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North Star

By Sergio Donati

Where is Hudson Saanteek?
You have to leave.
You're not supposed to be here.
Not now.
- Please.
- Oh.
Don't buy yourself trouble.
I want the man that signed the claim.
Nobody has a claim.
This is a sacred place.
Ask him again, Smiley.
- Jesus, mountain's solid gold.
- So where is he?
Just leave us alone.
This is our grandfather.
We're saying our goodbyes.
There. I'll ask you again.
Where is Hudson Saanteek?
- What are you doing here? Get out!
- Hudson!
Don't let him get away.
- Where is he?
- Up there.
Come on, this way.
Kill the son of a bitch.
Over there.
Yeehaw!
Got him.
- You got him, huh?
- Yeah.
Let's get back to Nome.
I'll buy youse all a nice warm hooker.
Easy.
Papa?
Son.
You've grown.
- You're home.
- Morning, Miss Sarah.
- Good morning.
I'll take her, Miss Sarah.
Thank you.
- Mama.
- What is it?
Bjorn.

It's so good to see you.

Hannah.

Can you believe it?

What is it?

This winter,

you'll have a room of your own.

Close your eyes.

Can you feel how warm? It's gold.

Sold, the Kosoktok mine...

...to this lucky man...

...for \$250.

Next up, the North Star Falls.

"Former owner,

Hudson Saanteek, deceased."

The bidding will start at \$200.

Do I hear \$200?

- Two hundred dollars.
- Two hundred dollars, I have bid.
- Do I hear 225?
- Two-twenty-five.
- Two-twenty-five, the man down front.
- Two-fifty.

Three hundred.

- Three-twenty-five.
- Three-twenty-five bid.

Do I hear \$400?

I don't. No...

- Four hundred dollars.
- Four-twenty-five.

Four-fifty.

I have bid 450, a man at the back.

- Going once...
- One thousand.

One thousand dollars is the bid.

Going once.

Going twice.

Sold to Mr. Sean McLennon,
new owner of the North Star claim.

I'm, uh, very sorry about that.

It seems I've edged you out
by just a smidgen.

Mr. Hanson.

Bjorn, wait for us.

Come on, hurry up.

Come on, Jesper.

I want to claim a stake.

You mean, stake a claim?

Yes. That.

- Name?

- Bjorn Svenson.

Where's this claim at?

Ah.

Here.

Proof of citizenship?

- I'm Swedish.

- I'm sorry, Mr., uh, "Svenson."

Unless you're an American citizen,

I have to deny your claim.

What? L... I don't...

- What do you mean?

- According to the Miner's Association...

...foreigners can no longer stake claims
on American land.

But it's my claim.

I've been digging for eight months.

That's why I came here.

I'm sorry, it's not my rule.

Give me my map.

I'm sorry, it is now the property of
the North American Miner's Association.

- Give me my map.

- Mr. Svenson.

Don't you jump my claim.

Bjorn.

Hey. Hey. What's going on here?

They said,

foreigners can't make claims here.

- They stole my map.

- Who?

- Who?

- He.

That's against the law.

We're only following
Miner's Association rules, Lindberg.

If you wanna complain,
you know where to go.

All right, come on.

- Where's McLennon?

- Who?

- The owner, your boss.

- Oh, McLennon.

I haven't seen him.

Where's McLennon?

Yes? Gentlemen, can I help you?

How dare you deny these men
their claims?

Oh, I see, you, um...

You think this is a claims office.

It's true. This is a bar.

This man was denied his claim
because he was not a citizen.

After eight months of digging.

Do you think that's just?

Well, according to the

Miner's Association, yes, it is just.

You are the Miner's Association.

Ah.

Yes, that's true. I am the president.

And as the president,

it is my duty to inform you...

...we are about to a meeting which
will declare all foreign claims...

- ...void and illegal.

- No, no, you can't do that.

You can't do this.

What's the matter with you?

What?

Without their claims these men
will freeze to death on the beaches.

Nobody asked them to come to Nome.

Yeah, yeah.

That's right.

Move, go home.

No.

Have you seen a man freeze to death,
Mr. McLennon?

A frozen man,

or the actual freezing process?

No, I don't.

Because the actual freezing
process is quite something to see.

The body's natural instinct

is to fall asleep...
...but, anyway...
...first, uh, the joints and the tendons
contract into little knots...
...and then your extremities...
...you, know, your nose,
your fingers, your sex organs...
...they get frostbitten and fall off.
Then your breathing shuts off
and you asphyxiate, it's terrible.
Do you expect these men will stand by...
...and watch this happen to their wives
and children, do you?
- I expect these men to go home.
- We ain't going home.
We are up front with you.
May the words of a fellow Scot...
I, of course, was born here.
But a Mr. Macbeth said:
"When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors."
I have no fear to tell the truth...
...which is that I don't care
if you people freeze to death.
Because as far as I am concerned,
you're trespassing.
This is disgusting.
Damn you. How dare you?
You are stealing from the people
to whom this country belongs.
So you see? It's either your lives or ours.
Well, that's not a hard decision to make,
is it?
- You son of a bitch.
- Reno. Smiley.
No.
If you going to take my claim,
you'll have to kill me like all the others.
And why not do it now?
Come on, get them out of here.
Get these guys out.
Get him.
Get out, now.
Hey, you, get up.

- Come on. You heard me.
- No, I didn't.
Oh, ho!
Oh, ha, ha.
Here we go.
Goddamn. Goddamn, I'll kill you.
- Hey, hey, you.
- Get him out of here.
Get him, come on.
Get him out. Get him out.
McLennon. Go home.
Go home.
Just leave.
You dogs.
Hey. Halt.
- What the hell's happening?
- These men are stealing from us.
They're thieves.
- Well, that's better.
- McLennon, what's happening here?
These foreigners came into my saloon
and started tearing the place apart.
- Liar. You started this.
- Let's have some order here.
Order? You call this order?
- He's planning to take over all our claims.
- Take it easy.
He's starting a war.
- Look, I'll handle this.
- You will?
Ha.
You may own the town, McLennon,
but you don't own me.
We'll be back, McLennon.
Don't fight, Bjorn.
Come on. Come on, let's go. Go.
McLennon.
I'm gonna have to report this
to Colonel Johnson.
A barroom brawl?
It seems like a local matter to me, but
if it's a little too big for you, sheriff...
McLennon,
I'm not gonna have violence here.

These foreigners, they ain't gonna stand
by and watch you wipe out their claims.
And between you and me,
Congress ain't gonna approve it either.
And there's talk about an audit
of the Claims Office.
I'm sorry, Sean,
I gonna have to report this.
Well...
Sheriff, I guess you gotta do
what you gotta do.
Reno, Smiley, come on,
we got work to do.
You brought the white man here.
They killed my grandfather
because of you.
I'm sorry.
But I had nothing to do with it.
- Why did you steal our cave?
- I didn't steal anything.
Why do they say
it's yours then? Why?
- I claimed it to protect it.
- You claimed it for the gold.
As long as I have this,
the cave is still yours.
We don't need you
to protect what's ours.
You can't protect yourself from them.
I know these men. They crave gold.
To them, it's just another mountain.
Sooner or later, they would have come
to find and destroy it.
And you are half of one of them.
And you will destroy us.

NAKKI:

How do you know?
Besides...
...they think I'm dead.
Goodbye, uncle.
"Normann Olsen, deceased.
New owner, Sean McLennon.
Dominique Tropini, deceased.

New owner, Sean McLennon."
"Hudson Saanteek, deceased.
New owner...
...Sean McLennon."
What the hell?
Damn.
What is it, Smiley?
We got a problem.
Not now.
A big problem.
- Sean, what the...?
- Big time gunfighter, huh?
- What do you want?
- Just some broken-down bum.
Get out.
Get out, now. Now.
He's dead, huh?
The guy's dead?
Hey, I saw the Indian. He's alive.
I bought that mine because I thought
you could do something besides this.
Now, I'm in deep shit.
Deep shit.
I want that half-breed dead.
You're a bum.
I thought you shot him.
Hey, maybe I missed. I, uh...
Square piece of garbage.
My Sarah.
Read aloud.
Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
And call upon my soul within the house;
Write loyal cantons of contemned love,
And sing them loud
even in the dead of night;
Twelfth Night.
Shout your name
to the reverberate hills.
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out, "Olivia!"
O, you should not rest
Between the elements of the air and earth
But you should pity me.
No way he's still in town.

I'll go back and burn down
the whole goddamn Indian village.
- Reno said to look out for him all night.
- Oh, Reno.
While he stays in bed.
Goddamn.
Goddamn, I killed that Indian.
You've gone too far, McLennon.
You want the cave?
Deal with me.
Leave the Indians alone.
You got that?
They have nothing to do with it.
It's just between you and me.
- Get away from him.
- Aghh!
Get out! Get out!
Reno! Quick!
Reno! Someone...
Quick, help!
Quick, someone's attacked Sean.
Stay here.
Help, Smiley, quick!
Help me, help! Get off.
- Don't move.
- Reno, please!
- Put your guns down, I'll kill her.
- Reno! Reno!
Let me go. Stop!
Get off me. They'll kill you.
Will you get off?
- What's going on?
- You gotta help me.
- What are you doing with her?
- What're you doing? That's my sled.
Help! Help!
- Stop, don't shoot!
- Sean, help!
No.
Sean!
Get the sleds ready
and get the goddamn tracker.
- You mean, the Indian?
- Yeah, the Indian.

Make sure Sean's sled's ready.

- You forming a posse?

- No, going fishing.

Don't forget his rifle.

- Of course we're forming a posse.

- Any money in it?

You two help get the girl back...

...I'll make sure

you never look at another mine.

All right.

- You can't go alone.

- Hey, Annie. Annie, we're gonna be rich.

Stay down.

Please, someone help!

- Help, somebody, help!

- Shut up.

- Stop!

- Stay down.

- Hold on, McLennon.

- You're late, aren't you?

You know, a posse ain't legal

without the law behind it.

Stay and do your job.

- Hyah, hyah, hyah.

- Hyah, hyah.

- Come on, let's go.

- I'm coming.

Halt! Stop!

Come back!

Smoke!

Come back!

Help! Help!

Where are you running to?

There's nowhere to go.

Give me your hand. Give me your hand.

I won't hurt you.

Hold on to me.

Go, go!

Come on! Hyah! Hyah!

Stop!

- Please, sir.

- Hey, hang on.

Please, hang on.

Oh, God. Please.

I'll take you to someplace warm.

What's going on?

The girl jumped out, she ran down there.

He brought her back, then continued.

- I can't wait to kill that Indian.

- He's not an Indian, he's a half-breed.

- What's the difference?

- Let's go.

- We don't want you here.

- Help me.

- You bring nothing but trouble.

- Leave me alone!

White man's trouble.

Help me.

You bring death.

Don't worry, she'll take care of you.

White men.

- We have to go.

- Don't touch me.

If you stay here, they will kill everyone.

- Let's go, come on.

- Don't touch me.

Let's go.

Let me go.

Come on.

No, no!

Quick.

Yap-yap-yap.

- He says he didn't...

- I know what he said.

I can see it in his lying face.

Go look for tracks.

I found tracks.

We go while they're still fresh.

Hey, wake up.

Wake up!

Stop!

Wake up!

Wake up!

Don't sleep. Wake up, wake up! Hyah!

Hyah, yap-yap, yap-yap.

I just hate this goddamn snow.

Christ.

You mean all this time

we've been chasing an empty sled?
He's been dragging us along
behind a goddamn empty sled.
I should have known,
you goddamn Indian.
What are you trying to do, kill us?
- I'll kill him, I'll...
- Smiley, take it easy.
Come on.
No, we shouldn't trust him.
I'm gonna kill the son of a bitch.
I'm gonna shoot his red ass off.
You're gonna shoot him, eh?
The same way you shot the half-breed?
Come on, Reno. He's just an Indian.
Go ahead, half-wit.
I bet he drops you right here.
I thought we were business partners,
I thought we were friends.
Friends? You shitbreath.
I'll kill you for that, Reno.
- I'll kill you for that.
- So shoot, goddamn it.
Shoot! You killed the half-breed,
we wouldn't be here.
Go ahead, shoot everybody.
I'm looking forward to hell.
- He's just an Indian.
- Heh, heh, heh.
What's wrong with you?
He's just an Indian.
Goddamn it. Goddamn them.
Goddamn that dog.
Goddamn that dog.
- Goddamn Indian.
- He's crazy.
I'll kill them. Everything.
Goddamn.
Goddamn.
Nobody dies until I tell them to die.
You should eat.
Please?
- I didn't mean to harm anyone.
- Well, you did.

I had no choice.
They were trying to kill me.
- You tried to kill Sean.
- No, I didn't.
Yes, you did.
I tried to talk to him.
With a knife to his throat?
I told him to stay away
from the North Star.
The North Star?
Well, that's his.
- It doesn't belong to him.
- Yes, it does. He bought it.
Because the owner died?
Exactly.
Well, I am the owner.
Do I look dead to you?
The North Star
belongs to those Indians...
...who gave you warm clothing
when you were freezing.
I filed a claim to protect them
from McLennon.
Whoa!
I'm Henry Pruet Johnson.
Colonel of the United States Army,
Fort Michael.
Military commander
for the territory of Alaska.
As of this moment,
the town of Nome is under martial law.
So you see, it's not that simple.
- I'm sorry, but I don't believe you.
- What?
I mean, Sean isn't like that.
He cares for me.
He's not what you think.
You haven't listened to anything.
You don't understand
why I'm doing this.
No, you're right, I don't.
- I don't think you're being honest.
- Honest?
What do you know about me?

You just think of me
as a half-breed and a thief.
No, I don't.
I mean, what are you hoping to prove
from all this?
That cave is sacred, like a church.
And McLennon's men defiled it.
They killed an old man
who was like a father to me.
And I could do nothing to stop them.
That man had my respect...
...because he taught me as a child
about right and wrong.
And if I can save that cave...
...then I can be honest with myself
about who I am.
What are you gonna do?
- Look, I'll talk to Sean...
- Sean, he'll be here sooner or later.
And do his best to kill me.
Do you understand that?
You don't know him.
Look, he'll listen to me.
Why are you trying to help me?
You could have let me die out there
and you didn't.
We'll leave tomorrow.
Before they get here.
Where to?
Nome.
Sean McLennon, owns 10, now 11
of the richest strikes on Anvil Creek...
...and he didn't file the original claim
on one of them.
Nothing wrong with transferring a claim.
Happens all the time.
The original owners
of McLennon's transfers are all dead.
Here. And here.
Here, this Indian.
Eyewitnesses saw him alive,
here in town.
That makes things
a little more slippery now, doesn't it?

I'd say a lot more.

Well, you best find him, and the girl.

- Well, now, this matter really...

- Sheriff.

Take three of my men

and go after that posse.

Inform them of the martial law decree.

And order them

to return to Nome immediately.

- Get up, get up.

- Hmm?

- Why?

- Get dressed, they're here.

No!

Sean.

Sean, listen. You have to listen to me.

You have to...

- Kill him.

- No!

No!

Tell them to stop, please.

No, Sean, you can't.

You mustn't shoot him.

No, Sean, please.

Stop it! Stop, stop shooting.

Please, please, stop it!

Out of the way.

Blow him up.

Sean, please. He didn't mean any harm.

He just wants to talk to you.

He told me.

What are you wearing?

What did you do with him?

You fucking whore. You whore!

I don't know what you're thinking.

How can you say that to me?

Gwill! Gwill!

Oh, no. Jesus Christ.

He's getting away.

Kill him! Put the dogs on him.

Please, please, Sean. I don't know what's wrong with you. Please, please.

Please. Please, Sean,

just take me back to Nome, please.

Please, Sean.

Just take me back to Nome, please.

- Take me back to Nome, please.

- Let me take her back.

Please.

What?

I'll take her back. She'll freeze out here.

I mean, I gotta take

Gwill's body back, anyway.

I mean, a posse

ain't no place for a woman.

All right?

Yeah.

Yeah, that's great.

Why don't...

Why don't you take her back to your sled
and you keep her...

You keep her warm.

Maybe you like to fuck her like that
half-breed, would you like that?

Let's finish what we came to do.

You're right.

Run.

Run out there to die
or I'll kill you here?

I didn't come out here to kill any woman.

Shoo.

Shoo.

Whoa.

Hey, what's that over there?

That's a hell of a fire.

It's one of McLennon's boys.

Somebody shot him

in the back of the head.

How old you think this fire is?

A couple hours at most.

Whoever did this, sergeant, can't be far.

Come on. Hyah!

Wait!

Wait, please! Stop!

Hyah.

Hyah.

Go on.

Go on, come on.

Go on.

Whoa.

We'll leave the horses here,
follow up on foot.

That bastard.

That bastard.

It goes to the end of the canyon.

Well, that's good.

That's the only way out.

Let's get there first.

- Ah.

- Ah. McLennon.

Well, well, Lamont.

What a pleasant surprise
to find you out here like this...

...in the middle of all this natural beauty.

Boys?

What happened back there at the cabin?

Ah.

You found old Pete, huh?

Goddamn half-breed,

they shot him right in the face.

The half-breed shot him in the face?

He, um...

He ran out and old Pete went to grab him,
and bang, right in the face.

Where's Sarah?

Sarah, well...

We're out looking for them now.

McLennon, Nome is under martial law
right now.

Martial law, is that right? Heh, heh, heh.

- Yup.

- Really?

Ah. Well, well, well.

Well, we'll be getting back there
as soon as we find them.

Seeing as how you boys
will all be there...

...seeing that it's nice and safe
and martial and all.

I'm sorry, McLennon,

but I'm taking over from here.

And I'm ordering you and your men

to go back to Nome.
You just tell us which direction
the half-breed went.
- I'd rather not.
- No, I'm the law around here, McLennon.
Not you.
Yeah, Lamont.
You're right. You are the law.
The man is right, he is the law.
Look out.
Hey, what the hell?
- Please.
- All right.
Let's get to the dogs.
What is it, Tonga?
Very good.
You can see things, track,
command dogs.
Speak English.
You understand what I say.
You didn't need me here.
You're a half-breed, just like him,
aren't you?
Who was it, your mother?
Your father?
I won't tell anyone.
No, you won't.
- Afraid of a wolf?
- No.
But that half-breed's watching us.
That half-breed killed him.
- That's right, that half-breed killed him.
- Smiley, get the dogs ready.
Smiley, get the dogs ready.
You killed him, didn't you?
I just said the half-breed killed him.
- You saw him?
- Yeah, sure.
Oh, something's funny in there, Sean.
Where'd you think you were taking us?
- What, are you starting to question me?
- It's time I go back.
Half the mine is yours. You put your
feet up for the rest of your life.

Don't you think that's a little late?
I'm going home.
Don't ever touch me again.
I'm coming apart.
You can't leave without me, you know.
You're the only friend I got.
You gotta trust me.
We'll go.
And in deciding this issue...
...the Miner's Association declares
all foreign claims void and illegal...
...and open to restaking by the citizens
of this frontier gem we call Nome.
Americans. God's children.
And in so doing,
we rid ourselves of these scavengers...
...that have cost me so very much.
The life...
...of a woman that I loved very deeply.
Killed by a savage.
And the lives of my trusted friends...
...who bravely tried
to help me save her.
And here in Nome, your oasis...
...among you, right here,
there are savages.
Some are red, some are harder to spot.
But they all want the same thing,
and you know what that is, don't you?
What do you have that they want?
And when will they try to take it?
Maybe tonight.
Maybe next week...
...maybe next month, but one night,
when you're sleeping...
...they'll come take what's yours,
because you're alone.
But from this day forward,
you are not alone.
We are not alone.

Macbeth said:

"When our actions do not...
...our fears, we will fight against..."

- What?
- Sean McLennon.
You're under arrest
for the murder of Sheriff Lamont...
...Deputies Ross and Graves...
...and three soldiers
of the United States Army.
- What are you talking about?
- We have an eyewitness.
The Indians saved her life
and brought her here.
Take him away.
Citizens of Nome.
Citizens of Nome.
People of Nome.
I'm also here to inform you
that meetings such as these...
...with obvious intent
to cause disorder...
It's all over.
- Thank you.
- Get yourself some rest.
Congress has declared that all claims,
past, present and future...
...by all miners, American and foreign,
will be honored.
- Can I have my own room now?
- Of course you can.
You can have anything you want.
- Where is McLennon?
- He's in jail.
I wanted to say goodbye.
So did I.
- What's going on here?
- Haven't you heard?
The whole bloody beach
is covered with gold.
My ancestors taught me
you cannot own the land...
...you can only respect it.
This is what I fought for.
And what I will always believe.