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Support Your Local Sheriff!

By William Bowers

We are gathered here today to consign
the mortal remains of Millard Frymore.

Or whatever his name really was.

I ain't really got

a whole lot to say about Millard

because he only rode amongst us

two days ago,

and was promptly struck down

by whatever deadly disease

it was struck him down.

We can only hope

that whatever deadly disease it was

it wasn't particularly contagious.

And with that in mind, I suggest

we all bow our heads in devout prayer.

Heavenly Father, we hereby consign

to your tender mercies all that remains...

Get out!

All that remains of one Millard Frymore.

Origin unknown.

Cause of death unknown.

And of considerable concern to those

of us thrown into contact with him

during the last two days.

Millard was struck down in what

was evidently the prime of his life.

In fact, he was took from us so fast

he never even got a chance

to unpack his suitcase.

However, inasmuch as we were the last

to know poor Millard here on earth,

and in so far as we were all drawn

to this godforsaken country

in search of a common goal,

I'm certain you will agree with me...

- Hey, Pa... Pa...

- What is the matter with you?

- Take a look.

- Ain't you got no reverence for anything?

- Gold.

- What?

Take a look, it's gold.

I remind everyone we are here to

consign the remains of Millard Frymore.

- It's gold, Henry.

- Gold?

Down there in the grave.

- Let's get this coffin out and have a look.

- Oh, no, you don't!

Get out of my gold mine.

Get out of my gold mine.

- We're gonna be rich.

- Get out of my gold mine...

Gold! Gold! Gold!

It doesn't seem possible
that a town could get in this condition
in the short time it's been in existence.

Lynchings, gunfights,
and that drunken revelry going on
at Madame Orr's House 24 hours a day.

A decent woman
is not safe on these streets.

Oh, I think the women are safe enough
for the most part.

We only got a couple
that would be much interest to anyone.
Outside the dance-hall girls and they're
good at handling themselves in a pinch.
Or in a ticklish situation.

Well, now, this may be very funny
to the members of the town council.
We mine-owners haven't found anything
to laugh at since we started in business.

We don't think it's funny, Tom.
We just don't know what to do about it.

Maybe what we need is a new mayor
and a town council that does know.
What kinda talk is that? The only reason
I'm mayor and the others councilmen
is nobody else wanted the jobs.

Don't forget, Tom.

We're all mine-owners ourselves.
Do you enjoy giving 20 per cent of
everything you mine to the Danby family?

- Why would we enjoy it?

- All right, let's do something about it.

What? You all know the situation.

Us in Calendar.

There's Galena, where we ship our gold.
There's the Danby ranch in between the
two. The road runs through their property.
Then we build the road
around their property.
How? They own that whole valley.
If they don't get their 20 per cent, they
just hold up every stage and take all of it.
All right, but we've got to do something.
Even if it means bringing troops in here.

- Troops?

- Troops?

What troops? From where?

The nearest troops are 500 miles.

- Then we recruit our own.

- We can't recruit enough dishwashers.

How will we recruit troops?

Nobody wants to stop prospecting
long enough to take a bath.

It all happened so fast we ain't had
a chance to get organised yet.

- The Danbys are takin' advantage of it.

- There goes one of 'em now.

- Which one is he?

- Joe.

Out of the father and brothers,
he's second toughest.

- They all act like they own the place.

- The way things are now, they do.

It's gonna stay that way
until we find ourselves a sheriff
that doesn't turn tail and run
the minute someone takes a shot at him.
Whiskey.

All right, you all saw it.

And it was a fair fight.

He drew first.

So it was self-defence.

He drew first, sure as anything.

You couldn't call it anything
but self-defence.

It may have been a lot of things,
but self-defence it wasn't.

And he didn't draw first, you did.

- What do you mean by that?
- Oh, it's an old trick. You did it pretty well.
Not real well, but pretty well.
You fainted with your left shoulder
gettin' him to go for his gun
while you were going for yours
with your right hand.
It's an old Arizona trick, but I have
seen it used as far north as Montana.
- Are you callin' me a liar?
- You heard every word I said.
All I said was you fainted him into drawing
while you were going for your gun.
- So what?
- You beat that poor man to the draw.
He's dead and you're alive.
That's the whole idea of the game.
- What's your name?
- Jason McCullough.
- What's yours?
- Joe Danby.
- And you had better remember it.
- Oh, I'll remember it, Joe.
It's about all I'll do the rest of my life,
remember your name.
The bread's on the table in front of you.
Why, you!
Is this one of Emma's
tasty home-cooked meals?
- That's it, mister.
- They charge \$3 for this, huh?
That's what they call inflation. Sometimes
it catches you right in between mouthfuls.
Is there really any gold in this town?
- How long did it take you to get that?
- Yesterday afternoon.
A good part of this morning.
Where could a man find a place to sleep?
If you mean a room, you can't. Down
at the end of the street, you get a cot.
- How much?
- \$20. Eight-hour shift.
Say a man was willing to go to work to
get himself a stake. How'd he go about it?

- You don't want a job?

- No.

I figure the way prices are around here,
I'll go broke about 2.30 this afternoon.

We got a bulletin board with that
kinda stuff down at the assay office.

Thank you.

Hold it! Hold it!

OK, go ahead.

Fight!

Yee-hah!

- Get the hell out of my way.

- Heck, go around.

I told you get outta there.

What did I tell you?

Watch where you're grabbing.

- What about you?

- What about me?

- You wanna grab something?

- Everything looks too slippery.

- What does that mean?

- Nothing.

You look too clean to suit me.

Are you the man I talk to about...

- Wait your turn, mister.

...the job of sheriff?

- You interested in the job of sheriff?

- Well, maybe.

- How much does it pay?

- No sheriff lived long enough to find out.

Look, boys. Why don't you go outside
and watch the fight? The ladies too.

Very good fight out there.

You can watch it too, Sam.

OK, come on.

Let's get out. Get moving. Come on.

All right, let's go.

I'm Olly Perkins, the mayor here.

Jason McCullough.

Fred Johnson,

Henry Jackson, Tom Devery.

Original settlers. Fred and Henry
are members of the town council.

- I represent the mine-owners.

- Nice to meet you.

What that fella said a minute ago
ain't strictly true.

We've had three sheriffs the past
two months, but only two got killed.

- What about the other one?

- He quit, kinda sudden like.

I don't think

he had the right temperament.

You never have said

anything about the pay.

Well, for the right kinda man,
\$150 a month.

With the spiralling prices around here,
that'd only allow a man to eat
and sleep about eight days a month.

- The job includes room and board.

- Not at Emma's Tasty Food Emporium?

At my house.

My daughter does the cooking.

Gentlemen, it's only fair to tell you I'd only
be interested on a temporary basis.

Oh?

I was on my way to Australia
when I heard about your gold strike
and I decided to travel through here
to see if I could pick up a little stake.

- What do you want to go to Australia for?

- It's the last frontier country.

- I thought I might do a bit of pioneering.

- I thought we was pioneers.

- So did I.

- To get back to the sheriff's job.

If I take it, it's with the understanding I get
time off to do the prospecting I came for.

Well, you ain't said nothing yet
about your qualifications for the job.

Don't worry about that.

If I take it, you'll be glad.

It ain't just a question of taking the job, it's
also a question of being able to handle it.

Olly, we ain't in much of a position
to be choosy.

Him talking about it at all

certainly shows the right attitude.
I don't care what it shows. As mayor,
it's my responsibility to hire us a sheriff
that's not only got qualifications
but ain't gonna get killed
the first time he sticks
his nose out of the door.

There you go.

- What's your point?

- Just an exhibition of marksmanship.

- The bullet went through the hole.

- Maybe it did, maybe it didn't.

- Oh, it did. Take my word for it.

- I'd like to take your word but...

Would you mind doing it again,
Mr McCullough?

- You want me to do it again?

- If you don't mind.

- Well, I already shot one hole in your roof.

- That's all right.

I hope you didn't take offence
at nothing I said earlier, sir.

No. Gentlemen,
just to keep the record straight, now.

\$150 a month
and the room and board is fine.

But I've got to do my prospecting.

I'm on my way to Australia.

You just name your terms, mister.

We'll rush to meet 'em.

Fine, as long as everything is straight.

Is there some kind of badge with this job?

Oh, you bet there is.

- I'm afraid it's a little bent up.

- That saved the life of whoever wore it.

It would have if it wasn't for all them
other bullets flyin' in from everywhere.

Gentlemen.

- Do we have a jail here?

- Do we have a jail?

A brand-new one with two cells that
the whole community built last month.
Even the dance-hall girls showed up,
made sandwiches and carried on.

It was designed
to be practically escape-proof.
Good, because I'm gonna have
to throw a couple of people in it.
- There's one thing. It's got everything.
- Even a new stove with a coffee pot.
The only thing it hasn't got
is iron bars for the cells.
You're kiddin'.
We had to send away for 'em
and they ain't arrove yet.
It's got glass windows and brooms
and kerosene lamps. You name it.
- Just no bars for the cells.
- Right.
- Well, all right, I'll think of something.
- You ain't wanted for anything anywhere?
Not that it matters. We understand
how them little things can happen.
No, I'm not wanted for anything anywhere.
You realise the chance you was taking
asking him that?
He might have took offence.
I'm the mayor and I got responsibilities.
The question had to be asked.
Mr Mayor, if I could get
a few men on this pump over here,
I think we could stop this thing.
Sure thing, Sheriff. Give us a hand, men.
All right, men. Let her go.
A little more.
Break it up.
OK, cut it.
- What are you tryin' to do?
- Stoppin' a fight.
- Who are you?
- I'm the new sheriff.
Oh, we got a new sheriff.
Let's see if he scares
as easy as the last sheriff.
I want all you people to quit disturbing
the peace and clean up this mess.
Yes, sir. Anything else?
- You got a name?

- Jake.

Right, Jake, I want you
to go into the Mint Saloon.
There's a fella in there
by the name of Joe Danby.
Tell him I remember his name.
He's under arrest for murder.
I'll be in to pick him up in not 20 minutes.

- You talkin' to me?

- You hard of hearing?

You want me to tell Joe Danby
that he's under arrest for murder?

- What about after he kills me?

- I'll arrest him for both murders.

- Where's the jail?

- Just follow me, Sheriff.

You won't find a better jail
for 200 miles.

That is, if he can find one at all.

- Everything seems to be in order.

- Our last sheriff was a good organiser.

Yellow clear through,
but a good organiser.

We should be getting the bars in
any day now.

- That oughta do it.

- That oughta do what, Sheriff?

That oughta take care of it
till we get the bars in.

I've got my bedroll and other things
over at the stable.

I'll pick them up, then settle in
where I'm gonna stay.

I got a nice room for you at my house.

Shall we go over there?

Then I can pick up that Danby fella.

There is something you better know
about the Danbys.

Why bother the sheriff
about that stuff now?

- But, Fred...

- We can fill him in after he settles in.

- You comin', Mayor?

- I'll be right with you, Sheriff.

This is like murder.

I hope you know that.

Just cos we've lost three sheriffs
don't mean we're gonna lose four.

- Our luck is bound to change.

- What about his luck?

Prudy! Prudy!

- Just put your things over there.

- All righty.

Prudy!

I want you to meet my daughter, Sheriff.

A good cook. Mighty fine-lookin' girl.

Takes after her dear, departed mother.

- Mother died, huh?

- No, she just departed.

Come on, Sheriff.

I'll show you the parlour.

That little organ,

that came all the way from Dsseldorf.

The furniture was shipped

through St Louis and Chicago.

- This desk is where I do my mayor work.

- Very nice.

I guess you could say

this is about the finest house in town.

Let me show you the dining room.

That's where you'll be having your meals.

Prudy! I want you to meet someone.

- This is the dining room.

- You sure have a nice place here.

Thank you, Sheriff. A drink?

- Water, if you have some.

- Water?

Sure thing.

We've got a pump inside the kitchen.

Inside the house?

There's the pump.

Sheriff.

Before you go down

to arrest Joe Danby,

a couple of things you oughta know.

- All right.

- The Danbys, there's four of them.

Father and three sons,

all of 'em pretty tough customers.

- Outlaws?

- No, not exactly.

But in many ways,
you might say they're like outlaws.

- How's that?

- They do pretty much as they like.

And they get real nasty
when anybody tries to stop 'em.

You mean...

You mean you don't want me
to arrest this boy?

No, not at all. It's just it's a new idea.

Takes a little bit of getting used to.

I stood there in that saloon and watched
him gun a man down in cold blood.

Oh, I believe you, Sheriff. It's just
the kind of thing you'd expect Joe to do.

- But are you sure it wasn't self-defence?

- Not a chance.

Sometimes them things happen so fast.

It didn't happen all that fast.

Look, Mr Perkins.

You're the mayor of this town. If you order
me not to arrest this man, you're the boss.

I'll have to give you this badge back,
cos that is no way to run a town, Mayor.

I couldn't agree with you more.

Furthermore, I'll expect all the law-abiding
citizens to back me up in this job.

They will, Sheriff. Well, maybe
not all of them. Not right at first.

You see, it's like I told you.

I'm just on my way to Australia.

You go ahead

and do what you think is best.

I'd better go and alert everybody...

We're all behind you, Sheriff.

Don't give it another thought.

You don't need any help with Joe Danby?

- No, I can handle it.

- Oh, good. Good.

- You're the strangest girl I ever met.

- Go away.

Do you always show this side of your nature or am I just lucky on my first day?

I suppose you have some reason for sitting up there like that?

Ordinarily, a girl doesn't get undressed, pour a bucket of water over her head, then climb a tree.

I'm warnin' you...

- Hi, Mrs Danvers.

- What in the world...?

Prudy, is this man bothering you?

- Do you know this young lady?

- Of course.

That's Prudy Perkins.

She lives here in this house.

Does she have any past history of strange behaviour like this?

Why, no. Prudy's always been a sweet, normal, loveable...

Of course,

there were a couple of times last year.

What happened last year?

It wasn't really anything.

The annual town picnic, she got her hair caught in the ice-cream freezer.

I think we ought to be merciful and forget about this whole unfortunate incident.

Good day, ma'am.

Sheriff, I didn't go down there and tell Joe like you asked.

- Why not?

- Nobody's paying me to take chances.

You never know

how that Joe is gonna react.

Why should you worry what Joe thinks?

Cos he's mean, Sheriff, and he's nasty.

He enjoys killin' people.

- All them Danbys enjoy things like that.

- You're faster than Joe.

- Who says so?

- I do. I've seen you both draw.

You're faster than he is.

Supposing it's true,

why should the matter ever come up?

Jake...

How would you like the job as my deputy?

I'd hate it.

Even if I lived through it, I'd hate it.

I don't know how much they're paying you
but you gotta believe me, it ain't enough.

He's expecting you. Some of these

other people told him you was coming.

I hear you're gonna try and arrest me.

You don't look near as tough

as those other sheriffs we've had lately.

Particularly that old boy who done run off
an hour and a half after he took the job.

Joe, you just make me feel tired all over
when you talk like that.

Now, what do you mean by that?

It's bad enough to have to kill a man

without having to listen

to a whole lot of stupid talk from him first.

And remember, Joe, I've seen you draw.

All right, Sheriff, hold it.

Now, drop your gun belt.

- I couldn't let him shoot you in the back.

- Oh, you could have.

Is this the kind of town you people

want for yourselves, this kind of life?

Three killings in one saloon alone

and the sun hasn't even gone down yet.

Any more of this foolishness,

I'll close this place up tight.

- Yes, sir. I wouldn't blame you a bit, sir.

- Pick it up, Joe. Go on, pick it up.

I'm gonna get you for this, Jake.

You are the toughest-talkin' blowhard

I ever heard.

You might as well come on. Whether you

like it or not, we're on the same side now.

Come on, Joe.

Take it easy, boys. Me and the sheriff

takes a dim view of show-offs with guns.

Remember.

No more shooting till the sun goes down.

- Is that what he said?

- Close enough.

Drinks are on the house.

Jake, why don't you look around the desk and see if you can find a deputy's badge?

I never said I was taking no job as a deputy.

You're tryin' to corner me into this.

I'm surprised

at what's happening to me too.

I was just ridin' through on my way to Australia... Where are you going?

- This is just plain stupid.

- Are you callin' the sheriff stupid?

Do I have to listen to him?

He's the town character.

Was the town character!

I'm now deputy sheriff and probably the second fastest gun around here.

- Did you hear that?

- He probably is.

If he isn't, he will be after I have a chance to work with him for a couple of days.

Come on, Joe.

Joe, the cell on the right here is yours.

We don't have any bars yet.

- You're kiddin'.

- That's what I said.

But we're going to operate just as if the bars were there.

You stay on that side of the line and everything should work out fine.

What?

While you're in this jail, you stay on that side of the line and you and I will get along fine.

You expect me to sit here in this lousy cell...?

What is that red stuff all over the floor there?

Oh, that's the poor fella that crossed the line earlier today.

Now, Joe, you just stay right there and behave yourself.

- Maybe if you wanted something to read.

- Read?

No, I guess you wouldn't.

Sorry.

- Well, I see you found a badge.

- Yeah.

Are we gonna set out
to clean up this town?

- I guess that's about it.

- All by ourselves?

Not that we'd turn down any help
cheerfully offered.

Nobody is gonna offer no help,
cheerful or any other way.

I think you're probably right, Jake.

How much money
am I makin' in this job?

Well, let's see. I'm the sheriff
and they're paying me \$150 a month.

Shall we put your salary
at about half that, plus room and board?

Plus all the ammunition you need
to carry on the job.

Of course, I haven't checked out your
employment with the mayor and council.

- You mean they might turn me down?

- I don't think so.

No, I think their attitude is going to be,
if we found somebody cra... willing
to take the job, don't rock the boat.

You can bet
that's what their attitude's gonna be.

Ever been sheriff of a town
that needed cleanin' up?

- No, I haven't.

- Ever been the sheriff of any town?

No, not that either. But the mayor seemed
to think my qualifications suited the job.

He'd have thought that if you was blind
in both eyes and crippled in both legs.

I think you've got
the situation pegged, Jake.

- Want me to warm some coffee?

- I never turn down a cup of coffee.

- How long you been out west?

- About four years.

- From where?
- East.
- I was raised up in Indiana.
- Well, that could be either good or bad.
Them four years you been out west,
what you been doin'?
Well, mostly,
I've been on my way to Australia.
- For four years?
- It takes some people longer than others.
- What's in Australia?
- A lot of things. You'd be surprised.
- Any other questions, Jake?
- Oh, I... There's no...
No, it's all right. If there's anything I want,
it's a deputy who's at ease in his mind.
Well, you ain't got one.
I don't know where you're gonna
get one in this town, either.
- Why Australia?
- You'd know if you'd read a book about it.
- I ain't never even seen a book about it.
- They got one in the library in Chicago.
If you're ever up that way,
take a look at it.
They got pictures, everything.
They got little people over there, like that.
They got a stick that when they
throw it away, it comes back at 'em.
They got some animals there...
They got one that hops. It'll box you.
It carries things in its tummy.
When you shot
that friend of Joe's in the back,
you fired two shots.
I figure they went in, oh...
about that far apart, huh?
Pretty sloppy shootin', Jake.
I was in a hurry to save your life.
I wasn't trying to group my shots.
If you'd been five feet further away,
you'd have missed him entirely.
I'd say that was
a pretty pitiful showing, Jake.

- You see that bottom nail on the right?
- Yeah.
- That's weird.
- What's weird?
- That anybody can shoot like that.
- Just a matter of practice.

How come nobody ever heard of you,
a man that can shoot like that?

- How come you ain't got a reputation?
- What would I want with a reputation?
That's a good way to get yourself killed.
You just go on practisin'
while I put Joe back in jail.

Joe.

I took the bullets out.

You just won't play the game, will you?

I keep layin' down the rules.

You don't pay any attention.

Just wait till my pa and two brothers
find out you've got me in here.

I'm lookin' forward

to meeting your whole family.

Go on.

It's bad enough I was dragged
out of that saloon in front of my friends.

Oh, I doubt if you have all that many
friends that you need to be upset, Joe.

And then I have to sit there
in that lousy cell.

Pa is gonna skin me alive
for getting caught.

He won't mind you murderin' that man,
he just doesn't like you gettin' caught?

I didn't murder anybody.

That was self-defence. It was him or me.

Well, we'll let the judge decide that.

We do have a judge around here?

Never needed one till you come to town
and ruined everything.

- Spoiled all your fun, huh, Joe?

- You can say that again.

That's funny...

That's real funny.

I hope you ain't got no religious

convictions against drinking.

Not since I gave up my parish.

I'm only kidding, Mayor.

- Mayor, what about my deputy?

- No problem.

- I'm curious as to why you picked Jake.

- Jake backed me up when it counted.

I'd have to wait and find that out about another man. Then it might be too late.

How about a judge?

The need for one

ain't exactly been felt up to now.

- That's what Joe said.

- If I can't appoint one, who can?

Some show you put on

at the saloon this afternoon.

- Kind of sobered up the whole town.

- That's good.

Maybe. Maybe not.

It has been a lot of fun here up to now.

Everything kinda wide open and relaxed.

Nobody lookin' down their noses

at anybody who shot somebody else,

poking their noses

into nobody's business

without getting their big noses

blasted off in the process.

I guess now that we've got law and order,

churches will start movin' in.

That's usually the next thing.

Then the women will start forming

committees, having bazaars.

Then they'll chase Madame Orr's girls

outta town or make 'em get married.

But what the hell. Like you said, the law's

the law and we all gotta face up to it.

- When did I say that?

- You know what I mean.

Well, I was just short of money

when you offered me this job.

But you didn't have to take it. I mean,

there's dozens of other jobs around.

Well, don't worry about it.

I'm not going to keep it too long.

I'm just passin' through
on my way to Australia.

I'll drink to that.

Argh!

- What are you...?

- You was on fire, Prudy! You was on fire!
Fire?

Oh...

I'm sick and tired of these stupid things
that have been happenin' to me.

And somebody'd better
do something about it soon.

- That's quite a daughter you got.

- I think she's crazy.

Why would you think that?

I know why I'd think...

She had some shocks this year. She got
wealthy overnight. It unhinged her.

Then she was always big for her age
and puberty hit her hard. That'll do it.

- I didn't know that.

- Well, it will!

As a disinterested stranger,
how does she hit you?

- Well, she...

- You are disinterested, ain't you?

Oh, I think you could safely say that.

She's a rich gal in her own name, Sheriff.

Sole owner of the Millard Frymore
Memorial Mining Company.

- Whoever marries her gets the mine?

- Shaft and all.

Yeah, well, that won't hurt her
in certain circles, will it?

I better fry us up something to eat.

No, thank you. I better go down and
relieve Jake. This is his first night on duty.

- You expectin' trouble?

- What do you think?

The Danbys. Some people think
you could've waited a couple of days
before you stuck your nose
in our biggest hornet nest.

When you set out to clean up a mess,

you don't watch that mess get bigger.

I guess you know what you're doin'.

I don't know what I could've said

to give you that idea, Mayor.

Puberty.

You gonna stick to your plan of
handling this by yourself, are you, Pa?

Since when did it take more than one

Danby to take care of a thing like this?

You know what a tiger you are.

You're liable to go chargin' in there...

- And what?

- Nothing. I didn't mean nothing.

You ain't got brains enough

to mean nothing.

You two go in here

and order yourselves a drink.

I'll be back with Joe

before you can finish 'em.

I believe you've got one of my children

in your jail here.

How dare you walk into my office

and pull a gun on me?

- Get your finger out of the end of my gun!

- How dare you pull a gun on me?

I said take your finger out.

Until I do, take your finger off that trigger

and let the hammer down real slow.

If that went off,

it'd have blown up in my face.

It wouldn't have done my finger

a hell of a lot of good, either.

- What can I do for you, Mr Danby?

- My son Joe.

Well, it seems Joe

murdered a man this afternoon.

I heard he killed a man

in a fair gunfight.

- I was standin' right there.

- Standin' right where?

In the saloon when Joe killed him.

Well, now, that was

real smart of him, wasn't it?

I've been around Joe all afternoon.

I haven't seen him do one smart thing yet.

- Anything else?

- Can I see him?

Why didn't you take that approach
when you came in? In there.

I'm obliged to you.

- Hi, Pa.

- What is this?

No bars on the window.

No bars in the cell.

No bars nowhere.

- What's keepin' you in here?

- That guy out there.

He won't let me move
without jumpin' down my throat.

Besides, he lies to me
about whether my gun is loaded.

- He does what?

- Are you gonna get me outta here or not?

Never mind that. Who was it you killed?

I don't know his name.

He was some bum in the saloon.

Besides, he drew first. Are you gonna
believe me or that liar out there?

- Why don't you shut up?

- It wasn't anybody that we know.

Pa, you always told me there wasn't
a jail that could hold a Danby.

- Well, now they built one.

- Oh...

You'll have to stay here
for a couple of days.

But we run this town.

I gotta throw in with that sheriff that
you don't dazzle with your intelligence.

Now, you just sit tight here till I've had
a chance to think this thing out.

Couldn't you do it
when he weren't lookin'?

He wasn't the sheriff
when he done seen me do it.

I didn't think of that before. That could be
a loophole to get me out of here.

Don't you try to do nothing about this

situation. Leave that to me and the boys.

- That's a lousy jail you got in there.

- We're just gettin' started.

- What's he supposed to be?

- That's my deputy.

Last week, he was shovelling horse...

working in the stable.

Well, he's been promoted.

I'm gonna find out

what's happened to this town.

What did Danby want?

Oh...

He just came in and we talked a while.

He went in to see Joe.

He came back out,

we talked a little more, then he left.

You know...

- He strikes me as being a lonely man.

- Lonely? Danby?

He's a mean, no-good,

low-down bushwhacker.

Well, now, there, you see?

No wonder he's lonely.

He stuck his finger in your what?

Would you shut up?

Everybody will be lookin'.

I don't understand what happened.

You said you had your gun on him.

I ain't gonna explain it again.

I don't have to explain nothing to you two.

Instead of sittin' here askin' questions,

why don't you come up with suggestions?

Why don't the three of us go over there?

I don't care

if he is the fastest gun anywhere.

- Who says he's the fastest gun?

- Everybody.

That's all they're talkin' about

all over town.

- What could he do against three of us?

- He could kill two of us.

You ain't talkin' like yourself, Pa.

You always charge in

and we hold you back.

- We ain't gonna leave Joe to get hung?
- Well, of course we ain't.
Who says we gotta
take care of the sheriff?
Who says anybody has to? Why don't we
run him outta town like the last sheriff?
Because this one won't go.
He didn't throw a scare into you,
did he, Pa?
I didn't mean that the way it sounded.
I just meant...
Well, what did he do to you, Pa?
He maybe made me
a little more thoughtful.
He maybe made me realise that now
we've got a little money for the first time
and a chance to get a lot more,
this would be a dumb time
to find out who's fastest with a gun -
us or some show-off that might be lucky
even if he weren't good.
- If we don't take care of him, who does?
- There's always some tramp to be hired.
But you always said that
the Danbys fight their own battles.
Maybe I was talkin'
about another branch of the family.
I'm gonna take a little trip tomorrow. You
two behave yourselves while I'm gone.
I don't want nobody to make
no martyr out of this here sheriff.
- What's a martyr?
- I'm sorry.
They didn't use words like that
in the third grade, did they?
- How would I know? I didn't get that far.
- Ah!
You remember when I was stuck
all them years in the second grade.
Shut up!
Sheriff?
Can I talk to you a minute?
Sure, Miss Prudy.
Could... could we sit down?

Sure.

Well...

- How can I be of service, Miss Prudy?

- What?

- How can I be of service?

- What do you mean, service?

I don't mean anything by it.

What do you think I mean?

Look. I'm just a dumb little girl from a hick town in a jerkwater part of the country.

What?

Nothing. You said

you were dumb little girl...

I know what I said.

I wanted to explain some of those stupid, silly things you saw me doing.

- What stupid, silly things, Miss Prudy?

- What stupid...?

- How about when I burned my dress off?

- That could happen to anyone.

How about in the mud when I was trying to defend myself from that... pervert?

That's just one of those things that any overstimulated girl might get caught into.

How about up in the tree, half-naked, drippin' wet?

That one could take a little explanation.

Well, it was one of those days when everything goes wrong.

Actually, every one of those ridiculous things has a perfectly simple explanation.

Not that it matters. I just thought it was dumb to have such an...

attractive man thinking

I was a hopeless loony.

Well, loony maybe, but hopeless...

You...

- You think I'm attractive?

- Well...

I don't think a girl would curl up and die because you smiled at her.

But, yes, I think you're attractive.

Well, Miss Prudy, I can see

that you're a young lady
who believes in laying
her cards on the table.

- In what?

- Laying your cards on the table.

When a girl does that, I think that a man
should lay his cards on the table too.

Anybody can see that you're
a very pretty and very attractive girl.

Any man in his right mind would be
only too glad to take you out on a picnic
or out for a walk in the evening.

Well, I'd feel privileged to do just that.

However, if you're thinking of anything
more serious, I'm on my way to Australia.

- I'm just passing through here.

- Why, you conceited...

I'm only telling you
that I'm on my way to Australia.

Who cares where you're on your way to?

Any girl who was thinking of a permanent
relationship would be glad to know...

I'm not thinking of entering into...
one of those.

- What's the matter with you?

- You think something is?

Do I think...? There isn't enough time
to tell you how much.

Good night.

- You all right, Miss Prudy?

- Shut up and mind your own business.

- Damn! Damn! Damn!

- Prudy!

You shut up too!

Well, do you see anything?

No. What are we lookin' for?

What are we lookin' for?

Nuggets. Veins. The mother lode.

What's the mother lode?

I'm beginning to get the feeling you know
less about gold-mining than I do.

Of course I don't know about gold-mining.

Why do you think I brought you along?

Everyone around here knows about it.

I don't. I might be able to give you a few tips about shovelling horse... working around a stable, but I don't know nothing about huntin' gold.

- Mind if I put this stuff down?

- No, you better not.

If I know anything about prospecting, you gotta keep on the move.

Pity.

Well, here.

Let me redistribute the weight for you.

I feel like a jackass.

There, that oughta do it.

- Come on, Jack.

- Jake.

You're a pretty good fisherman, Jake.

- This is more like it, huh?

- More like what?

This is more like the kinda place

I want to go gold-minin' in.

What makes you think

there's any gold here?

What makes you think there isn't?

It don't bother you none that Joe is gonna be miles away by the time we get back?

Not unless he's learned to travel fast handcuffed to a potbellied stove.

- What do we do now?

- I think we oughta have lunch, take a little rest, and then you start diggin'.

Hey, Jake, how do you think we oughta split whatever we find?

60-40?

60 for who and 40 for who?

There, you see?

See what gold does to men?

We haven't even found anything and already we're arguing.

60 for who and 40 for who?

I just wish you could see the greed in your face.

What you mean is 60 for you and 40 for me.

Well, thank you, Jake.

That's very generous of you.

Hey, Jake.

Jake, what did you do
before you became my deputy?

I did odd jobs.

Like what?

I was a whore-holder
at Madame Horse's...

A horse-holder at Madame Orr's house.

- You were a what?

- Horse-holder.

See, on Saturday night,
that hitch rack would get full.

I'd hold the extra horses,
sometimes all night.

It seems to me like you spent
a lot of time with horses.

One end or the other.

Course, I come by it natural. My daddy
stole horses for a livin'. They hung him.

That's a terrible thing for a sheriff
to suddenly find out about his deputy.

If you hadn't shoved
this job down my throat,
you might have found out a lot of things.

- Want my badge back?

- Don't be silly.

Jake, you better clean up those fish.

I'll take a little nap.

- Sure I won't disturb you none?

- No, just don't rattle the pots and pans.

I'll be wantin' you boys to ride into town
more quietly from now on.

- You drove your point home real good.

- Good. Good.

Well, that kind of brightens up
the whole place.

At least I don't feel so naked and stupid
sitting in here day after day.

Joe, if Jake comes in, tell him

I went down to the store to see the mayor.

- Have you seen my daddy?

- No.

Not since the night he came in here
and we had that little chat.

Don't you worry, Joe.

I'm sure he's planning a little jailbreak.

- You really think so?

- What else would they be doing?

Where will I find the sheriff?

I imagine he's in the jail...

No.

Wait a minute. There he is
comin' out of the hardware store there.

- Much obliged.

- Pleasure.

Sheriff.

- Anybody know who he was?

- I think he just rode into town.

He asked me where you was.

I seen you coming out of the hardware...

Thanks for pointin' me out to him.

Hold it just a minute.

You don't want to go in there right now.

Wait here just a minute,

I'll come back and I'll join you.

Honey, I think I just been...

- Ever see him before?

- Uh-uh.

Jake.

After lunch...

- Afternoon, Sheriff.

- We ain't makin' any dust at all today.

- Another one of 'em rode into town.

- You sure?

Can't miss a professional gunfighter.

They got a look ain't like anyone else.

He's been askin' around to find you.

- I'm sure gettin' sick of all this stuff.

- This stuff would make me sick too.

Well...

Why do these jaspers

always have to hit town at mealtime?

- Are you gonna kill another man?

- I'm sure we all hope it turns out that way.

This sure is a childish way

for a grown man to make a living.

- Go for your gun, Sheriff.

- You go to hell.

And stay out.

If either one of you
opens his fat, stupid mouth,
I'll chase you right out of town
after that other yellow dog.

Leave the bottle.

- All right, now he's done it.

- Who?

- That sheriff.

- What's he done?

He's pushed me too far this time.

That's what he's done.

I've been bending over backwards
up to now. That's all finished.

You know I've bent over backwards.

You ain't let him push you into no corner
where you could be provoked.

Right. But from now on,

I'm tired of being a nice fella.

Pa, have you been
touchin' up your hair again?

- What do you mean, again?

- Nothing.

- It just looks better in spots, that's all.

- What do you mean?

Nothing.

What are we gonna do, Pa?

- Get Joe out of jail.

- How?

Leave that to me. I got it all figured out.

We'll do it tonight.

You get ready,
cos this is gonna happen awful fast.

- Pa.

- Huh?

Nothing. It's all right.

When I yell go, we all go together.

And use your spurs. All ready? Yah!

- Now he's really done it.

- Who?

That sheriff.

- I could've told you it wouldn't work.

- Why not?

Because they set these bars in too solid.

- What do you know about anything?

- I helped to set 'em in.

You...?

Luke, I want you two
to round up the horses.

Ride over to your Uncle Milt's. Tell him
to bring Steve and George and Young Milt.

And, Tom, you ride out to Uncle Ira's.

You tell him to bring Billy and Jack
and anyone else he can think to bring.

- I ain't foolin' around no longer.

- That's a two-day ride.

I know far it is. Stop at the ranch
and pick up some grub.

Tell Milt and Ira we'll all meet Friday.

If any of them feel
that they don't wanna come,
you just remind them of the mortgages
I help them to pay.

Well, all right, get going.

- You helped 'em put in those bars?

- I didn't have nothin' else to do.

They was gonna put the bars in
whether I helped or not.

They'll hang you
whether you helped or not.

Pa, I don't think
that they are really gonna hang me.

They laugh and they joke,
but I don't think they'll do it.

- You'll see whether they hang you or...

- Don't move!

- What's goin' on back here?

- That's all I need.

Some stable bum orderin' me around.

This is my saddle
and I'm taking it with me.

I know it ain't mine, so go ahead.

In just a few days now,

I'll take care of you.

What was he tryin' to do,
bust you outta here?

Yeah.

You know Pa.

Got a heart as big as the whole outdoors.

But he don't have one brain
in his poor old head.

May I compliment you on getting
such a romantic idea, Miss Prudy?

Nothing romantic about it, Sheriff.

Nothing romantic about a man and a girl
out for a ride on a warm afternoon?

You think what you want to, Sheriff.

But you'd do that anyway, wouldn't you?

It's surprising how well you've gotten
to know me in such a short time.

Would you like to get out
and talk a minute, Sheriff?

All right.

Light yourself up a cigar
if you want to, Sheriff.

Thank you, Miss Prudy. I believe I will.

Was there anything in particular that
you wanna talk to me about, Miss Prudy?

In case you didn't know, Milt Danby
is rounding up his two brothers
and all of their sons
and all of their hired hands.

They're gonna ride into town
and take care of you.

- They're gonna get Joe out of jail.

- Yeah, I heard about that.

We've all been trying to remember.

We think there are three grown boys
in Ira Danby's family
and two in Milt Danby's family.

So with the three Danbys here,
and Joe in jail,

we figure that makes about 11.

Plus all of the hired hands
that they bring along.

That's about the figure I arrived at too.

- Ten or 12, maybe.

- Or 14 or 15, maybe.

- It's quite a few.

- It's almost a mob, you might say.

Have you figured what you're gonna do?

- More or less.

- What?

I thought I might just leave town.

Just get outta town before they ride in.

Just ride out and keep on going.

- I don't believe it.

- I don't know why not.

I've never made any secret of the fact that basically I'm on my way to Australia.

I don't think I'm gonna find

a better time to get started than now.

Besides, I don't like the odds.

I just don't believe it.

You better believe it. It's not gonna be too many hours before I'm long gone.

I think that is one of the most mature things I've ever heard of a man doing.

You think it's what?

Mature.

Any other man would have to stick around to prove that they are a man and get a whole town shot up to boot.

Mature?

As opposed to childish and shot full of holes.

You don't think it sounded a little cowardly?

For a man to take a job and then when the going gets a little rough, he just sneaks out in the dead of night?

You didn't say whether it was day or night.

But the point is, didn't it sound a little cowardly to you?

No, I told you, it sounds mature.

It sounded cowardly to me just now when I said it.

It isn't, it's mature.

I know it's cowardly.

I have never done a cowardly thing.

No matter what you

or anybody else thinks.

- I didn't say I thought...

- It isn't mature. It is cowardly.

Let's just call things
by their right name from now on.
What is the matter with you?
I'm surprised at a girl who throws herself
at a man when she thinks he's a coward.
But...
What do you mean, throwing myself?
Did you think that I was gonna turn tail
and run at the first sight of trouble?
- Why shouldn't I? That's what you said.
- Well, I'm not, so you just forget about it.
All right! Order! Order!
You all heard the motion.
Those in favour, raise your hands.
- Count them, Henry.
- One, two, three, four, five.
Now, those in favour
of not getting involved
in the crisis which is
about to befall our fair community,
keepin' the hell off the streets and out of
the way of the shooting, raise your hands.
- Count 'em, Henry.
- Five, ten, fifteen.
I think we've passed that motion.
Order, order!
Be it so entered in the books
of the town council
that the majority has ruled,
and as your mayor...
- I object.
- Get that gun away from her.
- Oh! You can't do this.
- You just shut up and sit down, Prudy.
This is a meeting of the town council
and certain citizens of this community.
You can't just walk in off the street
and insult everyone.
Just one question. How many of you
will help the sheriff against the Danbys?
- It's not as simple as that, Prudy.
- Why not?
There are other factors.
Economic factors.

It could affect the wellbeing
of everyone in this town.
I heard that the sheriff was leaving town.
At the time I heard it, I said to myself
"That sheriff has his head
set squarely on his shoulders."
Now he's not gonna leave town.
I'd like to get my hands on whoever
caused him to change his mind.
Me too. A man with that good an idea
oughta be encouraged to hold onto it.
What is the matter with you?
Remember how long we waited for a man
who would stand up to the Danbys?
Remember what this town
was like before? Murderin'. Lynchin'.
Miners shootin' up the town
day and night.
Aside from those few things,
it wasn't a bad place at all.
Sure, we had a little misunderstanding
with the Danbys at times.
- They could all be worked out in time.
- Joe Danby's in jail for murder.
That would've solved itself too if the
sheriff had left town like he promised to.
I said it before and I'll say it again.
The men in this town are nothing but
a bunch of low-down, cowardly curs.
As your father,
I may have to take that talk from you,
but as the mayor of this town,
I sure as hell don't.
Throw her out, boys.
And don't be too gentle with her.
Don't let her tie herself to that post.
It's a trick of hers, tying herself to things
when she doesn't want to do something.
- Death to all tyrants.
- What did she say?
Death to somebody. She's always saying
death to somebody she's mad at.
Order!
Forget about gettin' help

from anybody in this town.

- Or from anybody for 100 miles around.

- That takes care of just about everybody.

They can throw a girl out of a meeting,
but they can't defend their town against
a bunch of cutthroats like the Danbys.

What are we gonna do now?

- We?

- Don't turn down any help you can get.

- How's Joe?

- He figures we'll be dead tomorrow.

Did he seem to feel any sorrow
over the fact that we might all be killed?

No, it's more like he planned to dance
and spit all over our graves.

- Sounds like Joe.

- Sure was a good idea, leavin' town.

- You don't have to stay.

- Yes, I do. I gotta stay if you do.

- I took the job.

- So did I.

I'll tell you what. I'll even go to Australia
with you if we leave right now.

We'll go to Australia, but first we got
a few things to do. It's time we got started.

- Prudy, do you really wanna help?

- Sure.

First, get Joe outta here.

- Then what?

- I got a couple of ideas.

If things work out right,
we might live through this thing.

I sure liked his idea about leaving.

Prudy, you go in the courthouse.

Do you know how to use this?

Here, you'll need these.

- Jake, are you there?

- Yeah.

- You know what to do?

- Oh, yeah.

Keep out of the line of fire
whenever I can.

- Mayor.

- Can't talk. Emergency council meeting.

- What's that all about?
- I'm not gonna shoot through the window.
Here. Take care of these.
My eating teeth.
I don't wanna get them all shot up.
Get Joe.
- He ain't in there, Pa.
- Hold it. You're under arrest.
Throw down your guns,
I'll accept your surrender.
Take cover!
- Haven't you heard of just wounding?
- I only know one way to shoot.
That's to kill.
We don't want a massacre on our hands,
so just watch it.
Hold it! Hold it! Settle down out there.
Just hold it.
OK, go ahead.
- Jake, where'd you put Joe?
- Upstairs.
Go get him.
Pa, look. Your teeth.
- They saved my life.
- Always worryin' about your life.
What am I supposed to jaw with
from now on?
Pa, look.
I want all you people to unstrap your
gun belts and throw your rifles down.
Or I'm gonna have to set this thing off.
You don't think you're gonna bluff me
with that cannon?
Why, it ain't even loaded.
- Well, shall we see?
- Believe him, Pa.
You stay outta this,
you miserable coward.
What's it gonna be, Danby?
Jake, let Joe loose.
- Throw the rest of that bunch in jail.
- By myself?
I'll be right behind you.
You weren't gonna really

blow him up, were you?
Of course not. That thing isn't loaded.
I just stuck that fake fuse in there.
See?
Wow!
My business!
I'll find out who's responsible for this outrage if it's the last thing I ever do.
Disturbin' the peace, that's what it is.
I don't care if you are
cleanin' up this town.
That was a terrible thing to do
to them unfortunate girls.
I didn't know it was loaded.
I never done anything
to an unfortunate girl in my life.
Some of those girls
are the closest friends I got.
Well, well, who have we here?
It's the sheriff.
- It's the sheriff, boys.
- We know who it is.
Everybody knows
who our sheriff is these days.
Devery's right. You're the most popular
and respected citizen we've got here.
That's nice to hear.
We're sendin' a delegation to Washington
about turning this territory into a state.
- We'd be proud if you'd head it.
- No, no.
You want somebody who will be here.
Now, Jason, if you're upset with us
about that Danby business...
- We were behind you all the way.
- It might not have looked that way.
No, that's not it. It's just that...
I've never made any secret of the fact
that I'm on my way to Australia.
Which reminds me, I'm gonna have
to think about getting started again.
Would you excuse me, gentlemen?
A small crisis needs to be handled.
Jump, Miss Prudy. Jump.

Boys, I just want you to know
that from now on when you pick on
this lady, you'll be pickin' on my girl.
We didn't have any idea
the wind blew that way.

- Now you know. Spread the word around.

- Yes, sir.

What do you mean, your girl?

Prudy, for once in your life, play it smart
and keep your big mouth shut.

You keep out of this.

What do you mean, your girl?

Come on, you've had that look in your eye
since the first day I hit town.

We're gonna have an agreement. After
we're married, no matter how many kids,
when I say we're off to Australia,
we pack up, kids and all, and off we go.

What do I wanna go to Australia for?

That's where your husband would be.

Girls usually go where their husbands are.

Oh...

Well, when you put it that way...

Why don't you put me down?

I like it like this.

You want me to walk you home?

If you want to, Sheriff.

Say...

Are you really one of the richest girls
in this part of the country?

- The richest.

- That's nice.

That's real nice.

The way this story ends
is that they get married
and he goes on to become
governor of the state.

He never gets to Australia, but he keeps
reading a lot of books about it.

I get to be sheriff of this town.

Then I go on to become one of the most
beloved characters in Western folklore.