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Man with the Gun

By N.B. Stone Jr.

Dade Holman's calling card.
And that's one cashed-in dog.
Maybe the boy'd feel better
if I took a look.
Boys inside?
"Dog, you dare,
"dog, you die."
I've been thinking.
You know, somebody ought
to tell Mr. Pinchot
that when he's on Sheridan Street,
he shouldn't act like he's on Gold Street,
or people won't like him.
I'll tell him.
I'm very fond of Ed Pinchot.
We had a perfectly divine dance last night.
Except he didn't take off
his shoulder holster.
Take off his holster in Sheridan?
Oh, I guess he'd be safe these days.
Dade Holman's painted the town
bright yellow.
Well, it could be worse.
Mr. Pinchot usually shoots people.
Well, what did I say this time?
Really, Ann.
How's he called, that big one?
Ed Pinchot.
Wears a shoulder holster?
Yeah.
Come in.
Get on the loose shoe as soon
as I mend the Doc's rig.
He needs it for sick calls.
I'll mend my horse
if I can borrow your layout.
Ridin' through?
Yeah, as soon as I take care
of a little personal business.
Tools.
Thanks.
How about that,
middle of Sheridan Street,
and the gun blast didn't even roust

the Marshal out of his seat!
Sims get het up about a dead dog?
He ain't het up about the miner
who died sudden at the Palace last night.
Now, Saul, we can't afford
to worry about Gold Street doings,
but when Holman's gunslick gets
careless on this side of town...
Trouble's outside of town today.
Holman's fixin' for a busy one
when he borrows the Palace boys.
Now, everybody roundabout's
heard that gunshot.
They don't know it's just a dog.
Ain't even noon!
And business goes to pot for the day!
It's on the house.
Where will I find Nelly Bain's place?
Nelly Bain?
Corner of Sheridan and Gold.
Entrance on Gold.
But don't let that fool you.
It ain't an entrance.
Nobody, no man anyhow, gets past Nelly.
You want to wait till night,
you can see her girls at the Palace.
Sarah.
- Sarah!
- Yes, Miss Bain.
Miss Bain ain't home.
When do you expect her?
She won't be home all day.
All right, give her a message for me.
You tell her that Clint Tollinger
is riding through.
Tell her he wants to ask her
just one question
before he moves on.
You tell her right now. I'll wait.
I can't do it.
She's already told me.
I'm a doc,
so I'm entitled to theories,
and I got one now.

I got a theory
that sudden death is catching.
Tollinger!
Well, if you haven't got it yet,
maybe you never will.
No, you wouldn't remember me,
but I'm not likely to forget you.
No one who lived in Ponca,
who lived through Ponca,
is going to forget you in a hurry.
Doc Hughes.
Tollinger?
Might call him a town doctor, too.
Ponca was a mighty sick town.
Clint operated on it.
Patient lost a lot of blood, but lived.
Town tamer.
Where you headin'?
Not here!
I never could sleep in a saddle.
- Board my horse?
- My business.
Mostly west a mile
and over, Doc.
Where law and order
ain't caught up yet, huh?
We're mighty far west, seems to me.
Atkins here is president
of the town council.
It's his job to worry.
We're not that far west.
That so?
Well, I'm checking into the hotel
down here for a couple of days.
That'll give you time to decide
just how far west you are.
I'll see you, Doc.
Saul, I know what you're thinking,
but don't.
I don't believe in operating
till you've tried all the cures.
We're not that bad off yet.
Aren't we?
Always dresses in gray.

Black would fit his profession better.
Dade says no guns unless we have to.
You reckon Castle saw us coming
and lit out?
Let's get a fire started.
You want the next one
between your eyes?
Tell Dade Holman I'm building here,
and if he bothers me again,
I'll personal put a bullet
through his fat carcass.
When Dade's got hisself
12 top gun hands out at his place,
not counting the boys
he's got here at the Palace,
that's just too many to fight, boy!
And should I, at any time, rile them up,
they can ride in here,
and wipe this town right off the map.
Now, Saul, ain't them the facts?
Heard you say so often enough.
There's more than one way
to wipe a town off the map.
A town has got to eat if it's gonna grow,
but Dade doesn't want farms
cluttering up his grass.
Look out there.
It smells like a ghost town already.
Son,
when you get a little older,
you'll realize there's certain things
that's best left alone.
And by and by, they just take care
of theirselves.
Leave Holman alone,
and he'll swallow us up.
He's done swallowed
and digested the whole lot of you already.
Long before I come to town.
Dade's a power in the county,
and he's gettin' to be a power in the state,
and now you want
to cut him down to size.
Yes, now.

Look, son, hold your horses, will you?
Dade is old, and he's fat,
and he's got hisself a bum ticker.
And one of these days,
he'll just pop off, just like that.
Then that'll be the time to go...
Son, quit it, will you?
You are digging holes
in my desktop again.
That land is mine, legal.
Dade needs to be told that, legal.
But if you won't do it, put a star on me,
and I'll tell him quick enough!
I ain't deputizing you,
nor no other darn fightin' fool
who wants to go out and get hisself killed.

- Saul, are you with me?
- I'm not waiting till Dade dies
to live on my own property!
I... Son!
Look, Jeff.
Now, did you hear that?
I heard.
Look, before you and Stella
set the wedding date,
I might've felt different about you
declaring war on Holman.

- But now, boy...
- It's too late, Saul.
I caught his boys red-handed
today trying to set a fire.
Well, I shot them off my homesite,
and I'm gonna keep 'em off.
Saul,
step into my office a minute, will you?

- Maybe you and me...
- No, Lee, we can't.
Tell her I'm here.
- Miss...
- She's home.
You see that? That's my foot.
It's too big to close the door on.
Now, you tell her.
Itching to get into it, Clint?

Hello, Nelly.
Your girls, I understand.
And you're the girl who was brought up
to think that dancing was a sin.
I know you've come a long way, Nell,
but then it is a long way from home,
isn't it?
I thought so.
But you're still in business, I see,
so you've found it.
I might have known.
The town's rotten ripe.
Is that why you picked it?
Now I'm here on personal business.
I got your message.
Just the one question.
It's been three years.
You don't expect an answer.
It's been three years, and I do.
Leave us alone, Clint, I'm warning you.
As soon as I get my answer.
You won't from me.
Be kind just this once.
Forget us.
Ride away and let me forget
you're still alive.
Beth is five now.
Where is she?
It's almost like you could
reach out and touch the snow.
It looks like a lake I once saw up
in the Sawtooth Mountains.
You know, Jeff, I thought
of a mountain lake for our honeymoon.
Not in the Sawtooths.
No one around for hundreds of miles.
Oh?
I could always fish,
but what would you do?
Fish!
Sometimes, Jefferson Castle,
I wonder about you.
Company.
Mr. Tollinger, this is my daughter, Stella,

and this young man ain't a member
of the family yet,
but he's the next thing to it.
- Jeff Castle, who had the trouble today.
- Pleased to meet you.
What trouble? Jeff, you didn't tell...
Look, Holman tried to burn him out,
but I got an idea.
First, I have to sell it to the council
at the regular meeting Friday.
But if I can't swing it,
I'll pay you for your time.
- Clint Tollinger.
- That's my risk.
I always try to make sure
that a town needs doing,
and a town wants doing.
We need it, all right.
You figure you can tidy up a town
single-handed, Mr. Tollinger?
With a little luck, yeah.
He's been 100% lucky,
and when it adds up like that, it ain't luck.
Call it timing. I just work faster alone.
Well, then you're not a marshal.
- Or a sheriff.
- He's a town tamer.
The difference is there are no rules
on my end of the business.
Except maybe one,
never stay in one town too long.
Well, you can clean up
for the rest of the town.
I believe in doing my own fighting.
Look, that won't be necessary.
If Mr. Tollinger does the job,
it'll go fast like he says.
If you'll just hold up...
I'm not holding up for anybody!
Not for Holman or Sims or anybody.
How about thinking of Stella?
I am thinking of Stella.
It's our homesite, and I'm building on it,
so we'll have someplace to live

when we get married.

Mr. Tollinger, I must say
you don't look fierce enough
to fight everyone's battles.
I'm a peacemaker by profession,
Miss Atkins.

Let's get you some dinner.
You haven't met my wife yet.
Oh, Mary.

Saul?

You're late tonight.
Mary, this is Mr. Tollinger,
and he's hungry.
Oh, this way, Mr. Tollinger.

Those guns...
All that talk about fighting,
and what happened to you today.
I'm scared.

Honey, you can't keep on
turning the other cheek
with a cemetery as big as we've got.
But to pay someone to stand up
like a man for you...
You understand, don't you?

I don't know.

Look, it's like this.
I've got to do my own fighting,
to get into training to be head
of my family.

Don't I, now?
Good night, honey.
Good night.

Mmm.

The boy's gonna take some handling.
But I think he's...

Jeff!

Here he is.
- His left shoulder, it's bleeding!
Get Doc Hughes.

Well?

Town needs it.
They'll find out they want it in a hurry.
Fourteen killings
and 31 robberies in the past year,

most of them in or around the Palace.
That's how things have
quieted down for us.
Call that spade a spade, Saul.
You're talking Tollinger,
you're talking gun law.
What have we got now?
Only it's Holman's guns and Holman's law.
People are scared to build.
They're scared to farm.
They're even scared off the streets.
You know how I feel about young Castle
getting shot up, Saul,
but Tollinger?
I heard about a town
he cleaned up right smart,
only a lot of businesses closed down
till the smoke blew away,
and never did open up.
If my business closed down,
I wouldn't know the difference.
\$500 is a lot of money
to pay for a cleanup job,
but it ain't too much to pay a tamer,
willing to take all the chances.
Arthur.
One gun against Holman's army?
They'll take him fast.
Then Dade'll work his grudge off
on the rest of us.
I say if Gold Street ruffraff
want to kill each other off,
let them, and good riddance!
Things have quieted down lately for us,
till tonight.
Ten years ago, there were a dozen farms
and three mining operations in the valley.
Now there's just Dade Holman.
He's got the valley,
he's got us backed up here in town.
Now he's working on the town.
He already owns Gold Street.
What happens when he decides
to take over Sheridan Street?

He'll take it over.
Can anyone here deny that?
Unless...
Are you sure Clint Tollinger is available?
I'm sure.
Is Tollinger the cure for what's ailing us?
As a doctor, I've seen some cures
worse than the disease.
Believe me,
his medicine is hard to take,
and harder to keep down.
Come in.
There's a fire out in the prairie a ways.
It ain't grass neither.
It's young Jeff Castle's new house,
gone up in a puff of smoke.
Well, if that don't just about...
What are you gonna do about it?
Well, I...
I could deputize
every man jack of you
for a war on Holman,
just like young Castle had wanted.
All over a pile of lumber!
Is that what you want?
Hold it, Lee.
Gentlemen,
I'm putting the proposition to a vote,
namely, to employ Clint Tollinger
in the capacity of town tamer.
All in favor signify by saying, "Aye."
- Aye.
- Aye.
All opposed?
Motion is carried unanimous.
Gentlemen,
meet Clint Tollinger.
Mr. Tollinger,
I guess you wouldn't mind
a little friendly advice
from a member of the town council?
What I mean is,
we don't want you to go hog wild on this.
I mean, just take it a little easy.

Too much gun play is bad for business.
What you mean is
that target practice in the hallways
is against the house rules, eh?
Oh, I see, having your little joke, huh?
Oh, hello, Tollinger.
Just looking around a bit
before you start to work?
No, I'm ready.
Ever been in Sheridan before?
No, but all these towns look alike to me.
So do the people.
I'll bet you, you never seen one
look like Dade Holman before.
Lay odds you never
get a chance to see him.
Saul Atkins tells me you know the terms.
You'll draw up a contract in letter form.
There's a clause I'd like in that contract.
- Yeah?
- No interference.
I'll do the job my own way.
You'll deputize me, and that's all.
If I need your help, I'll let you know.
Well, the town council took you on.
I'm just a hired hand here myself.
You're on your own, Tollinger.
What's Holman's brand?
Lazy Tombstone.
Who ramrods for him?
Pinchot. Ed Pinchot. Know him?
Yeah, I've heard he's overdue.
He's wanted down in Texas
for murder and rustling,
and in Abilene, Kansas, for plain murder.
And there's Frenchy Lescaux.
When Dade opened the Palace,
he brung Lescaux
all the way up from New Orleans,
I believe it was, to run it for him.
Two of a kind.
Lescaux can kill plain or fancy,
but he's partial to a bowie knife.
Fact of the matter is,

last marshal died of a knife wound
he got over at the Palace,
checking up on a knife killing
there the night before.
- But Lescaux claimed...
- Fill me in on Holman.
No name calling,
just how does he operate?
Well, Dade's a fat man,
but don't let that fool you.
Never lifts a pudgy finger hisself.
Well, you take yesterday, for example.
Just a typical day in Dade's life.
He cut himself a piece out of a trail herd
that was passing through.
Then he roughed up the new mine
merchant's over at Benning Creek Way.
Then he tried to grab
young Jeff Castle's homesite,
and, I'm betting you,
he divvied up the gold dust
they took off that poor dead miner
over there at the Palace.
Nothing is too small or mean for Dade.
Nothing's so rich nor fancy, neither.
Grand piany from Italy,
yeah, fish eggs from Rooshy
and a brocade sofie from New York.
Did he bring in Nelly Bain?
Nelly? Oh, no.
No, not that one.
Nelly come on her own steam,
stays on her own terms.
Course, her girls work over at the Palace,
but nobody owns Nelly.
Now,
don't you tell them church biddies
I said so,
but Nelly is quite a female.
Ain't no lady of course,
but if some of the men in this town
stood up to Dade's boys
the way Nelly does, and got away with it...
Town never stood up before, huh?

No. No.
And believe you me, mister, it...
It ain't no
one-man job, neither.
And
it's too late now.
Well, they got to start sometime.
How?
You can't get at Dade.
He sits out there in that ranch
of his like a big, fat spider, I tell you.
He ain't been to town
in the last four or five years.
It would take an army to get through them
gun hands of his.
Well, we'll have to get him to town.
Get him how?
I'll work on that.
I'll take that oath now.
Okay.
- Mr. Tollinger.
- Miss Atkins.
I just stopped by to ask how's the patient?
Much better, thank you.
Doc Hughes says he can't be moved.
That suits me just fine.
Mother's with him while he's taking a nap,
while I try to figure out
Father's bookkeeping.
I don't know what the council's gonna do
for its book work
when Stella and Jeff get married.
When?
It seemed so soon, but now...
Maybe you can tell me something,
Mr. Tollinger.
After all, it's what you call your
business.
Would they have tried to kill Jeff,
if he hadn't shot at them yesterday?
I knew a man once, didn't own a gun.
Wouldn't have one in the house.
One day, those land grabbers
back in Lotawana County

came to pay him a call.
He sent his kid out to hide in the brush
before he'd open the door.
They shot him where he stood,
then they burned the house down
around him.
Jeff Castle just made one mistake.
What?
He didn't shoot to kill.
Oh, it is getting late,
and I want to be home
when Jeff wakes up.
First one's on the house, Mr. Tollinger.
My first drink on a working day
is my last one.
Can't afford to drink on the house.
Any of Dade Holman's boys in town?
We work for Dade Holman.
Who's askin'?
Well, look what we got here,
a new deputy.
With a long memory.
Fred and Sy Harkness.
You ran with Big Bill Thompson
down south,
wiped out the Circle B Ranch to a man.
Last year, you killed a bank teller
down in Texas.
I hear there's a price
on your head in Texas.
That's in Texas.
Well, this is Sheridan,
where I'm giving you exactly 10 minutes
to get out of town and don't come back.
Don't ever come back.
- Why, you tinhorn...
Move.
Nelly!
Look, just in from St. Louis.
Every day's a shopping day for you, Annie,
you'll never save a cent.
How will they see the forest for the trees?
Huh?
You're going to do Mable's song tonight.

She's nursing a sore throat.
But I haven't got any voice,
and that's the worst kind!
They're not paying for your pear-shaped
tones at the Palace, dear.
Nelly means, "Who listens?"
Well, honestly, Nelly, half the time,
I don't know what you're talking about.
Well, try a little harder
'cause I have something to say
to all of you.
I'm warning you again
not to let your escorts
any further than the verandah steps
when they walk you home.
The ladies in this town
are just waiting for a reason
to force us to leave.
I'm going to keep them waiting
as long as the Palace
pays as well as it does.
Oh, honestly, Nelly,
the way you talk, sometimes
you'd think we'd never left home.
You notice I don't say anything
about your manners.
Appearances are all I care about.
You're pretty girls,
and the Palace is not a pretty business.
Ann,
whose husband were you flirting
with today?
Why, nobody's.
I mean, well, that is, at least he's new,
and not one of the old, tired ones.
New and attractive, obviously.
Oh, yes!
But, you know,
I think he's some kind of a law man
because he had a big star right here,
and he was all dressed in gray.
What did I do now?
Ann, you should realize by now
that you should never flirt with a man

wearing a badge.
Especially that man.
And from now on,
any rule I give you has nothing to do
with manners or appearances.
It's to keep you
out of the way of stray bullets.
Ain't open till 6:00.
So if you want a drink,
The Red Dog next door will oblige.
Tell Lescaux I'd like to talk to him.
A beauty, eh?
I brought her all the way
from New Orleans with me.
Won her with a stack of poker chips.
\$2,000 worth.
Fancy.
What can I do for you, Mr. Tollinger?
Word gets around.
Then you may have heard that I told
the Harkness Brothers to get out of town.
You may even have heard
that I never warn a man twice.
The Harkness Brothers?
Oh, they're at The Red Dog
because you've got things all figured out.
I'm here with a warning for you, Lescaux.
Starting now,
there will be no wearing of weapons
within town limits.
I'm prepared to shoot
any man who violates that rule.
Do you think you can make a crazy rule
like that stick in my place?
Your place?
I thought this was Holman's place.
Except maybe for this.
Your bowie knife is a weapon.
I'll take that.
You tell Holman
he can pick up the Harknesses
any time he wants to ride in town
after them.
The Harkness Brothers in jail, eh?

That ought to get action
out of Dade Holman in a hurry.
- Where you going?
- Be right back.
Stella!
Where do I put 'em?
Get off the street!
What are you doing out here?
I had to see for myself.
Go on home, Miss Atkins.
Got four going out,
- one coming in.
Oh.
Whiskey's my line, sir, whiskey.
All the best brands.
- Never touch it myself.
- Are you staying at the hotel?
Oh, to be sure, to be sure.
I expect to be spending quite some time
in your delightful little town.
- Good.
- Quite some time.
I wonder just what all
he considers a weapon.
Good morning, Mr. Tollinger.
Good morning, Mr. Atkins.
Quiet today.
Looks like some places
ain't going to open up at all.
I guess Virg thinks
the town's in for trouble.
Might get worse
before it gets better.
Might get worse fast.
Say,
church festival coming up a week
from Saturday.
Mary says to get you there,
and no excuses.
Ain't that right?
We hope you'll be there.
A week from Saturday?
That's kind of far off to be making plans
in my business.

But I'll be there.
Hey, Tollinger!
We've come to pay you a little visit!
Tollinger!
Where's your new peacemaker?
He don't keep me posted, Reedy.
Tollinger!
Tollinger!
Come out
from where you're hiding, Tollinger.
You looking for me?
You, and you, and you,
drop those gun belts.
You drop your gun.
Take him, Slim.
Well, now,
I reckon it was downright foolish of Slim
to try to draw against you, Tollinger.
We maybe got a little off
on the wrong foot.
We're going back home now,
and we won't come to town
no more, carrying our guns.
Reckon that's what you want, ain't it?
Yeah, that's what I want.
Now, you can take Slim
and bury him out on the prairie.
Doesn't look nice for a town as small
as Sheridan to have a graveyard
as big as we got.
Why, sure, Tollinger.
We'll give Slim a real good send-off.
Sure hot today, ain't it?
You just tie Slim onto his horse,
and get on with it, lke.
Now, get out of town!
Take your dead with you.
Anyhow, there ain't been
a Lazy Tombstone rider in town
since Reedy was killed last week.
Nobody else, neither.
Business was bad enough before,
but it's worse now.
It's the quiet I don't like.

If you ask me,
Tollinger don't like it, either.
He don't care how much blood he spills,
just so something's happening.
Time's on Holman's side,
and Tollinger knows it.

5:

he comes in here for his one drink.
You can set your clock by him.
He don't like to drink with no one,
so I keep the end of the bar for him.
Wouldn't hurt my feelings none
if he took his business somewheres else.
Oh, how nice.
Thank you very much.
Quite a hand with the ladies.
So was Samson.
So was Samson.
How are you doing, Mr. Tollinger?
Things quieted down enough to suit you?
You lost your way, Lescaux?
Oh, no. I know my way around Sheridan.
I venture to say
I could tell you a lot of things
nobody else has bothered to tell you.
That Dade Holman is a reasonable man,
for instance,
and willing to listen to reason from you
if you feel like riding out for a little talk.
Safe conduct, if you are worried.
Any time he feels like riding in,
I'll feel like talking to him.
By the way, Lescaux,
I've decided the town needs a curfew.
All places of business will close tight
at midnight,
starting tonight.
What are you trying to do?
Put me out of business?
I thought we settled all that.
It's Holman's business.
Why not let him worry about it?

5:

Allowed time for interruptions.

A man of prompt habits.

Prompt habits.

Mr. Tollinger.

Run along, run along.

Not apple pie.

I do want you to try
some of my green tomato pie.

Green tomato pie?

How did you know, Mrs. Elderhorn?

Oh, well...

Some of the ladies have delegated me
to congratulate you,

Mr. Tollinger,

on the splendid work you're doing,
driving the riffraff out of Sheridan.

Oh, I know you'll like this pie.

There's just one element
that hasn't been touched yet.

The women that sing and dance
and carry on so shamelessly at the Palace.

Not one of them has left town.

They sing and dance? What else?

Well, they carry on.

I think you'll find, Mrs. Elderhorn,

that the dancehall girls
leave of their own accord
when things slow down.

You don't know Nelly Bain, Mr. Tollinger.

Don't I?

Now, don't you be fooled
like some of the ones

I can name around here.

Oh, the airs she puts on!

I daresay it takes a woman
to know she's no lady.

And you're all woman, Mrs. Elderhorn.

Glad you got here.

Come see who's here.

Well, it's good to see you up and about.

Well, up anyway.

Not that I'm going to be much
use on the dance floor.

Don't you worry, honey.

Somebody'll take pity on you
sooner or later.

Sheridan only has two dances a year,
- and she loves to dance.

- Jeff!

He used it as an excuse to get out of bed.

Maybe she'll take pity on me.

I'll just sit here with Jeff
if you'll excuse me, Mr. Tollinger.

You know you can't sit still
when the music's playing, now.

You seem to enjoy dancing,
Mr. Tollinger.

Maybe you're human after all.

At first, I wondered if you were fierce
enough for the job, remember?

But then after...

Well, I just wondered.

I'm human.

Thank you, Miss Atkins.

Seems you're a man of your word,
Mr. Tollinger.

They tell me it's a different town
since you took over.

No, it's the same town.

The real work is still to be done.

That so?

I don't want to interfere
with that time schedule
you were talking about,
but I aim to start working on my homesite
and make up for lost time.

- I'd like you to wait a little longer.

Why?

Well, the choice of battlefield is important.

I'd like to try to keep it
out of Holman's territory.

It's my homesite.

In his territory.

Are you forbidding me to go ahead?

Yes, I am.

That doesn't mean I'll stop you.

That means you go ahead

on your own risk.

Fine.

I've never asked for your help.

You're right, of course.

Only you shouldn't have
told him off in front of Stella,
when he's trying to prove to her
that he's a man now,
and not the kid she grew up with.

He chose the time, the place
and the audience.

Kind of a big audience for plans like that.

Good night, Saul.

You know why I'm still here?

The longer you keep putting it off,
the more I want an answer.

How is Beth?

I took her to my family in Toledo.

I know that.

I asked, "How is she?"

If you know that,
and cared enough to find out,
you could have followed us.

The idea was to take her too far away
to follow, wasn't it?

Would any place have been too far
if you'd wanted to?

Follow you? Why?

To ask you to come back to something
you hated enough to make you run,
the way you ran?

I couldn't wait to say goodbye.

If I had,

I wouldn't have gone.

It wasn't you that I hated.

You believe that, Clint, don't you?

I wanted to see Beth.

I just thought she might be safer...

That she'd be safe there.

She is.

Safe from you and from me,
and that's your answer.

One more thing.

Business this time,

since you're a businesswoman now.
Curfew means your girls, too.

It's 11:

Don't worry, Clint, they'll be in by 12:00.

I know what happens

in a Tollinger-tamed town.

So we'll be moving farther west soon.

Any suggestions?

Where you won't be?

May I come in, please?

Must be pretty important for you
to risk the gossip.

There was nobody downstairs.

I knew where to find you

'cause I've seen you sometimes
at the window.

It is important.

This morning, when we woke up,
Jeff was gone.

Dad's gone to the lumberyard to see
if he's really going to do
what he threatened.

And I came to tell you.

- You're that worried, huh?

- Yes.

I know he can take care of himself
any other time,
but he's not strong enough yet.

Well, he may be lucky today.

You don't really believe that.

No.

- Then what are you going to do?

- Nothing.

I warned him.

I thought I made it pretty clear.

Yes, but if you warn a child,
and he does something foolish anyway,
you try to stop him from getting hurt.

Oh, I see. You think he's still a child, huh?

- Partly.

- Well, I think he's a man.

He might be a little young
and bullheaded about some things,

but if there were more like him around,
I might not be here.
Look, I'm sorry...
Stella!
This wasn't necessary.
But time is so important.
You didn't find him?
He picked up a load of lumber an hour ago.
I don't think Mr. Tollinger's interested.
I'm not going after Jeff.
I guess you have your reasons.
I'll go.
No.
I just don't think they're interested
in killing Jeff today.
You don't!
And you were there when they shot him.
When I took this job,
we signed an agreement,
no interference.
We'll do it your way.
His way!
You mean do nothing at all.
They've always sort of looked
after each other.
Well, that might make the waiting
a little harder.
You know what you remind me of?
No offense meant, of course.
You remind me of a hungry lion
I once seen pacing a cage in St. Louis.
- I'm hiding out.
- You? From what?
Questions
that I can't answer.
They want action from somebody else.
Just rode in to report, Tollinger.
Caught Jeff Castle trespassing
on Holman's property again.
Dade's keeping him for you
out at the place.
You can pick him up any time you want.
I don't recall issuing
any trespass warrants.

- Do you, Lee?

- No.

You arresting people these days
without a warrant?

We're not going to let something
like that stop us, are we?

The boy's all right. Not a scratch on him.
And that took some doing.

We got a few to show.

No threats, no trouble, no nothing.

Just an offer. Come and get him.

I don't see your white flag.

Huh?

Now, if you were flying one,
we might observe the rules of war.

You're not, so we'll abide by the town law.

If you got something on your mind,
Tollinger, say it!

Mr. Sims, keep an eye on that young man,
will you?

The law is, "No guns in town."

You've broken it.

That makes it legal and proper
to arrest you.

All right, dismount.

Dismount!

Mr. Sims, make out a warrant
for these gentlemen while I detain them.

Tell you what, I'll make those out.

You go on over to the Palace,
and tell Lescaux

to get a message to Holman right away.

Tell him I'll exchange

two hostages for one.

Two unscratched hostages
for one in the same condition.

Sure.

Sure does me good to see
them fellas behind bars.

First time ever I've seen any
of Dade's boys where they really belong.

Hope he leaves them cool their heels
there for a couple of days anyway.

Well, if he does, we've lost this hand.

Uh-oh.

I know, it's three hours already.

And now it's Trotter.

It's about time he come
to pay his respects.

I'll wait.

Tollinger, I...

We'd like you to answer a few questions.

Now, no one will say Ed Pinchot
ain't richly deserving of what he got, but...

Will it get Jeff Castle back?

I don't know yet.

Two gunslicks come a-ridin' into town,
high and mighty,

bearing arms,
detaining people without a warrant,

and now you're asking
why Clint and me put them under arrest!

What do you want, anyway?

I tell you what we don't want.

I ain't the only one heard

what you said about
choosing the battlefield,

and we don't want Dade
marching into town
with his gun army and wiping us out!

You don't have to worry.

He gets a big part
of his revenue from the Palace.

That's bad business,
wiping out the paying customers.

You're paid to protect our people
and our property,
but you won't go after Jeff Castle.

And putting Pinchot behind bars
is just inviting Holman to come after him
and tear this town apart!

Now, suppose you stop telling me
what you don't want.

You want me to turn Pinchot loose
and ride out,

and bargain with Holman's
guns for Castle's release?

Will you guarantee the result?

No?
Well, then, if you'll excuse me,
I'll get on with other business.
Now, Miss Atkins...
You've already answered my questions.
Only I'm worried about Jeff, not the town.
Dad said I shouldn't have come.
You go on, I'll stay.
Sure.
I do feel kind of empty.
I generally eat about sundown.
Still, it ain't very late,
- and if you'd rather...
- Oh, no, go on, eat.
Wouldn't want you to think I was
runnin' out on you
like them others.
It's all right, Lee.
Hey!
Oh, Jeff!
They're waiting for the exchange.
Are you in good condition?
Yes.
All right, we'll return them
in good condition.
Seems I owe my safe return to you.
That calls for thanks.
Thanks.
Jeff!
I'll say it for him,
the way it should be said.
Thank you, Mr. Tollinger,
and please accept my apology.
That wet-behind-the-ears kid was
a-pestering me for a deputy's badge,
so he could go out
and take on Holman single-handed.
Don't mark him down.
He's gettin' taller every day.
I never thought I'd see the day.
We got Castle back, that's all.
Maybe I lost more than a day.
I've never even laid eyes on Holman.
So far, it's cost him Jeff

and four gun hands,
but now he knows a lot about me.
I've been in Sheridan too long already.
Miss Bain! Miss Bain!
Miss Bain!
Miss Bain!
This time, I'm staying till you tell me
everything I want to know.
Why did you leave Beth?
To earn a living, Clint.
You called me a businesswoman, and I am.
Just that.
Only that.
You left me
because you couldn't stand
the kind of life I gave you.
- Is this better?
- Yes.
Better than being married to a gunfighter.
That's what I am, Nelly.
Guns are all I know about.
There are only two ways to use them.
And the way you use them wasn't murder,
because you wore a badge.
I don't know.
I only know it didn't make the waiting
any easier.
I thought you loved me at first.
Then I thought you might love
Beth enough to...
But you learned to hate so early
that you never learned anything else.
Guns are all you know about.
They're all you care about.
Still paying me back, huh?
For what? For something you can't help?
You forget, Clint.
I know that your father died
because he wouldn't own a gun.
You'll die because you do.
Well,
may be a short life, but it'll be a full one.
Plenty of exercise for your guns,
and all the women you want,

even nice ones.
That's for my full life,
and all the women I want.
Where does that leave the Atkins girl,
Stella? I've seen her.
I've heard about her,
every day falling a little more out of love
with her young man,
and more in love with you.
She reminds me of you,
though, as you used to be,
even down to hating this business.
You're a little older now, too.
Maybe she could persuade you to do
what I couldn't.
Maybe.
Clint, I wasn't telling the truth.
I didn't have the courage before,
but now I don't care.
Beth is dead.
That first winter up north was so cold.
She got sick. We did everything.
It didn't help.
Clint!
Clint!
I'm not paying you back!
I'm punishing myself!
You'll never be human!
You haven't any pity!
No pity, Clint!
No pity at all.
- Hey, what's up?
- I'm cleaning out the Palace.
Alone?
Are you crazy?
Bad house, boss.
Worse every night,
and Tollinger's still around.
It will not be long now.
Things will pick up,
right after the party for Tollinger.
Party? A farewell party?
Clear out!
Lescaux, you've been in town too long.

Time to go.
I do not know
what you are trying this time.
You are armed, I am not.
But I am warning you, Mr. Tollinger.
You're leaving tonight.
The only choice you have is which way.
I am staying.
All right, Lescaux, you're overdue anyway.
No!
Don't!
Your property.
Fetch in some more, boys.
Try and keep it from the other buildings.
Keep it coming!
Keep that water coming!
Let it go, boys. Let it go!
Keep it from spreadin'
to the other buildings!
You hurt?
Keep it coming!
Keep that water a-coming!
How'd it start?
I started it.
You started it!
What are you trying to do, burn us all out?
Give that house over there
a wetdown!
What's on your mind?
The fire.
Well, at least it took Lescaux out
of our lives for good.
But the way he did it.
Remember the fire he told us about once?
The man who died in it
because he didn't have a gun?
Yeah.
Where's Jeff today?
I don't know.
Anything wrong between you two?
Nothing he's willing to talk about.
Anyway, it's hard to get anything
out of him since...
- Good morning.

- Anything I can do for you?
Why, yes, sir, you can.
- I'd like to hire a horse.
- How long?
Oh, three or four hours.
I sell whiskey, sir.
- So I've heard.
- Never touch it myself.
I get my intoxication just riding around
this glorious western countryside of yours.
Corral's in the back.
Make it a spirited animal.
I want to feel the wind in my face.
A spirited animal, sir.
Guess you know what we're here for.
Saw you making the rounds.
Last on the list, huh?
Last but not least.
We weren't aiming to bypass you, Saul.
We want time at the council meeting.
You'll get time.
Won't take long because we got the votes.
The Palace is gone,
and maybe that's all to the good.
Now we got to keep Holman off our backs,
and the only way to do that
is to get rid of Tollinger.
When it comes to destroying property,
he's stepped on more toes than Dade.
We can't afford to let him
run hog wild again.
Where do you stand, Saul?
I don't know.
Just curious.
We can swing this with or without you.
How can you get rid of him just like that?
So far, he's done exactly
what you hired him to do.
You put up the money,
he put up his life.
He may have a reason for what he did
that we don't even know about yet.
Reason?
For turning thousands of dollars

worth of good lumber
into a pile of ashes?
Oh, it's the lumber that worries you!
And you wouldn't want to get rid of him
just so you could hang out
a "Business as Usual" sign,
so that you can pick up the trade
the Palace can't handle anymore?
And you wouldn't be so crazy
to keep Tollinger around
because you got your cap set
for him, now would you?
That's enough, Virg.
And a good morning to you, gentlemen.
Trouble on my account?
They told me they have enough votes
to take you off the job
at the council meeting this afternoon.
That's just about on schedule
as my jobs go.
But I think that's something
Holman will want to take care of himself.
Especially if he knows the town
is ready and willing.
With a little wind last night,
that fire could have touched off the town.
It didn't.
Fire might smoke Holman out.
If it does, I'll be here.
Don't matter how the council votes,
I'll see you get full pay for the job.
I'll finish what I started, or it'll finish me.
- Don't matter how the vote goes?
- No.
That's the way it works.
If the town doesn't know it, Holman does.
Town hires a man to fight its war.
They find out he's fighting
because he's got an itchy trigger finger
that ain't under control and never will be.
They get scared.
They got a right to do something about it.
Well, it'll be over soon.
If it ends your way,

then what happens
to you?
You'll have no trouble getting rid of me.
I'll shake the dust of this town fast.
Your young man rode out of town
again today.
I just came by to tell you that, this time,
I can't do a thing about it.
If you get him back,
let him know you want him back
before that trigger temper
he's working up saddles him for good.
When is it due?

4:

I'll send for the luggage.
Billy!
Billy!
Leaving today?
No, but soon.
This is for someone luckier than I am.
- You're staying?
- Mmm-hmm.
Of course. A target right to the end.
Standing in front of people
who won't stand back of you.
Holman will collect for the Palace.
I'm staying for that.
Yes, it was your fire.
Aren't you even now?
I'm getting out of business soon,
if that answers your question.
You've killed Holmans in every town
you've taken on.
And you're staying here for the kill, too.
You won't get out of business
until they put you out of business.
And don't try to change now, Clint,
or you'll find that even feeling a little
can hurt a lot.
Yeah,
I found that out last night.
You've been living three years
with what I found out.

Leave today.

No.

You've never met Dade Holman, have you?

I have, once.

He's a fat man, but he's as hard as you are.

And he might even be smarter.

Who you expecting, miss?

- Fine horse! Fine ride!

- \$1, please.

Dollar? Where's your pa?

- Gone to council meeting.

- Yes, Friday.

Town always seems deserted
on meeting days, doesn't it?

Mmm-hmm.

Well, I guess

I got my dollar's worth all right.

Hurry, Kitty!

Lucky Kitty.

She's going to visit her family.

I don't call that fun.

My family reads me like a book.

What's the matter,

don't they like dime novels?

Kitty will join us

when we locate somewhere.

Nelly said we should be hearing soon.

Hope it's soon.

Town gives me the shivers.

We just sit around,

waiting for the same thing

everyone else is waiting for.

- What?

- For Mr. Tollinger to get killed.

Oh, I wouldn't like that.

I mean, there are so many

ugly ones to spare.

Well, just the same,

before the Palace burned down,

I heard someone talking

about a surprise party for him.

Well, Mr. Tollinger surprised them instead.

- Good afternoon, ma'am.

- What is it?

I'm a drummer, ma'am. Ladies' wear.
Miss Wakefield, Miss Ann Wakefield,
I believe, ordered a bangle from St. Louis?
That would be Miss Wakefield.
Ann, someone to see you.
On the porch.
Oh, the porch, of course.
By all means, the porch.
Kitty!
Sorry, Nelly.
- My luggage...
- It was picked up an hour ago.
Come along, or it'll leave without you.
Bye, girls.
Bye.
- Bye.
- Bye, Kitty.
Oh, it's simply beautiful!
Show the rest of you ladies anything?
- Be glad to wait.
Don't bother.
- Stay on the porch, Ann.
- Bye, Kitty.
Bye.
Now, you're sure
you won't forget the time?
- Oh, no.
- Five minutes before 5:00.
- Oh, I won't forget!
- Now, he's very punctual.
Remember, not a word to anyone.
It's the job, you understand.
He must be above reproach.
Oh, I won't tell a soul.
But that's the part that I...
Well, I mean, Trotter's Bar is so public.
Outside Trotter's Bar.
A chance encounter on the street,
that's what makes it look so natural.
Then the handkerchief,
the signal that you're not offended
with his gift.
Offended?
Oh, couldn't he tell

by just the way I looked at him?
Well, he couldn't be sure.
This is his way of being sure.
Once he knows, then he'll have
no further need for an intermediary.
A what?
He'll speak for himself.
Remember, five minutes to 5:00.
How can I wait that long,
now that I know?
Miss Wakefield,
we're talking about minutes, not hours.
Well, what would I do with myself?
Oh, I know! I'll put on my hat.
Excellent.
Oh, be careful of the hatbox.
It's borrowed.
I'll write to you, Kitty,
as soon as anything's definite.
Here's your ticket. I'll send for you soon.
Ladies.
Well, look who's here!
Deserting a sinking ship, Cal?
Nothing here for me.
This is one gone Tollinger-tamed town,
and I'm heading back to New Orleans.
Ann!
Just getting some fresh air, Nelly.
It's so hot today.
Well, catch your breath, Ann,
and then go on back to the house.
I don't want you in the streets today.
Oh, it's worse inside.
I'll be home soon, Nelly.
Well, bon voyage, Kitty.
Ann, try and resist the Emporium today.
You know you're out of a job,
and that bracelet looks pretty expensive.
Bracelet?
Oh, yes. It's lovely, isn't it?
The Emporium? I wouldn't dream of it.
Well, bye, Kitty. Bye, Cal.
Goodbye, Ann.
- Goodbye, Miss Nelly.

- Goodbye, Cal.

Goodbye, Mr. Zender.

Zender?

Dade Holman's lawyer man.

I guess he's checking

on what's left of the Palace.

Aboard. Aboard and rolling.

Cal, are you sure he's working for Holman?

Sure, I'm sure.

Lescaux sent me out

to the Lazy Tombstone

with some papers for him to look over.

See you soon, Nelly.

Goodbye, Kitty.

Mr. Tollinger's room, what number is it?

He ain't in, ma'am. Been out all afternoon.

What is his room number?

Key's here,

so he's out.

Nelly Bain.

No, no.

Is Miss Wakefield here?

I haven't seen her today.

Well, if you do, will you tell her I want
to see her immediately?

- At home.

- Well, certainly.

Oh, thanks.

You know I swore

I wouldn't buy any more clothes,

and I really shouldn't, you know,

- but I'll take it.

- No trouble at all.

You're our regular customer.

Miss Atkins!

I know you by name at least,

- and I think you know who I am.

- Yes.

Have you seen Clint Tollinger
this afternoon?

No.

Why should you ask me?

Miss Atkins, I have reason to believe
a trap has been set for him.

I don't know what kind,
but I'm sure it's a very clever one.
If it's true, why do you care?
I care, Miss Atkins.
Enough to try and warn him,
even if you won't.
I haven't seen him since this morning.
But I could warn the council.
They're meeting now.
About the same thing,
how to get rid of him.
Of course.
That's why Holman picked this afternoon.
Don't waste time with the council.
When these things happen,
they happen fast.
- I know.
- My father will...
Right now, you can help most
by staying here
to watch for Clint to warn him.
Do you know Ann Wakefield?
- By sight.
- Well, she may be part of it.
If you see her, keep her with you
off the streets till I get back.
Stella!
Jeff?
Your wound, it's open again.
How?
How?
I rode out to Holman's to see
if I could find a way to get at him.
Oh, no!
There were lots of horses outside.
Everybody was inside.
I almost made it, but somebody saw me.
Shot missed me, but scared my horse.
- I was thrown.
- You've got to lie down.
But no one came after me, do you hear?
They didn't even bother to chase after me
because Holman's up to something, Stella!
All I care about is that you'll bleed

to death if I don't get help.
Everyone's at the council meeting.
You'll be all right.
I don't dare carry a package home today.
I'll pick it up tomorrow.
Oh, I've got to hurry!
Ann?
Ann!
Dade Holman.
He's mine, Tollinger!
Then take him, Jeff! Take him.
I didn't know.
- Oh, Nelly, I didn't know!
- Clint!
Clint.
Too long in one town, Nelly.
Brandy.
Did you get him?
We got him.
Thanks.
Nelly, there's nothing
old Doc doesn't know about
gunshot wounds.
Isn't that right, Doc?
Never thought I'd prove it on you.
Time to quit this business, Nell.
Got to be an easier way to make a living.
We'll find it.