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# Hondo

By James Edward Grant

Hey, Mama. Mom! Look at that.  
Look, Mommy, look.  
Johnny!  
Now you let Mommy do the talking.  
Remember.  
Yes, Mom.  
But he has no horse.  
No talking.  
Good morning.  
- You look like you've had trouble.  
- Yep.  
I lost my horse a few days ago  
getting away from some Indians.  
Indians?  
We made dry camp last night  
above the llano.  
Sam here smelt more Apaches,  
nuzzled me up.  
So I thought I'd put some miles  
between us.  
But why?  
We're at peace with the Apache.  
- We have a treaty.  
- Yes, ma'am.  
Now I got to get me a new horse,  
borrow or buy one.  
I can pay you in United States script.  
I'm riding a dispatch for General Crook.  
- My name's Lane.  
- I'm Mrs. Lowe.  
I'm Johnny.  
- The water sure looks inviting.  
- Well, help yourself.  
Watch out for that dog, son.  
Could you hire me or sell me a horse,  
Mrs. Lowe?  
Of course. I've only got plow horses,  
and two that are only half-broken.  
The hand that was breaking them  
for me got hurt and had to go to town.  
- You mean you're staying here alone?  
- Oh, no.  
No, my husband is up in the hills,  
- working some cattle.

- Oh.

He would pick today to be away,  
when we have a visitor.

I'd enjoy meeting him, ma'am.

I wouldn't touch that dog, son.

He don't take to petting.

And now if you'll allow, ma'am,

I'll take a look at those horses.

Of course.

You'll find a saddle over by the barn.

In the meantime, I'll fix you something  
to eat. I imagine you're hungry.

I could eat. Thank you.

I'm so sorry my husband had to pick  
today to go hunting those lost calves.

He would have enjoyed  
having a man to talk to.

We welcome visitors.

Must be right lonely around here.

Especially for a woman.

I don't mind. I was raised here.

- What can I feed your dog?

- Nothing, thanks.

He makes out by himself.

Can outrun any rabbit in the territory.

It's no trouble at all.

If you don't mind, ma'am,

I'd rather you didn't feed him.

I see. You don't want him to get in the  
habit of taking food from anyone else.

Well, you can hand it to him.

No, ma'am, I don't feed him, either.

Sam's independent.

He doesn't need anybody.

I want him to stay that way.

It's a good way.

- Everyone needs someone.

- Yes, ma'am. Most everyone.

Too bad, isn't it?

- You're a good cook, ma'am.

- Thank you.

A woman should be a good cook.

Good cook myself.

Why didn't you get on him

when he was stuck?

'Cause I didn't want him sitting on me  
from a standing start.

Stay with him.

You chose the most savage one.

I won't give you an argument there.

He's always been a fighter.

I wouldn't give a plugged nickel  
for a horse that wouldn't fight.

It lets you down

when the going gets tough.

It's a little dull.

Well, I can do almost everything  
around a ranch, but I never could  
put an edge on an ax.

Where is it?

- What?

- The grindstone.

This ranch looks like it's been here  
a little while.

Yes, I was born here.

My husband was raised here, too.

He's an orphan. His parents got killed  
in a wagon-train massacre,  
so my father took him in.

- Handy.

- What do you mean?

Well, it seems the figures are against it.

Only young fellow

in 1,000 square miles,

only young girl in 1,000 square miles.

They get in a whirl over each other.

That's what I meant. Handy.

I guess it was quite a coincidence.

But they say that the right two people  
are going to meet

by an arrangement of destiny.

You believe that, Mrs. Lowe?

- Yes, I do.

- Interesting.

Always sink a blade into a log, son.

Keeps the edge clean.

Well, I guess I'd better quit stalling  
and get back to that horse.

And can I play with Sam now?  
I've told you twice not to.  
But you do what you wanna do.  
Really, Mr. Lane, if you knew  
the dog would bite, I should think...  
Mrs. Lowe, people learn by getting bit.  
Youngster just learned.  
Johnny.  
Don't you ever touch that dog again!  
Now go in and take your nap.  
While I'm at it,  
I'll shoe those plow horses.  
Thank you very much.  
They do need a shoeing, I guess.  
They do.  
I guess my husband's having a hard  
time finding those strayed calves.  
I guess he is.  
Perhaps he won't be home  
until late tonight,  
or he may even camp in the hills and  
come in tomorrow after you're gone.  
He'll be so sorry to have missed  
one of our very few occasional visitors.  
I guess I'll go and look after Johnny.  
Mrs. Lowe, you're a liar.  
- And an almighty poor liar.  
- I don't understand you.  
These horses haven't been shod  
in a couple of months.  
It's a cinch that ax hasn't had  
an edge on it in two months.  
And your tea can, a five-pound tea can  
in your house is empty.  
Your husband's been gone a long time.  
Now, look here, Mr. Lane,  
I don't think you have any right to...  
I'm not talking about rights.  
I'm talking about lies.  
Why did you lie to me, Mrs. Lowe?  
Were you afraid that maybe  
you wouldn't be safe here with me  
with your husband away?  
- That it?

- That's partly it.

Women always figure every man  
comes along wants them.

- Mr. Lane.

- Yes, ma'am?

You're right. L was lying.

My husband is overdue.

He should have been home long ago.

Figure Apaches killed him?

Of course not. There are a hundred  
possible explanations.

Indians are one of them.

But we're at peace with the Apache,  
except for a few...

Mrs. Lowe, if you've got good sense,  
you'll pack up you and that boy of yours  
and come out with me.

There's trouble brewing  
in the Apache lodges.

Vittorio, their main chief,  
called a war council.

A full report of it is in that dispatch  
Im carrying.

But you don't know, we've always  
gotten along splendidly with the Apache.

They drink and bring their horses  
to our spring

on their way north to the buffalo hunt.

Ive never seen the great Vittorio, but  
there've been plenty of Apaches here.

Ive seen the great Vittorio,  
before the treaty.

His horse had 40 scalps  
hung in its mane.

That was before the treaty.

We broke that treaty, us Whites.

There's no word  
in the Apache language for lie,  
and they've been lied to.

If they rise, there won't be

- a White left in the territory.

- They won't bother me.

Us, I mean.

We always got along very well.

People I know, man and his wife,  
got along real well for  
20 years. Then one day,  
she upped and blew a hole in him,  
big enough to drive  
a stagecoach through.  
She got mad. The Apaches are mad.  
Well, I have nothing to worry about,  
I'm sure.

Nice to be sure.

Get out of the way.

- Strange dog you have.
- I don't have him.
- The two of you are together.
- He stays with me.
- He can smell an Indian at a half a mile.
- He smells Indians? I don't believe it.

Sure, lots of dogs smell Indians.

You can teach them.

Teach them? How?

First you get yourself a puppy and then,  
you hire yourself a tame Indian  
and cut a willow switch.

Then you get the Indian  
to beat the puppy  
with a willow switch four or five times  
a day.

And when he grows up, he'll always  
signal when he smells an Indian.

Beat a puppy. How cruel.

That's the way they do it.

Anyway, I don't believe  
a dog can smell Indians.

I mean, as different from anyone else.

- You or me, for instance.
- Well, they can.

As a matter of fact,  
Indians can smell White people.

- I don't believe it.
- Well, it's true.

I'm part Indian, and I can smell you  
when I'm downwind of you.

- That's impossible.
- No, it isn't impossible, Mrs. Lowe.

You baked today.  
I can smell fresh bread on you.  
Sometime today  
you cooked with salt pork.  
Smell that on you, too.  
You smell all over like soap.  
You took a bath. And on top of that,  
you smell all over like a woman.  
I could find you in the dark, Mrs. Lowe,  
and I'm only part Indian.  
Mrs. Lowe.  
What do you want?  
- I watered and grained the stock.  
- Thank you.  
I'll bed down near here  
someplace tonight.  
Mr. Lane?  
You can't sleep outside,  
there's a storm coming.  
I've fixed a pallet for you in the corner.  
It would be uncivilized  
to let anyone sleep outside,  
and after all, we are civilized, aren't we?  
Speaking for you, of course. But me?  
I guess you could call me civilized.  
That's your bed.  
I'm sorry it has to be on the floor.  
I have to set the batter for the morning.  
I hope the noise won't disturb you.  
It won't.  
Good night, ma'am.  
Put that gun down.  
You're Hondo Lane, the gunman.  
- I carry a gun.  
- Don't come any nearer.  
You killed three men  
in a gunfight last year.  
- We heard about it. Three men.  
- Yes, ma'am.  
- Just as quick as I could.  
- Don't come any nearer.  
It's not a very good idea  
to point one of these things at anybody  
with an empty chamber



under the firing pin.  
You can see it plain as day.  
I keep it that way because of Johnny.  
Well, now it's loaded.  
Keep it that way, and keep it high.  
Please stay. I really want you to.  
I'm sorry. I should have realized from  
the beginning that you are a gentleman.  
Civilized? Gentleman?  
Well, a lot for one day.  
Night, ma'am.  
Morning. Getting an early start.  
Be sure and tell that little man  
goodbye for me.  
I ought to wake him  
to say goodbye to you.  
Was it me, I'd let him sleep.  
Youngsters grow sleeping,  
but you do what you want to.  
He was so delighted with that whistle  
you made for him.  
Glad to hear it.  
He and I got along just fine.  
It's more like a flute than a whistle.  
It ranges almost the full scale.  
I learned to make them when I was  
living with the Mescalero.  
My squaw used to make them  
for every kid in the lodge.  
- You lived with the Apache?  
- Five years.  
- And you had an Indian wife?  
- Wife, squaw...  
I took the liberty of borrowing a few feet  
of rope off of that coil in the lean-to.  
- Gladly pay you for it, if you let me.  
- 'Course not.  
The hills are so beautiful today.  
Odd how clear they always are  
after a dust storm.  
Must have been very interesting  
living with the Apache.  
I liked it.  
- This Indian wife you have...

- Had. She's dead.

Im sorry. L didn't mean to bring up  
an unhappy memory.

I can't remember anything unhappy  
about Destarte.

Destarte? How musical.

What does it mean?

You can't say it except in Mescalero.

It means morning.

But that isn't what it means, either.

Means more than just that.

Indian words mean the sound and

feel of a word, like,

crack of dawn, the first bronze light

that makes the buttes stand out

against the gray desert.

The first sound you hear of a brook

curling over some rocks,

with trout jumping.

Its like when you get up in the first light,

just you and her and you go out of

a wickiup.

Where it smells kind of smoky

and private, just you and her, and

kind of safe with just the two of you.

Stand outside and

feel the bite of the first wind

coming down from the high divide

that promises snowfall.

Can't say it in English,

but that was her name.

Destarte.

- You remind me of her some.

- Of an Indian girl?

Was she fair?

Her hair was black as 10 feet down.

Did you ever see a crow's wing,

how black and gleaming it is?

- Yes.

- That's the way her hair shined.

I'd like to pay you for that rope.

Riding dispatch,

I have the right to give U.S. script.

- You loved her?

- I don't know.  
I needed her.  
- But if she was dark and I'm fair...  
- Why you reminded me of her?  
- Yes.  
- I don't know.  
I thought about it.  
You don't look anything like her.  
I am fully aware  
that I am a homely woman, Mr. Lane.  
I didn't mean that.  
I have a bad habit of telling the truth.  
But being pretty isn't much.  
I know a lot of pretty people  
I wouldn't trust  
with a busted nickel-plated watch.  
But some others, something comes  
out of the inside of them and  
you know you can trust them.  
Destarte had that.  
And you've got it, too.  
- I'm a married woman.  
- I thought about that, too.  
I guess I kissed you  
because you remind me of Destarte.  
Or maybe it was because  
I hate to think of your hair  
hanging from the center pole  
of an Apache wickiup.  
Well, a long time ago I made me a rule.  
I let people do what they want to do.  
Sam!  
You are a strange man, Mr. Lane.  
I don't know about that.  
Goodbye, Mrs. Lowe.  
- You are Vittorio.  
- I am Vittorio.  
Your horses have been watered here.  
- You were told to go.  
- I couldn't leave.  
My husband is away,  
and I didn't think that I...  
Your people water their horses here.  
You leave my mother alone.

Stop him! Stop him!

- I ain't scared of you.

- You're not fear Apache?

No.

He fear hurt to mother,

but not death to self.

He brave. Like Apache boy.

Him now blood brother.

I call him Small Warrior.

Him belong Moon Dog Lodge,

Chiricahua Apache.

You care for him well.

You now mother Chiricahua warrior.

Live safely here.

I hope someday,

someone befriends your sons.

My sons are dead. White man kill them.

Figured your scalp would be hanging

in some Apache wickiup by now.

- Hi, Buffalo.

- Been making bets on it.

You're sure a disappointment to me,

Hondo.

You like to win your bet.

I wore out some horses.

You wore out you while you was at it.

Here, let me get that.

Where's that water?

- Looks like I won a bet, Buffalo.

- Hi, Dick.

Yeah, I owe you a jug of red-eye.

- This feels good.

- There's times when water is good.

That's exactly what I mean.

I say I got a right to talk to

this here bow-necked Major,

- I don't talk to no underlings.

- Major's asleep.

That's just too bad about him.

Im a citizen and I want to see him.

Major ain't had any sleep for three days.

I can tell you everything

just as well as he can.

We ain't heard nothing from up north.

If you ask me, the Cavalry's scared of Vittorio. I think the U.S. Cavalry...  
I am greatly interested in your opinion of the United States Cavalry.  
Continue, Mr... Whatever your name is.  
The Cavalry is supposed to support the settlers.  
I've got some cattle up north, I don't intend...  
C troop is making a sweep to the north to escort out any settlers they may find. C troop is now over a week late in returning. That's all I can tell you. C troop isn't coming back.  
I'd be obliged, sir, if you would leave. A fine business, the whole territory...  
- Sergeant!  
- Get!  
Get out of the way, you mangy...  
If that's your cur, get him out of the way. Walk around him.  
I'll be hanged if I go out of my way for any cur dog.  
A man ought to do what he thinks is best. Quit blocking the door. Where did you get this?  
- Half a day's ride south of Twin Buttes.  
- How?  
Took it off a couple of Indians, Apaches. Running Dog Lodge of the Mescaleros. Mescaleros are up, too.  
That makes all the Apache lodges. Say, while I was south, did any settlers get in from the north basin?  
A few, the last couple of weeks. Handsome woman, fair, with a boy about six?  
No, mostly middle-aged or elderly people.  
Get some sleep, Lane, use my tent. Thank you.  
While you're sleeping, I'll move your possibles over to my tent.

Pete Britton was scouting with C troop.

Wintered with old Pete once  
up on the Divide. Ornery cuss.

Them Indians you took  
that pennant offen.

- Dead Indians?

- Finally.

- Hi, Pete.

- Hi, Hondo.

Broke my heart

when I heard you made it.

Your pap know you started out  
against this so-called whiskey?

I ain't seen him for a month.

I know you haven't. Come here,

I got a message for you.

Leave him be, Hondo,

I can't make no money scouting.

Aw, these other fellows'll excuse you.

Come on over at the bar.

I won't. I'm out almost \$100.

- That figures, with Buffalo in the game.

- Wait a minute.

These shirts are hard to come by.

- What'd you hit me for?

- 'Cause I know you.

Leather it.

No, don't leather it.

No wonder them Apaches

call him Emberato.

- What does it mean?

- Bad temper.

I should've let him shoot you.

That's the second time I've tangled with  
that mouthy no-good...

- What's his name?

- Calls himself Lowe, Ed Lowe.

Johnny.

Johnny!

Mommy.

Hi, Mommy.

Vittorio says I'll make a good Apache.

I thought... I didn't know he was  
with you, I didn't hear anything.

- Apache no make noise.  
- Look what he gave me.  
- It is lodge token. His.  
- Its very pretty, thank you.  
He will ride well.  
And he no afraid.  
- I speak with your mother, go to house.  
- Yes, Vittorio.  
Lodge should have man.  
- My husband will be home any day now.  
- I no think so.  
I think he dead.  
Small Warrior should have father.  
See, Sergeant, just like I told you.  
That's my horse, all right.  
Got my brand on it. "E.L." Ed Lowe.  
What he says true?  
- Yeah, that's his horse.  
- Where'd you get him?  
From his ranch,  
that's where I'm taking him back.  
That's where he can pick him up.  
But that's Indian territory, strict orders  
against any Whites going in there.  
You know something, Joe, I got a bad  
ear. I can't hear a thing you're saying.  
Aren't you gonna prefer charges  
against him?  
He may be a mean, ornery,  
son-of-anything-you-wanna-call-him,  
but he ain't no horse thief.  
And I'm not gonna call him one,  
to his face or his back.  
You stay here.  
I thought the Apache were always silent.  
Not when they seek squaw.  
You pick one.  
What?  
Its not good for Small Warrior  
to be without father  
to teach him how to be man.  
This is the one I was calling Emiliano.  
Very brave, has taken many scalps.  
He has six horses, and two squaws,

but one old and will soon die.  
He's good hunter.  
Never hungry, his wickiup.  
This is one who is called Kloori.  
He has ten horses, one squaw.  
Sachito, brave warrior, many horses.  
Not much beat squaws, sings very loud.  
- Boy, go stand by my horse.  
- Yes, Vittorio.  
Small Warrior never to see tears,  
Apache does not weep.  
Chief, you can't make me do this,  
Im married.  
You are fool, your man dead.  
Soon come planting rain.  
If your man come home by then, good.  
If not, you take Apache brave.  
Remember, time of planting rain.  
He's getting kind of deep  
into Indian territory.  
And so are we.  
What are you squawking for?  
You're getting well paid.  
He'll be making camp pretty soon.  
Don't get a chance at him then,  
we'll turn back.  
Quiet, Sam, I hear them.  
Come on, Sam.  
That's his camp, all right.  
Rifle's gone,  
must be out looking for camp meat.  
- You're all right, you're not hurt bad.  
- This tintype saved me.  
That did it.  
Now, every Apache between us  
and the ranch will be alerted.  
They'll have us cut off.  
No, there's nobody between us  
and Fort Seddon.  
Beat it, Sam!  
- White man understand Apache.  
- A little.  
He know now how he die.  
Your coup stick shows many scalps.



Yes, many. Soon, you.  
Man's scalp would look  
out of place there.  
You took all yours from squaws,  
papoose, and dogs.  
Your lodge should be real proud of you.  
You will take long time die.  
Where are soldiers, White man?  
- How many?  
- I don't know, Vittorio.  
You know my name?  
I saw you once at the Treaty Council  
at Fort Meade.  
The treaty.  
The treaty was like rustle of wind  
to White man.  
- Now you tell, where are soldiers?  
- This, I do not know.  
- Hat. Soldier hat.  
- I was once a soldier.  
Why you here Apache land?  
This is for me to know.  
I'm told you speak insults  
to this one of my chiefs.  
The cougar screams insults  
and is brave.  
A coyote howls insults and is a coward.  
We shall see.  
Cougar or coyote.  
You will die bravely in silence,  
or you will wail  
like woman bringing forth child  
and cry out to us  
where pony-soldiers are.  
He claims the blood right,  
you understand?  
You mean, he says I shot his brother?  
I understand.  
So that life may ebb cleanly.  
Forget your blood right  
or join your brother.  
You think you buy your life now?  
I don't think.  
You may live or die, we see.

Indians.

Is this your man?

Speak, is this your man?

- Yes, this is my husband.

- White man,

you lived with the Apache, that's good.

You know how Small Warrior

should be taught that,

he be honored son of wickiup

of one who's called Vittorio.

Watch like the hawk,

be patient as the beaver,

brave as puma, that he may learn well.

Know it, then,

or your dying will be long before

you welcome death.

- More coffee?

- No, thanks.

- What are you gonna do?

- Gonna fix up your shirt.

Not before I show you something.

- Did Ed give you this?

- I took it off his body.

He's dead.

Tried to tell you before.

Funny, I'm not surprised.

Perhaps because I knew all along,

just wouldn't admit it to myself.

- Hi, Emberato, you didn't die, did you?

- Hello, Johnny.

Be careful.

I wanna show you something,

Emberato. My Indian emblem.

Vittorio gave it to me, didn't he, Mom?

- He's taken a great liking to Johnny.

- Probably saved your life and mine.

Indians place great value

on male children.

They also place a great value

on dying well.

Did Ed die well?

I keep it under my pillow.

He died well.

When Johnny's old enough,

when he has to be told,  
it will make him proud.  
Here it is, Emberato. Im a chief now.  
Isn't it wonderful?  
- Isnt it?  
- Yes, Johnny.  
- Where's your mother?  
- Picking watercress.  
- Any luck?  
- Not a bite this morning.  
See where the sun is?  
- Up there.  
- Yeah, on the back of your neck.  
You're casting a shadow.  
If you can see it, the fish can see it.  
Always fish with the sun in your face.  
The other bank's the place.  
- That is, if you want my opinion.  
- Gosh, Emberato, I want your opinion.  
But Mama won't let me go over there.  
- Why not?  
- I can't swim.  
- You can't what?  
- I can't swim.  
- How old are you?  
- Six.  
Help him, he can't swim.  
Time he learned.  
Everybody should swim.  
Just reach out in front of you  
and grab a handful of water.  
Pull it back towards you.  
Not too fast. That's the way I learned.  
- I did it, Emberato, I did it.  
- Good.  
- How will he get back?  
- Swim.  
Well, he might drown.  
- Well, then, you go get him.  
- I can't swim, either.  
Angie, there's  
something Ive got to tell you.  
I tried to tell you.  
- And it isn't going to be easy.

- Then don't say it yet.  
Just look at the moon.  
How odd it looks in this quarter.  
When I was a child, my mother  
used to tell me it was a teeter-totter.  
You know,  
the tilted plank a child plays on.  
I suppose the Indians have a word for it.  
Yeah, bermarga. Its the planting moon.  
Indians won't plant their corn  
unless the moon's like that.  
You liked living with the Apache,  
didn't you?  
Angie, I've just got to tell you this.  
I'm not much for lying.  
The last time I was here,  
before Vittorio brought me?  
Yes.  
I rode dispatch some after that,  
then came to Seddon.  
There was trouble.  
I killed a man.  
Stay still. Somebody in those willows.  
Don't shoot, White man.  
Small Warrior has knife.  
He sleeps with it.  
- You were in the house?  
- In house.  
Wickiup empty place without sons.  
Mine empty wickiup.  
You better tell that brave back at  
the creek bank not to walk in the water.  
I almost killed him a few minutes ago.  
Almost threw a shot at him.  
He very young. Will learn.  
- If he lives.  
- You are Apache.  
Now, hear me, pony-soldiers are near.  
Soon will be fought remembered fight.  
They will come here first.  
- You will not go with them, White man.  
- I will not.  
Leader of pony-soldiers  
will question you.

You will say you have seen Apache  
trailing to the west.  
This I won't do.  
- You will not?  
- I will not.  
You have good man, treasure him.  
They're mounting up now  
down by the butte.  
I don't hear a thing.  
There's eight of them I'd say,  
or maybe nine.  
There's something in those trees.  
That's a squirrel.  
Our talking woke him up.  
He's put out. There's nine of them.  
I love you.  
I suppose I shouldn't have said that,  
with my husband dead so short a time.  
I don't guess people's hearts  
got anything to do with a calendar.  
You were so wonderful,  
refusing to lie for Vittorio.  
He was testing me. Indians hate lies.  
And I guess I got to feel the same way,  
but, once in a while a fella's got to  
lie if it'll make it easier  
on someone else.  
Troop, halt!  
Prepare to dismount.  
Dismount!  
Madam and sir, may I present myself?  
Lt. McKay, Troop D, 8th cavalry.  
- Hi, Hondo, you old cabin robber.  
- Hi, Buff.  
Lieutenant, this here is Hondo Lane.  
He's scouted some and ridden dispatch  
some for the cavalry.  
- I don't reckon I know this here lady.  
- This is Ms. Lowe, Lieutenant.  
You people are lucky.  
Obviously, Vittorio  
and his renegade band just happened  
not to find this hidden valley.  
- Vittorio's been here lots.

- And you lived?  
One lone man stood off Vittorio?  
No lone man stands off the Apache.  
He lets us live here.  
There are almost 100 dead settlers  
in the basin,  
scalped by this cowardly criminal.  
Vittorio may be a criminal by the books,  
I don't know.  
But if he's a coward,  
it hasn't showed up yet.  
- Amen, brother.  
- I must disagree with you, Mr. Lane.  
He's run before us for 200 miles.  
Indians have a story  
they tell their young ones  
about a hunter who chased a wild cat  
until he caught it.  
Then it was the other way around.  
The story goes back further than  
the Indians.  
It's originally attributed  
to the first Roman army to enter Tartary.  
The soldier caught a Tartar  
and yelled out.  
The officer called back  
for him to come in with his prisoner.  
And he replied,  
"The Tartar won't let me."  
That was one of the favorite stories  
of Col Mays,  
who teaches cavalry tactics at the Point.  
The story is world-wide.  
How long have you been  
out of that school, Lieutenant?  
Graduated class '69, sir.  
This is '70, ain't it?  
I just can't seem to keep up  
with the years.  
I meant to get a calendar,  
but then I forget.  
Say, who's President  
of these United States now?  
Ulysses S. Grant.

You know, I voted once. I was down  
in Independence around voting time.  
And a fellow come up to me  
and offered me \$2  
if I'd vote for a man named Taylor.  
And I was drinking,  
drinking a little at the time. And I...  
The \$2 didn't last...  
Mrs. Lowe, Mr. Lane, my orders are  
to make a sweep as far as Twin Buttes.  
My men'll bivouac here tonight.  
We'll go on to Twin Buttes tomorrow,  
return tomorrow night to escort you  
and your boy out to safety.  
If you'll excuse me, madam, I must see  
that my men are properly encamped.  
Very nice and very young.  
He for doggone sure is, ma'am.  
- How long you been out on this patrol?  
- This is the 20th day.  
We've rounded up about eight families  
back there, that's all there are left.  
We're gonna pick them up  
on the way out.  
There've been many a scalp took,  
Hondo.  
- You know where Vittorio is, don't you?  
- I do.  
This boy Lieutenant's  
gonna get you killed.  
Us scouts has got to get  
these young officers educated.  
Johnny, go in  
and set out the plates for me.  
Hondo, if your friend  
would like to eat with us, Mr...  
Buffalo? Mr...  
I've known you for 8 or 10 years.  
You must have a last name.  
Well, of course I got a last name,  
what do you think I am?  
I know what you are,  
but there's a lady present.  
Mrs. Lowe, my name is Baker.

That's what it is, Buffalo Baker.

Well, you may eat with us then,

Mr. Baker, and wash.

There's a basin on the bench

and a towel on the jug, and soap.

You know, there is something

about this place...

- I know what it reminds me of.

- My ranch.

In California.

I shot a deer right off your front porch

on a butte just like that.

With a crick down below

and the mesas all spreading out.

Made me pack it back.

- You have a place that looks like this?

- East of San Dimas.

How wonderful.

You're getting to where you kind of

take to that water.

Every time I wash my face

I think of you and that night at Seddon's,

when you whacked me.

You busted off a jaw tooth, and it got to

hurting so bad I had to go to

the barber and have him dig out

the rest of it.

Did I catch you that day,

I'd have set your sun.

That's the last morning you'd ever seen.

"Hondo Lane, first prize,

Winchester Arms."

Always liked this rifle of yours. Always

wanted one of the new issue myself.

Keep your hands off it.

I've known him 10 years, and he's never

spoken a friendly word to me.

- I don't like you.

- Figured that.

But now I figure is how he might admire

to give me that rifle.

You see, about a half day out

of Seddon, I come across some bodies.

One of them



was this here lady's husband.  
There was a lot of horse tracks  
around there.  
Some of them belonged  
to that there chestnut you were riding.  
That one with the cast-off horseshoe.  
Yes, sir, it's a mighty nice  
little set-up you got yourself here.  
Nice ranch. Pretty woman.  
You could get yourself killed  
talking like this.  
Or I could get that  
new-fashioned Winchester  
since he bushwhacked  
this lady's husband.  
Did she know that,  
I figure she wouldn't look at him like  
he was the high cockalorum  
of every tribe from here to Salt Water.  
Hondo.  
I tried to tell you.  
Mrs. Lowe, we're ready to leave.  
Mr. Lane?  
- Stridon.  
- Yes, sir.  
- Form the troops, column of twos.  
- Yes, sir.  
I want you to accompany us  
as far as Twin Buttes.  
Haven't any time to lose,  
so I'd be obliged if you'd saddle up.  
- Im not going.  
- You're not going?  
- That's right.  
- But why?  
- Gave my word.  
- Your word to whom?  
- Vittorio.  
- Surely a word given to an  
- Indian desperado wouldn't be...  
- Mister, when I give my word, I keep it.  
Now Ill give you a piece of advice,  
there's only one family  
between here and Twin Buttes,

and you're too late to do them any good.  
So you better gather up what settlers  
you have and hightail it out of here.  
Sir, I have my orders,  
and these orders will be executed.

Ma'am.

Prepare to mount.

Mount.

Forward,

ho!

- Angie.

- I can't talk now. I have to think.

I'll put your things outside.

- Before I go I want to explain something.

- Yes?

It didn't happen

in the low way you heard it.

- I didn't bushwhack.

- I never for a moment thought you did.

- But you killed him.

- I didn't have any choice,

- he cut loose at me...

- I should have known that.

I should have known you were lying  
to make me think well of him.

Poor Ed. I guess he wasn't the sort  
of man to die well.

Sorry now I hated him so much.

I guess he couldn't help  
being weak and selfish.

- I just didn't have any choice.

- I know that.

You're gonna feel differently about me?

No one has any control  
over the way they feel.

I'm never going to change  
the way I feel about you.

But,

what about him?

Yeah.

Guess there are some things  
that just can't...

He's gonna be a good man.

Good spread to his shoulders.

Head works, too.  
Other night, after you went to sleep,  
he crawled up into my bunk  
and put his arms around my neck.  
Made me feel kind of funny.  
Like he was depending on me.  
Lot of things I'd rather do than this.  
You're going to tell him?  
If I don't, somebody else will.  
And I got a belly full of lies.  
Look what I got!  
- Hold him by the gills like I showed you.  
- Sure.  
- Johnny, I want to tell you something.  
- It's a nice perch, ain't it?  
Bass. Remember the shape of its head?  
Oh yeah, I forgot.  
Bass have a jaw that stick out like this.  
What I wanted to tell you is,  
while back,  
a man came at me with a gun.  
- I had to kill him.  
- Good. Indian?  
No, he was a white man, Johnny,  
but I didn't have any choice. He...  
I told you to press down on the shank,  
and then you won't stick yourself.  
Won't break the hook, either.  
Here, bite down on this stick.  
That's the way Indian youngsters  
learn not to cry.  
- Johnny, this man I killed...  
- No!  
Your ranch in California,  
it's far, too far for gossip to travel.  
Go wrap your thumb  
in some bayberry leaves.  
You and your silly ideals.  
You think truth  
is the most important thing.  
- It's the measure of a man.  
- Not for a woman.  
A man can afford to have  
noble sentiments and poses.

But a woman only has the man  
she marries. That's her truth.  
And if he's no good, that's still her truth.  
I married a man who was a liar,  
a thief, and a coward.  
He was a drunkard and unfaithful.  
He only married me to get this ranch,  
and then he deserted Johnny  
and me for good.  
And that's your fine truth for you.  
- Could I bring Johnny up on that?  
- No, I guess you couldn't.  
And then you come along  
and you're good and fine,  
and everything that Ed  
could never hope to be.  
And now, with your vanity, you want to  
spoil Johnny's chances, and mine?  
- Varlebena.  
- What?  
When the Indians wind up their  
squaw-seeking ceremony,  
they only say one word. Varlebena.  
It means forever.  
Forever.  
Well, we caught the wild cat.  
Give us a hand, will you?  
I can't understand,  
we killed him on the last charge.  
Vittorio?  
They had us surrounded.  
Could've cut us to pieces,  
then they withdrew.  
That's why they pulled out.  
Anytime their leader is killed,  
that means their medicine's bad.  
- This poor child.  
- We're going out with this troop.  
- Vittorio's dead.  
- No, he can't be.  
Everybody gets dead, it was his turn.  
Now get your possibles.  
I have some medicine in the cabin.  
Thank you, Mrs. Lowe, I'd be

eternally grateful  
if you'd pass among the men first.  
No, you're wounded,  
Im going to fix you up.  
Thank you, ma'am.  
The men are in worse shape than I am.  
Come on, do as he says.  
We'll take care of him.  
- Sergeant.  
- Yes, sir?  
Dismount the men.  
- Hitch their horses up to the wagon.  
- Yes, sir.  
You'll find harness in the barn.  
Len.  
- What do you want?  
- Take four men and gather the settlers.  
We'll probably catch up with you  
at Errad Crossing.  
Wilson, McGrath, Lyon, Johnson.  
- How is he?  
- He'll make out.  
Don't know much.  
Led us into an ambush.  
But I ain't ashamed of him nohow.  
Bullet holes are in the front of him.  
All those youngsters from the Point  
are like that.  
They got to learn.  
Partly they learn, partly they die.  
But I gotta float my stick same as you.  
I never saw one of them  
I had to be ashamed of.  
Join in and keep moving.  
Move it along, there!  
Hurry up!  
Come on, move along here!  
Come on, hurry it up.  
Hurry it up!  
Circle the wagons!  
Wheel her around.  
Circle the wagons!  
Hold on!  
Stay in the wagon.

Keep everybody in the wagons.  
And don't unhitch.  
Hondo!  
All this circle's doing  
is protect the horses.  
We gotta turn some wagons over.  
And stay here? That's what they expect.  
We gotta do what they don't expect.  
That's why all the heavy artillery's  
in Buffalo's wagon.  
Buffalo!  
Lieutenant, get down.  
Are you ready, Buff?  
- I was born ready.  
- Let's go.  
Circle the wagons.  
Close up.  
Stay down!  
Sergeant!  
- I don't want to be an Apache, Mama.  
- Now, you be quiet.  
We're going to get out all right.  
Now, help me, hurry.  
- Ready again, Buff?  
- As I told you, I was born ready.  
Throw me your knife.  
Get out of here!  
All right, Hondo!  
They're not following.  
Leader's dead.  
They'll powwow and pick a new one.  
We're out of trouble  
if we get a move on.  
And am I going to get to drive?  
Before we get to San Dimas,  
you'll be a top teamster, son.  
- How are you, Lieutenant?  
- Fine, thanks to you.  
And you're all right, thanks to Lennie.  
He shot that Indian offen your back.  
- Thanks.  
- With your rifle.  
Its his.  
Don't look like we'll be needing it

much more today.

General Crook will be here  
within a month with a large force.

- That'll be the end of the Apache.

- Yeah.

End of a way of life.

Too bad, it's a good way.

Wagons forward!