Open Range

By Craig Storper
Think she'll get over this away?
Might.
Best bed them down.
Come on, Tig.
There she goes.
Looks like we're in for it.
You see them?
Can't see them. Can't hear them.
You ever seen one this bad?
Not since Noah and the flood.
Well, you should know, Boss, since you was there.
What did you say?
He said, "You should know since you was there."
Well, even that wasn't this damn wet.
One thing's certain.
Noah never shoveled as much bull from them he had aboard.
Let's rustle up some grub.
Mose?
Hey!
Mose, still got them cards?
Yeah, I got them.
Get them out, and let's have us a game after breakfast.
Button!
Pull them plates under here.
You gonna play them cards, Mose, or stare a hole through them?
Don't rush me.
I'll take four.
Oh, for pity's sakes. "Take four."
All right, that's it.
I'm out.
Me too.
A man's trust is a valuable thing, Button.
You don't want to lose it for a handful of cards.
Well, at least it ain't raining.
Get yourself dressed, Button. Help Mose get things cleaned up.
Then you walk out and look for them horses.
Looks like you could use a little muscle there, Charley.
You just keep on like you are.
You'll get your chance soon enough.
No need to ask for more chores, Mose.
Every man's got to pull his weight.
Yeah, but my weight is half of yours.
You know, it's hard to figure Charley sometimes.
I ain't even sure if he likes me.
He likes you.
You know, Boss had some pause about hiring me on.
Too big to get around on horses and work them cows.
Afraid I'd eat too much.
It was Charley that talked him into it,
and I ain't one to take a man's confidence lightly.
You know I ain't, either.
I know you ain't, but it's best to keep remembering it
if you want respect
when you're riding with men like Charley and Boss.
Button, pull.
Pull it.
Button!
Quit playing with that dog and pull the wagon!
Pull it!
- Pull! - Oh, yeah!
Yeah. That's it.
Hey, hey! Look at that!
Old Boss sure can cowboy, can't he?
Yeah.
Broke the mold after him.
Main bunch is working towards water.
We'll go up-country, find the rest,
and we'll push them there.
Look at that.
A couple of damn kids.
Anyway, once we get them,
we can start driving them back closer to camp.
It'll be a while before we see another town.
Could use supplies, coffee and such.
Mose!
Ow!
Mose!
You'll have to ride back to that town we passed.
When you want me to go?
Tonight.
I'll go.
I can go.
How long you figure, Charley?
Without cows slowing things, maybe one day there, one back.
Sounds about right.
Come on, Boss.
I can do it.
Sure you can, boy.
Just don't know if that town's ready
to have you turned loose on it just yet.
English!
Damn! Shit!
Bullshit!
By God, if you're gonna pick your feet like a monkey,
you do it downwind.
Swear to God, old Tig takes better care of herself.
Starting to think it was a mistake
not getting you on in some town to learn a trade.
I don't like towns. Never liked them.
Oh, you're just saying that 'cause you heard me say it.
Get yourself a trade and set up in a town.
You'll always have a roof over your head,
a bed up off the ground,
and food no further away than a caf.
Ain't that so, Charley?
That was a big help.
Might as well be talking to this horse.
Put your boot on, Button. Let's go to work.
Course, if you was to live in a town...
You'd have to clean up some.
Otherwise, no one could stand the stink.
What you do that for?!
Cheating at cards.
Cheating.
I apologized to you for that!
Eh, Boss? I apologized to him for that.
Evidently he ain't over it yet.
It's getting dark, Boss.
He could have got hurt between that town and the camp.
Probably just taking his time.
Don't suppose he got into a poker game, do you?
Wouldn't gamble your money, Boss.
What if he's lying out there waiting for us to come along?
We'd never find him tonight. Now, come on down from there.
He's worried.
- You worried? - Yeah, I'm worried.
Been worried since yesterday. Should have sent me.
Mose can look out for himself.
Then why ain't he here with us?
Well, you never was wanting to go to towns.
Well, I don't want to go now, neither. But we better find him, wherever he is.
All right.
You and me strike out early. Button can watch the outfit. Button, come on down from there and get supper a-working. Most likely be back before suppertime.
But three sets of eyes, it's better than two.
- You stay with the wagon. - Come on, Boss.
No one is gonna bother it.
We haven't seen a single person since we set up the camp. I always feel better if someone's close around. You been working hard, deserve a little loafing time.
Stay right here.
Stay, Tig.
Wants to go.
She acts like she does, but she don't.
Still got the heart, not the legs.
You keep that rifle close.
Always liked me a sidearm with some heft.
Took this off a man who couldn't pay all he owed for some cows.
Damn fine weapon.
Always noticed you favor something light, don't you?
Set it right down. Thank you.
Hello!
- Howdy. - Howdy.
Like to feed and water them, curry them down with saddles on.
Okay, that'll be four bits each.
- There you go. - Thank you.
Not planning on staying long?
Long as it takes to find who we're looking for.
Maybe I can help you gents.
I been here since Harmonville was Fort Harmon and we still had soldiers to chase off Indians. I know everybody in town and for miles beyond.
Big man needing a haircut, about 30.
That's his rig right there.
Oh, yeah. Know who you're talking about.
Very friendly young fella.
Looks like he's been living out of saddlebags most of his life.
Got his horse in the corral.
Ride with you, does he?
Know where we can find him?
Yeah.
Yeah, he's up in the jailhouse.
He got into it with some cattlemen over at the general store.
- Some cattlemen. - Yeah.
Busted them up pretty bad, too, before Marshal Poole came up
and hit him over the head with his gun barrel.
Yeah, he's lucky he didn't get shot in the back.
You might want to keep that in mind when you're talking to Marshal Poole.
Saddle his horse.
That cover what he owes?
Oh, yeah.
Name's Percy if you should need anything else.
Much obliged.
Hold on.
How long you had him here?
I brought him in here yesterday afternoon.
It wasn't easy getting him into the cell.
Why is that?
Goddamn bear. Size of it.
Evening. Name's Boss Spearman.
This here's Charley Waite.
Evening.
Believe you have a friend of ours.
Name's Mose Harrison.
Yeah, I got him here.
He started a fight in the general store.
Mose don't start fights, just finishes them.
I just said he started it. You said he didn't.
Maybe you're calling me a liar.
You got a charge against him?
I got plenty.
Inciting a fight. Disturbing the peace.
Creating a public nuisance. Take your pick.
Hear tell he got hit over the head.
He'll be fine.
Well, I come to get him.
Well, you pay the fines, and you can have him.
How does $50 each offense sound?
Like robbery.
Lot of money.
Oh, yes, a lot of money.
I been waiting for you, Mr. Spearman.
My name's Denton Baxter.
Be your men Mose tussled with.
That's right.
You know, folks in Fort Harmon country
don't take to free grazers or free grazing.
They hate them more than they used to hate the Indians.
I expect by "folks," you mean ranchers like yourself.
I got the biggest spread around.
Bigger than any three or four put together.
Built it up with me own two hands,
piece by piece,
along with this town.
And there ain't no free-graze cattle
gonna take the feed off my cattle on this range.
Free graze is legal.
Times change, Mr. Spearman.
Most folks change with them. A few holdouts never do.
You know, a few years back,
a free-graze outfit came through.
One night, the cattle got stampeded,
the wagons caught on fire, and one of those boys
was shot off his horse in the middle of it all.
Shot in the back, was he?
Your man's horse and rig are at the livery barn.
You can take him with you when you leave tonight.
And come sunrise, you hitch up your wagon
and get your damn free-graze cattle moving
and keep them moving till you're out of Fort Harmon country!
Now, you let Mr. Spearman fetch his man
so he can be on his way.
Charley.
- Mose.
Mose.
Looks like someone's put the boots to him after he was down.
Does it?
Mose, you gotta get up.
Charley, I'm glad to see you.
I don't much like this town.
Here you go.
Boy, they really lit into him.
You got a doctor in this town?
Yeah. Doc Barlow.
It's the house up behind the barn by the church.
Look for a picket fence.
He's got a sign out front.
Oh, my. Bring him right in.
Lay him down in there.
I'll fetch the doctor.
Get his legs, Boss.
Easy, easy.
Good.
I'm Dr. Barlow.
Boss Spearman.
Charley Waite.
Patient there's Mose Harrison.
He works for me.
These wounds are old.
Easier to treat if you bring him in right away.
Your marshal had him, and he don't keep a friendly jail.
This is the man who was in the fight with Dent Baxter's men?
He certainly gave as good as he got.
Broke the arm of one.
Knowing them, they had it coming, I expect.
Let's see what we got here.
- Aah! - Easy.
- Easy, Mose. - Easy, Mr. Harrison.
Nobody's trying to hurt you on purpose.
I'd say you got a couple of broken ribs.
Gonna need to get this shirt off.
Sue, I am gonna need some soap, some water, and some alcohol.
I want you to drink this, Mr. Harrison.
- That's it.
Let's clean up these cuts on his face.
He's got a nice gash in his scalp there.
I'd say to good health,
but then I'd probably be out of business.
We'll drink to good health for them that have it coming.
The two of you can wait in the parlor.
Be better he didn't travel.
Well, he'll have to.
How much I owe you, Doctor?
We're even.
I figured I made enough off the damage he did to Baxter's men.
Wish he'd have made you wealthy.
Ma'am.
Doc Barlow's got him a pretty wife.
Notice that, did you?
Well, I ain't dead.
Glad to hear it.
Sweet, too. Treated us as good as anybody. That's a real lady. A woman like that makes a man think about setting down roots, eh? Doc looks like a real hardworking feller. Probably working away on making some little ones, too. Creates quite a picture, now, don't it?

Yeah.

Heard they're worth a thousand words.

Hey, Tig. Now, where do you suppose he is? Goddamn kid.

Button's all right, Boss. Anyone done him harm, they'd have gone through the wagon. Reckon you're right.

Here he is.

If you're awake, you might want to see this.

- Where you been?! - I seen it before.

Out with the herd.

I thought I told you to stay with the wagon.

- What happened to Mose? - Did you hear what I said?!

Yeah, but what happened?

Run into a little trouble in that town.

Looks like more than a little.

Are we moving on?

We always do, don't we, once we've grazed off a place? Did I do something wrong?

Just leave him be for a while.

Here. Have some coffee.

Made fresh, for a change.

There was three riders scouting up the herd this morning.

Where?

Maybe half a mile out.

Just sitting there, looking at the cattle.

Same ones?

Four this time.

Country's filling up.

Maybe we should push on.

Do no good, Button.

I seen them like Baxter before.

He means to have this herd or scatter it to the wind.

If he was gonna take the herd, why not just keep you in town?

Marshal already had Mose.
Wants us all in one place.
Far from there when it happens.
Don't make no sense, him telling us to move on and all.
Weren't the only thing he said.
Most time, a man will tell you his bad intentions
if you listen, let yourself hear.
A few years back, a free-graze outfit come through.
That weren't no idle story.
Let's find out for certain.
Beautiful country.
A man can get lost out here,
forget there's people and things that ain't so simple as this.
How long we been riding together, Charley?
Nigh on 10 years.
Mm-hmm.
You know what they call that, call it a decade.
Long time.
Been a lot of change since then.
What's on your mind, Boss?
Way I figure it, we can leave the cattle and run,
or you and me can go in the dark and stop them
before they scatter the herd.
You reckon them cows are worth getting killed over?
The cows is one thing.
But one man telling another
where he can go in this country's something else.
That rancher sat in that jailhouse,
sneering and letting his lawman lay down the law
till he figured it was time to show us
that he gave the orders around here.
Ooh, sticks in my craw.
Well, we sure as hell owe them for what they done to Mose.
Yeah.
I'll saddle the horses.
You two keep a sharp eye out.
Got the scatter-gun. We'll be watching for them.
You'll want to douse that fire.
Button, keep to the wagon.
I don't want to see you out in the open.
Okay?
I got some sugar in that town.
It's in the wagon.
I wouldn't want to have him coming down on me
like these cowboys.
What the hell's the matter with you, Gus? You're twitching all damn night.
Damn back's so sore from being flung into that stove.
Feel like I been humped by a 300-pound whore.
Well, Gus, I'd say you got off easy.
Look at my face.
Well, you can bet Butler will square things with that big man for breaking his arm and all.
Did you hear it snap?
I heard it snap.
Lucky for him he shoots with either hand.
One twitch, and you're in hell!
Now, get on your feet, all of you!
Now, throw them guns on the ground.
I ain't a-gonna say it again.
And kick them away.
Which one of you's got a sore back?
Which one?
Him.
- You're Gus? - Yeah.
Ought not gang up on a man three-to-one.
Ohh!
Wait a minute, mister.
- It wasn't our idea to jump him. - Shut up, Wylie.
Get up, you son of a bitch.
- What's your name? - Vince.
Mighty nice tie-down you got. You're a gunhand, are you?
- You fast? - No.
Uh-huh.
How many riders does he have?
I said, how many riders?
The rest are on their way to your wagon.
Uhh! Aah!
You want to smile now, go ahead.
Be a while before he's of use.
Charley, throw me them saddlebags.
Put your spook hats on.
The ones in your belt, put them on.
Now get your britches off.
Not taking my britches off for nobody.
You listen out of your good ear now.
Now, get them off!
Pretty scary bunch, eh, Charley?
Get belly-down, flat-out!
Uhh!
Get your peckers in the dirt.
- Hyah! Hah!
Hah!
If I hear so much as a twig break...
I'll come back and kill you all.
Charley.
Charley!
No Tig come to meet us.
Ooh. The bastards.
They shot the boy, but he's alive.
Is that Mose?
He's dead.
Shot him in the head.
Charley?
Charley?
Charley, get the lantern and the whiskey.
Yeah.
Come on, wake up.
Charley.
They shot him here and cracked him in the head here.
We'll have to dig that bullet out.
You done good, Boss.
Him going in and out like that.
I don't know. He lost a lot of blood.
A whack on the head can make a man strange
for the rest of his days.
Well, you done all you can.
He needs a doctor now.
If Button lives through morning,
you take him in the wagon and move on.
You just gonna sit out here waiting with them cows?
That's right.
And I'm gonna kill every son of a bitch
that comes to take them.
For one man on open ground,
you sure got a lot of killing in mind.
You know I never gone against you, Boss.
Always let you do most of the talking.
But he needs that doctor back in that town,
and I aim to take him.
If you want to come, we'll go together.
Otherwise, you do what you have to do, I'll do the same.
You think they'll let you waltz in there and waltz out?
I don't figure into it.
Button deserves every chance we can give him.
All right.
But I aim to kill Baxter and those that done this.
And if that marshal gets in the way, I'm gonna kill him, too.
So you best get your mind right about what's got to be done.
I got no problem with killing, Boss.
Never have.
Looks real nice, Charley.
Yeah, a man ought to have something to show he was here.
Be gone in another big storm.
Don't matter none. He's got your dog for company.
He'd like it you put old Tig with him.
Yeah, he was more Mose's dog in the end than he was mine.
Be right to say some words.
You want to speak with the man upstairs, do it.
I'll stand right here and listen,
but I ain't talking to that son of a bitch.
And I'll be holding a grudge
for him letting this befall a sweet kid like Mose.
Well, he sure as hell wasn't one to complain.
Woke with a smile.
Seemed like he could keep it there all day.
Kind of man that'd say "good morning" and mean it,
whether it was or not.
To tell you the truth, Lord, if there was two gentler souls,
I never seen them.
Seemed like old Tig wouldn't even kill birds in the end.
Well, you got yourself a good man and a good dog,
and I'm inclined to agree with Boss
about holding a grudge against you for it.
I guess that means "amen."
God.
Charley, you all right?
I'm fine.
Seems like you was, you know...
I said I'm fine.
Just got some old feelings coming up.
You know, we never asked each other much.
That's always been okay with me. I figured it was okay with you.
But you said some things the last couple of days.
Things that seemed like they had kind of a history to them.
Hey, Charley?
Don't stand behind me, Boss.
When I was a kid, a bunch of us would go into the woods with our peashooters.
Nothing fancy, just enough to kill a bird or a squirrel, maybe something larger if we was lucky.
Killed my first man in them woods.
Held the paper on our farm, and after my pa died, he'd come around to get payment from my mom in any way he could.
Weren't much older than Button when I shot him in the throat.
Knew there'd be more killing, so I run off and joined the Army.
War was on.
They was only too happy to have me.
My first skirmish was like hunting with my friends.
We just sat up in some trees, and they came marching at us.
Must have been a hundred of them dead after the smoke cleared.
Went around and shot the rest who weren't.
Those of us with the knack was made into a special squad so we could travel light and on our own into enemy territory.
Orders were pretty simple. Make trouble wherever we could.
With room like that, it wasn't long before we was killing men that weren't even in uniform.
Seemed like that went on the rest of the war.
After that, I come West.
Lot of call for a man with them skills.
And I put them to work for men just like Baxter.
Every once in a while, I almost get through a day without thinking about who I am, what I'd done.
He drifted off again.
No better, but no worse, either.
You're a real honest man, Charley.
Well, I ain't gonna lie about Button.
Not Button I'm talking about.
- Mr. Spearman. - The doctor in?
No, he's not here.
We got a boy that's hurt bad.
Here, put him in the examining room.
It's not his hearing, ma'am.
He hears real well when he's awake.
Mr. Spearman, I'm checking if there's blood in his ears.
It could mean a fractured skull.
Are you the boy's father?
No, ma'am.
His name's Button, and he works for me.
It appears that's not very healthy.
You know the way to the parlor. Sit down.
I'll be a while.
Well, I don't think it's a fracture.
Concussion's more likely, but it's bad.
I have to admit, we don't see a lot of people shot.
I cleaned and dressed the wound. Doesn't look infected.
What about the fever?
He needs to lay still and let his body do its work.
No offense, ma'am, but we come a long way to see that the boy gets looked after proper by Dr. Barlow.
Now, where's he at?
One of Dent Baxter's hands came and fetched him out to the ranch.
Some men there had an accident night before last.
You must tell me what happened, Mr. Spearman.
Baxter sent his men to stampede the herd, and I figured me and Charley to stop them.
Surprised them where they was hiding, and we had at them.
Them's the one Dr. Barlow's putting back together.
We got back to camp, others had shot Mose in the head, shot Button, left him for dead.
Oh.
Shot our dog.
I'll be getting money.
It's not necessary.
We pay our way, ma'am.
Please, sit, Mr. Waite.
Button. Is that his real name?
Please, sit.
Yeah, it's the only one we've known.
He's just a boy.
Yeah.
Picked him up in a Texas town a few years back, living off caf garbage.
Couldn't speak a word of English.
Thought we was doing him a favor.
What about you?
Hmm?
You know that the marshal works for Baxter.
People saw you ride in.
There's payment to be made by them that done this.
Don't intend to run.
We could wire for the federal marshal.
If he started riding today, he wouldn't make it for a week.
With the storm coming, maybe longer.
We're obliged to deal with the marshal and Baxter ourselves.
What about Button?
Well, he's fighting for his life.
We're gonna do the same.
Whatever's needed for Button, you do it.
If he wakes, he's gonna need to stay here a couple days
so we can watch him.
Whatever's best for him.
Can't stay away from my little paradise, gents?!
Believe Satan says the same at the gates of hell, old-timer!
We'd like to put the horses up. Had a tough trail.
I'd like to set the wagon yonder.
Help yourself! Hurry up, though!
I seen it like this before!
Big one's coming!
Hyah, hyah, hyah!
Son of a bitch.
Sorry, Charley.
Yeah.
Jesus Christ.
Ooh, hoo, hoo, hoo!
Maybe you should have built it in another spot.
Ah, mercy.
Get the dog!
Get the dog!
Get the dog!
It's a dog there, Charley.
Take this.
There he is. Back here, Charley!
To your left! To your left!
Get him! Get him!
You all right, Charley?
Yeah, considering I've just been swimming.
I owe you, mister.
That's a sweet pup you got there.
Remind you of anyone, Charley?
Small version.
Too small to be let out in this weather.
Belongs to my daughter.
I tried to grab him, but the water was too fast for me.
If you're going into the caf,
I'd be proud to buy you both a cup of coffee.
Coffee would be good about now.
This is like the storm that washed away Gunnison
The water come down from the mountains.
Nowhere to go but straight into town.
- Killed a lot of folks. - It's okay, Bill.
Town's been here a long time, Mack.
It'll be here a lot longer.
That's right, Papa.
Every once in a while, a good storm washes through
and leaves her as clean as a baby's bottom.
Got to look on the bright side, gents.
Marshal.
Meat and spuds, Les, as always.
That should cover our meal.
Worth a man's life to walk across that road tonight.
Thanks for the coffee.
Well, appreciate what you done.
That'll be two bits.
Two bits.
I'll be having words with you two.
And we'll be having more than that with you, Marshal.
No need to make the caf messy... with folks.
I've got a warrant sworn out for your arrest
for assaulting Baxter's men.
We got a warrant sworn for attempted murder
for them that tried to kill the boy
who's laying over there at the doc's.
Swore out another one
for them that murdered the big fellow you had in your cell.
Only ours ain't writ by no tin star
bought and paid for, Marshal.
It's writ by us. And we aim to enforce it.
Is that so?
We got no quarrel with none of you folks.
Baxter's men bushwhacked our friend and shot him dead.
Shot a 16-year-old boy, too.
And clubbed him so hard...
He might not live.
Tried to take our cattle.
Your marshal here ain't gonna do nothing about it.
You don't like free grazers in this town.
We don't much like being here.
But a man's got a right to protect his property
and his life.
And we ain't letting no rancher or his lawman take either. We got no intention of harming bystanders. Anyone who helps or comforts these goddamn lawbreaking free grazers is gonna have to deal with me. Your call, Marshal. We don't have to settle this here and now. You ain't going nowhere in this weather. But I'll be seeing you gents real soon. You can count on that. That marshal ain't gonna wait. That son of a bitch is gonna get some men, come looking for us. He's gonna need us locked up tight in that jail by the time Baxter hits town, 'cause if we ain't, Baxter's gonna start to think that maybe Marshal Poole ain't worth what he's paying him. You got something on your mind, just spit it out. Well, I say we take him right at the jail. Lock him up, wait for Baxter to come riding in. Hell, Charley, why don't we just ride out to Baxter's ranch and go straight at him, too? Well, I'll fight wherever you want, Boss. You just make the call. God damn it. Now, hold on, Charley. Hold on. Well, you asked me. I told you. Charley, come on in out of the rain, would you? Come on. Come on. Just getting testy in my old age. Sounds like it's not such a bad idea. Just roll it around is all I ask. All right. What'd you think of my speech in there? Liked it. Maybe I ought to run for mayor. Well, I believe officeholders got to be living, Boss. Come to see about the boy. He's asleep. But, please, come in. Are you sure, ma'am? We're a mite rank. We don't want to mess your house. No, no. No, please, it's all right. Come on in. Thank you, ma'am.
There you are.
I can't get my fingers in.
We can't get our big fat fingers in these holes.
- Too many broke knuckles.
Oh, let me get you something bigger.
- No, ma'am, we can make do.- No, no. It's all right.
It's just nice to be sitting at a table set with fine china.
Those were my mother's.
They were the only things of hers
that survived the trip out here.
I don't know why I bring them out.
I can't hold them, either.
Guess it just makes me feel good.
I say what's on my mind, good or bad.
I admire that.
Try living with it.
See that?
No need for a wife or home.
We're just like a... an old married couple.
So, is it marriage that scares you two
- or putting down roots?- No. Who'd have him?
All rangy and mangy like a rough old dog.
How about I hold your head underwater
for just a little while?
I married once.
Never knowed that, did you, Charley?
Had a wife and child.
Sweet little spread, too.
It was nothing fancy, but we was young.
Loved each other.
Never had a cross word.
They caught the typhus and died.
And after that, home didn't seem a place to spend time.
Believe I've changed my mind on that
now that I'm getting on in years.
If Button lives and we survive Baxter,
I swear I aim to see to it there's a home he's sleeping in
instead of the cold prairie.
Have yourself a last cup of tea, Charley.
I'd like to see Button again, Miss Barlow.
Of course.
I know the way.
Whew.
Been riding with him 10 years.
Never said nothing about being married.
Where are you and Mr. Spearman spending the night?
Don't rightly know.
It... depends on circumstances.
You mean Marshal Poole?
We have a spare room. It's yours if you want it.
Couldn't do that, ma'am.
We'd be putting you in a spot with the marshal and Baxter.
Besides, it's a small town.
Wouldn't look right, particularly with the doc away.
I'll take those.
You know where they go?
I saw.
Thank you.
Been raining like hell ever since we got here.
Water washing right down Main Street.
Charley saved a pup from being washed away.
Looked a little like old Tig.
Now, if you can, you got to listen and pay attention.
Cause I got something important to say.
I ain't been looking after you for you to go out this way.
The world ain't a perfect place, Button.
But you got unfinished business here.
So you come back, you hear me, now?
You come back.
Kind of dumb talking to him like that.
No.
No, it's good.
You all right, Mr. Spearman?
Believe I'm as right as a man can be under the circumstances.
Circumstances? That's just what Mr. Waite called them.
I asked him to reconsider, and I'm asking you.
By "reconsider," do you mean tuck tail and run?
I mean save your life and his.
He'll listen to you.
Charley thinks for himself, Miss Barlow.
He's a good man, and he knows what has to be done.
I'll be paying you now for whatever else Button needs.
In case it goes bad for Charley and me, maybe you and the doc will see we're taken care of properly.
I'd like to put pen to paper if you have them.
Yes. Of course.
Mr. Waite?
Look at my face.
Oh! Sorry!
I'm sorry.
It's all right, Charley.
Okay? It just be us.
It's all right, Charley.
It's all right, Charley.
It's all right. I'll get it.

Jumpy is all.
She ought not to sneak up like that.
She weren't sneaking.
I scared that woman half to death.
Yeah. Scared me a little bit, too.
Well, that's how it is, Boss.
Ain't a pretty picture.
Got your wits about you now?
Yeah.
Yeah.
It weren't as bad as it looked.
I'll bet.

Go! Hyah!
Two whiskeys, barkeep.
Barkeep! Two whiskeys.
You see that sign?
Around these parts, free grazers is the first.
Now, he asked you twice.
Ain't gonna ask again.
Hey, Bill, it's all right.
These are the fellows that saved my dog.
I couldn't serve them if they saved Jesus himself.
Mr. Baxter would have my job.
Baxter the owner?
That's right.
Give me a bottle. I'll serve them myself.
You know I can't do that.
Now we'll have our drinks.
Believe I'll have me another.
Yes.
Well, looks like the rain's let up a bit.
Well, if it don't, there'll be trout fishing right on Main Street.
I'd like you to meet my boys.
Ray and Cory.
How you doing?
We run a freight outfit when the weather cooperates.
Boss Spearman.
And the marksman here is Charley Waite.
Is all that true, what you said in the caf?
Yeah.
There's a kid at the doc's house
put on death's doorstep by Baxter.
Doc's wife's caring for him
until he comes back after the storm.
Doc's wife?
Yeah. Miss Barlow.
You mean Sue?
That's right.
Well, she'd make somebody a fine wife.
But she ain't the doc's.
That's his sister.
His sister?
Ain't his wife.
Good evening, Mack.
Ralph.
Ray, Cory.
Whiskey.
This is Ralph Peterson. He runs the general store.
That's where I was when the dog got free.
You fellers the free grazers, I expect.
No offense.
Personally, I don't stand with others around here
about free grazers.
There was a fight in your store about a week or so back.
Some of Baxter's men jumped our friend.
He was a big feller.
Yeah. I saw the whole thing.
That big feller drubbed the hell out of them other three.
Broke one's arm.
Be a gunhand named Butler, would it?
That's what they say.
Felt bad about your friend. Is he all right?
He's dead.
That's too bad.
Seemed like a nice young feller.
It's a shame what this town has come to.
You could do something about it.
What?
We're freighters.
Ralph here's a shopkeeper.
You're men, ain't you?
I didn't raise my boys just to see them killed.
Well, you may not know this,
but there's things that gnaw on a man worse than dying.
Hey!
Evening, gents.
Evening.
Better get out of this weather,
or your bones are gonna be even stiffer than mine.
Heading into the saloon to do just that.
Come looking for you boys.
I'd have bought you a drink if you was earlier.
Then turn around and do it now.
Marshal's got men waiting to waylay you back at the livery.
Another one's in your wagon.
And then there's another in the shed across from it.
Marshal with them?
No.
He's sitting up there all by his lonesome
in that warm, dry jailhouse with his feet up
waiting for them to bring you in.
Or kill you.
Well, thanks for the warning.
Like I told you, never been partial to the marshal's ways.
Dent Baxter's either.
You're near the only friend we got in this town.
I'll be buying a drink or two.
You keep it quiet, all right?
Time's come. How you want to play it?
Well, I work for you, Boss. I'll play it however you want.
Nobody works for anybody here, Charley.
Now, the name Butler mean anything to you?
You hear names when you're on the other side of things.
He as fast as they say?
He's a killer.
Know him if you saw him?
He ain't hard to recognize
if you know what you're looking for.
Yeah.
Too bad if we get shot up tonight
before we get a chance at him and Baxter.
Sure as hell is.
Tell you what, I'd like to sit someplace dry
while the marshal's men sit out in this rain.
Won't be so steady|come morning.
Small town.
It's hard to hide even at night|in this weather.
What do you want to do?
Yep.
Heard me an idea|sounded pretty good.
You did, did you?
Well, all right.
He's alone.
Get your hands up.
You must be plumb crazy.
Shut up.
You're dead men.
Didn't he tell you to shut up?
What's that?
Chloroform.|Stole it from the doc's.
You gonna arrest me|for that, Marshal?
Jesus.
Well, looky here.
He's asleep.
No.
Looky here.
Put 'em down.
This way.
What do you think?|Do you like it?
You like it,|you son of a buck, you?
- Huh?
A little bit more?|A bit more?
A bit more.
Wasn't no call to leave me|setting out like that.
- There wasn't a lot of time.|- I ain't bait, Charley.
I hear you.
Best you remember it.
Well, I guess you ain't gonna|let me forget, are you?
Starting to enjoy that part,|aren't you?
Sorry if we woke you.
No, no.|You didn't.
- Come to see if...|- Go see for yourself.
Hey.
- Hey, Boss.|- Hey.
You gave us a fright, pard.
Thought we was gonna lose you.
Just taking a little nap,|that's all.
It's good to have you back.
We owe you, Miss Barlow, and we thank you. 
You best thank God instead. 
Yes, ma'am. We'll... give that a try. 
Well, I expect you men are hungry. 

Button just ate. 
I thought I'd make myself some breakfast. 
Two more mouths wouldn't be any bother. 
I'm just gonna change. 

You. You should try to sleep. 
He will. 

Now, you do as she says now. 
Yes, Boss. 

Okay. 

Boss? 
Yeah? 

Mose? 

I'll be along in a minute, Charley. 

Be seeing you, Button. 
Aah. 

If you don't mind my saying, ma'am, you look... Tired. 

Oh. It's been a long night. 

Why don't you sit? 

Let an old cowpoke cook up some breakfast. 

No, I couldn't let you. 

Sure, you could. 

Thank you. 

I want to apologize for earlier. 

Oh, no, no. There's no need. 

You were startled. 

No, it was more than that. 

I've been trying to put some bad times behind me. 

But sometimes they don't stay put. 

Always makes me feel better to let things breathe a little. 

Not bury them. 

I'm learning that. Trying, anyway. 

Well, that's all any of us can do. 

Just glad Button's getting better. 

Don't believe I've ever seen Boss so worried. 

Well, the doctor will be on his way home 
as soon as the storm's passed. 

By the doctor, you mean your brother? 

It's just we've been thinking that you and the doc was... 

husband and wife.
Oh.
You did?
Didn't find out till last night.
Thought you was married, Sue.
Why, no. I'm...
I'm not, Charley.
Well, that's good. I mean that's good to know.
Otherwise, we'd been thinking wrong.
We wouldn't want to do that.
No. No, of course not.
Much obliged to you, ma'am.
You're very welcome, Mr. Spearman.
Thank you, Sue.
Take care of yourself, Charley.
Are you just gonna go off like that without saying nothing?
Ain't nothing to say.
I seen how you look at that gal and the way she looks at you.
It ain't right to walk away without a word.
What do you want me to tell her, Boss?
We probably ain't gonna make it?
Be a big fat comfort.
I don't know what you should tell her, Charley.
I wish I'd have said more to my wife before she passed.
This may be the last time she sees you in this world, Charley.
Or you her.
So tell her whatever you can.
'Cause she's entitled to more than just your backside walking away.
Charley.
I'm not sure what's worth saying or not.
Well, you don't have to say anything.
Yeah, I do.
Boss is right about that.
He's right about a lot of things.
It's just...
I'm not who you think I am, Sue.
I've... been places. I've done things.
Most of them, I'm not proud of.
You know, I always hoped somebody gentle and caring might come along.
Years pass. A small town and all.
And your hopes begin to fade a little every day until you hardly remember what they were.
I've seen who you are, Charley.
The way you looked after that boy and the respect you give Boss.
It might be little bits.
But they're enough for a woman who looks.
Men are gonna get killed here today, Sue.
And I'm gonna kill them.
You understand that?
Yes.
I want you to have this.
It's always brought me luck.
I... can't take your locket.
It's not your choice when it's a gift.
It's a good likeness of you.
It's my mother when she was young.
She's beautiful.
I want you to know that if I don't ever see you again
that I meant everything I said to you
and I appreciate everything you said to me.
Ain't nothing that happened in this old town been a surprise.
Except you.
I'll be seeing you, Charley Waite.
Happy?
Yeah. If you are.
Morning, boys.
Brung you breakfast.
Hey, you kids. Come away from there.
Come on.
You get along.
What do you suppose this looks like?
It don't matter.
Whole town knows there's a fight coming.
They just hope it don't spill over to them.
Well, if I'm gonna get killed,
I got a hankering to soothe my sweet tooth.
Morning.
Morning.
What can I do for you fellers?
Thinking about some candy.
- Candy?- Yeah.
Yes, sir. Candy.
Got anything you want.
- Got jawbreakers?- Yeah.
Gumdrops, candy canes, licorice, caramel, honey crisp.
Jujubes, lollipops, milk chocolate...
Looking for something special.
Now, what's the most expensive you've got?
Well...
Ooh. I got just the thing.
- This is dark chocolate.
- Yeah.
It comes all the way from Switzerland, Europe.
That's near France, see.
They call it bittersweet.
Melts in your mouth.
- You tried it?
- No.
How do you know it melts in your mouth?
Well, truth is we can't afford it ourselves.
Mm-hmm. I'll take two.
Don't you want to know how much?
Nope.
Yes, sir.
And three of your finest cigars.
My friend and me got a hankering for Switzerland chocolate and a good smoke.
Now, these come all the way from Havana, Cuba.
Thank you.
- Anything else?
- No. That'll do it.
How much I owe you?
It's... $5.
Charley.
Here you are.
Believe I'll enjoy these later, Boss.
Yep.
You ought to do yourselves a favor and ride on while you still got time.
Tried minding our own business.
This is good.
Worth every penny.
You're gonna get yourselves killed.
Try that, Ralph.
Go on.
Sitting right here in front of you.
Never even tried it.
Shame to go forever without taking a taste of something.
Charley, let's go.
Percy!
Up here!
Brought you a cigar. All the way from Havana, Cuba.
You don't say?
I've heard about them, but I never had one.
Much obliged to you.
What do you think?
Better than them crappers I usually smoke.
So, you're gonna make your stand down here?
Yeah. But out there around our wagon.
Not much choice without getting a lot of innocent folks shot up.
Like to place some guns and ammo
where we can get to it on a short run.
Help yourself.
We'll try to stay out of your barn.
Might not be able to.
Best bring in your livestock.
Be wishing you good luck now.
Thank you.
It's a pretty day for making things right.
Well, enjoy it.
Because once it starts,
it's gonna be messy like nothing you ever seen.
I ain't survived my years
without being in some fights, Charley.
I ain't doubting your grit, Boss.
You got more than any man I ever known.
It's just that...
I don't mean to be hard.
It's just the other night, them fellows
back in them trees we let go.
It was my call, Charley.
I can see now it was probably a mistake.
It's not what I meant. I mean, maybe it was.
But the fact is it's what I always respected about you.
What I always appreciated.
How you treated other people and how you treated me.
How you never look for no trouble.
That kept me from trouble.
But it's found us here, Boss.
And if we're to have any chance, you'll...
You go on and talk, Charley. I'll hear you.
I'm almost certain
they'll be overly confident in their numbers.
Especially if we're standing right out here in front of them.
It's not like we'll have any advantage.
But if they're out there with us,
then they won't have as much as they might have otherwise.
I don't figure all of them to be killers.
Only two or three like Butler will have done much of it.
I'll be looking to him.
The others will be hired men. Probably saddle tramps.
Maybe ex-Army.
The rest will be cowpunchers.
They won't want to line up in front of us.
It'll happen fast once I start.
So just keep yourself moving forward.
And they'll either move or root. Maybe even freeze up.
It don't matter which.
You just start right in on them with that scatter-gun.
When you've done both barrels, drop it, pull your pistol,
and make a run for that building where we stashed them others.
I'll be trying to do the same if I can.
Right.
Sounds like you got it all worked out.
Yeah.
Except the part where we don't get killed.
Best smoke these while we got the chance.
Yeah.
I'm thinking about getting out of the damn cattle business.
You never said nothing except nag me and Button about getting ourselves out.
Well, maybe my own words struck a chord.
Thought maybe I'd sell off the cattle and have enough to start up a saloon somewhere.
Man could stay cool in the summer and dry in the winter.
Some dancing girls might be nice, you know?
Have to get me some.
Yeah.
"If I die, please sell my good horse and my good saddle and my guns to buy a tea set for Miss Barlow."
"Charley Waite."
"Postscript..."
I like this one.
But I don't know.
"Princess pattern."
Oh, hell.
What's the matter?
Oh. Looks like you waited too long.
Kind of like us and free grazing.
Well, good is good.
Melted or not.
Looks like you're plumb chained, to your work, Marshal.
Get up, Poole.
He ain't worth a damn.
Get them all up!
Sobered up!
Ooh.
I got a feeling there's gonna be a new marshal in town.
All right!
It's time to settle these free grazers.
Oh, you leave your horses.
We're walking down to their wagon.
When we get there, you better empty your guns in them.
Or I'll damn well shoot you myself.
Now, you three skirt the buildings.
Get into the alleys on the side.
Come on.
Hayley! Come away from there.
Finish these later.
Okay.
I'm not going to my maker without knowing your given name.
Mine ain't Waite. It's Postelwaite.
Charles Travis Postelwaite.
What's yours?
Sure ain't Boss.
I mean it, Boss. I'm asking you straight up.
It's Bluebonnet.
Bluebonnet?
Bluebonnet, yeah.
No middle name?
No, just Bluebonnet Spearman. And don't you tell no one.
I want to hear you swear an oath. Now, go on.
I swear it.
All right. Okay.
Just in case.
Said eight. Count five.
You should have run when you had the chance, Spearman.
Not much for running from cowards.
I see the marshal ain't with you.
You won't find it so funny when you're all shot to hell and dying.
- You the one killed our friend? - That's right.
I shot the boy, too, and I enjoyed it.
Hayley!
Back up!
Where's the back door?
- Back door! - Right this way.
It's locked.
You hit?
I'm good.
You.
You get out of this house!
You pull that trigger, Baxter,
and you can forget about me patching you up.
You get your bag. You're with me.
Go on.
Get the hell up, Poole! On your feet, God damn it!
Yeah!
You're... going out there.
We ain't ourselves yet!
I see they hobbled you.
It's been a while since I was in a fight.
I panicked. Fell back. Like to have broke my foot.
Ornery old fool.
Well, or that damn Cuban cigar got me riled up.
Charley.
You two wait here.
Hold on, there, Charley. Hold on.
I ain't looking over my shoulder the rest of my days.
Charley.
You said we was gonna kill them all.
I aim to do just that.
I meant kill them. Not murder them.
Splitting hairs, ain't you, Boss?
Mister, I heard what you said.
I won't come after you. I promise.
No, I expect you won't.
I ain't gonna let you do it, Charley.
You do this, you ain't no different than Poole or Baxter
or that gunhand of his that murdered Mose.
Him killing Mose is how this started.
We come for justice, not vengeance.
Them is two different things.
Not today, they ain't.
Step aside!
Listen to him, son.
You done what you had to here because they give you no choice.
Don't go making this into something bad.
This ain't the way, pard.
Mister, thank you.
Thank you.
Didn't do it for you, boy.
Just make peace with your bad deeds.
Sue!
Get in here!
Oh, my God.
Get out of the way.
Button!
- Put it down.— Let the lady be!
We got your boy, Spearman!
You better drop them guns and come walking down the street
or I shoot him.
You've got ten seconds!
We ain't giving up our guns.
He's gonna kill Button anyway.
One!
The only chance for him or us when we walk up is these guns.
Two!
Three!
Sue!
Stop!
Stop it! Stop it right now!
Four!
Sue.
You're a disgrace, Marshal Poole.
You always have been.
I know it. That's just the way it is.
Five!
Six!
Have a nice rest, did you, Marshal?
You'll be having a long one yourself in a minute.
Been enough killing for you?
Be enough when you're both dead and buried.
Let the woman and boy go. They ain't a part of this.
If you want considerations,
you drop them guns on the ground.
Let her take him to the doc's.
The doc's in jail, and he ain't leaving
unless your guns are in the dirt.
I'll crush any man who stands with them!
When I finish that,
I'll torch your homes and drive your wives and children out into the cold prairie. So you women, you better take hold of your men. If you don't, you'll be raising orphans by winter. Mack Langly! It doesn't matter whether you run or stay! You and your boys are already dead! Mack Langly is our friend! I didn't come all the way from Ireland to see my land pissed on by free grazers. Now, I want them guns in the dirt. Him first. The gunhand. Looks like you're losing your army, Marshal. Get down! It went through? Yeah. Is he hit, Sue? - Sue, is he hit? - No! No! But he's bleeding bad again! God damn it. Can you stop it? I'm trying. I'm gonna kill you, Baxter! Well, come on, if you're coming! Can you cover me? Might be best to wait him out. Probably bleed to death. I ain't waiting. Button needs that doctor right now. Well, you know, that door's locked. Well, it won't be when the scatter-gun hits it. I'm waiting for you, Spearman! I'm coming for you, you son of a bitch. Okay, Charley? Yeah. You ready? Yeah. I'm dying. And for what? More cows? Killed a good man. And maybe that boy out there out yonder. You get no sympathy for your death. Get! You're... nothing. Yeah? Maybe so.
But I'll still be breathing in another minute.
Well, kill me, then.
No.
I ain't wasting a good bullet to ease your pain,
you son of a bitch.
Your man's in the saloon.
Ordered everybody out.
Asked to see your sister iffen she's willing.
He'd like to speak with you, Miss Barlow,
iffen you ain't offended by entering a saloon.
Sue.
Doc.
Bring him on up.
Put him in there. We'll make room.
Baxter got any kin?
Daughter is all he has left.
It'd be right if somebody explained things to her.
There never was any love lost between 'em.
Even so, she's his daughter.
And kin is funny about such things.
Come on. Come on.
I didn't mean for you to have to...
walk into this place in front of those people.
I don't care what anyone out there thinks, Charley.
You don't have to stand up for me.
Well, just the same,
I wanted to tell you that I'll be leaving in a day or two.
I'd like you to stay.
I think others would, too.
I can't say I haven't thought about it.
Truth is, there wouldn't be a corner here
that don't have a bad memory for me.
I've been holding my love a long time, Charley.
I know you feel something for me, too.
I do.
But I ain't no more than those who come to kill us.
You seen that yourself.
Maybe you've done some bad things.
Maybe worse than bad.
But what happened here today wasn't one of 'em.
And those killings, they don't give you pause?
I'm not afraid of you, Charley.
It brought me luck.
Just like you said.
It's yours now.
You keep it.
I don't have the answers, Charley.
But I know that people get confused in this life
about what they want and what they've done
and what they think they should have because of it.
Everything they think they are or did takes hold so hard
that it won't let them see what they can be.
I've got a big idea about us, Charley.
And I'm not gonna wait forever.
But I am gonna wait.
And when you're far away, I want you to think about that.
And... come back to me.
I'm in love with you, Sue.
Been that way since I first laid eyes on you.
Just took me a while to see things clear.
I know I'm not the kind of man
you expected to walk up your front walk.
If I was your brother, I wouldn't choose me for you.
Charley...
Do you know how old I am?
Don't care how old you are.
I'm not a girl anymore.
You're the handsomest woman I ever saw.
I've had my disappointments, Charley.
Well, I'm not gonna be one of them.
I never thought I'd live as long as I have, Sue.
I guess living the way I have, it never really mattered.
But thinking I was never gonna see you again was maybe...
Was maybe the most awful feeling I ever had in my life.
I know I can be a good husband to you.
And I know I ain't asked you proper.
But I'm asking you now.
Will you marry me, Sue?
Charley.
Yes.
I'll marry you.
And can I kiss you?
I'm gonna give you a thousand of these before I'm done.
Hey, Charley!
Looks like the doc changed his mind about you.
Something wrong?
No. Everything's fine.
I forgot to tell you I'll have word about the saloon
by the time you get back.
Sounds good.
You take care, now.
Charley.
Sue.
I'll be along.
Saloon?
Told you I was wanting out of the cattle business.
There's a saloon right back there just had its owner die.
Hoping you'd be my partner.
I cant afford something like that.
Not even half.
Well let the brains of the outfith do the thinking.
Sue!
You are coming back, aren't you?
And i will be waiting for you Charles!
Keep nothing private.
Have to go back know.
I don't want to loose side of the roof tops.
I mean it Sue.
Got to go!
How this gonna work if you don't do what i say.
I told you, i gonna get 8000
Before i die!
You make sure you do.
Let go get our cows.