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Rancho Notorious

By Daniel Taradash

Oh, listen
Listen well
Listen to the legend
of Chuck-A-Luck
Listen to the song
of the gambler's wheel
A souvenir from a bygone year
Spinning a tale
of the old frontier
And a man of steel...
And a passion
that drove him on and on and on
It began, they say, one summer day
When the sun was blazing down
'Twas back in the early '70s
In a little Wyoming town
So listen to the legend
of Chuck-A-Luck
Listen to the wheel of fate
As round and round
with a whispering sound it spins
The old, old story of hate,
murder and revenge! #
Nothing's better than that to
make a man agreeable.
- Especially at midday.
Why'd you come in town?
- To kiss you.
- You oughtn't be away.
Last calf I had an iron on
told me I could come.
When we get married...
- Eight days.
And when we get the ranch...
- Eight years.
- I found a name for it.
Yeah? What is it?
- Lost Cloud Ranch.
Pretty?
- Pretty as you.
Wow! Oh, Vern!
- Came from Paris in France, the man said.
Oh, it's beautiful for evening!
- Fine for stargazing.

Beth, where's everybody?
The folks yelled, "Coming, Tommy?"
And I couldn't make it right then.
They left! Everybody's gone!
I got nothing to do.
Do it outside. Go on, get out!
Where is everybody? Town's deserted.
The Burdens had triplets last night.
The whole town went to see them.
I told Dad I'd keep the store.
- Kids. We ought to have a lot of them.
Yes.
- One every August.
See you tonight.
Whitey.
You wait outside.
Mister, can I hold your horse?
- Get away from here.
Is there anything you'd like to see?
Yeah. I wanna see what's
in the assayer's safe.
Both of 'em. The one over there too.
Yes. Yes, all right.
Hey, hey!
Vern! Vern!
I saw him come out the store.
Then the other one fired at me.
He shot at me, the fella with
the long white hair.
- White hair?
The one that stayed outside.
No.
Vern, I don't know how to tell you
this. She wasn't spared anything.
Jim... give me your gun.
Place was empty. Just a girl
in a store. Sure looked easy.
Could've been,
if you didn't chase petticoat!
- It's not your business.
The whole town'll be after us.
- Let's move. We're in this together.
Let's split it. I'm alone from here.
- We'll split it in Chuck-A-Luck.

The tracks lead south, Sheriff.
- It's Sioux country below here.
What of it? Let's go!
I didn't mind being deputised, but I
don't wanna be butchered by Indians.
I'm turning back.
- That's my feeling, Sheriff.
I got 50 head of cattle to brand tomorrow.
- Are you all gutless?
Come on, we're losing time.
- I've no authority past this stream.
There'll be a warrant out for him.
- What's his description?
What if she was your wife?
Or your daughter?
- This is as far as we go.
I'll follow him alone.
- Don't be a fool!
You're a raw hand with a gun.
- Never mind the advice.
You've all done your duty. Get home.
Tell everybody how brave you were.
Get drunk tonight.
I hope you have good dreams.
I had to do it, that's all,
I've told you a dozen times.
What are you driving at?
What are you after?
- I want my share now.
I said we split it at Chuck-A-Luck.
Keep quiet about the girl
when we get there.
Maybe I will, maybe I won't.
I'll do what I please.
Rattlesnake! Look out!
The man who was with you,
where is he?
The man who was with you,
where is he?
Water. Water.
- Talk, or you don't get a drop.
Where'd he head?
Where did he head?
Chuck-A-Luck. Chuck-A-Luck.

Chuck-A-Luck?

Where and what is

Chuck-A-Luck, Chuck-A-Luck?

Nobody knows

and the dead won't tell

So on and on, relentlessly,

this man pursues his quest

Through autumn and winter

Searching the great South West

This thing that drives him

like a whip will never let him rest

Night and day, early and late,

he looks for a place

Or a town or a face

And deep within him burn the fires

of hate, murder and revenge! #

You're new around here, ain't you?

- Just passing through.

Did you ever hear of a place

called Chuck-A-Luck?

- Sure. Wheel of fortune.

They got one at the Royal Flush,

down the street.

Not gambling. You never heard of

any other Chuck-A-Luck?

- I ain't.

Why don't you try asking

over at the courthouse?

Barber, get another bowl of water.

- Water comes later...

I want it now.

- Sure. Excuse me.

Are you on the dodge?

- What of it?

I wouldn't talk about Chuck-A-Luck

so free if I were you.

- Why not?

Altar Keane wouldn't like it.

Where'd you hear about Chuck-A-Luck,

why are you asking about it?

I'm supposed to meet somebody there.

- Who?

- I don't know. It could be you.

Get back there, Barber!

- Yes, sir.

You don't know much,
but you're sure trying to learn!
How is he, Doc?

- He had lacerations and concussion.
His jugular vein was severed, he has
broken ribs and a fractured skull.
To put it briefly, he's real dead.
What makes you think he was an outlaw?

- The way he acted.

How do I know it was self-defence?

- I saw his gun!

It used to be the finest barbershop
west of Baxter's Bridge.

Could this be him?

There's something around the eyes.

Sure, that's him. That's him
before I shaved his handlebars.

"Wanted by the State of Texas
"for robbery of a stagecoach
out of El Paso, July 25, 1873.

"Reward, \$300."

- July 25th?

- Yeah, July 25th.

He couldn't have been in
Wyoming early in August.

- No, he couldn't.

Apologies and congratulations.

The \$300 is yours.

Sheriff, did you ever hear of
Chuck-A-Luck? A saloon? A password?

No, I never did. Here's your gun.

The reward - it'll be a few days.

Give it to the barber.

- That's sure kind of you.

You did our job. The least I can do
is buy you a drink.

- Wait a minute.

Did any of you ever hear of
someone called Altar Crane?

Altar Crane.

- It seems to me like I heard
of a name like that.

Or Altar Keane?

- Yeah, I remember.

If it's the person I'm thinking of,
the name is Keane, not Crane.

Altar Keane, yeah!

- What are you laughing at?

That name takes me back a long time,
when I was mining ore in a boom town.

Well, one night,

it was a horse race,

only I was one of the horses

and Altar Keane was my jockey.

One, two, three!

Come on, come on!

You can make it!

Get up, get up!

That's the only Altar Keane I know!

They only made one like her.

- What happened to her?

I never saw her after that.

- I've got to find her. Where would I look?

I heard she went to Virginia City.

Try some of the saloons.

She moved there with a girl

named Dolly, a good friend of hers.

I knew her well.

When I met Altar, she'd just come

from the Eastern Seaboard.

She was a singer, you know.

She sang only

in the most elegant places.

Loved horses.

Always had a pair of white horses.

And the men would all uncover

as she drove by.

The women?

The women would have been happy

for lightning to hit her.

Let me tell you the kind of girl

Altar was. Lots of men.

Sure, that's her privilege.

She shut the door on a cattle baron

if she had fancy for a cowpuncher.

Yes, she was a glory girl

in those days.

Last I heard, she was in Tascosa
at Baldy Gunder's place.

The only thing you'll find here,
young man, is a shade of her.

She left here seven years ago.

It was just after the night
she met Frenchy Fairmont.

Faster on the draw
than a Mexican jack rabbit.

I don't swear it's true. I wasn't
here. But here's how they tell it.
The story was that Mr Gunder didn't
like the way she treated a patron.

Or Altar didn't like the way
the patron treated her!

How could she leave her baby?

How could she leave
her bed and board

And elope with Gypsy Davey?

Last night she slept
in a goose-feather bed

At home with her lord and her baby

Tonight she sleeps...

Altar, you don't smile enough.

- I'm sick of smiling.

I pay you to entertain people,
not to kick them.

- Hands off me, Baldy.

Sure, sure.

Nobody's gonna touch you, angel.

Nobody wants you around, either.

- You're fired.

Deductions for food and costumes,
\$27.

Deductions for leaving early
two nights, \$10.

You haven't been shilling very good
lately, either. I owe you \$20 even.

Look for yourself.

- Never mind.

Your word's as good as your book.

Here's your \$20.

- Thanks.

Lots of bad luck to you, Baldy.

Get out of my way.
Make your bets. Everybody down?
We're ready to spin.
Wheel is spinning.
- Wait.
Spin the wheel.
- Wheel is spinning.
Three 4s on red.
We have a winner!
Here's a lady who's lucky.
Everybody's lucky at Chuck-A-Luck.
Step up and make your bets.
Is everybody down?
Spin the wheel.
Wheel is spinning.
Three 4s on red wins again. Did the
lady have that covered? Yes, she did.
That idiot thinks she's shilling!
- He didn't know you fired her.
- Shut up.
Stop the game! When I tell somebody
to get out, I mean it.
I don't work for you. I'm a customer.
- Don't lose your sense of humour.
I stay here as long as I like.
All right! Have one more spin,
then close for the night.
Try your luck at Chuck-A-Luck.
Everybody wins. Is everybody down?
Betting, Altar?
Sure.
Let her spin.
- Wheel is spin...
I'll spin it.
- It's Frenchy Fairmont!
You win, ma'am.
Pay the lady, please.
Pay her.
This will help you carry it.
There you are, ma'am.
May I be seeing you home?
Yes.
Always a pleasure
to meet a good loser.

Frenchy Fairmont.

The fastest draw in the West.

The greatest ability

often consists in not showing.

You're wanted, aren't you?

- Let's say I'm in public demand.

Why did you do that back there?

- I'm sentimental.

Are you?

I once saw three men fight

a gun battle over you.

- You did?

All three were killed.

Abilene, wasn't it?

- Yes.

I was in Hayes City when you rode

through a hotel on a white horse.

Rode him up to the dining room. You

must've had an important engagement.

It was with the mayor.

Wherever I went, I seemed to see

Altar Keane or hear about her.

Why didn't you ever meet me?

My engagements led me to other

parts of the West, toward Mexico.

I often wondered

what had become of you.

You can stop feeling sorry for me.

You strike me as a

wonderful woman, Miss Keane.

- Oh, stop it.

What are you gonna do

with all this money?

For a moment, when I was winning,

I thought...

Give it back.

- Why?

Baldy Gunder wouldn't let me out of

town alive with it. This is my place.

Don't give it back. There's a stage

south to Silver City in the morning.

I'd be glad to offer you protection

until it leaves.

I know you would.

All right, come in.

I will, ma'am. Tomorrow at nine,
before the stage leaves. Goodnight.
They say he stayed outside her place
that night, in case Baldy showed up.
The next morning, he put her
on the stage. That's how Altar left.
With her gone, business
fell off at Baldy's Palace.
Where did she go?

Young man, why are you
so interested in Altar Keane?

I gotta find somebody through her.
- I never heard of her any more.
I was told that, years later, she
met Frenchy again, near the border.
If you wanna believe what you hear,
there they might be now,
the two of them, snug and warm.
I don't know if it's true,
but it sounds romantic.

Frenchy ain't so snug.
A mail rider came through today.
In case you don't know, Frenchy was
locked up in Gunsight last Thursday.
The best I hope for him
is they hang him.

Now the road that goes
to Chuck-A-Luck
Leads to a western jail
And behind the bars is an outlaw
who knows the Chuck-A-Luck trail
There's crooked politicians in the
very next cell, safely locked away
It's an angry town all closed down
to vote on election day
But here's a man with a crazy plan,
a plan that will not wait
He'll trick his way
inside that jail
To reach his goal of hate,
murder and revenge! #
Got a padded cell?
Shooting up the town on election day!

With deputies roaming the streets!

How's the election?

- Law And Order's ahead.

Why ain't you at the polls?

I'm making sure this rat
don't turn those rats loose.

What do you think?

- I don't know.

Don't fret, gentlemen.

It won't be the first time
they've hung crooked politicians.

It'll only take a minute.

It's a clean way to die,
and as quiet as eating a banana.

You've got no right to keep us.

- Protect us!

Law And Order'll hang us;
that's their platform.

- Shut up!

Where d'you want him?

Not with them! They had to close the
saloons to throw them out of office!

That's what I was saying. You could
bribe them with a rusty nail.

You...!

- That's Frenchy Fairmont.

Rather be with him? Sure.

Give me an outlaw anytime. At least
he takes his chances in the open.

You are welcome, sir.

- Sheriff, we might cash in
our chips tonight.

How about some whiskey?

- You can't deny that, Mr Bullock.

There'll be no lynching while I'm
around, but send for three bottles.

What kind of Law And Order is this?

I get jailed for trying to buy
a drink. They have it delivered!

You're right. Our party stands for
everybody. Whiskey for all of 'em.
Sheriff...

Be sure it's my brand. Joe Gideon.

It'll take a little time.

In Wyoming, I heard that no jail
had ever seen Frenchy Fairmont.
I dropped by for some merchandise.
Some perfume.

Perfume?

- For a lady.

When I turned away, the storekeeper
hit me with an axe handle.

Are you from Wyoming?

- Yeah. Have you ever been in Wyoming?

No, I haven't. And I wouldn't be
surprised if I never will be.

Why not?

- If this election gets out
of hand, it may not be choosy.

If they take our friends here,
they might take us along too,
just for a few extra laughs.

That's a comforting thought.

- Isn't it?

I had a fight with my ranch boss
and quit. I decided to see the land.
Work your way down here?

- Yeah, a coupla weeks at a time.

I usually lose what I make at poker,
but the other night I was lucky.

I closed my eyes and threw my last
\$20 piece on a Chuck-A-Luck number.

And, so help me, I hit!

- A man can get fortunate at Chuck-A-Luck.

When I wanna do a little skylarking,
the town's shut up tight.

You took your time about it!

Couldn't find your particular brand
right away...

- Never mind about that.

Drink your whiskey
and be glad you got it.

Drink it fast. The final returns...

- I told you, never mind!

That dirty, double-crossing sheriff!

Not a thing but whiskey!

What did you expect to find?

Empty your bottles!

Empty them fast! Come on, Cowboy!

Go on, go on!

Empty it fast!

That's it!

- Give it to me.

What would you say that was?

- A pick.

These boys work real well together.

- Can't we talk this over?

How much would you take?

Polls are closed.

I have the latest count.

Citizens' Party - 119 votes.

Law And Order - 1,540.

Dad says we all meet later

at the Big Dipper Saloon.

Gentlemen, say your prayers.

- Cowboy, I'll give you \$1,000.

I'd double that.

- \$3,000. Hand it over!

You heard him - \$3,000.

Let us out! \$5,000! Do you hear me?

They're getting drunk at the Dipper.

- What are you doing?

The election threw you out of office.

- I wanna clean my desk out.

Go ahead. Then get outta here.

- You gonna let that crowd take 'em?

All right, I'll go and make

a speech at 'em. You stay here.

Bill, help me with this drawer.

It's stuck.

The horses are in the back!

- Fairmont's loose!

Come on.

Put up your hands!

That's very sensible.

Go find the horses.

- Yeah.

You'll just have to wait a minute,
gentlemen.

You'll have to walk out of town.

If you want my advice, you'll run.

Whoa! Wait here for me.

- What are you stopping for?

What I came to town for.

After the war, I settled in Missouri.

- What brought you west?

A bullet.

A bullet I put in a rancher,
another man who had his own sheriff.

Cheated me out of a homestead.

I met him in a corral.

He had the jump, but hate made me
fast. He went down like a stone.

I wasn't sorry, but I had to leave.

I got a rep for being a fast gun.

I kept meeting cowpunchers full of
booze, or trigger-crazy gunfighters.

I'd ride into a town and shoot my
way out. Seems that's how it went.

Must be a lonely trail.

- You don't make many friends.

There'll be a warrant out for you.

- First time I ever had a warrant.

First time I've been a horse thief!

Would you like a bed with springs tonight?

- They grow on cactus here?

Not exactly. Down there.

If you're not headed anywhere,
side with me for a while.

There's something I have to attend
to, but that can wait. Lead the way.

Hiya, Frenchy.

- Hi, Harbin.

Grain 'em.

- Rio, Gonzales!

Who is he?

Friend of mine.

Good to see you, Frenchy. Heard
you were on your way an hour ago.

Don't be surprised at anything here.

- The boss is waiting to see you.

Hello, Boss.

Frenchy, you old mustang.

Welcome back to Chuck-A-Luck.

Meet the boss of this ranch,

Altar Keane.

Lookout said somebody was with you.
- But for him, I might be on a rope.
Little trouble up in Gunsight.
Used his head and used his guts.
Uses his eyes too, doesn't he?
What are you staring at?
Shall I turn around?
- I've heard so many stories.
I wasn't certain there was an Altar Keane.
- You think I was a pipe dream?
It's the first time I ever met a
pipe dream with grease on her arms.
It's unsettling.
- Well, settle down.
Does he need to be out of sight?
He helped me break jail.
There's a warrant for that.
I'm tired. How many are here?
- Nine, including the lookouts.
Star came in. He's very prosperous
now. He's wanted in three states.
Any friend of Frenchy's is welcome,
if he agrees to the rules.
Hard to fancy anybody
not agreeing with you!
Don't fight, don't ask questions.
Everybody does his share of work.
You'll do yours.
- Sure, I'm good at cattle work.
- This is a horse ranch.
Come and get it! Come and get it!
Good music, isn't it?
- I'll take him in.
How do you want to be known?
- My name's Vern Haskell.
Some don't care to be called
by their names.
- Vern'll do.
All right.
We've got a new man tonight.
He helped Frenchy out of a jam.
Goes by the name of Vern.
This is Star. He carried one once.
And this is Red. Doesn't touch

liquor but is death on candy.
Here's Preacher -
he claims he was one once.
"Be joyful for you shall find
haven here. "
Preacher reads over anybody he kills.
This is the best hiding place
this side the moon.
Meet Harbin.
His warrants rotted away long ago.
I don't mind. There'll be more.
This is Comanche Paul.
He's half-Indian - the honest half.
Meet Wilson. Look at that smile.
He spends his time chasing ladies.
No girl is safe when he's around.
- One of them had some fight in her!
Uh-uh. Bobcat made these.
A real bobcat.
- Male or female?
Don't forget - no questions.
Kinch has a way with gold. He used
to pan it. Now he just borrows it.
Sit down.
- Where's Frenchy?
He's eating with me.
Mighty handsome filly.
You'll like Vern. He's all right.
- Outside of being a little fresh.
Could you find any use for this?
I haven't had perfume since I went
to El Paso two years ago.
I'm sorry I haven't got
anything else for your birthday.
They caught you, huh?
Crazy Frenchy.
Risking your life
for a bottle of perfume.
Don't ask me how old
I'll be tomorrow, or I'll ask you.
Does another year bother you?
- Every year's a threat to a woman.
Crazy Altar.
I been riding alone too long

this time. It's good to be back.

Pretty good, huh?

- Pretty good.

I might have liked that kind
of riding 10 or 12 years ago.

He can handle a horse!

- Ever seen him before?

Uh-uh

- Certain?

I never lose a face.

I don't know him.

He was looking at you
all through supper.

He sure does gander.

- He looks straight through a man.

Fancy riding!

- Yeah. She's a cocky filly.

Like women. Takes a lot of breaking
before she comes nice and even.

You're dead right on that.

Wilson!

- Howdy. Coming to this party?

To the party and away from a marshal.

Amigo, you sit on a horse
better than anybody.

If you let me say so.

They don't come any tougher even in
Wyoming. Any horses from up there?

Don't know.

We are only paid hands here.

Some of these fellas
range pretty far from here.

Used to be five paid hands. Martinez
worked on saddles and bridles.

He began to talk in town.

He began to answer questions.

No bridle on his tongue.

Four of us now.

We never know what become
of Martinez. They say...

Maybe you know what they say.

- You see?

Yeah. Yeah, I see.

A carful of cattlemen

was on a siding.

Jess went one end, me the other, and
them boys just emptied their pockets.

One tried to be brave.

That started the trouble.

We've been one jump ahead
of marshals across Texas.

What's the account?

- \$4,800. That yours?

- That's right.

Care for any of that?

- No.

Ten per cent of this would be,
I should say, \$50.

\$50.

We'd better keep our faces
here for a month or so.

Before you do,
what's in that bag?

Bonds. City of Austin bonds.

They're worthless.

\$1,100 worthless?

I take \$110 in cash. Now.

How d'you expect us
to cash those in?

That's your trouble.

I don't ask you to stay here.

That's your price?

- Always, ten per cent.

You been riding high.

Some day...

Some day what?

Count it out, Jess.

You'll have a chance
to win it back tonight.

You're mighty lucky.

- Do you mind? On my birthday?

I been chasing this filly.

She finally asks me in.

I said, "You got a husband or two.

Where are they?"

She said,

"I got three husbands in the cellar."

"I lock 'em up when I'm not using

'em. Are you coming in or not?"

You'd do anything to get your arms round a girl, huh?.

- Wouldn't you?

I'm in.

Isn't this worth staying for?

I'm out.

- Somebody get me a drink.

You don't remember him?

- I never lose a face. I've never seen him.

Looks like a lot of men.

- What's bothering you?

You see the way he looked at you when you told that story?

Frenchy brought him.

That's enough for me.

You're always there when you're needed.

Ace is bet.

- Gonna play my luck.

And a hundred.

- Two steep for me.

I'll see you.

- Three fives.

I don't wanna see

Altar swindled on her birthday!

Geary bugged that card. I seen it.

Say that again, Harbin.

- He cheated, I tell you.

I knew he cheated.

That's why I stole his watch.

I'd trade it for the pot.

- I'd call that a fair trade.

How about a song, Altar?

- Give us a tune.

The three things a man requires are whiskey, a song and an honest woman.

Or any woman. Take care of my money, Harbin.

I've had all kinds but never found one to equal Altar. How about you?

I wouldn't know.

- Maybe he's got a sweetheart.

Let's have some music.

Let's have fun.

A young man is reckless and ready

A young man is handsome and vain

He's young and intense,

but hasn't the sense

To come in out of the rain

Get away, get away

Get away, young man, get away!

A young man is full of adventure

And eager to do what he can

He may be a joy,

but don't send a boy

To do the work of a man

Get away, get away

Get away, young man, get away!

A young man will come

when you call him

And leave when you tell him to go

But some day he'll guess

a woman means yes

Whenever a woman says no

Get away, get away

Get away, young man, get away!

A woman is only a creature

of notions and dimples and lies

So learn, if you can,

this lesson, young man

And don't run off when she cries

"Get away, get away,

get away, young man, get away!"

Get away, get away,

get away, young man

Get away, get away, if you can!

Altair, lookout coming!

Saw some riders at Dry Creek! Looks

like a posse headed for the ranch!

Regular hands stay. Everybody else,

clear your gear out of the bunkhouse.

Lookout, go back to your post. Clean

up this mess. Get rid of the bottles.

Shall I stay?

- No, I can handle this.

They don't know my face...

- Go with the others!

Get going!

- You heard the lady.

Ride to the ridge camp.

Stay until I send word.

Everybody ready? Come on!

Hello, Spinning C!

Hello, the ranch!

Anyone awake?

Marshal Donaldson!

We haven't seen you in months.

Hello, Miss Keane. You're up late.

- I was working.

We're hunting four men, Miss Keane.

Frenchy Fairmont and a man that helped him break jail, Vern Haskell, came this way a couple of days ago.

A sheep herder saw them.

Then Mort Geary and Jess Factor, wanted in Texas for a train robbery, were reported heading this way.

That's peculiar, isn't it?

Yes. Unless they're all headed for the border.

No sign of them here?

- Not a soul.

Things are very peaceful these days.

I don't like to do it, but I've got to ask you one thing more.

- Yes?

We'd like to breathe our horses here and loan some of yours.

Glad to oblige. Rio, Gonzales, get five of our best horses.

We'll help.

- Would you like a drink?

I should keep my finger steady.

- It will take a while to get the horses.

Where's Vern?

- He stopped a way back.

His saddle was slipping.

He'll never find this trail.

I'll go back for him.

The horses are ready.

- Would you like a drink?

Thank you.

- I hope we can repay you.

You can. If you hear of any Eastern buyers of stock, let me know.

My cousin might give you some trade.

- That's nice.

How many horses do you have?

- About 42.

Strange.

I counted 33 in the corral.

How did you happen to count them?

- Because I noticed fresh tracks.

Shoes in the clay, leading out of the corral - eight or ten horses.

I saw those strays, ma'am, grazing in the box canyon across the valley.

We can round them up now or in the morning.

- Are they safe?

I'd say so.

- Morning will do, then.

- Sorry I left the gate rope off, ma'am.

Who are you?

- My new hand, Marshal.

- I thought you used only Mexicans.

I needed an extra man. He's good at breaking broncs. Careless, sometimes.

You wear your holster mighty high.

- Don't have to reach as far.

Let me see your hands.

- They're not as soft as yours.

I don't earn my living as a gunsling.

Takes years of cowpunching to make 'em that rough. Sorry, son.

I got a good man here too.

Sometimes he's TOO careful!

Thanks. Goodnight.

I'll go with you. Wait for me.

- Yes, ma'am.

Come on!

Goodbye, Miss Keane.

Come on, men.

You're always standing in doorways.

And always using your eyes.

- That way, you see unexpected things.

Like stray horses? That was clever.

Thanks.

- I'm grateful,

but I expect men to do as I say.

Why aren't you with the others?

- I lost them on the way.

Figured I might find what I was after here.

- Am I to believe that?

That dress you had on tonight...

I never saw a stylier one.

They made you out of salt and brass!

Where'd the bracelet come from, and

that brooch? Who gave them to you?

Things have to be explained double
to you! There are no questions here.

You don't ask people who they are
or if the moon is yellow!

You don't ask me where I get my
jewellery! It's not your business.

The rules are meant to be kept.

If you don't intend to keep them,
you can clear out right now.

It's hard for a man to look at you
and keep any rules.

Did you just think of that?

- No, when I first saw you, grease and all.
Like heat lightning, I suppose.

- How do you know?

Every time you see me,
you feel weak in the head.

- I feel sorry for myself.

Sorry I never met you before. Sorry
I never gave you a brooch like that.

You're as smooth on the ground
as you are on a horse.

Only when somebody irons me out...
like you do.

Vern, when you find a fenced range,
do you always try to climb over?

I see if the gate's open first.

- One way or another, though, you try.
That was for trying.

That was for trying too hard.

- You're real unfair, ma'am.

- Why?

Got two slaps, only one kiss.

You go and saddle my horse.

I'll lead you up to the trail...

Frenchy?

- Beautiful night for chasing up
and down a mountain.

Sorry I lost you. The only place
I knew where to go was here.

Not being a sceptical man,
that's what I figured.

The posse was looking for
you, Vern, Geary and Factor.

They'll be back in the morning.

- We'd better leave.

I'll bring everybody back
tomorrow night. Go to bed.

Nobody'll get lost this time.

That's threading a needle!

I once saw Bat Masterson shoot the
toe off a fella with his boot on.

I'll be glad to duplicate that.

Stick out your foot.

What's up? That wasn't personal.

- Harbin, hang up another rein.

Lately, I see you
trying everything I do.

He's good at that kind of a stunt.

I don't know how he'd be
drawing against a man.

That would depend on the man.

- I call that fair shooting.

If I keep on,
I might even outdraw you some day.

Don't ever try it.

You only stayed six weeks this time.

I came back empty-handed the last.

I need income.

- Going tonight?

I'm riding to Clay Springs
in the morning with Star.

There's a bank I wanna look over

before doing some other jobs.

I'm hoping six men can handle it.

It'll take about two or three days.

That's what the shooting was about?

- Target practice.

Vern's handy with a .45.

- You're not taking him?

And why not?

- He's...

He's not...

- You mean he's not an outlaw?

That never bothered you about me.

You were chin-deep in this life. You
couldn't go back if you'd wanted to.

He can.

- Maybe. It's not how he acts.

His draw is as fast as you'll find.

There's always gonna be someone faster.

- That's right. Me.

Some day you won't come back.

Or you'll come back full of lead.

You're not talking about me.

You're talking about him.

- No, Frenchy.

I think you're lying.

Maybe I am.

Look, Altar, once in a lifetime,
a woman means something to a man.

I know, Frenchy.

- Time holds us together.

Time is stronger than a rope.

We buy your horses,

work your ranch. Now this.

Just send back my ten per cent of
that bank robbery before you go on.

Why the change in rules?

- If you land in jail, I get nothing.

You took that risk before.

- Not now.

Don't you trust us? Lately...

- Lately what?

We ought to worry about trusting you.

- Then find another Chuck-A-Luck.

That's like finding a potato tree.

When's Frenchy back?

- Later today.

What's he got to do with it?

- We'll talk this over with him.

I'm the boss of this ranch, Kinch.

I make the rules.

I told you to saddle my horse.

What is the other one for?

- For me, ma'am.

All right. Come along if you want to.

That's who! I knew I'd seen him

before! The way he gets on a horse!

Got him placed?

- A town in Wyoming.

What'd he do?

- It ain't what he did.

Never mind. But the sooner he gets a
bullet through his head, the better.

I was working with your horse. Soon
he'll be able to read and write.

Yes, I've been watching you. I don't
want him to learn stupid tricks.

Sorry. I'm moody these days.

- It's been a dry summer. The earth's hard.

Gets people out of sorts,
the weather. My father told me that.

How long do you intend to
stay at the ranch?

- Till the rains come.

If a girl won't blow out the candle,
the rain'll douse it sometimes.

Did your father tell you that?

- No, I just sort of made that up myself.

Whenever I should be angry at you, I laugh.

- You think I'm funny?

- I do.

And I only met one man in my life
who didn't want something
behind his pretty talk.

What I want, if I'm allowed to ask,
is to know a thousand things
about you.

Where you were born,
how you came out west,

where you got that dress,
where you got your jewellery,
what stories are true
and what aren't.
The dress is from New Orleans,
and I can tell you what isn't true...
I never wore green hair!
Did they name a parlour car after you?
- Mm-hm.
Kansas Pacific Railroad...
the Altar Keane.
That diamond, famous in four states,
big as a doorknob.
- It wasn't real.
The fella who gave it to me was like
you. Fresh, honest around the mouth.
Anyway, you've got a girl somewhere.
- No, I haven't.
Then you've got five of them.
- No.
No, I have no girl.
I'd wish you'd go away...
and come back ten years ago.
Go, Vern. I don't want you any more.
Get off my ranch and leave me alone.
Suppose this is the main street
of Clay Springs. Here is the bank.
Next to the bank is a store. Next
to that is the Primrose Theatre.
Down a bit is the saloon.
- Where's the sheriff?
- Asleep, I hope.
But there's our worry. Across from
the bank is the marshals' office.
If anything goes wrong,
some of us'll get sawed off.
How many men will we need?
- Nine.
Five in the bank,
three in the street
and somebody, who's not known in
town, on the balcony of the theatre.
He can draw a bead
on the marshals' office.

I never been in Clay Springs. I'll go.

- Right.

You, Star, Jess and me makes five.

Comanche?

- I go.

I'd like to make it.

Sorry, Harbin. No deal for a man
who can't move fast.

- But I...

Red?

- No, I'm heading out tomorrow myself.

I got a little matter down in Mexico.

Preacher?

- Praying for Mammon has
always been my infirmity. I'll ride.

I'm number eight. We're one shy.

Vern's gun would be worth a lot.

- No, he doesn't belong in this.

Leave him here?

That won't make Altar unhappy.

I get your point,

but I'll make up my own mind.

I forgive you for being so foolish,
but not for being wrong.

- Am I wrong?

Frenchy, he's young and handsome.

It's easy to take a fancy to him.

He makes you remember yourself a long
time back, but there's been nothing.

I told him to leave this afternoon.

He's riding with us tomorrow.

- Did he ask to go?

No. I'm telling him. We need him.

He'll go along whether

he likes it or not. Do you mind?

No, I don't mind.

They hit me in the shoulder.

Star's hit.

I never saw anything so messed up.

- The shot came from across the street.

It missed me by inches.

- Don't blame Jess and me,

we done just what Frenchy said.

Where is he, anyway?

He knows we're meeting here.
- Frenchy'll get here.
If the next job goes like this...
- We got what we went for!
Who's gonna take Altar's cut back?
She shouldn't get a cut.
I'm fed up with her.
- We're safe at Chuck-A-Luck...
You are here two hours.
You don't talk to me. Come and dance.
In a minute.
See you in a minute, honey.
Somebody's gotta take Altar's
ten per cent back.
Not me!
- Me neither. I'm not riding
half the night to cater to Altar.
Well, I'm occupied here.
I've got some dancing to do.
That leaves you three.
Low card fair?
- That's all right with me.
King.
Seven of diamonds.
Five of diamonds.
I expected you a little sooner.
I knew you were coming. The lookout
saw you. I told you not to come back.
No matter how often you tell me,
I'll come back.
I expected you to.
How did it go this morning?
- No difficulties.
A few of us got to Margy's saloon
first. The rest'll be along later.
Tomorrow we're all gonna go to Langsey.
- Then why are you here?
Somebody had to bring you your cut.
- Why you?
I happened to draw low card.
- Happened to?
- I'm lucky at cards.
And I aim to get slapped again.
If I can...

I knew you would.
Sometimes I like a man who doesn't
believe what a woman tells him.
I like a woman who's sometimes like
ice, sometimes burning like the sun.
A pipe dream in blue jeans
or in a birthday dress.
Give me one wish, and I'd wish
to see that rig again -
a shawl... and jewels... and all.
Just like that night.
What are you gonna do about it?
What is it, Vern?
It's a pipe dream. You'll kiss me
tonight and send me away tomorrow.
Maybe. If that's the way you feel,
where's the money you were bringing?
In my saddlebags.
- Then go and get it.
Star...
Vern?
I won't send you away tomorrow.
You're very beautiful.
The jewellery Frenchy gave you...
- Men are funny. All men are jealous.
Frenchy only gave me one of these.
- Which?
- The necklace.
The others I bought with the dress.
What about that?
- Oh, that? It was part of my cut.
Kinch gave it to me.
Kinch? It was Kinch!
Vern? What's the matter?
Now I can tell you what's been
choking me every minute.
Who wore that brooch before you?
A girl that I was gonna marry!
She was outraged and butchered
by the man who took that from her
and gave it to you for ten per cent
of her life!
She's on the floor.
She's got blue eyes.

Do you feel them staring,
see the blood, hear her screaming?
Kinch didn't tell me...

- Kinch!

I thought it was Wilson, Factor,
Frenchy, or somebody who'd gone.
I'm glad it wasn't Frenchy,
but it could've been.

It could've been anybody who came to
Chuck-A-Luck to hide. Chuck-A-Luck!
Altar Keane's place! Look, Altar.
Is that a bedroom or a morgue?
Look over here, through that window.
Is that a courtyard or a graveyard?
You think a dance-hall girl
was a dirty life?

You ought to be proud of that
compared to what you are now!
Here's your cut
from yesterday's job.
And there's payment for this.
I'm buying it back from you.
Let's get going, boy.

My shoulder...
Ever seen it, Kinch?
Touch it. Pick it up.
You've seen it, Kinch,
in a town in Wyoming, on a girl.
Altar told you!

- I'm gonna kill you.

- Wilson, Geary!

This is a private affair. Keep out.
You got business upstate.
Get out of town.
Don't go. Altar is squealing on us!
Get out!

I'm gonna kill you,
but I'm not gonna murder you.
I'll give you an even chance.
Now go ahead, draw.

I've seen you. You learned Frenchy's
draw. You can't make me fight.

Draw!

Draw!

All right.

Draw!

Take your guns out
and hold them at your sides. Do it!

Bartender... when you say go,
that's it.

Maybe you'll have the guts to shoot.

- I didn't mean to do it! She yelled.

If she hadn't yelled
, it would've been all right.

- Let's see how you like it.

Go ahead and yell. The longer
you yell, the longer you live.

What's the quarrel here?

There's no shooting in my town.

This man's wanted for murder.

A girl named Beth Forbes,
in a town called Whitmore
in Wyoming, August 10th last year.

Is that true?

I heard him admit it, Sheriff.

Is that true?

- I heard him admit it, Sheriff.

Thanks, mister. I've got a special
fondness for rats that kill women.

I'll need you for a witness.

You'll stay in town?

- Yes.

Come on.

Turn that man loose,
and don't make any noise.

This man is my prisoner.

- Yeah.

We got business with somebody
that squealed on him.

Gonzales, Harbin.

Altar!

Altar? Altar!

What's going on?

Where's Harbin and Gonzales?

I sent them away.

Is your shoulder bad?

- Bad enough to bring me back
instead of going on.

There isn't a horse in the corral.

What happened?

The hands are taking them
to Silver City to sell them.

There's a note for you.

It's the deed for the ranch.

The money's in the safe.

I'm leaving, Frenchy.

Has Vern been here?

- Yes.

You're doing this
on account of him?

- Yes.

You're not going away.

You belong to me! You'll stay here.

You don't like to lose, do you?

- No.

If I lose you, I might as well
turn myself in to the marshal.

Get it out of your mind.

You're not gonna meet Vern.

He wouldn't have me

because I belong to you.

Because of you and everything
you mean. You and the ranch.

I don't believe you!

I don't believe a word of you!

Where are you going?

- Away from here.

To Baldy Gunder's

or any saloon that'll have me.

I'll kill you before you do.

Hello, Frenchy.

You and Altar been packing long?

Place sure looks deserted.

Looks like people are moving.

What's going on?

- Planning to leave?

- Nobody's leaving.

Altar was gonna,

but she'll change her mind.

Don't make no difference.

We got plans for her.

She told Vern her brooch came from

his girl that I shot in a hold-up.
No telling what other things
she told him about all of us.
I told him where I got
the brooch, that's all.
I believe that.
You're a reasonable man. Once
they start talking they don't stop.
Ain't a marshal from here to Kansas
wouldn't pay for what she knows.
We took a lot from you.
You wiped your boots on us.
Too bad Preacher ain't here
to read over you.
You can get her and me, but I tell
you, you're gonna die doing it.
Here's where you're wrong, Frenchy.
The rifle on that sill is aimed at
your back, and Wilson's behind it.
If you think I'm gonna turn around,
you're mistaken.
Alright, you tell him!
It's there, Frenchy.
- You can get one of us, maybe two.
But there'll still be three left
to settle with her.
You've got the odds. Let us leave,
and Chuck-A-Luck's yours.
Not a chance!
We got the odds, we call the plays.
- The odds are changed.
There is a rifle on this sill
but there's nobody back of it.
I hogtied Wilson.
I was riding 500 yards behind you.
All of us were heading for the
same spot with different reasons.
They did a job on the sheriff, but
all your friends won't help you now.
The others are yours, Frenchy.
It's up to you whether
you turn 'em loose or hang 'em.
Shooting's better than they deserve.
First I want your word on something.

Keep them here a while.
I cried Kinch to jail personally.
Give me an hour's start.
Vern, maybe we can work out a deal.
If you're willing...
Watch out! The window!
Stop! Stop shooting!
- Throw out your guns!
Comanche...
Go on, get started.
Pick a direction
and don't come back.
That sheriff
will have a posse out.
I can't fight.
We'll be caught.
That's your problem.
Take your chances.
Once the posse gets them,
they'll come for you.
They're welcome to me.
We all get taken, sooner or later.
First, there's a matter
you and I have got to settle.
Altar...
She stepped in front of that
bullet to save you.
Two men rode away
from Chuck-A-Luck
And Death rode beside them
on the trail
They died that day,
so the legends tell
With empty guns,
they fought and fell
And so ends the tale
of hate, murder and revenge! #