S IT!

He CRUMBLES the poster into trembling fists. Enraged -- he PACES the deck like a caged animal -- muttering to himself:

WILLIE: He can't be... HE CAN'T BE ALIVE -- he just *CAN'T*...

He's coming unglued.

And we CLOSE this time on the old crow... taking it all in from atop the abandoned post office across the street.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DUSK

Jasper cinches up supplies on an overloaded mule in the alley behind the saloon.

Angelica peaks out the back door -- checks both ways -- then glides down the steps and approaches Jasper with a CARE PACKAGE.

ANGELICA: I don't know what's going on out there, but...

She pulls a bottle of SARSAPARILLA from the bag... then a bottle of WHISKEY with a splash left in the bottom.

ANGELICA (CONT'D): You think one of these might come in handy...? (apprehensive -- hopeful)
Either one...? Or both? -- maybe?

Jasper beams a toothless grin.

WILLIE (O.S. -- from saloon): *ANGELICA!!*

ANGELICA: Oh no... Quick! You need to get out of here -- NOW!

She hands over the bottles, and hurries back from where she came. At the top of the steps she turns... and gestures for Jasper to "GO!"

EXT. MINE SHAFT AREA - NEXT MORNING

Luther and Monty are sound asleep in the quarry. A RUMBLING sound in the distance wakes Monty and he scrambles to his feet. He runs out to the clearing, and we can see a cloud of dust advancing on the horizon. Luther comes up from behind -- still a little groggy...

LUTHER: Wha... what's THAT?!

Monty strains to see:

MONTY: I don't know... Posse...? Maybe...?

LUTHER (panicked): POSSE? What are we gonna do...?!

MONTY: Get to your horse. QUICK!

They scramble to their horses and return to the clearing. Monty squints again to see through the haze:

MONTY (elated): Well, well -- look at that... My BUDDIES are back!!

LUTHER: Your BUDDIES...?!

A huge HERD OF BUFFALO BURST out of the dust cloud -- and an endless flow of them RUMBLE past.



Luther and his horse stagger back a few steps -- cowering at the power and size of these beasts. Monty stands his ground. Proud and fearless.

MONTY (over the noise): YOU EVER RIDE WITH THE PACK, LUTHER?!

LUTHER: What... THEM?

MONTY: HA! You ain't never LIVED 'till you ride with the PACK! Come on, let's DO THIS! YAHH!

Monty charges off -- and Luther's horse instinctively follows -- launching into a full-out RUN.

Luther bounces out of control -- getting rattled to pieces. He's obviously never ridden a horse that actually RUNS before.

Monty gains on the pack -- LOVING IT!

Luther is TERRIFIED -- and it takes everything he's got just to stay on.

MONTY (over his shoulder): NO FEAR, LUTHER!! Just hang on tight and ENJOY THE RIDE!

The buffalo charge straight into an area of low-profile rock ARCHWAYS.

Monty's horse narrowly passes under the first arch while his BODY passes right through -- no problem for a GHOST!

And here comes Luther -- inevitable carnage ahead -- with nothing to do but... *JUMP!!*

He DIVES from his horse, and tumbles to the bottom of a DEEP RAVINE -- while his horse runs on with the pack.

Up ahead, Monty is living the bliss of a surfer on the perfect wave. He looks back to see how much Luther is enjoying this, but... no Luther. It's just his HORSE -- charging along behind. *Damn.*

MONTY: WHOA! WHOA! WHOA!

He brings the horses to a STOP -- then watches longingly as the buffalo fade off into the distance.

It was fun while it lasted, but... game over now.

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

Luther has managed to bring himself onto all fours -- heaving and struggling to catch his breath, as Monty shows up over the rise:

MONTY: You sure know how to knock the wind out of a party, don't you?

LUTHER: You're supposed to be LOOKING OUT FOR ME... I thought.

MONTY: Well I AM...! I just learned you how to ride with the pack. You're gonna be THANKING me one day for this. Life don't get any better than riding with the pack.

LUTHER (winded; on all fours): Yup... best day of my life... so far...

Monty throws the end of his BULL-WHIP into the ditch to help him out. It SWINGS down in front of Luther's face and he scrambles back in terror.

LUTHER: AAHHH!!

MONTY: What are you DOING NOW...?!

LUTHER: I thought it was one of them dang RATTLEERS again.

MONTY: Why 'you so a-scared of them rascals anyhow...? They're nothing but big ol' WIGGLY-WORMS...!!

LUTHER: Don't like 'em. They bite.

MONTY: Yeah, but that ain't a RATTLEER, is it? You're getting yourself all worked up over nothing - - afraid of the BEJEZZERS out of yourself for no good reason at all.

Monty swishes the whip to make a wave run through like a slithering snake -- snickering to himself -- trying to get a rise out of Luther:

MONTY (laughing): NO FEAR, Luther! Just grab hold of that thing and PULL YOURSELF outta there --

Luther approaches the whip, then STARTLES.

Wait... is that --? He moves in closer and sees that Monty's whip is actually WEAVED out of SNAKE SKIN with a rattlesnake RATTLE stitched on at the tip.

LUTHER: Hey, that... that IS a snake!

MONTY: Used to be... 'till I showed him who's BOSS. See there -- NO FEAR, Luther! Now, *GRAB THAT SUCKER BY THE TAIL and SAVE YOURSELF (** echoes ominously **)*

A SHADOW passes over Luther's face. They both look up and register on the CROW circling high above -- KRAAAA!! -- that mysterious creature that always seems to be there in Luther's moments of peril.

Luther reflects for a moment -- and we witness a CHANGE come over him as a look of resolution takes hold. With sudden conviction, Luther approaches the whip -- BOLDLY GRABS HOLD, and begins to CLIMB.

EXT. MINE SHAFT AREA - DAY

Jasper unpacks his mule as Monty and Luther return to camp. Luther is battered from his ordeal -- completely gutted.

JASPER: Ha-ha -- LUTHER! Looks like you lost a bunch of your puzzle pieces out there...

LUTHER: Yeah... thanks to my GUARDIAN ANGEL here.

Jasper rummages through the supplies and pulls out the bottle of SARSAPARILLA --

JASPER: THIS oughta glue your pieces back together --

LUTHER: Where'd you get that...?

Jasper beams his toothless grin...

LUTHER: Miss Angelica...?

MONTY: Ohh--ho-ho... Luther's got a *GIRLFRIEND!*

LUTHER: Shut up, Monty.

Jasper pulls out the bottle of WHISKEY and WAVES it at Monty. THAT shuts him up.

JASPER: Lucky thing for me I got out of there when I did. Thought for SURE I was done-for after Willie got ahold of me...

MONTY: He got ahold of ya...?

JASPER: Yup. Started grilling me on where Luther got to -- then I let YOUR name slip on accident... and he got all JIGGEDY on me.

MONTY: *JIGGELY* --?

JASPER: All I said was "*MONTY*," then he did like this -- (*demonstrates the twitches*). I think maybe he thinks we're ON to him, or something... maybe... I think.

MONTY: Is that a FACT...? Hmm -- just saying my NAME did that, did it?

JASPER: Spooked him real good -- from what I saw...

MONTY: Heh-heh.... Guilt's got a healthy appetite, don't it? It got a good taste of him, now it wants to GOBBLE HIM ALL UP.

JASPER (laughing): Drowning in the devil's stew, right...?

MONTY: So if my NAME spooked him like that, how do you think he'd feel about SEEING me?

JASPER: Uhh -- but he can't SEE you, remember...?

MONTY: Oh... he'll SEE ME all right. I think I got the makings of a pretty good plan here... (*malicious laugh*).

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

It's a BALMY NIGHT under the light of a FULL MOON -- Luther, Jasper and Monty poke their heads up from behind a retaining wall at the FARM, just outside of town.

LUTHER: What are we looking for?

MONTY: Need to find me a good STEED.

They sneak from one enclosure to the next... chickens, geese, cows, horses...

LUTHER: HORSES!! Hey Monty -- that's a good one right over there!

MONTY: Nope -- that's the wrong kind.

LUTHER (confused): What kind are we looking for then...?

MONTY: I'll know it when I see it. Just stay close, and follow me.

Monty and Jasper cross to the stables with Luther lagging behind.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Monty peaks through the crack of an oversized enclosure:

MONTY (brightens): Ahh... NOW we're talkin'!

Jasper squeezes in for a look:

JASPER: Oh no... you're not thinking --

MONTY: Oh -- that's JUST what I'm thinking!

LUTHER: What is it? Let me see --

Monty elbows Luther aside...

MONTY (dismissive): It ain't nothing, Luther. Just go outside and make sure the coast is clear. Me and Jasper -- we'll be out there in a minute.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Luther paces nervously in the moonlight -- skittishly checking over his shoulder -- more anxious with each pounding heartbeat. *Where the heck are those guys...?*

Then COMMOTION inside the stable -- SNUFFING and SNORTING -- as Jasper and Monty pull a HUGE BULL into the clearing.

LUTHER: What is THAT?!!

MONTY: Heh-heh -- It's just like the old steed I USED to ride.

LUTHER: Wait... you're gonna RIDE that thing--?!!

MONTY: Well... yes and no. I mean -- I need to give you a few POINTERS first, and uhh...

LUTHER: ME...?! What are you talking about...? I'm not gonna--

MONTY: Shhh-- QUIET! COME ON -- I already LEARNED you how to ride with the WHOLE PACK, remember? This should be EASY!

LUTHER: Easy for you! Why don't YOU do it then--?!

MONTY: No-no-no. It's no good if I do it. Willie's got to SEE me on this thing -- but you know... he can't SEE me, soooo...

LUTHER: What kind of GUARDIAN ANGEL are you--?! Who's helping who here?

MONTY: We're both HELPING EACH OTHER! Look... you can't get in trouble on account of they won't KNOW it's you.

Monty steps back and gives the bull a once-over...

MONTY: Yup... this'll twist Willie's shorts in a bunch for sure!

JASPER (laughing): Yeah -- this'll be FUNNY!

LUTHER: *FUNNY--?! Is that what we're doing here...?!*

MONTY (laughing): Well yeah! I mean no, no -- 'course not (collects himself). I'm thinking if we shake Willie up good enough it'll run him out of town for good. Then I can help you find that train of yours and we can ALL BE DONE HERE.

LUTHER: You mean you'll let me go after this?

Monty crosses his heart --

MONTY: Deal's a deal, Luther.

Luther looks down at the other supplies Jasper rounded up from inside the barn:

LUTHER: So what's the paint for?

MONTY: This bull's the wrong color. Mine was BLUE.

EXT. MINE-SHAFT AREA - NIGHT

The CLATTERING of CEREMONIAL BEADS and SACRED CHANTING echo through the canyons. Glowing embers swirl up from Kickapoo's campfire as the INCANTATIONS build to a crescendo and becomes the *MUSICAL BACKDROP* for what follows:

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Luther is stuffed to the gills with straw inside of Monty's oversized outfit from the scene of the crime. He's perched high atop a freshly PAINTED and very pissed-off bull.



Jasper's got the bull by the tail -- struggling to keep him steady.

MONTY: Now do just like I said... straight through town and back. Make sure you got your guns ablazing so you get Willie's attention. Just make sure he SEES you, got it?

Luther nods feebly inside his crazy get-up. He can barely move.

MONTY: Just stick to the plan, with none of that funny business like you do -- (then) -- Jasper... you ready?

It takes all of Jasper's strength to hold back the bull.

MONTY: Okay Luther -- just give him a little kick and he'll GO!

Luther strains to lift his leg -- then drops his foot -- and the bull takes off like a BAT OUT OF HELL!

LUTHER: WHOA!!!

Jasper's still got him by the tail --

MONTY: You can let him go now, Jasper!!

Jasper releases -- tumbles -- then BOUNCES to his feet and chases after the bull -- kicking his heels, and WHOOPING with glee.

JASPER: WOO HOO!

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

It's another somber night of sleepy patrons milling about -- much as it was when Luther first arrived.

Willie sits uneasy in his usual spot -- lost in thought -- tormented over the photograph that he still clutches in his trembling hands.

The sound of GUNFIRE rings out in the distance, and Willie jolts to attention.

-- BANG-BANG-BANG!! --

The bull closes in fast and EXPLODES past the saloon -- sending a CLOUD OF DUST swirling through the doors.

A TOWNS-PERSON rushes in:

TOWNS-PERSON: Monty's back!! And he's riding Ol' Blue!

Willie's face twists into a knot -- and everyone rushes for the door.

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

Willie BURSTS out and stomps defiantly into the center of the street -- facing off with an impenetrable CLOUD OF DUST left in the wake of the bull.

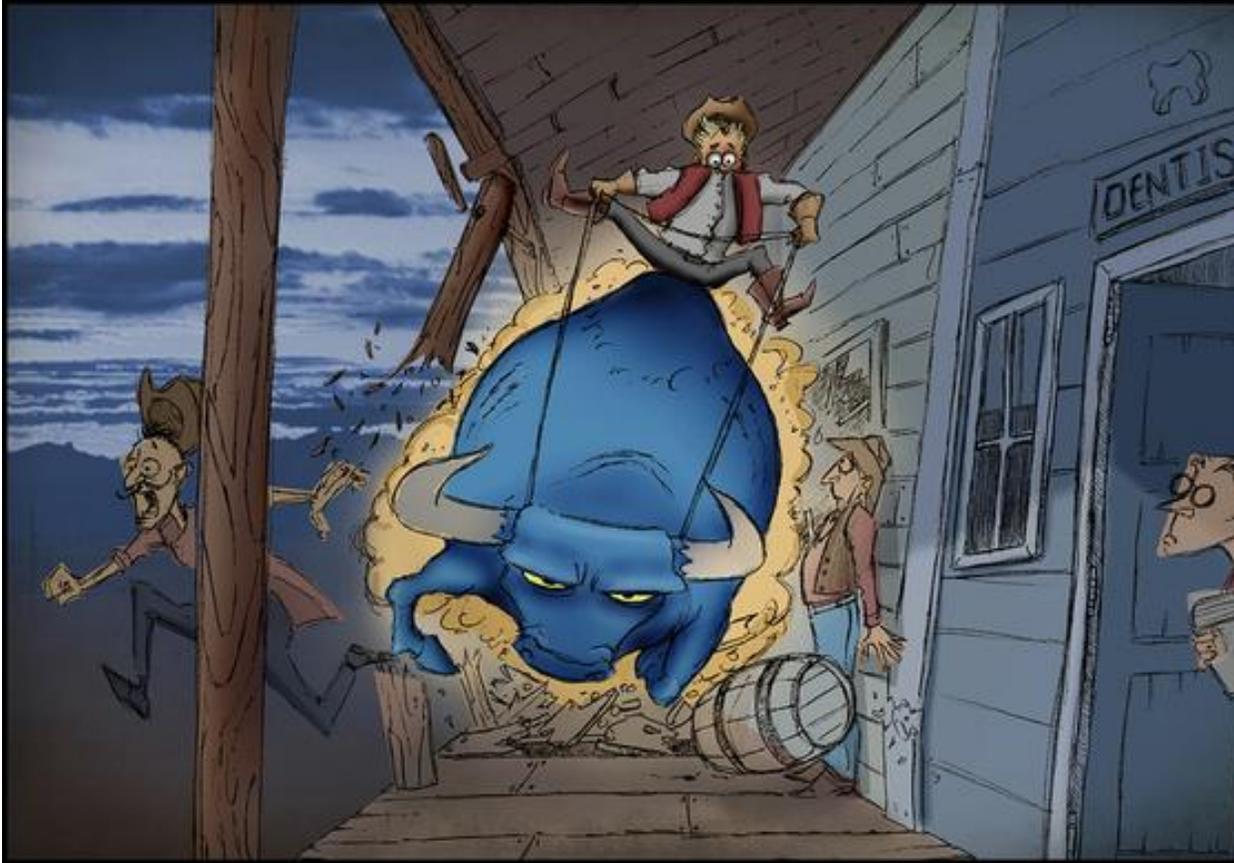
GUNFIRE lights up the inside of the cloud.

Willie strains to see as the bull BURSTS through the haze. It CRASHES into Willie -- throwing him into the air and SPLASHES him into a WATER-TROUGH.

The crowd ERUPTS -- but the excitement and applause only aggravates the bull, sending him into full-out rodeo pandemonium -- BUCKING and KICKING and CRASHING through the side of the train depot.

A GAGGLE of SNAKES flood into the street -- PANICKED -- slithering under the sidewalks for cover.

The bull wheels around and charges back again -- barreling through a CHINA SHOP -- launching a HAIL of FIREWORKS through the roof. The best Luther can do is just HANG ON FOR HIS LIFE!!



Willie stomps back into the street for another face off, only to get struck again -- CATAPULTED into the air -- and planted face-first into a pile of MANURE.

... AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Monty winces at the sounds of destruction in the distance. EXPLOSIONS and FIREWORKS light up the sky. He PANICS, and runs off toward town.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - NIGHT

Monty staggers in, but Luther and the bull are gone.

Willie is on a RAMPAGE -- STORMING up the street -- BARKING out his proclamation:

WILLIE: All of you -- INSIDE! Any one of you that sets foot out here is gonna be arrested by decree of the honorable *WILLARD 'WILLIE' DIXON* -- yours truly! Traitors and their abettors are gonna be locked up and prosecuted under the full extent of the law -- including, but not limited to a good old-fashioned *TAR-AND-FEATHERING!* That means *MARTIAL LAW* -- effective right here and right now -- in case that isn't clear to all of you double-crossing traitors around here --

Willie continues his rant up the street away from the saloon. DOORS and SHUTTERS SLAM SHUT like cascading dominoes as he goes.

Monty stands alone in the middle of the main street -- stunned by the devastation he's caused.

He looks over at the warmly lit, but empty saloon. He can clearly see his TABLE and SHOT GLASS waiting for him.

He looks away to resist temptation... but then slumps his shoulders and gives in.

Then from out of nowhere -- Jasper bounds in and straddles the saloon doorway, blocking Monty's path:

JASPER: You can't go in there Monty!

MONTY: Outta my way, Jasper -- this town's way better off without me.

JASPER: You come in here and you'll never get back out again -- just like before.

MONTY: But look at the disastrophy I caused here. I was meant to be looking out for that kid but the whole thing blew up in my face.

JASPER: But everyone was hooting for ya! They're all EXCITED that you're back!

MONTY: But I'm NOT BACK, am I...?! All that's left of me is that dirty ol' pile of bones back there.

JASPER: But... but --

MONTY: It's just like a BAD DREAM I can't wake up from... and I know I'll NEVER wake up from it, 'cause GUESS WHAT? -- I don't got a body to wake up into. *You GET IT...?!*

From inside the saloon, Angelica approaches Jasper from behind:

ANGELICA: You need to get out of here Jasper. Willie's locking down the town and he won't be happy to find you hanging around here.

JASPER: But we gotta find Luther!

ANGELICA: I'm sure it can wait.

JASPER: No it can't -- he's in big trouble!

ANGELICA: Oh GOD... What's he done NOW...?

JASPER: He's gone missing! And we got no idea where that bull ran off to!

ANGELICA: What BULL--?! You mean -- that was LUTHER?!! What kind of stunt was that, Jasper?

JASPER: Monty taught him!!

Angelica shoots a look to where Jasper is pointing...

ANGELICA: Did you put him up to this, Jasper?

JASPER: No... I swear -- MONTY did. TELL her Monty!!

ANGELICA: Right... for some crazy reason I thought you were looking out for him. You've got to get back out there and find Luther before Willie does.

She pulls Jasper inside...

ANGELICA: I'll have to sneak you through the back so he doesn't see you --

JASPER: No... please Miss Angie -- I can't do this by myself! MONTY'S gotta come with me.

She hesitates... then:

ANGELICA (resigned): Fine...

She pushes the doors open quietly... looks both ways -- then nudges Jasper back outside.

ANGELICA: Now GO! And take that whole... "colorful posse" with you -- or whoever it is you've got waiting around out there.

JASPER: No... it's just me and Monty -- that's all.

ANGELICA: Right... I MEAN IT Jasper -- no more stunts! Now get going before Willie catches you.

The doors swing shut and the lights go out. Monty remains standing. Unmoved.

MONTY (resentfully): Way to go, Jasper...

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the HEAD of a RAGING BLUE BULL charging full-force in the moonlight. We pull back to reveal Luther still hanging on -- trying to wrangle this beast.

MONTAGE - A PASSAGE OF TIME:

Transition through multiple landscapes showing great distances covered. With each transition, the bull gets more fatigued, while Luther gains greater control.

Eventually the bull slows to a trot... but still bucking sporadically trying to knock Luther off. Luther stays with it until finally the bull settles -- and gives in. Broken.

END MONTAGE

The bull is heaving and winded. A sheen of BLUE SWEAT glistens in the moonlight. Luther lets out a deep sigh and pats the bull on its massive shoulder.

LUTHER: There you go, Buddy... good boy.

Moving slowly, Luther slides down the side of the bull -- and cautiously moves around the front to connect with him face-to-face.

He cradles the bull's massive jaw with one hand and rubs the bridge of his nose with the other.

LUTHER: We're buddies now, right?

The bull SNORTS. They have a connection.

In this magical moment, Luther finally notices the beauty of the NIGHTTIME VISTA stretching out as far as the eye can see.

LUTHER: Whoa! Look at that, Buddy.

The sky is aglow with God's little lanterns twinkling on and off in the heavens. A water-color wash of lavender-teal paints the Milky Way. A random star streaks across the sky.



Luther and Buddy sit on the ridge like a boy and his dog -- gazing at the marvel in the heavens that casts a glowing sheen on the rock formations in the monument valley below. Luther slumps against Buddy and starts to nod off, until:

-- WWOAOAOAOhhhh --

The sound of a TRAIN breaks the silence.

It's a familiar sound, so Luther doesn't react at first. Then again:

-- WWOAOAOAOhhhh --

Luther bolts upright -- scrambles to his feet... and there in the valley is a PLUME of SMOKE TRAVELING WEST!

LUTHER: I knew it! That's it, Buddy! That's my TRAIN!

He scurries atop the mighty bull, and brings the creature to its feet. From this vantage point we can see it's definitely a TRAIN down there!

LUTHER: I TOLD him it was out there! We gotta go -- NOW Buddy... Giddy-up -- GO...!!

The bull launches full-tilt down the slope.

LUTHER: Yaaahhhhh!!

In the swirling cloud left in their wake, another PAGE spins in to rest on the ground.

We PUSH IN on the header: "CHAPTER 6: THE ROAD HOME"

EXT. DESERT VALLEY - DAWN

Down the ridge and into the valley, Luther rides proud and strong.

First light cracks over the horizon behind them as they charge full steam in pursuit of the train up ahead.

LUTHER: Faster Buddy! You can do this! Go--Go--GO!!

The bull digs in, and powers forward like a locomotive. Luther's dream is alive and finally within his grasp!

EXT. TRAIN - DAWN

Looking back from the train, we can see the SILHOUETTE of a BULL AND RIDER charging toward us against the rising sun. A head pops out of the passenger car window:

PASSENGER: Look -- it's *MONTY*!!

Another head pops out... then another and another!

CLAPPING and CHEERING for Monty erupts over the noise of the train.

EXT. DESERT VALLEY - DAWN

Luther looks over his shoulder to see what everyone's cheering about -- but no-one is back there.

LUTHER: *MONTY...?!*

He loses focus and falls back from the train.

LUTHER: Whoa! Whoa! WHOOAA!!

He pulls hard on the reigns and brings the bull to a full stop in another CLOUD of DUST.

LUTHER: They think I'm *MONTY*...?

Confused and torn -- Luther watches the train fade into the distance.

Then he looks back over his shoulder solemnly from where he came...

LUTHER: What am I doing?!

EXT. DESERT WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

Monty and Jasper emerge from a ROCKY CANYON on horseback and mule. It's been a long, sweltering day -- and Monty is despondent.



MONTY: I'm fresh out of ideas here, Jasper.

JASPER: We can't stop NOW! Something awful might have happened to him out there!

MONTY: I been watching the sky all day... I ain't seen any buzzards out there. There'd be buzzards by now if he was down.

Jasper checks the sky in all directions, concerned. A dust cloud takes shape on the horizon ahead.

It looks like... YUP! -- it's another STAMPEDE of WILD BUFFALO! Monty steps forward on his horse as the pack roars by.



His butterfly flits around excitedly overhead -- ready to GO!

MONTY: There was a time, Jasper... I would have wrangled every last one of them.

JASPER: Yup, I remember. You and Ol' Blue. You gonna go after 'em?

MONTY (despondently): Nah... I don't got it in me no more...



The dust cloud fades into the distance behind them -- and the butterfly settles on Monty's back... drooping sadly now.

MONTY: I think we're done here, Jasper.

Jasper checks the sky again, and finally gives in...

The RUMBLING sound rises up again from behind. The buffalo are charging back! There's a WHOOPING sound of a WRANGLER inside the pack: WOO-HOOO! YAH-YAH-YAHH--!!

MONTY (laughing): Well, well -- look at that!!

And Luther BURSTS out of the stampede on BUDDY BLUE!



JASPER (elated): *LUTHER--!!*

Luther trots up to Monty and Jasper -- beaming his crooked smile.

MONTY: Where the devil 'you been...?! We been looking ALL OVER --

LUTHER: OI' Buddy here took me on a wild ride for sure! We must have gone to the edge of the Wild West and back again!

MONTY: So how'd you get HOLD OF HIM like that?

LUTHER: No fear... just like you showed me. I just hung on real tight till he settled down.

Jasper leans in close to the bull...

JASPER: Is that bull... PURRING...?!!

LUTHER: Yup! Me and BUDDY BLUE have an understanding now.

Luther scratches the bull's neck, and it thumps its hind leg on the ground like a dog.

LUTHER: We're PARTNERS, see?

The bull SNORTS.

LUTHER: So did it work? Did we get Willie outta there? Oh, you should have seen his face when we charged through!

MONTY: Uhh... I think it's about time we got you back to that train, Luther.

LUTHER: Wait -- what do you mean...? I thought--

MONTY: The town's a wreck and we got Willie foaming at the mouth now. There's no going back. We're DONE here.

LUTHER: But I came all the way back to make sure we got him outta there. The whole town was cheering for you. You should have seen 'em!

Monty sighs despondently, and nudges his horse forward. Luther and Jasper exchange concerned looks, then follow after him.

LUTHER: What's wrong, Monty?

MONTY: I got you all wrapped up in my own tangled mess. I was supposed to be watching after you, but I almost got you KILLED instead --

LUTHER: No you didn't... see? I'm fine! You said I'd be thanking you one day -- so that's what I'm doing. Come on... we gotta finish what we started!

MONTY: Let it go, Luther. The damage is done.

LUTHER: I won't break nothing else -- I promise!

MONTY: That's NOT WHAT I'M SAYING! (regroups...) I'm saying I'm ready to move on now, and it's about time YOU did the same... while still you can.

Jasper rides up next to Luther and signals him to hold back.

JASPER: Give him some space... he's got some thinking to do.

And the men ride off in silence toward the smoke of Kickapoo's fire -- glowing embers swirling up under a twilight sky.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - EVENING

The town is heavily fortified. Bails of barbed wire block the entrance. Wooden turrets are hobbled together on rooftops, and corrugated tin roofing is propped up as makeshift armor against intruders.

The SOUND of a single HAMMER rings out under the rising moon -- it's the finishing touch.

INT. SALOON - EVENING

The windows are boarded up -- and loot from the train is still piled up in the corner.

A disheveled Willie sits alone in his usual spot with the photograph of Luther's Grandfather in hand -- still tortured over this thing.

Mezcal enters from the back -- and Willie stuffs the photo back in his vest pocket.

MEZCAL: What do we do now, Patron ...?

WILLIE: We WAIT.

Mezcal pulls up a chair, and they sit in awkward silence -- for a long time. Finally Mezcal speaks up:

MEZCAL: So what do you think, Patron...? Was it really Monty out there the other noche...?

WILLIE: Monty...? Really...? You were out at that mine shaft with me! How many bullet holes did YOU deposit inside of him...?!

MEZCAL: So that means he must be a GHOST then --

WILLIE: It's not a GHOST either...

MEZCAL: But what about that BULL...? We made that Toro into a Swiss Cheeses too, you know? And that was the only blue bull I ever seen! I've NEVER seen another Toro like that one... EVER! That means he must be back -- but he's a GHOST this time, right Patron?!

WILLIE: QUIT THAT! You're making me all confused now. Someone else must have been out there. Someone's on to us, and they're trying to get inside my head now --

MEZCAL: But who, Patron...?

WILLIE: I got a sneaky suspicion its got something to do with our little visitor, and...

He whips out the photograph, and SLAMS it on the table.

WILLIE: ...and THIS!

Mezcal leans in for a good look at the old man in the photo.

MEZCAL: THAT'S the ghost--?!

WILLIE: Dang-it -- I told you there's NO GHOST! Help me out here. You're saying this face doesn't ring any bells for you-- ?

MEZCAL: So we're looking for *this* Padre now...?

WILLIE: No, we're not looking for this PADRE!! I'm just saying -- that face doesn't look familiar to you? *AT ALL--?!*

Mezcal stares at the photo -- blankly.

WILLIE: Forget about it. I'll take care of this part. YOU get back out there on the roof and keep watch.

Willie stuffs the photo back in his pocket and shoves Mezcal out the door --

WILLIE (CONT'D): Make sure you got every corner covered. Whoever... *WHATEVER* it is that shows up -- I want you to finish 'em off! You got it...?!

MEZCAL: Si... but we already did that -- and he STILL came back!

WILLIE: Who?

MEZCAL: Monty.

Beast-like RAGE bubbles up over Willie's face...

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - NIGHT

We pull out wide on the little town... as Willie EXPLODES:

WILLIE (O.C.): AHHHHHHH!!!!

His FURY echoes into the night... RINGING into:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Kickapoo is chanting over the bones. The others sit around the fire watching curiously.



MONTY: So what do you 'spose he's up to over there?

JASPER: Well, I dunno... maybe a good 'n proper burial for ya...?

MONTY: Ooo... I like the sound of that. Maybe now I can *REST IN PEACE*.

JASPER: You can't *REST YOUR PIECES* till you clean up all that spil't milk o' yours!

MONTY: You don't *GET IT* Jasper. I don't *GOT* any pieces! I'm just a *BURP IN THE BREEZE* out here. See...? I got no hands to get hold of nothing to make any kind of changes around here no more.

LUTHER: That's why you got me -- I can help!

MONTY: Forget about it, Luther. You're in too deep already. MY JOB is to get you back to that train -- and that's it. Took me a long time to get that through my thick noggin -- but I GOT IT now. That's the last thing I gotta do, then we can both leave all this mess behind us.

LUTHER: But we gotta finish what we started -- (getting more excited) -- You know what--?! I bet I can wrangle that whole herd of buffalo and run 'em through! That'll do it! That'll chase Willie out for sure!

JASPER (laughing): Sounds like one of *your* hair-brains, Monty!

MONTY: Yeah, I been ruminating on that, and -- you know... I think you're right. We're a lot alike you and me, Luther. In fact, there WAS a time... if I was ABLE-bodied -- if I HAD a body -- we would have made good partners out there, you and me.

Luther chokes up a bit, as Monty checks his empty bottle against the light of the fire.

MONTY: And you're right about that "unfinished business" too. I got some PLUMBING-BUSINESS needs a good draining here --

Monty stands and stretches -- then lumbers off toward a BIG ROCK around the bend for privacy. Luther looks over at Jasper:

LUTHER: He's got plumbing...?

Jasper shrugs.

As Monty passes by Kickapoo, the bones QUIVER and RATTLE like MAGNETS stimulated with electricity. Monty steps out of the way -- but the bones chase crazily behind.

He SIDESTEPS, DODGES -- then DIVES behind a rock with the bones right on his tail --

MONTY: AAHHHHHH!!!

ASSAILING him in a CLATTER of CRASHING parts. Luther and Jasper jump to their feet -- FREAKED OUT by what just happened.

Then Monty emerges from behind the rock with BONES attached to all his INVISIBLE LIMBS.

LUTHER: MONTY--!!

JASPER: Monty...?!

The bones HOVER and WOBBLE in place like FLOATING MAGNETS, but all mixed up and in the wrong places.



MONTY (laughing): Look at what KICKAPOO did, boys!!

LUTHER: So that's what he's been up to!

Monty makes some corrections -- swapping a LEG-BONE for an ARM-BONE, a HAND for a FOOT... until he's assembled like a proper skeleton.

JASPER (laughing): That's some crazy magic for sure!

Kickapoo stands proudly -- arms folded with a satisfied grin. He SPEAKS for the first time:

KICKAPOO: NOW I see 'um.

Suddenly, a jagged bolt of LIGHTNING splits the night -- and a rolling BOOM of THUNDER reverberates through the canyon. The moonlit sky grows darker, and Kickapoo looks ominously skyward -- cowering:

KICKAPOO: Uh oh...

Was this some kind of *FORBIDDEN MAGIC*...?



The others are oblivious... laughing, and caught up in the SKELETON DANCE that Monty's doing for their amusement.

MONTY: Ha-ha -- look at me! I'm not just a filament of your imagination no more!

It sounds like BAMBOO WIND CHIMES with bones CLUNG-CLUNKING against each other as he shows off.

Monty POPS OFF his skull -- TWIRLS it around -- and THRUSTS it into Luther's face:

MONTY: BOOO!!

Luther and Jasper fall over themselves laughing.

LUTHER: Oh -- that would have REALLY popped Willie's cork.

JASPER: Yeah... too bad he didn't see you like that, Monty!

CRACKLE -- BOOOOM!!

Laughter subsides and takes on a more serious tone.

Then Luther echoes Monty's words from earlier:

LUTHER (mischievous chuckle): Oh, he's gonna SEE HIM alright!

A flourish of WHITE-LIGHT CRACKLES overhead, and Monty's skeleton STROBES against the black of night.

CRACKLE -- KABOOOOM!!

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Willie sits alone cleaning his gun at the head-table. He inserts the last spring into the hammer mechanism when Angelica comes through the kitchen door.

Willie almost JUMPS out of his skin, and the parts go flying everywhere.

WILLIE: Dang-blast-it woman! Don't go sneaking up on me like that.

ANGELICA: What's gotten into you? Why are you so jumpy?

WILLIE: YOU saw what happened out there the other night. Why do you THINK I'm so jumpy?

ANGELICA: I told you he'd be back.

WILLIE: Who, Monty--?! You're kidding, right...?

ANGELICA: Uh... why would I be kidding? (playing him) When's the last time YOU saw a blue bull?

A nervous TICK from Willie -- then he EXPLODES.

WILLIE: Well I'm not buying it for a second! I'm pretty sure your little boyfriend's got his paws all over this one.

ANGELICA: Who...? LUTHER...?

The door BURSTS open and Roach lumbers in -- the biggest, burliest and most dim-witted of the bunch.

WILLIE: Why you in here? You're supposed to be out there keeping watch --

ROACH: The storm's coming.

WILLIE: So...?

Roach rummages through the pile of LOOT in the corner and pulls out an UMBRELLA.

WILLIE: What kind of mansy-pansy-milquetoast, son of a biscuit-cutter -- put that thing down and GET BACK OUT THERE--!!

ANGELICA: Uh... Hold on. Let's see what your little minion thinks here -- (to Roach) -- So Roach... *honey* -- who do YOU think was out there the other night?

ROACH: Sh... She knows...?

WILLIE (panics): DANG IT -- fool...

ANGELICA: Knows what?

ROACH: 'bout Monty's ghost --

WILLIE: Shut it, Roach!

ANGELICA: Uh... why would it be his ghost?

ROACH: Well it's gotta be --

WILLIE: What are you --?

ROACH: 'Cause... 'cause --

ANGELICA: Because WHAT...?

WILLIE: I said ZIP IT!

ANGELICA (to Willie): You had something to do with this, DIDN'T YOU--?!

ROACH: See...? She KNOWS.

Willie's face goes FIERY-RED -- fuming and ready to EXPLODE.

ANGELICA: You can't keep this a secret. Just wait till word gets out --

WILLIE: Word's not going anywhere. Grab her Roach! Get her upstairs while I get the rope.

Roach gloms his fat paws onto Angelica. She FIGHTS and STRUGGLES, but is easily overcome by Roach's strength. He throws her over his shoulder and starts up the narrow staircase.

ANGELICA: You're not going to get away with this, NONE of you!

Roach pushes through the attic door -- revealing MOUNDS OF STUFF stowed away under DUSTY OLD TARPS.

Angelica LASHES OUT -- flailing for anything she can grab onto for leverage. She catches the corner of a TARP and reels it in -- trying to pull herself free.

As she pulls, the tarp peels away from SUITCASES, TRUNKS and more PLUNDER from a history of train robberies.

ANGELICA: What are you gonna do with a ghost on your tail, Roach...? You can't get away from a ghost, you know -- (playing him): and you know what GHOSTS do when they get hold of you, right...?

ROACH: WHAT--?!!

LIGHTNING FLASHES outside the window. Roach LURCHES -- and that final tug pulls the tarp off of a LARGE WOODEN FRAME -- Revealing (*to the audience*) -- a big PORTRAIT-PAINTING of LUTHER'S GRANDFATHER -- just like in the photograph.

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTERN TOWN ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

The full force of the storm has rolled into town. TUMBLEWEEDS bounce over barricades and roll down the main street. Loose SHUTTERS, DRAINPIPES and SIGNS clatter in the wind as snakes slither under wooden sidewalks for cover.

The gang members exchange concerned looks across ROOFTOPS and BALCONIES. They huddle into their posts and brace themselves while keeping a watchful eye on the perimeter.

INT. SALOON ATTIC - NIGHT

Willie and Roach cinch the last knot that binds Angelica to a chair. Roach's HANDS are trembling...

WILLIE: What's wrong with you? Why you shaking like that?

ROACH: Uh... d... do g-ghosts really suck out your eyeballs and eat 'em?

Willie shoots a threatening look at Angelica. She gives him a sly smirk.

WILLIE: Dang it Roach. She's filling your head with those feminine wiles of hers. There's no ghost -- you *GOT IT* --?!

Another FLASH outside -- and Willie looks over at the exposed window.

WILLIE: We gotta cover that up... NOW!

He moves to that side of the room and starts to pull a tall CABINET in front of the window. Roach joins to push from behind.

A FLASH of LIGHTNING outside, and Monty's skeleton STROBES at the window like a Halloween decoration.

Willie TUMBLES to the floor -- TERRIFIED. He crawls backward on the ground toward Angelica with his BULGING EYES fixed on the window behind her.

ANGELICA (mockingly): What's wrong with you...? Looks like you just saw a ghost or something.

Another LIGHTNING FLASH -- and Roach sees it too. He SCREAMS and runs for the door. Willie scrambles after him, and they both CRASH down the staircase.

We push in on Angelica -- glancing over her shoulder into the darkness outside the window.

A satisfied smile crosses her face... as if to say: *"Whatever the boys are up to, it might actually be working..."* And she's more than happy to play along.

EXT. SALOON BALCONY - NIGHT

Mezcal scans the horizon through the sights of a RIFLE, straining to see into the night. A CLUNG-CLUNK SOUND of BAMBOO WIND CHIMES. *What was that...?* He whips around and points his gun into the darkness.

MEZCAL: Hello...? Who is it ...?!

He steps forward, cautiously...

MEZCAL (CONT'D): Patron -- is that you...?

A LIGHTNING FLASH -- and Monty's skeleton BURSTS out of the darkness.



A tussle in the dark -- then Mezcal hits the deck, and his gun fires into the night -- BANG!!

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Willie JOLTS at the sound of GUNFIRE. He's huddled in the corner -- a quivering basket of nerves.

He kicks a rifle across the floor to Roach.

WILLIE: Get out there and see what that was!

ROACH: But... but the GHOST--!!

The LIGHTS FLICKER and dancing shadows draw Willie's eye to the DEER HEAD mounted on the wall.

A LIGHTNING FLASH -- then MEZCAL'S HEAD is mounted in place of the deer head!

Willie SCREAMS -- rubs his eyes -- and when he looks again the deer head is back.

Is he delusional, or is this a HAUNTING?

EXT. OUT HOUSE - NIGHT

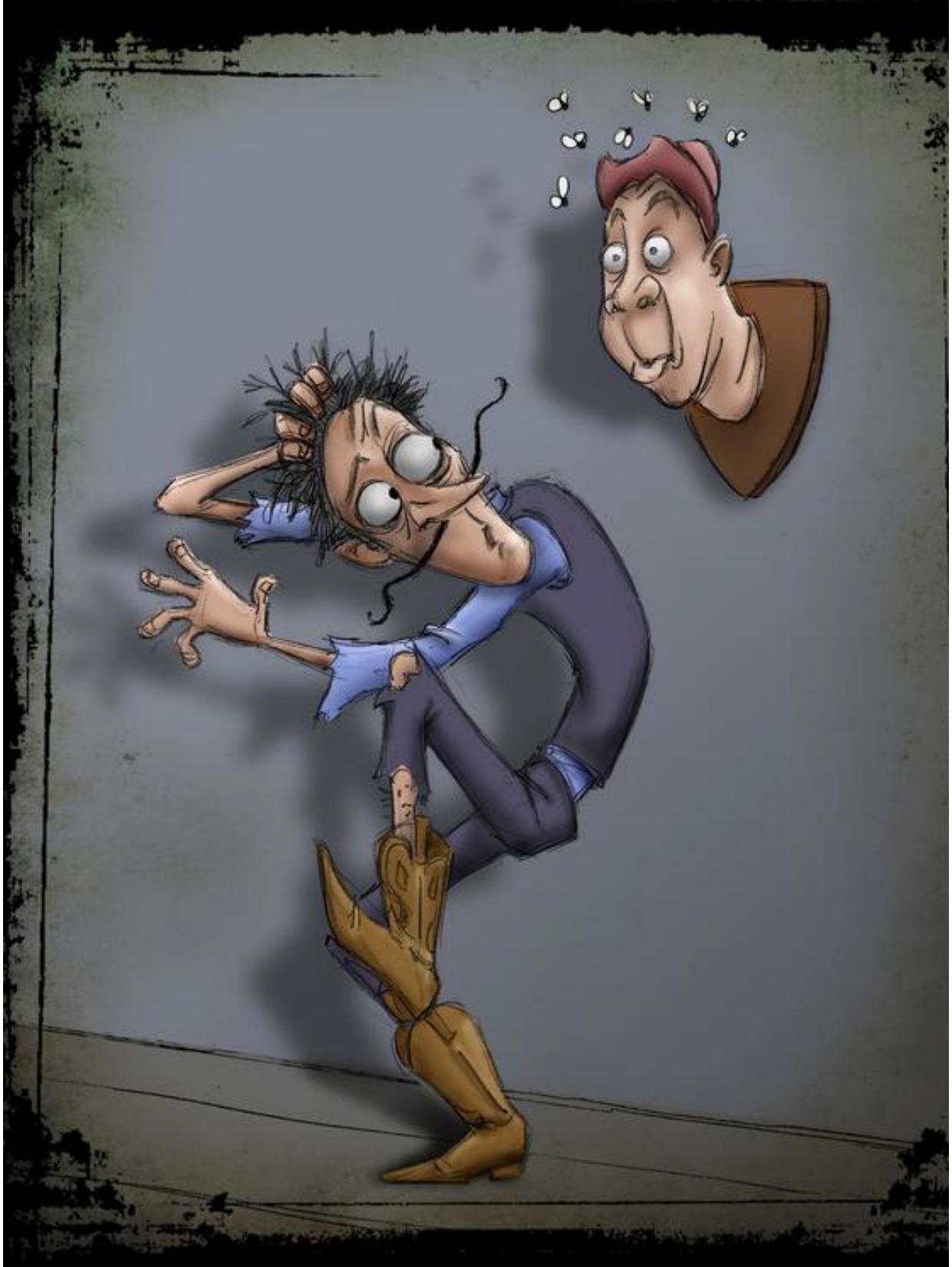
CLOSE ON the barrel of a RIFLE poking through the crescent moon of an OUT-HOUSE DOOR. A SKELETON HAND rises up and grabs the barrel. It pulls forward then SLAMS BACK hard -- a BONE CRUSHING SOUND

inside.

The door SWINGS open and STENCH tips out -- face planting into the mud.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

A LIGHTNING FLASH -- and STENCH'S HEAD is mounted on the wall this time. Willie freaks again -- and rubs his eyes -- trying to wipe away the horrifying image.



EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Another take-down: CHORIZO... And another: QUIOTE -- to the musical CLUNKING of BAMBOO WIND CHIMES.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

CHORIZO'S HEAD... then QUIOTE'S HEAD appear one-after-the-other in place of the deer head. Willie draws his GUNS in a NOISY CLATTER:

WILLIE: GO AWAY -- ALL OF YOU...!

And he SHOOTS aimlessly.

BULLETS RICOCHET through the saloon -- and one of them takes out a supporting chain of the WAGON-WHEEL LIGHT FIXTURE.

The fixture swings across the room by its remaining chain and SLAMS into Roach -- knocking him to the floor in a heap. Out cold.

WILLIE'S VOICE (O.S.): Pull yourself together, man!

Willie whips around to see HIS head... HIS OWN HEAD mounted on the wall! He WAVES HIS GUNS around like a drunken sailor:

WILLIE: What do you WANT from me...?!

He pulls the triggers -- CLICK-CLICK-CLICK -- but the chambers are empty now.

WILLIE'S HEAD: Put those away you fool. You're OUT OF CONTROL HERE.

WILLIE: Who ARE you...?!

WILLIE'S HEAD: You're KIDDING, right...?

The head strains to turn profile, nose up -- a cool and confident version of the Willie we first met with a smug and smarmy grin.



WILLIE: What's going on here...?! Am I DREAMIN'--?!

WILLIE'S HEAD: No-No-No. I'M the dreamer -- YOU'RE the dream.

WILLIE: You're not-- I mean... I'm not YOU!

WILLIE'S HEAD: And you're not the Willie I know either. LOOK AT YOURSELF! You're just a poor unfortunate FOOL now.

WILLIE: You mean... this is how it all ends...?

WILLIE'S HEAD: This is EXACTLY how it'll end if you don't pull yourself together. What's WRONG with you...? It's like you've lost your head or something.

WILLIE: Ha -- you trying to be FUNNY here...?

WILLIE'S HEAD (doesn't get it): What--?

WILLIE: Look... I got this GHOST on my tail, and--

WILLIE'S HEAD: A GHOST...? Really... you sure that wasn't just some swamp-gas out there the other night...?

WILLIE: Swamp gas--?! What...? That's kinda funny -- coming from YOU!

WILLIE'S HEAD: Aah -- touché... you got me there.

WILLIE: So... why are you here, anyway--?

WILLIE'S HEAD: SOMEONE'S gotta knock some sense into ya. How long you been scratching around in this wretched little town anyway -- and what do you got to show for it? NOTHING!

You got a town in shambles -- Monty's full of holes... and that's all you got!! No GOLD -- no FORTUNE. You forget what this was all about in the first place?

WILLIE: No... that's what got me OUT to the MINE SHAFT. I thought FOR SURE that's where they stashed it all... in the MINE SHAFT--!!

WILLIE'S HEAD: And...?

WILLIE: Empty. GUTTED.

WILLIE'S HEAD: Who, MONTY?

WILLIE: No-no-no -- the MINE SHAFT! Monty came next -- he SNUCK UP on us!

WILLIE'S HEAD: Right. So it's gotta be back HERE then...

WILLIE: But I scoured every square inch inside every nook and cranny, and... and--

WILLIE'S HEAD: --and all the usual spots. BRAVO FOR YOU...! And what if I told you that gold's been right under your nose this whole time...?

WILLIE: What --?! *WHERE--?!*

Willie scans the room -- CRAZY-EYED.

WILLIE'S HEAD: No-no-no. Use your head... YOUR OWN HEAD this time. If YOU were the old man, and you wanted to hide your fortune in plain sight--

WILLIE: What old man...? You mean MONTY..?

WILLIE'S HEAD: No-no-no... Monty was just looking after it for him. Problem is you got yourself all wrapped up inside that unbalanced and deranged head of yours, and you lost sight of the BIG PICTURE.

WILLIE: Wha.... WHAT big-picture?

WILLIE'S HEAD: You don't remember--?! The *BIG PICTURE*...?!

The WILLIE HEAD motions to the bar.

Willie looks over -- then takes a few tentative steps in that direction so he's standing squarely in front of it.

Then a VIOLENT cascade of LIGHTNING FLASHES: CRACKLE -- FLASH -- KABOOM!!

And Willie's shadow STROBES into the EMPTY SPACE on the wall behind the bar.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

LIGHTNING FLASHES on the PORTRAIT in the ATTIC: CRACKLE -- FLASH -- KABOOM!!

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

And the IMAGE of the OLD MAN is superimposed inside Willie's strobing shadow on the wall.



Then he whips out the PHOTOGRAPH and holds it up to the empty space in front of him.

WILLIE: THAT'S IT--!! The *BIG PICTURE*...!!

He looks toward the attic:

WILLIE: THAT'S where I've seen that face.

WILLIE'S HEAD: Who's gold do you think we're talking about, anyway?

WILLIE (flustered): I don't care who it belongs to -- he's dead now. So what difference -- at this point -- does it make...?

WILLIE'S HEAD: Trust me. It makes a WORLD of difference!

The WILLIE-HEAD raises an eyebrow -- waiting for him to put two-and-two together. Then Willie shoots another look at the photograph.

WILLIE: Wait... what was LUTHER doing with this...?

WILLIE'S HEAD: Hmm... (coaxing him): next of kin...? Perhaps...?

The light goes on --

WILLIE: So that's what this is all about? He's here to COLLECT?

WILLIE'S HEAD: If you let him. Come on big boy -- who's in CHARGE around here...?

WILLIE: But if he's the rightful heir, then... then--

WILLIE'S HEAD: Then WHAT--? What ELSE is he--?!

WILLIE (thinks...): Well... he's a dirty, low-down, no-good, filthy FELON, that's what...!!

WILLIE'S HEAD: RIGHT--!! And unless I'm grievously mistaken here, I do believe that under the law, a felon's got NO RIGHTS.

We push in on Willie as this revelation sinks in. We can see the weight being lifted...

WILLIE: You're RIGHT!! He's got no RIGHTS!

The WILLIE HEAD gives an affirmative nod...

WILLIE: It's been LUTHER this whole time, right...? There's no GHOST out there. He's been playing me for a fool. What ELSE do you know...?

WILLIE'S HEAD: What could I POSSIBLY know that you don't already? Who do you think you're TALKING to here...? Let's interchange our respective rolls now, shall we...? I'LL be the dream and YOU be the dreamer. Now quit talking to your ghost like that flea-bitten street-urchin about town, and go *DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS...!!* (** echoes **)

A FLASH of light -- and a concussive EXPLOSION of THUNDER shakes the room.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. SALOON - MORNING

SILENCE -- all is still. DUST MOTES float softly in the shaft of morning light that beams in through a crack in the window covering.

A sliver of SUNLIGHT crosses Willie's eyes and he blinks awake. He's propped up against Roach -- still out cold from last night... SNORING.

Willie scans the room -- disoriented -- as thoughts start flooding back.

He shoots a PANICKED LOOK to the head on the wall -- then RELIEF. It's just a DEER HEAD. Nothing crazy.

He strains to his feet -- turns to the bar -- and REMEMBERS! He whips out the photograph and holds it up to the empty space.

WILLIE (disdainfully): Luther...

He looks toward the attic... then BOLTS up the stairs.

INT. ATTIC - MORNING

The attic door CRASHES open and Willie looms in the doorway -- a disheveled WRECK.

Angelica is still tied up in the chair -- waiting patiently -- unaffected by all of this:

ANGELICA: Sounds like you had quite a party down there last night.

WILLIE: Hush, woman.

He pulls a TARP aside, and starts foraging through the CLUTTER...

WILLIE: I had a little TÊTE-À-TÊTE with myself last night, and now I think I'm on to something BIG!

ANGELICA: Oh Great. NOW what...?

WILLIE: Where's that BIG PICTURE I put up here...?

ANGELICA: What big picture...?

Willie waves the photo in her face:

WILLIE: The picture with this OL' GEEZER on it -- THAT'S what picture!

She gestures over to the framed portrait -- now in plain sight:

ANGELICA: Him...? Old man McCleron -- ?

WILLIE: Old man -- WHAT...?!

We push in on the portrait. It's the spitting image of the man in the photograph.





WILLIE (CONTD): So you're in on this TOO..?

ANGELICA: In on WHAT...? You're the one that dragged it up here, I DIDN'T--

WILLIE: I mean... you and LUTHER.

ANGELICA: LUTHER...? Why do you keep bringing LUTHER into this...?

He WAVES the photograph wildly:

WILLIE: 'Cause this is HIS, that's why! He was carrying it with him on his person. Now he thinks he's got some kind of CLAIM to the KEEPINGS OF THIS TOWN.

ANGELICA: He's a McCCLERON --?

WILLIE: Mc... Mc--WHAT--?! Who's that...? I don't know what that means -- Mc-Clellan... Mc... McAllen...?

A voice calls from outside:

LUTHER (O.S.): Willie...?! Willie -- you in there--?!!

WILLIE: Ahh... *Mc-CALLAHAN!*

A malicious smile creeps over Willie's face:

WILLIE (CONT'D): Our little chicken's come home to roost.

Willie catches his disheveled reflection in a dusty old mirror. He SPITS in his hand -- SLICKS back his hair -- then gives himself a NOD OF APPROVAL:

WILLIE: Welcome back to the honey pot, Luther... It's SHOWTIME NOW (*villainous laugh*).

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - MORNING

A sliver of golden sun is just off the horizon -- and STEAM rises up eerily from the COLD WET GROUND.

Luther stands boldly in the center of the street -- his SHADOW stretches past the saloon to the edge of town.

The saloon doors swing open and Willie steps out. His eyes track up the length of Luther's imposing shadow... then land on this little twerp playing the tough-guy.

WILLIE: Well, well, well -- look at you... you little PIP-SQUEAK. Somehow I KNEW you'd be back. Now how do you suppose I knew that?

LUTHER: We got business, Willie!

WILLIE (chuckling): Oh -- you bet we do. And that's the which-of-why you're here to TURN YOURSELF IN...? Am I getting that right?

Willie looks up to the shuttered windows --

WILLIE (calling out): LOOKS LIKE WE GOT OUR OUTLAW, EVERYONE!

DOORS and SHUTTERS swing open -- HEADS pop out to listen:

WILLIE: Now I DON'T want to be accused of rushing to unrightful judgment here... so for the benefit of all in attendance, let me digress and review the counts we have against you -- SHALL WE...?

He faces off with Luther in the center of the street --

WILLIE (CONT'D): COUNT NUMBER ONE -- We got the vandalization and defilement of our distinguished cocktail lounge -- that would be our little saloon over here.

NUMBER TWO -- The assault of an esteemed sheriff -- yours truly -- and his team of loyal deputies.

Willie takes a step forward and gestures to the jailhouse shanty --

WILLIE (CONT'D): COUNT NUMBER THREE -- Breaking out of our fine little jailhouse -- or should I say -- breaking down the ENTIRE jailhouse, and laying to waste all contents and valuables residing therein.

AND LASTLY -- if you don't mind me... PAUSING for dramatic effect...

A beat.

WILLIE (CONT'D): The *ANNIHILATION OF THIS ENTIRE TOWN!*

There's murmurs and confusion in the crowd...

WILLIE: *YES...* you heard that right. I'm sorry to say it was NOT our beloved Monty that rode through here the other night -- elevating the hopes of every man-woman-and-child in attendance... not the least of which -- MYSELF (feigns a whimper). I'm sorry...

Willie wipes a tear --

WILLIE (CONT'D): NO -- it was indeed an *IMPOSTOR!!*

He points at Luther --

WILLIE (CONT'D): One by the name of *LUTHER McCALLAHAN!*

A collective gasp.

WILLIE (CONT'D): You got any final words, son...?

Luther turns to the crowd -- finds Kickapoo and Jasper and gives them a wink.

Then he turns back and politely raises his hand like a schoolboy, waiting to be called on. It takes the wind out of Willie's moment:

WILLIE: Yes -- Luther... (looses his cadence). I suppose you... what--? You wanna dispute that, I presume...?

LUTHER: Nope. Sounds about right.

A GASP -- and COMMOTION in the crowd...

WILLIE: So THERE YOU HAVE IT!

LUTHER: But...

Luther raises his hand again --

LUTHER: I got a "BUT" here...

WILLIE: You got a "BUTT...?!"

LUTHER: ...and it's a BIG ONE...!!

WILLIE: A BIG one...?!

LUTHER: Yup!

WILLIE: A big BUTT...?!

LUTHER: HUGE...!

WILLIE: Well -- go on... what is it...? What's this "BIG BUTT" you got then...?

LUTHER: BUT... it was MONTY that showed me how to ride that bull. We're PARTNERS now!

WILLIE: PARTNERS?! BLASPHEMY...!! COUNT NUMBER FIVE!! COME DOWN HERE AND GET HIM, BOYS!

Nothing happens. He SCOURS the roofline.

WILLIE: I said get down here -- NOW!! -- *WHERE ARE YOU FOOLS...?!*

LUTHER: I think maybe my partner can illuminate you on that.

Luther gestures over his shoulder -- and on cue:

-- CRACKLE -- BOOOOM!! --

A jagged bolt of LIGHTNING rips the sky apart -- and LIGHTS UP the water tower. MONTY'S SKELETON FLASHES atop the platform -- with a single BLACK CLOUD roiling over his head.

MONTY (calling out): Is this what you're looking for, Willie...? Got your BAD HOMBRES right here -- Ha-ha...!!



He swings out the SPOUT-ARM of the water tower -- and hanging from it is a big CARGO NET filled with the panicked WILLIE GANG.

WILLIE GANG: *HELP!! GET US DOWN FROM HERE...!!*

MONTY: And since we're rounding up charges and confessions out here, you got anything else you wanna share with us? Mister... Willard Willie Dicker-something... or-other?

He CRACKS his whip -- CRAAACK -- and the cloud spits out another FLURRY of saw-toothed LIGHTNING bolts -- setting the tower aglow against the blackened sky.

MONTY (CONT'D): Come on Willie -- *ENLIGHTEN US!!*

WILLIE GANG: Get us down from here! We're gonna get *ZAPPED--!!*

Monty gives the bag a push with his foot, and sets it swinging --

MONTY: Or we can let your BOYS fill us in on the details if you want!

Willie panics:

WILLIE: Everyone get back inside! NOW...!!

Nobody obeys. More people flood the street. Children are lifted on to shoulders -- ALL EYES ON MONTY. Everyone is AWESTRUCK.

Monty WHIRLS his whip again, then -- CRAAACK!!

WILLIE GANG: *HELP...!!*

FORKS of ZIG-ZAGGING LIGHT thrash the tower, just inches from the bag this time.

WILLIE GANG: *IT WAS WILLIE THAT DID IT...!! HE WAS THE ONE THAT DID MONTY IN...!!*

-- CRACKLE -- BOOOOM!! --

WILLIE GANG (CONT'D): *WE JUST WENT WITH HIM 'CAUSE HE SAID SO...!!*

Willie draws his GUNS and waves them in the air:

WILLIE: I said INSIDE -- ALL OF YOU...!!

He pulls the triggers -- CLICK-CLICK-CLICK -- still empty from last night.

A CRACK of the whip -- CRAAACK -- KAPOOW!! -- and a BOLT OF LIGHTNING blows off a supporting beam of the tower. The structure BUCKLES and tips toward the saloon.

Monty rises up, and valiantly WHIRLS his whip overhead -- around-and-around -- stirring the storm to a CRESCENDO. Then -- CRAAACK!!

A HAIL of LIGHTNING bolts CLEAVE the sky into pieces with inverted limbs of light -- HAMMERING the tower with unbridled FURY.

MONTY: Come on, Willie! Come up here and get 'um!!

Then a FINAL bolt CONNECTS WITH MONTY -- CRAAACK -- KAPOOW!! --

His skeleton EXPLODES -- and FLAMING PIECES of Monty rain down on the crowd. Everyone SCATTERS.

Willie seizes the moment and CHARGES AT LUTHER -- SLIPPING and SLIDING through the mud -- when Monty's FLAMING SKULL tumbles from the sky, and knocks Willie face-first into the muck -- CLUNK -- SPLAT!!

He's DAZED for a moment... until Monty's FLAMING WHIP whirls in and PLOPS into the mud next to him -- jolting him back to his senses.

He rolls over and grabs the WHIP -- SCRAMBLES to his feet -- then CHARGES at Luther with a rage unlike anything we've seen.

He SLASHES the flaming whip at Luther -- but Luther evades... nimbly on his feet.

Again-and-again Willie STRIKES -- FLAMES flicking off the whip with each terrifying CRAAACK!!

He SLICES through the supporting posts along the walkway TRYING HIS DAMNEDEST to connect with Luther -- leaving a trail of FLAMING DESTRUCTION in his path.

Luther DUCKS, SPINS, TWIRLS -- then suddenly SLIPS in the mud -- and LANDS FLAT ON HIS BACK.

He's DOWN, and completely VULNERABLE now as Willie advances with a triumphant smirk of victory on his face.

In a final dramatic flourish, Willie WHIRLS the WHIP and SLASHES DOWN -- but Luther SNAPS to the side.

The whip BLOWS a SMOKING HOLE in the wooden sidewalk -- and a RATTLESNAKE slithers out of the rubble and INTO THE STREET.

Luther doesn't notice until he rolls back over and collides nose-to-nose with the ANGRY SNAKE. SSSSSssssss -- He FREEZES. TERROR STRICKEN.

The snake REARS BACK: HISSING, RATTLING and READY to strike.

Willie steps back and CHUCKLES -- enjoying the inevitable. IT'S ALL OVER NOW!

WILLIE (villainous laugh): Sayonara -- Luther.

We push in on Luther, and witness a RAGE of his own boiling up inside. *LUTHER HAS HAD ENOUGH OF THIS!*

Then... as if from the heavens:

MONTY (O.S.): *SAVE YOURSELF--!! (** echoes ominously **)*

That look of RESOLUTION takes hold and he goes from FEAR to outright DEFIANCE.

He rolls over and "*GRABS THAT SUCKER BY THE TAIL*" (like Monty instructed back at the ravine) -- then BOUNDS to his feet, and WHIRLS the snake overhead like a WHIP.

Willie STUMBLES backward -- SHOCKED at Luther's brazen ballsiness --

WILLIE: Holy Mother of God...!!

Luther's gone frickin' CRAZY -- spinning the rattlesnake over his head by its tail -- faster-and-faster... until he finally RELEASES at Willie -- FULL-FORCE.

In HYPER-SLOW MOTION the snake warbles through the air.

We intercut the horrified face of Willie. Same on the rattlesnake -- back-and-forth -- until the snake SMACKS into Willie's face, and SPINS UP on him like a TETHER BALL (with Willie as the pole).

CHEERING and APPLAUSE.

Willie is completely restrained now, and nose-to-nose with a very pissed-off snake.

Kickapoo steps out of the shadows, and watches the storm SWIRL itself back into the sky -- leaving behind a perfectly clear day -- crisp and still.

Like a scolded child, Kickapoo gives a meek and apologetic shrug to the heavens. *Apparently, the ancestors have just put nature back in balance.*

Jasper pushes through the crowd and into the street -- SCRAMBLING to collect Monty's bones:

JASPER: C'mon Luther! We gotta put him back together!

LUTHER: Let it go Jasper... he's gone.

JASPER: But... but... we can't just leave him--

THRONGS pour into the street, stepping all over the bones -- interfering with Jasper's valiant efforts of salvaging what he can.

A team of men hoist the OUTHOUSE-JAILHOUSE over their heads and parade into the street where Willie stands bound by the snake -- and they lower the entire structure down over the top of him.

And there's Willie -- HUMILIATED inside his little jailhouse shanty -- on display in the center of town for all to see.

Another bunch of men scale the tower to collect the WILLIE GANG. Jasper watches.

JASPER: Uh... Luther?

He motions up to the cargo net.

JASPER: I'm counting (counts to himself)... FOUR of 'em...

LUTHER: Uh oh... where's the other one?

A cocking gun: CHU-CHAK--!!

THROUGH THE SIGHTS OF A RIFLE: Luther is in the CROSS-HAIRS.

INT. SALOON - DAY

It's ROACH... taking aim from a barricaded window. He sucks in a deep breath... finger takes up the trigger slack, then --

CLAAANG!! Roach hits the deck -- THUD -- and his GUN fires SKYWARD -- BANG!!

EXT. SALOON - DAY

a CLATTER of ARTILLERY whips around to the front of the saloon. Then SILENCE.

The cold steel of every gun-barrel in town shimmers in the morning light -- all trained on the saloon. Breaths held as tension rises with each heartbeat...

Then very slowly... the doors SQUEAK open -- *AND WE BRACE FOR A HAIL OF GUNFIRE.*

When --

Angelica steps out -- tattered and still tethered in fragments of rope -- with a big SPAGHETTI PLATTER in hand that's molded to the shape of Roach's head.

She looks over at the throngs... everyone's mouth is agape.

Luther is center-stage -- speechless -- with Willie peering out through the tiny barred window of the JAIL-SHACK.

Then all at once -- a SWARM of townspeople rush to her side. She holds her gaze on Luther, and SMILES are exchanged between them.

Then she's overcome by the crowd and SWEPT BACK inside the saloon.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Everyone is dotting over Angelica. She's shaken from the ordeal, but brushes off the attention:

ANGELICA: I'm FINE. Really...

Roach is dragged out by his feet. Still unconscious.

ANGELICA (snidely): So where's the rest of Willie's dimwits...?

JASPER (O.S.): Didn't you see...?

Angelica turns to Jasper --

ANGELICA: See WHAT...?

JASPER: Out THERE! Monty strung 'um up on the water tower. You SAW him this time, RIGHT?... DIDN'T YA?

ANGELICA (exasperated): No Jasper -- I didn't see him.

JASPER: But... but --

Jasper looks over to the corner of the room -- and there's Monty back at his table -- just as he was when we first met him. Of course, no one else can see him. He raises his glass and gives Jasper a wink.

Jasper turns back to Angelica -- but she's already moving to the door to meet Luther at the threshold. He's smitten.

ANGELICA: That was quite some trouble you got yourself into...

LUTHER: Sure was. And to think... all I wanted was to get back to that train --

ANGELICA: WHAT train...?

LUTHER: The train back to Copper Creek Canyon... (pauses, thinks) -- It's a long story, but -- it all started with my Grandad... see--

ANGELICA: Wait -- Your *GRANDAD*...?

LUTHER: Well, yeah --

She studies his face for a moment, then:

ANGELICA: I need to show you something...

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The attic door swings open, and Luther comes face-to-face with the PORTRAIT.

LUTHER: Tha... that's him!

He rushes in for a closer look --

LUTHER (CONT'D): What's this doing up here...?!

ANGELICA: Well, it used to hang on the wall downstairs -- at least until Willie brought it up here--

LUTHER: Yeah, but I mean... how'd it get all the way out HERE...?

ANGELICA (suspicious): You mean... you really don't know about this...? It was Henry McCleron that BUILT this place.

LUTHER: My Grandad...?! But I thought he was back in Copper Creek Canyon.

ANGELICA: Well, maybe he was at one time... but he came out here to build a town of his own -- (looks over her shoulder) -- Jasper used to work for him.

Luther whips around to Jasper in the doorway:

LUTHER: You KNEW him...?

JASPER: Old man McCleron...? Well sure. Helped him strike it big back in the day. We struck gold up to our noses!

LUTHER: Well, where is he then...? What happened to him...?

JASPER: Well, let's see now... it was eighteen...six... no... seven -- eighteen-eighty--

ANGELICA (interrupts): He passed away a long time ago.

JASPER: Left it for me and Monty to finish up around here, only--

LUTHER: Only what...?!

JASPER: Uh...

LUTHER: What'd you do with all that GOLD...?

JASPER: Well... (scratching his head) he never told us where he put it.

ANGELICA: Cautious, I guess.... just trying to keep it away from the likes of Willie... and HIS kind --

JASPER (laughing): Worked pretty good, huh--?!

LUTHER: Well sure... I guess -- I mean... now that it's lost FOREVER.

ANGELICA: I like to think it'll turn up some day... "THERE'S A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND EVERYTHING IN ITS TIME." That's what Monty used to say...

And with that, she turns and glides off down the stairs --

Luther looks back at the portrait and does a double take -- *Was that trick of the light...? Or did the old man just wink...?*

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - DESERT - DAY

High on the wind we track along with another page from Luther's lost book. The crow is flying in tandem -- bobbing and weaving along with the page, as if guiding it to its final destination.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - DAY

The town is below us now. The streets are clear and all is quiet. We CLOSE IN on the drifting page:

Header: "CHAPTER 8: THE FINAL STRAW"

The crow peels away -- KRAAA!! -- letting the page float down slowly on its own now. We descend along with it, quietly -- until like a feather... it gently TOUCHES DOWN atop the CRIPPLED TOWER.

The structure CREAKS under the weight of that final straw. A BOLT POPS OUT -- a SUPPORT-BEAM buckles. A chain reaction as more of the framework POPS and SPLINTERS under the collapsing weight. Then a LEG GIVES WAY, and the tower tilts toward the saloon.

Kickapoo cringes as it crosses the tipping point... and DOWN IT COMES!

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The TANK CRASHES through the attic with an EXPLOSION of DEBRIS that knocks Luther and Jasper off their feet.

The attic is thick with DUST -- illuminated by sunlight now through the gaping hole in the roof. Luther and Jasper COUGH and SWISH at the air -- trying to see -- *WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT...?*

EXT. SALOON - DAY

Townspersons rush into the street -- finding the tower SMASHED through the roof of their beloved saloon.

That saloon was the last structure that remained somewhat intact through this entire ordeal -- now completely DEMOLISHED. There's hopeless silence all around.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The door BURSTS open:

MONTY: What in carnation happened up here --?!

LUTHER: MONTY -- you're ALIVE--!!

MONTY: Well... technically I'm -- you know... uhh--

The dust clears and we see that Luther and Jasper are buried to their waists in... *what IS that...?*

Luther scoops up a handful, and blows away the dirt. His eyes grow wide -- it's glittering -- *GOLD--!!*

MONTY (laughing): Well now! THAT'S where he put it!

Pulling back, we see Jasper and Luther BURIED in a mound of GOLD DUST -- spilled out from the broken water tank...

JASPER (frolicking in gold): Look at all this, Monty--!!

MONTY: Well look at that... the cat's in the cradle!

LUTHER: Th... the cat's... what--?

MONTY: You know... the whole -- "*kitten's kaboodle*" -- right there over Willie's head this whole time!

LUTHER: So, what...? How did he...? I mean -- *WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON HERE--?!*

MONTY: Heh-heh... I'm finally getting the BIG PICTURE now. Crafty ol' coot had the whole thing planned out... even postpartum.

LUTHER: Post-MORTEM...?

MONTY: Yeah... that's what I said. So you never thought to tell me you was a McCLERON this whole time, huh?

LUTHER: Well -- no... never crossed my mind. Why would it...?

JASPER (laughing): Good thing this didn't happen with Willie around -- right Monty?

MONTY: Well... just like I say, Jasper -- "*THERE'S A TIME FOR EVERYTHING, AND EVERYTHING IN ITS TIME...*"

Luther's attention is lost in the painting --

LUTHER: So... you're saying I just stumbled into this by accident...?!

MONTY: On ACCIDENT--?! That's what you call all of this...?! Look kid, you'd still be lost in the wild if I didn't keep a short leash on you.

LUTHER: So what -- you KNEW about all this...?!

MONTY: Well, no... I just used my SIX PENNIES this time around. See there--? I finally LISTENED to that rumbling deep down in my belly, and didn't let you out of my plain sight the whole time. See how it all worked out that way...?!

KRAAAA!!

The crow flutters to a landing on the edge of the broken rooftop overhead -- they all look up:

MONTY (quietly): And look at that right there. I don't think I was the ONLY ONE blowing you this-way-and-that out there in the breeze, was I...?

KRAAAA!!

Luther and the crow make eye contact -- and we hold while Luther ponders this mysterious creature that's been there at every turn... and here again NOW where Luther's meant to be.

LUTHER: You mean like... FATE--?

MONTY: No-no-no... FATE means you got no CHOICE in the matter --

LUTHER: Well... that's what I'm saying -- I didn't have a CHOICE.

MONTY: Well SURE you did! You made LOTS of stupid choices. But it's all them stupid choices that brought you right back where you NEEDED to be... right where you WANTED to be, but ya didn't even know it -- did ya? That's what I call DESTINY.

JASPER (laughing): Hey Monty -- I make stupid choices too!

MONTY: Yes, Jasper -- you do.

LUTHER (back to Monty): So... what's YOUR destiny?

MONTY: Mine...? Oh -- Heh-heh. I think I'm looking at it, kid.

LUTHER: Who... ME?!

MONTY: Well sure! I mean... I would have been stuck down there FOREVER if you didn't go sticking your nose into it like you did. Difference is... I tried out my intermission this time around, and it worked out pretty good!

LUTHER: In-TU-ition... Monty?

MONTY: Right... in-TER-mission. Wish I would have used THAT while I was still sucking-in and blowing-out real air. Didn't listen good, and missed out on all kinds of STRAWS IN THE WIND back then.

KRAAAA!! -- The crow flutters away, and Monty watches him fly off -- but with reverence this time:

MONTY: And I think that was ONE of 'em right there...

LUTHER: He's been WATCHING me, hasn't he...?

MONTY: Hmm... just making sure your destiny got done, is my guess.

Monty turns to the portrait of the old man -- now buried to his chin in gold.

MONTY: Yup. Destiny's your destiny, right old man...? No resting till THAT train comes in -- (pondering) -- no matter how many lifetimes it takes.

LUTHER: So what are we gonna do now...?

MONTY: WE...? Oh -- I think we're done here.

Monty reaches to his shoulder and the butterfly FLUTTERS to his finger.

MONTY (CONT'D): Me and Ol' Blue... I think we're off to find that TUNNEL you was talking about earlier -- the one where they left the lights on for us in there.

He steps back to survey the damage...

MONTY (CONT'D): And I'm gonna leave this mess for you to mop up now. Just gotta follow your in-SYNCS like I finally learned how to do, and everything will work out just fine.

LUTHER: My... IN-stincts -- ?

MONTY: Right -- your IN-syncs. You really gotta SPEND those six pennies of yours or you'll end up back here just like I did -- and you wouldn't want THAT, would 'ya...?

He winks at Luther... then turns and lumbers off down the stairs.

A moment of silence, then --

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE erupts from the saloon. Luther whips around to Jasper:

LUTHER: They can SEE him...?

Jasper shrugs. They struggle out of the pile and rush for the door -- down the stairs...

INT. SALOON - DAY

They stop abruptly -- halfway down.

There's NO MONTY, but... GOLD DUST is RAINING DOWN through the cracks in the ceiling.

The patrons are going WILD with glee -- catching powdered gold in their HATS and EMPTY BEER MUGS.

It feels like a fresh new wind is blowing through this town. Luther takes it all in with a smile -- enjoying the exuberance that left this town long ago.

EXT. SALOON - DAY - SAME TIME

Kickapoo is huddled in his usual spot. The LOST PAGE that landed atop the demolished tower WAFTS in -- and comes to rest at his feet. He reaches down and picks it up: "CHAPTER 8: THE FINAL STRAW"

From inside his poncho, he pulls out a LEATHER BOUND BOOK decorated in Native American artwork --

Wait... *it's LUTHER'S LOST BOOK...!!*

He brushes off some BLACK FEATHERS that came out of his poncho along with it.

He opens it up -- flips through -- and we notice that the book is filled with all the LOOSE PAGES we've seen throughout the story... apparently collected by Kickapoo along the way.

He inserts that final page into the back of the book -- then tucks it back into his poncho, and gives an appreciative nod skyward.

Then he settles back quietly -- stoic and resolved.

ON THE SALOON -- CROSS DISSOLVE TO:

A new and improved version of the saloon -- the colors are fresh and vibrant now.

A TITLE CARD: *"Several years later..."*

A new SHERIFF -- LUTHER -- steps out of the saloon and breathes a sigh at the fresh new day.

The street is alive with activity. Angelica steps out and puts her arm through his -- and together, they move into the bustling street.

A BUTTERFLY launches after them and flutters overhead as they walk. It's not BLUE... but the BURGUNDY and GRAY colors of Monty.

-- WWOAOAOAOAhhhh -- (train whistle)

We WHIP OVER to the newly-built TRAIN DEPOT, with a sparkling new TRAIN ready to leave the station. It seems the WHOLE TOWN is gathered for this festive celebration.

Luther delights in the fanfare as the butterfly settles on his shoulder and fans its wings in that familiar way.

As the train pulls away, we see the conductor there on the rear platform -- a little older now.

He tips his hat at Luther -- gives him a wave and CALLS OUT:

CONDUCTOR: Ha-ha! -- looks like YOU found your way back HOME!

With the town's attention on the parting train, Kickapoo steps out of the shadows of the NEW POST OFFICE -- and quietly moves into the empty street behind them.

From inside of his poncho, he pulls out the book and holds it up high... a few black feathers waft away.

The STOMPING of HOOVES -- a FLURRY of DUST, and WHAM! -- The book is handed off to the PONY EXPRESS COURIER from the opening sequence.

The courier chases after the train... and just like the opening sequence -- the crow flutters off to join him as the escort.

Then we WHIP BACK around to find Kickapoo -- but the only thing left there -- in a heap on the ground is his poncho... and a couple of black feathers swirling in the wake.

NARRATOR (V.O.): Now it's here that we could say "THE END," but our story never really comes to an end out here...

Kickapoo's spirit is back on the wind -- soaring along up there with the quiet whispers that guide us.

Whispers that will find their way into the heart of another lonely traveler -- another destiny seeker -- somewhere out here in the FOREVER WESTERN WILD.

FADE TO BLACK.