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# The Last Frontier

By Philip Yordan

Handful of hunters caught  
buffalo and deer  
Back when the west was young  
At the last frontier  
Snake bites, Indian fights  
plagued the pioneer  
The pioneer  
We're all at the last frontier  
The last frontier  
Back when the law was  
the law of the open spaces  
The folks out there were fair and square  
They paid every debt  
by the sweat of their honest faces  
Snow, heat, little meat  
famine almost near  
And still they struggled on  
hiding every tear  
Stout hearts played their parts  
in that bygone year  
Back there at the last frontier  
The last frontier  
Did you ever see so many smiling faces?  
I wonder what's bothering them?  
Ask them, Mungo.  
Let them talk first.  
I'm getting hungry. Let's make camp here.  
I guess this is as good a place as any.  
- You got any salt, Jed?  
- I ate the last speck day before yesterday.  
Mungo?  
I sure miss a sprinkle of salt on me meat.  
Right now I'd give a whole silver dollar...  
for just enough to sting  
the edge of me tongue.  
You're a mighty free spender  
with silver dollars you ain't got, Gus?  
I'm a big spender, I am.  
You just wait till we trade in these skins...  
and I'll show you how fast  
I can shed my share.  
What you gonna do  
with your share, Mungo?  
Whiskey.

Dollars?

Right now that appeals to me.

Don't get up, just keep eating.

He wants our rifles.

Give them to him.

He wants more.

- Not one more thing.

- Shut up, Jed.

- Give him the horses.

- Not the horses, Gus.

There's a year's work tied up in those packs.

A year of freezing, starving, and slaving.

I know. I've got more than a year's work  
tied up in me...

and I've no mind to lose it

for some tired horses and a pack of furs.

Give them the horses, Mungo.

Red Cloud says we're no longer welcome.

We're not to shoot, fish,

or set traps in the forest anymore.

We must go back beyond the river.

- If we return, we die.

- Why?

We ain't never done him any harm.

There's plenty here for all of us.

- It's the bluecoats.

- Soldiers.

- When did they come?

- In the spring.

- They chop down many trees. Build fort.

- Where?

Paha Saba.

Red Cloud says they all die

before snow falls...

and so will any white man

who sets foot in these woods.

We never fished

nor killed any more than we could eat.

And we're no bluecoats.

Why is he taking it out on us?

- Civilization.

- Civilization?

Civilization is creeping up on us, lads.

The bluecoats ain't satisfied...

with gobbling up all the land  
east of Mississippi.  
They won't stop till they've pushed us over  
the Rockies and into the Pacific Ocean.  
It's a drowning fate awaits us all.  
These are calamitous times  
we're living in, Jed.  
Calamitous times.  
They ain't pushing me  
off the face of this earth.  
I'm going down to that fort...  
and collect every single thing  
that Red Cloud took from us.  
Are you?  
Me big bull buffalo.  
You never tangled with men  
like these before, Jed.  
You don't know them like I do.  
They talk with forked tongues.  
Once you set foot inside that fort...  
they'll snare you.  
And how'll they snare me?  
They got wondrous ways. No.  
We'll go north to Canada.  
We'll get a stake from the Bay Company.  
Then we'll strike out for fresh country.  
You can go north, Gus.  
But them bluecoats owe us for them skins  
and I'm collecting it.  
- If you want to wait for me here, you wait.  
- No, I'd better go with you.  
- Somebody's got to do the thinking.  
- All right.  
You do the thinking,  
but I'm doing the talking.  
Halt!  
Halt, or I'll fire!  
See, what did I tell you.  
Right away they want to shoot us.  
- We go to Canada.  
- Not until we get paid.  
It's all right, sentry. They're unarmed.  
Come ahead.  
- Who runs this place, mister?

- I do.

You owe us for five horses,  
three rifles and a year's trapping.

- What are you gonna do about it?

- What are you talking about?

What me friend means to say is...

that on account of your building this fort,  
stirring up bad feelings...

we was relieved of them things  
by Red Cloud.

- You had a run in with Red Cloud?

- Aye.

- How'd you get away?

- We never bothered Red Cloud.

I guess he don't think of us as white men.

I'd like to make good your loss  
by giving you men jobs.

The Army needs scouts. We're too busy.

We've got too many places to go.

Wait a minute, Gus.

We ain't got no place to go.

- What'll you pay us?

- \$25 a month per man.

Free room and board, guns,  
all the ammunition you can use...

and you can keep whatever skins you hunt.

- You're trying to trap us, mister?

- Yes, I am.

We lost our commanding officer and scout  
since we started building this fort...

so we're a little short-handed.

The Army needs men.

We get wear those blue coats?

Only soldiers wear uniforms.

No bluecoat, no scouting.

I can't let you enlist.

It wouldn't be right for you.

Why not?

You men are trappers.

You're used to a lot of freedom.

There are certain restrictions  
a soldier serves under.

It'd be a tough life for you.

- You done your thinking?

- Canada.  
I'll promise you this.  
The moment you're ready  
to become a soldier, I'll make you one.  
You've my word on that.  
I like him.  
His face don't lie to me.  
How about you, Mungo?  
You got whiskey?  
You can buy anything  
inside the fort you want.  
- I'll see that you get paid in advance.  
- I like him, too.  
It's leading us into a trap, you are.  
Come on inside.  
Parade, attention!  
Present arms!  
Order arms!  
- Dismissed!  
- Dismissed.  
That's me boy.  
Where are you going, lad?  
- Whiskey!  
- Whiskey!  
Mungo, whiskey!  
Okay.  
Halt.  
Get out.  
Do you have any whiskey?  
Get out or I'll call the guard.  
He can't hear you.  
- Who's he?  
- That's my husband, Col. Marston.  
Say.  
I guess you have to dress  
in a fancy uniform like this...  
to have a woman like you.  
If you don't leave,  
you'll be severely punished, Mr. Cooper.  
Mr. Cooper?  
- You know me?  
- I saw you enter the fort.  
Capt. Riordan tells me  
he hired you as a scout...

to protect us.

You don't have to worry  
about anything, lady.

I'll protect you...

and your husband, too.

- You sure you ain't got any whiskey?

- Positive.

You must have some whiskey 'cause  
the Colonel looks like a drinking man.

You've had too much to drink already.

Will you kindly return to your quarters?

You know, I'm really going to be glad  
to meet the Colonel.

He dresses so fancy.

My husband isn't here, he's at Fort Medford.

He's at Fort Medford

on the other side of the forest?

I'm sorry to tell you, lady...

but you're a widow woman.

'Cause Red Cloud ain't gonna

let nobody build a fort in his back yard.

Please go.

What kind of woman are you?

Don't you cry when you hear  
that your man's dead?

I like strong women.

Take your hands off me.

You're a drunken, filthy animal.

I'm not an animal.

And I wouldn't drink

your whiskey if you had any.

And I feel sorry for your husband.

Bucko.

What's the matter? Somebody shove you?

If I was an Indian,

you'd be a dead soldier, Luke.

- Where'd you come from?

- Where you should have been looking.

I haven't got eyes in the back of my head.

- You've got ears, haven't you?

- Yes.

- You'd better start using them.

- Yes.

If you don't, them Indians will be

wearing that bluecoat.

Yes, Jed.

How do you like your fish, Captain?

Cooper, if you were in uniform,  
I'd lock you up.

Yes, Captain.

How do you like your fish?

- You left the fort without permission. Why?

- It's the best time of the year for trout.

Look, you just can't go wandering off  
anytime you feel like it.

- What am I gonna do with you?

- Why don't you make me a soldier?

- No.

- Why not?

Because a soldier does more  
than wear a blue uniform.

You mean, I'm not good enough for it.

Captain, I can leave. I don't have to stay  
anywhere where I'm not wanted.

I want you to stay, Jed.

I like you. You're my friend.

What's wrong with me, Captain?

If you're my friend, tell me.

- You're just not civilized.

- What is this "civilized"?

I guess it's the opposite of being a savage.

You know,

even I have a hard time understanding you.

I understand you.

It's deeper than that, Jed.

You have to belong.

- Belong to what?

- To other people.

Me, Gus and Mungo. We've lived like that.

Ain't we people?

You gotta have a family. A wife, children.

Do you?

- I hope to, if I ever get out of here.

- That's what I'm gonna do, Captain.

Find me a woman, make some children,  
get married and become civilized.

I won't go fool around

with these fish anymore until I tell you first.



I guess that's the first step, Jed.  
Anything from Fort Medford?  
Not yet, Phil. We've been trying  
to get through all evening.  
Would you like a fish?  
No, thank you.  
I want to thank you for not telling  
the Captain about me getting drunk.  
He might've been disappointed.  
As soon as the snow falls...  
I'm gonna go up in the mountains  
and get you a bear skin.  
- It will keep you warm for the winter.  
- That isn't necessary.  
How else am I gonna make friends with you?  
Is that really important?  
Yes.  
Sorry, Mrs. Marston.  
We just can't get through.  
I could've told you that. I saw the cut wires.  
We'll know more  
when Gus gets back with Mungo.  
Gus ain't here?  
- Where'd you send him?  
- Fort Medford.  
You know that Medford's done for  
and you sent Gus and Mungo anyway?  
Why?  
- I wanna know why, Captain.  
- Because they are scouts paid by the Army.  
It's their job and their duty.  
That's something you wouldn't understand.  
Gus and Mungo do.  
I might not understand you, Captain,  
but I'm going after them.  
I better find them healthy.  
If I find your Colonel kicking around,  
I'll bring him back, too.  
What kept you?  
It's all right, lads.  
It's just a friend of mine  
come to pay his respects.  
- Where'd you pick up our trail?  
- Fort Medford.

- You kind of ran into some trouble there?  
- Aye.  
- Red Cloud and his Tetons.  
- Yeah, they kept coming for two days.  
We couldn't hold so we shot our way out...  
with what was left of us.  
- What's the matter here?  
- I got a rifle ball about two inches in.  
- It's beginning to kick up a mite.  
- It's probably trying to get out.  
Where'd you come from?  
Fort Shallan.  
Stand up when I'm talking to you.  
Col. Marston.  
Sir, this is scout Jed Cooper.  
He'll see us safe to Shallan.  
Come here.  
Where are the reinforcements from Shallan?  
I requested 100 men.  
I'm all there is, Colonel.  
- Who sent you?  
- Capt. Riordan.  
You go back and tell this Capt. Riordan  
I want 100 men.  
- We'll wait right here until they come.  
- You can't stay here, Colonel.  
As soon as Red Cloud buries his dead,  
he'll be hot on your trail again.  
With 100 men...  
I'll meet Red Cloud in his own front yard  
and crush him.  
- We're gonna retake Fort Medford.  
- It's burned down.  
We'll rebuild it.  
You have your orders, Cooper.  
Capt. Riordan won't sent a single man  
out of Shallan unless I tell him to.  
And I ain't telling him.  
Who's the Commander at Shallan?  
You or the Captain?  
The Captain.  
But he's a smart man.  
Beg pardon, sir, let me talk to him alone.  
I'll knock some respect into him.

Never mind, Decker.  
I'll give you a choice.  
Carry out my order  
or I'll have you shot right here and now.  
I gave you my answer.  
If you don't move out now,  
you'll never get to Fort Shallan.  
- Corporal, how are the wounded?  
- Some need a doctor bad, sir.  
There's a doctor at Shallan.  
Decker, improvise litters for the wounded.  
We're moving out.  
If it wasn't for you and Mungo,  
I'd walk right out of here.  
Red Cloud would really love  
that Colonel's uniform.  
Civilization is creeping up on us, lads.  
Turn out the guard! Armed party!  
Present arms!  
Order arms!  
Glad you got through, Frank.  
- Capt. Clarke, isn't it?  
- That's right, Colonel.  
- I'd better see to your wounded.  
- Get those men to the hospital.  
- Capt. Glenn Riordan, sir.  
- At ease, Captain.  
I'm glad to see you made it, sir.  
Must have been pretty rough.  
It was.  
Hello, Frank.  
Corinna.  
I'll see you to your quarters, sir.  
I brought the Colonel back for you.  
Yes, I'm grateful, Mr. Cooper.  
- See that he gets rubbed down well, Decker.  
- Yes, sir.  
You know, Jed, I may not be  
as pretty as the Colonel's wife...  
but you carry me gently  
and I'll give you the kiss she didn't.  
- I'll drop you, bucko!  
- No, Jed, you'll kill me surely!  
Why don't you get some rest, Frank?

Rest?  
Who can sleep?  
How did I ever get out here?  
You could have stayed in Washington.  
Behind a desk?  
Shoving a pencil?  
Why did you stay in the service, then?  
What else do I know?  
Are you any happier being a soldier?  
You're a woman.  
You don't know victory.  
It has a taste.  
So does defeat. I've shared that with you.  
Come on in, Frank.  
Why did you come out here with me?  
I'm your wife.  
- I don't want you to feel sorry for me.  
- What do you want from me, Frank?  
I want respect.  
I want you to respect me.  
How can you in this miserable place?  
Look at the men who were  
at West Point with me. Look where they are.  
I'll be up there with them.  
- I'll make you proud of me, Corinna.  
- I don't care what you are.  
I married a man, not a uniform.  
And I deceived you.  
I'm not a man without this.  
Don't you ever sleep, Cooper?  
- What are you doing up, Captain?  
- Watching you.  
Are you afraid I might do something wrong?  
You wouldn't do anything wrong, Cooper.  
Good night.  
I won't do anything  
you wouldn't enjoy, Captain.  
Good night.  
Mungo.  
Report.  
All present and accounted for, sir.  
Present arms!  
Order arms!  
Good morning, Colonel.

Good morning, Colonel.

- How many men, Captain?

- 140. Raw recruits.

Half of them shoot each other  
at target practice...

the other half catch cold  
running out in their drawers at reveille.

They can be trained.

They are only odds and ends  
they could spare from the war back east.

I guess most of us here are misfits.

Forgotten misfits.

Shunted out here

because the department wants to forget us.

But not all of us are cowards, Clarke.

If the definition of a coward...

is a man who is sickened  
by killing and blood...

I qualify. In every sense.

Capt. Clarke,

check on your men in the hospital.

Find out how many can return to duty  
and when.

Before I was forced  
to abandon Fort Medford...

I telegraphed for reinforcements.

They never came.

I believe it'd be better to discuss this  
in my quarters, sir. Or yours.

I've nothing to hide, Captain.

Have you?

Sending out 100 men from this fort  
would have left us practically helpless, sir.

So you took it upon yourself  
to disregard my request.

Shallan is a key fort, sir.

If Red Cloud takes it...

there's nothing between him  
and Fort Laramie.

He's very tricky, sir. And clever.

The man's a savage, Riordan. Not Napoleon.

You're afraid of an ignorant savage?

The Colonel had a taste

of this ignorant savage at Medford.

Yes, I did.

But I'm going back there, Captain.

We're all going back there.

I'll hang Red Cloud

and enough of his men...

to put the fear of the Army

into every Indian in this country.

Go back?

- That's what I said.

- You can't, without more men.

And we're not going

to get any more while the Civil War is on.

There are enough men here.

We were sent out here

to build this fort and to hold it.

As I told you before,

these men aren't trained.

- Sgt. Decker!

- Sir!

I want all training procedure

doubled immediately.

- Make soldiers out of them.

- Yes, sir.

- This is my command, sir.

- It was.

- Do you have orders relieving me?

- I don't need them.

I'm senior officer in the territory.

You're subject to my orders.

You can accept that,

or place yourself under arrest.

Yes, sir.

- Decker, send Cooper to my quarters.

- Yes, sir.

Hi, Captain.

- Col. Marston wants to see you in his office.

- I heard him.

The Colonel does not like

to be kept waiting.

I'm eating breakfast.

Cooper, someday

I'm gonna take you to pieces.

Do you have anything to do right now?

Just let me know

when you've finished your breakfast.

- I'm finished. Come on, Mungo.

- Not him.

- He goes where I go.

- He's an Indian.

Say.

You are an Indian.

How about that?

You better not go, Mungo.

You might get in trouble.

Do they miss me at home?

Do they miss me?

'Twould be an assurance most dear

To know that this moment some loved one

Were saying

I wish he were here

To feel that the group

At the fireside

Were thinking of me

As I roam

Oh, yes

'Twould be joy beyond measure

No good.

No, Mungo. Very good.

To know that they missed me at home

To know that they missed me

At home

They tied the arrows. I saw them.

I sent you out to scout Red Cloud.

Why didn't you have Cooper

report directly to me?

I wanted to talk to Gus first.

Cooper is a civilian scout.

You know procedure.

I'm sorry, sir.

Your report, Cooper.

Red Cloud and the men

are camped at the foot of the canyon.

They're having a meeting

with the Assiniboin chief.

- Looks like they're gonna join forces.

- How long will that take them?

- About a week.

- They gotta make it by then, sir.

- Why?  
- Red Cloud's gotta beat the snow.  
Otherwise he'll have to hold off till spring.  
By that time maybe  
the war back east will be over.  
Red Cloud knows  
that means more men here, more guns.  
He's got to strike soon  
while he's got the chance.  
How soon will it snow?  
Like Gus said, the snow's overdue.  
- Where you going, Cooper?  
- To get some coffee.  
- Is it that urgent?  
- It is to me.  
When I first came here...  
Capt. Riordan assured me  
that Fort Shullan was an important post.  
- How are you, soldier?  
- Fine, sir.  
Has anything happened to  
change your mind, Captain?  
My last orders from Fort Laramie  
were to hold, sir.  
Since communication's been cut off...  
I have no way of knowing  
what other orders there may be.  
There are orders, Captain.  
Mine.  
I lost Medford because my orders  
were to stay inside the fort and hold.  
Holding actions do not win battles.  
I was sent out here to build a fort.  
Not attack Red Cloud.  
How did Red Cloud become so powerful?  
Because no one had the courage  
to move out against him.  
With what?  
Men who had to be shown  
which end of a rifle to point?  
It was up to you to make soldiers of them.  
Which is just exactly  
what they are going to become.  
Don't attack yet. We still have



a good chance of holding off Red Cloud...  
until it does snow.  
And if the Assiniboins join Red Cloud first,  
they'll attack.  
I don't intend to let them join forces.  
- You can't do it, Frank. It's suicide.  
- I'll be leading the men.  
I've no intention of committing suicide.  
Stop him, Glenn. You know it's wrong.  
Capt. Clarke, I believe  
you're forgetting yourself.  
Col. Marston, here,  
is in command of this fort.  
Thank you, Captain.  
You were assigned here as a doctor.  
Not a military strategist.  
Please return to your patients  
where maybe you'll do a little good.  
Ask him what happened at Shiloh?  
Ask him. And if he won't tell you, I will.  
- How are you feeling?  
- I'll be all right, sir.  
- Think you'll be strong enough to march?  
- I'll try, sir.  
I'll tell you what happened at Shiloh.  
I lost 1,500 men in a single encounter.  
We were cut to ribbons by enemy artillery.  
By the time the report  
got back to Washington...  
they were calling me the Butcher of Shiloh.  
Yes, they called me the Butcher of Shiloh.  
But reports are cold facts on paper.  
I took a calculated risk.  
I dared where cautious men stood still.  
But victory is not given to the cautious.  
That's why the war back east  
still drags on after four years.  
Because our men in command  
have no daring.  
If I had taken the enemy artillery position,  
it would have turned the tide.  
But unfortunately the War Department  
does not reward courage.  
Just results.

But if I had to decide Shiloh again...  
I'd do exactly what I did.  
Go ahead. Go after him if you want to.  
Go on.  
I gotta get you out of here.  
I can take you up in the mountains  
where you'll be safe.  
- I don't want to leave.  
- But you've got to.  
The Colonel's gonna get himself  
and everybody in this fort killed.  
- Why do you want to save me?  
- Because I want you for my woman.  
I don't have to ask you.  
I could take you if I wanted to.  
- You're a savage.  
- Are you crazy like he is?  
- Do you wanna die, too?  
- No, I wanna live.  
I'll take good care of you.  
I know these mountains  
like I know the fingers on my hand.  
There are other women at the fort.  
- But they're not mine.  
- I'm not your woman!  
You think you're too good for me? You ain't.  
You're another scalp for Red Cloud  
to hang up in his tent.  
I don't want to be saved by you, Mr. Cooper,  
or any other man.  
I've been saved enough.  
First by Col. Marston who married me  
to keep me from being a spinster.  
And now, you offer me the choice of dying  
or becoming your squaw.  
- You don't understand.  
- What is there left to understand?  
- You're no different from him.  
- I am.  
How?  
I care for you.  
I need you.  
How can I help you?  
I can't even help myself.

I know what I am.  
I know when I'm wrong.  
You could make it right.  
Cease fire.  
Hold your fire!  
Decker, turn out the guard,  
double the sentries.  
Bugler, call to arms...  
Oh, that ain't no use, Colonel.  
That was one brave come in close enough  
to get himself a coup.  
He's right, sir. It's happened before.  
Some young brave wanted  
to make a name for himself.  
They don't have much respect for you,  
do they?  
You may be right, sir.  
But I have an awful lot of respect for them.  
Mr. Benton, get a burial detail.  
You keep messing around  
with her and you'll wind up hanging.  
We weren't messing around.  
No? What was you doing?  
Showing her your buffalo hides?  
She's going to be my woman.  
The Colonel's lady  
is gonna be your woman?  
That's right.  
Don't laugh, Gus.  
No. No, maybe it ain't so funny.  
Maybe, it's kind of sad.  
I want you to forget her.  
I want you to get her out of your mind.  
- Forget her. Do you hear me? Forget her.  
- Leave me alone, Gus.  
I'm mighty disappointed in you, Jed boy.  
You make me feel  
all the years I spent with you was wasted.  
Jed.  
I'd have died for you more than once  
as you would for me.  
I feel for you  
like you was me own flesh and blood, lad.  
Do you believe that?

Do you believe it?  
- I don't know what to believe.  
- I think I got a right to talk.  
And I'm asking you to stay away from her.  
She can hurt you, Jed.  
She can break you into pieces  
without making you bleed.  
She ain't no squaw woman.  
She can't sleep in a tree  
or hide out in a cave.  
She's a fancy lady  
and she needs a fancy gent.  
You can't even read or write.  
And whose fault is that?  
It's mine, I should have  
taught you them things when you was little.  
Only I couldn't,  
cause I never learned them myself.  
I guess you and me...  
are just about two of  
the most ignorant men alive.  
Sometimes, she looks at me  
like I was a bear.  
There's some comfort in being a bear  
when you live in bear country.  
But I don't want to be a bear.  
Me leg's beginning to talk back to me  
a little. Will you give me a hand?  
I told you to keep  
off that leg for another three days.  
I'm gonna tuck it in right now, Doctor.  
Good night.  
Jed.  
Sit down.  
I'm worried, Jed.  
It's the Colonel.  
He's not a well man.  
It doesn't show  
because it's locked inside his head.  
He can't sit much longer.  
He's got to go out and kill Indians.  
Someone's got to stop him.  
You got a gun.  
Good luck, Mungo.

- Where're you sending him?  
- To Laramie.  
To bring back orders...  
that will keep Col. Marston  
inside this fort all winter.  
For a while, captain,  
you had me worried about you.  
I'm still worried.  
Tell me, Captain.  
How can you and the Colonel  
wear the same kind of uniform...  
and still be so different?  
It happens, Jed.  
He's a soldier.  
He's got a wife.  
He's got all the things  
you said you have to have to be civilized.  
Now, how can that be?  
We have animals among us.  
- Why don't you kill them?  
- That'd make us animals, too.  
What's the good of being civilized?  
Look, I don't have any right  
to judge Col. Marston.  
Neither do you.  
- How do you clean up such a mess?  
- There're lawyers and judges.  
I knew a lawyer once at a trading post.  
He claimed that my furs  
were trapped on his land.  
- We had strong words.  
- What happened?  
He was smaller than me.  
I know I did wrong, Captain,  
but the next time I'll know better.  
Next time I'm gonna find me a judge  
who sees things my way.  
That's a little too civilized.  
- Good night, Captain.  
- Good night, Jed.  
You hunks of mud, now listen to me.  
The soles of your shoes  
are half an inch thick.  
By tonight, you'll be through them...

and marching on the soles of your feet.  
But you'll be marching like soldiers.  
Anybody don't like it, speak up.  
Anybody.  
I'm gonna drill you till mess.  
You're gonna step out and step out lively.  
Calling platoons, forward march!  
Left, hut!  
Hut, two, three, four!  
Water detail ready to leave, sir.  
I should think you've stored enough water  
in the past week, Lieutenant.  
- It's best to be safe, sir.  
- I despise that word.  
It's for tradesmen, not for soldiers.  
How far is Red Cloud's camp  
from the stream?  
Not very far.  
I'd like to see it.  
Forward march! Hut, two, three, four!  
If one of them don't come back,  
you can be thanking yourself.  
Take the wagons  
to the fort as soon as they're loaded.  
Yes, sir.  
Benton will take  
the water detail back without you.  
I want to see Red Cloud's camp.  
You won't see anything  
that I haven't told you before.  
I want to see it myself.  
Is this their main camp?  
It doesn't look like  
they have more than 100 men down there.  
They've got a dozen camps  
just like this, scattered all over the valley.  
They split up. Easier to hunt food that way.  
If I had the water detail here...  
I could wipe out  
that entire camp with a single run.  
- We'd better start back.  
- What's your hurry?  
If we can see them,  
pretty soon they'll be able to see us.

I don't see any women.  
When an Indian goes to war,  
he leaves his woman home.  
Does Mrs. Marston's presence  
at the fort annoy you?  
She should be home, too.  
She'll be disappointed to hear that, Cooper.  
I thought she rather liked you.  
What do you keep stopping for?  
- What is it?  
- Don't talk.  
Cooper.  
Get me out of here.  
If you'd stayed behind me like you should,  
you wouldn't be down there.  
Never mind that. Get me out.  
You know,  
these woods are full of bear traps.  
You'll fall into two or three more before  
you get out of the trees.  
I didn't ask you  
for a lecture. Now get me out.  
- Colonel, I feel like talking.  
- I'm ordering you, Cooper.  
Take it easy, Colonel.  
I ain't got much to say.  
I got an idea you'll listen much better  
from where you are.  
Cooper, I'm warning you,  
if you don't get me...  
Take it easy now, Colonel.  
That's better.  
You know, Colonel,  
there's something eating you.  
I've seen it before.  
Mostly in Indians.  
When they get so full of hate  
they can't wait to kill.  
I've done some killing myself...  
but I never went out looking for it.  
I ain't sure, Colonel, that I wouldn't be  
doing an awful lot of people...  
a big favor  
by just letting you stay right where you are.

Get me out!  
Shooting me won't do you no good.  
It'll only bring Red Cloud down on you.  
And won't he be surprised  
to find that there ain't no bear in this trap.  
All right, Cooper, you've had your little joke.  
Now get me out.  
I'm going to take you out, Colonel.  
But first you've gotta  
promise me something.  
What?  
You being a fancy gent...  
I guess I can count on your word.  
Yes, you can, if I give it to you.  
Give up this crazy notion  
of chasing Red Cloud off the earth...  
and stay in the fort until the snow comes.  
I'm waiting, Colonel.  
Colonel, I don't hear nothing.  
I'll see you in hell first.  
That's harsh talk for a man in a bear pit.  
Do you wanna hear it again?  
I'll make believe I didn't hear you.  
Now let's try it once again.  
I'll see you in hell first.  
Like Gus says...  
that's a real likely possibility.  
Cooper.  
Cooper.  
Cooper.  
Cooper, come back here.  
Cooper!  
I wouldn't worry, Mrs. Marston.  
Cooper's very much at home out there.  
The Colonel isn't.  
He's with Jed.  
Captain, I'm very worried.  
Can't you send some men  
out there to look for them?  
- I could, if I had a good reason, but...  
- There is good reason.  
What is it?  
Nothing.  
I'm sorry I can't help you, Mrs. Marston.



Corporal of the guard,  
open the gate. Jed's here.

- Where's Col. Marston?

- I lost him.

You're too good a scout  
to lose a man, Cooper.  
Indians got him.

Isn't that the way it happened, Jed?

- No. That's not the way it happened.

- I'm sure it wasn't Jed's fault, Glenn.

- Let Jed tell me.

- I already told you. I lost him.

How?

- I didn't touch him, Captain.

- I want a full report.

- You can't put that in the report, Glenn.

- Now, wait a minute.

I dislike Col. Marston

much as any other man here...

but he was still in command of this fort.

I'll have no part of this murder.

What do you think he was trying to do  
to 148 men and women in this fort?

You're not fit

to wear a uniform, you never will be.

He's not coming back.

I didn't touch him.

I didn't have to.

He did it himself.

I did what they all wanted.

It's what you wanted, wasn't it?

Wasn't it?

Speak when I...

Yes, I wished for it.

- But not this way.

- There's no other way.

You can't kill a man by wishing him dead.

Now you look at me

like I was something dirty.

You hate a man,

you pray the Lord will strike.

But when someone

does it for you, you hate him.

I have nothing against the Colonel.

He never hurt me.  
What I did, I did for you...  
and the Captain and the rest of you.  
Now, I'm not clean enough to touch you.  
- She wouldn't let you do it, would she?  
- You're lucky, that's all.  
Luck had nothing to do with it.  
I know my wife pretty well.  
She's a fine person.  
Fine people can make mistakes, too.  
How long have these men  
been on punishment?  
Just overnight, sir.  
- Release them immediately.  
- Yes, sir.  
Punishment detail, halt!  
Dismissed.  
Were you worried about me, Captain?  
I was worried about Jed, sir.  
I didn't want to see him court-martialed.  
If I hadn't returned, I believe you would have  
gone through with it.  
I'd have hung him.  
You're a good officer, Riordan.  
I apologize  
if I ever questioned your integrity.  
Yes, sir.  
- Captain.  
- Yes, sir.  
I want the entire company  
fully armed and assembled in three hours.  
- The entire company, sir?  
- Every man.  
Jed.  
- Where did you get the blue uniform, lad?  
- From an Indian.  
- You got no right to wear it, you know that?  
- Neither did the Indian.  
- Does that help any, Jed?  
- Go away, Gus.  
No, I'm not going away.  
- I'm not your problem, boy.  
- No, I ain't got no problems, Gus.  
- I ain't got no problems.

- No, no.  
You just like  
holing up here like a bear, don't you?  
And drinking yourself crazy?  
- Sorry you brought the Colonel back.  
- I ain't glad.  
Jed, you did right.  
And I'm proud of you.  
Makes me feel as though  
I didn't bring you up too bad after all.  
- I didn't do it for you, Gus.  
- She made you, didn't she?  
Most likely, she wanted him dead  
just as much as you did...  
only she couldn't.  
That'd be the Christian in her.  
That's the part of your education  
that's most been sadly lacking.  
You ain't got no Christian in you.  
- I ain't?  
- No.  
There's two kinds of love.  
The way you love  
and the way a Christian does.  
And she can't be had your way.  
How do the Christians do?  
To begin with,  
he don't pine for another man's wife.  
- Never?  
- Maybe sometimes.  
But a good Christian fights it off.  
How?  
He gets himself another woman.  
You mean, a Christian...  
Ioves a woman he don't like  
because he can't get the one he wants?  
I call that real sneaky.

**Corpsman:**

**Corporals:**

Luis, Madison.

**Lieutenants:**

**Privates:**

Davis, Wilder...

Denny, Holden...

Priar, Jenkins...

Randolf, Russell...

Ryan, Alfasson...

Groven, McKinley.

- Report.

- All present and accounted for, sir.

We're moving out to attack tomorrow night.

Not many of you men have seen action.

Maybe you're scared.

As soon as you get

your first encounter behind you...

you'll feel a lot better.

You'll be given orders all along the way.

So don't lose your heads.

Just follow those orders

and you'll be all right.

Thank you.

I'm with you, Colonel...

I'm with you all the way.

I'm sick of being cooped up

behind these walls.

I need room, Colonel.

Elbow room, and lots of it!

You know what, Colonel?

You and me, we're gonna show

those Tetons how to die, aren't we?

I'm gonna get 10 scalps.

How many are you gonna get, Colonel?

I'm gonna get 10.

I'm gonna get 10, before they get mine.

All right, soldier boys,

go find your pretty ladies!

Find them and give them a kiss goodbye!

Make it a big kiss!

Because this is the last kiss

you're ever gonna have!

From now on in,

it's off to the happy hunting ground!

And me and the Colonel

are gonna get there first!

Right, Colonel?  
Open the gates!  
Open them wide, Red Cloud!  
Here we come!  
Me and the Colonel...  
and all them fine soldier boys.  
Open the gate, here I come!  
Onward at last!  
Lock the gate.  
Dismissed.  
Red Cloud!  
Where are you, Red Cloud?  
- They're too close, Sergeant.  
- What I aim at, I hit.  
Open the gate!  
- You're drunk, Cooper.  
- Yes, sir.  
Go to your quarters and take off that coat.  
Yes, sir.  
What were you trying  
to do out there, kill yourself?  
What do you care?  
I do.  
Why should you?  
Because you were doing it for me.  
You know, you get me all mixed up.  
- Go ahead, laugh at me.  
- I'm not laughing at you.  
Well, then, be mad at me.  
I can't be angry with you.  
Well, do something.  
Don't just stand there and look at me.  
That's all I can do, Jed, is look at you.  
Oh, no!  
Women.  
The next man who mentions  
Cooper's name to me...  
can expect to walk the punishment yard.  
There'll be a full inspection  
on the post before we leave tonight.  
Any man who fails to pass it  
will wish he'd never been born.  
That's all.  
Come in.

- Something troubling you, Sergeant?  
- The men's morale, sir.  
That Cooper riled them last night.  
We may have a little trouble.  
Have any of the men refused  
to march out tonight?  
No, sir, not yet...  
but Cooper's back,  
and I don't know what he's up to.  
- What could he be up to?  
- That's just it, sir, I don't know.  
But if he talks  
to the men again, they may refuse to go.  
What do you suggest, Sergeant?  
I was hoping you'd suggest something, sir.  
- You don't like the man, do you?  
- I hate him.  
I don't imagine  
it would take much to provoke him.  
Very little, sir.  
Provoke him.  
Yes, sir.  
Looking for someone?  
The Colonel wants to see you.  
What for?  
He'll tell you.  
I'll be there.  
I'm supposed to bring you.  
You came up the steps awful quiet.  
I did.  
The way you came  
through this door, I don't like it.  
No?  
I smell trouble.  
And you fill the room with it.  
Get going.  
The Colonel doesn't want  
to see me, does he?  
Why else would I come?  
Maybe to kill me.  
Why don't you try?  
Hold it.  
Well, Captain?  
Come down here, Cooper.

What are you gonna do to him, Captain?

- What are you gonna do to him, Colonel?

- He killed a man.

- The punishment's clearly prescribed.

- Cooper, come on down...

Run for the mountains, Jed.

They're gonna hang you.

- Gus, get out of my way.

- It's not his fault, Captain. I know it.

Come on down, Jed.

You, too, Captain.

I would've died for this.

It's nothing but a dirty, filthy, blue rag.

Shoot him, Captain. Shoot him.

Shoot him!

- Gus.

- Yeah.

We got a chance, ain't we?

To make it back, I mean.

Sure.

It's a real likely possibility.

Aren't you gonna say anything?

What can I say?

You could wish me luck.

I wished you luck the night before Shiloh.

You didn't mean it then...

and you wouldn't mean it now.

Col. Marston...

as first officer under your command,

I request you reconsider your plan...

for taking the troops out of this fort.

I've nothing to reconsider.

Capt. Clarke,

escort Col. Marston to his quarters.

Confine him there until further notice.

Under what authority

do you choose to ignore my command?

Orders from Gen. Fisbee at Fort Laramie.

- May I see these orders?

- They're en route, sir.

I sent Mungo to Laramie a week ago,

requesting this action.

It takes a great deal

of courage to go over your superior's head.

Right or wrong, I respect you for it.  
But I can't turn back now.  
I can't turn back either, sir.  
I'm taking the men out.  
You'll have to shoot me in the back.  
Col. Marston.  
Stop or I'll shoot.  
Corporal of the guard,  
dispatch rider approaching!  
I could have  
your career for this right here and now...  
but I'd be doing the Army a disservice.  
You showed courage and daring.  
That's becoming a rare quality nowadays.  
I leave you in command during my absence.  
Prepare to mount.  
Mount!  
By twos, by the left flank!  
Go!  
Forward! Hut!  
Close the gates.  
Go to your posts.  
What are you doing here?  
Going with you.  
Did the Colonel and the men go out?  
Did Gus go with them?  
The others still at the fort?  
They'll be dead.  
- Come.  
- Wait.  
What for?  
If you're in a hurry, go yourself.  
No hurry.  
- What's the matter? Can't you carry it?  
- You'll need it.  
I'm going with you.  
You can't. No more.  
Why can't I?  
You don't belong up there.  
- Why are you going?  
- I belong there.  
We'd best not leave these trees, Colonel.  
We haven't seen an Indian so far, have we?  
No, sir, but that don't mean



they ain't seen us.  
Their strategy's plain.  
They're dropping back hoping we'll split up,  
so they can pick us off in small patrols.  
Maybe...  
but I still don't like  
going on into that open draw.  
They won't fight  
unless we force them into it.  
We're wasting time. Go scout ahead.  
We'll wait here.  
Aye.  
Sound the attack!  
Back to the trees! Get back to the trees!  
Gus. Bucko. It's me, Jed.  
Go back to the woods!  
Back to the trees! Go back to the woods!  
Back to the trees.  
Back to the fort! Go back to the fort!  
Come on, Luke, you ain't dead yet.  
Back to the fort!  
Pick up the wounded! Back to the fort!  
Back to the fort! Don't stop for anything!  
Open the gates.  
Take over, Sergeant.  
Dismissed!  
- How'd I do, Captain?  
- Fine, soldier, just fine.  
Snow, heat, little meat  
Famine almost near  
And still they struggled on,  
Hiding every tear  
Stout hearts, played their parts  
In that bygone year  
Back there, at the last frontier  
The last frontier  
The last frontier