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# The Westerner

By Jo Swerling

Hey, wire.  
Wire. They've  
drawn a fence across there.  
Them plow-pushers must have  
put it up there last night.  
Give me them wire cutters.  
I'll fix this.  
Cow herders!  
Hey, cornhuskers!  
Shad Wilkins, you've  
been tried and found guilty  
of the most serious crime west of the Pecos,  
to wit, shooting a steer.  
Got anything to say for yourself before  
the sentence of the court is executed?  
I told you they shot at me first!  
I didn't mean to kill that steer on purpose!  
I was aiming at the man.  
It's your bad luck you missed him.  
That's the trouble with you sodbusters,  
you can't shoot straight.  
Shad,  
may the Lord have mercy on your soul. Hey!  
Buck, I want to see you.  
Well, how's the hanging, there?  
Well, his neck  
didn't hardly stretch a foot.  
Here's to the greatest woman in the world,  
the fairest flower that ever bloomed,  
- Lily Langtry.  
- Miss Langtry.  
Hold it, boys.  
Did you hear the toast, stranger?  
To Lily Langtry? I thought  
you meant your friends.  
I didn't know that included me.  
That includes every man  
that drinks at my bar.  
Glad to join you. Have  
you ever met Miss Langtry?  
No, I never met her. I never met the  
sun, I never shook hands with the moon,  
and I've never been introduced to no clouds.  
That's all right. Too bad Lily

Langtry couldn't have heard that.

Did you ever see her?

No, I was in England once,  
but didn't get around to it.

Oh, you was in England once,  
and you could have seen her,

- but you never got around to it, eh?

- Yeah.

- Get out of my bar.

- Huh?

Get out of my bar!

- To the Jersey Lily.

Miss Langtry.

Here's how.

All right, Mort, if Shad's  
good and cold, you can have him.

\$4, that's all he had. I'll make  
it up to you on the next one.

Get off.

- What you got there?

- A horse thief, Judge.

Prisoner of the bar.

- Get in there.

Chickenfoot, the law.

Hear ye, hear ye, court  
of Vinegarroon is now in session.

What's the charge?

We caught him on Chickenfoot's  
horse that was stole last week.

- My horse Pete? Where's he at?

- Right outside.

Well, so it is. Pete.

No, Your Honor. I was just  
trying to get the lay of the land.

- You will, too, at the end of a rope.

Southeast, no anticipating.

Hey, Judge! Judge, that is my old  
sabino pony. He's tied right out there.

People of Vinegarroon again...

You can use any name you like.

Cole Harden.

What are

you doing in Vinegarroon?

- Oh, just passing through.

- Homesteader?

- No.

Where do you hail from?

- No place in particular.

Where are you heading for?

- No place special.

- Oh, saddle bum, huh?

Well, it's all right to live on  
a horse if it's your own horse.

Bart, turn loose the prisoner's  
hands. Chickenfoot, swear him in.

Do you swear to

tell the truth... So help you?

Take off your hat!

Well, now, I'll tell you, son...

Are you Bean?

- Judge Roy W. Bean.

- My name's Jane Ellen Mathews.

Yes, Miss Mathews, what can I do for you?

- What have you done with Shad Wilkins?

- Shad Wilkins?

He was working in the fields

when some of your wranglers

came up and took him away.

Shad Wilkins. Shad Wilkins.

Oh, yeah, he was hanging around out there  
a while back, but he ain't around now.

Your men not only took him away,  
but they tore down the fence.

Not a stick of it was left standing.

That so?

Yes, that's so, and you needn't  
pretend you don't know about it.

Well, it don't surprise me none.

It's against the law to  
build fences hereabouts.

- What law? Whose law?

- Mine.

- Now, you listen to me, Mr. Bean.

- Judge Bean.

You're no more a judge than I  
am. Just call yourself a judge.

I wouldn't say that if I was you. I  
might consider it contempt of court.

It's contempt, all right.  
You call this a court?  
I do, and it happens to  
be in session right now.  
Southeast, get the young lady a chair.  
Now, you sit down, Miss Mathews, and  
I'll tend to your case in a minute.  
You're charged with stealing  
a horse. Guilty or not guilty?  
Not guilty.  
Where's exhibit A?  
- Huh?  
Where's the horse? Bring  
in the horse, Chickenfoot.  
Oh, yeah. Yeah, horse.  
Miss Mathews, when cattle  
can't get to water, they die.  
There's miles of river on  
each side of our homestead.  
This country's unfenced rangeland.  
It always was, and always will be.  
Get in there. All  
right, give me room there, you guys.  
Come on, get in there.  
Whoa, Pete. Come on in here.  
Come on, get over there.  
Give us a little room.  
All right, Judge, there he is.  
Mr. Harden, it's my duty to inform you  
that the larceny of an equine is a  
capital offense, punishable by death,  
but you can rest assured that, in this court,  
a horse thief always gets a  
fair trial before he's hung.  
- Chickenfoot, that's your horse?  
- Oh, why, Judge...  
Can you prove it's your horse?  
Why, Judge, anybody here... I can prove  
it by Pete himself that he's my horse.  
Pete, you're my horse, ain't you?  
Ownership of horse clearly  
established. It belongs to Chickenfoot.  
That's my ruling.  
Well, I don't contest it, Your

Honor. Maybe the horse does belong  
to Chickenfoot here, but I didn't steal it.

- How'd you get it then?

- I bought it.

Order in the court!

- That all you got to say?

- That's all.

No, it's not. I'm not going to stay here  
and see anybody railroaded like this.

Miss Mathews, I don't recollect you  
was summoned as a witness in this trial.

What kind of a trial is it when a prisoner  
isn't even allowed to

have anybody speak for him?

You an attorney, Miss?

I'm as much an attorney as you are a judge.

- You know this man?

- No, I don't.

- You ever see him before?

- No, but...

- Can you prove he didn't steal the horse?

- No.

Then he don't need no lawyer then.

This man was caught on a stolen horse,  
and in this jurisdiction,  
that's prima facie evidence.

- The case is closed and that's my ruling.

- Yes, and it's just like all your rulings!

The courtroom will now  
be cleared of everybody,  
excepting the judge, the jury,  
the prisoner, the witnesses and...

I guess that means you.

All right, I'll go. I  
don't want to see anymore.

It's murder, that's what it is. Murder.

This man hasn't got a  
chance, and you know it,  
but you never give anybody a chance.

You didn't give us one when you  
stampeded the cattle over our crops.

You thought you'd starve the  
homesteaders out, but you didn't.

You can pester us and rob us and

kill us, but you can't stop us.  
'Cause there'll always be  
more coming. More and more.  
And we'll stay on our farms in spite of  
you, and your courtroom and your killers!  
By gobs, she's all right.  
She'd make a good cattleman.  
If it wasn't for Lily, I'd marry her.  
Giddap.  
You heard the case against  
the accused, pro and con.  
Now I guess maybe you'd better  
retire to consider a verdict.  
Chickenfoot, you'd better take  
Pete out for a little fresh air.  
Take him out, Bart. I got work to do.  
And while you retire, there'll be  
a recess for them that's thirsty.  
Well, I guess you can't take it with you.  
It's got to be strictly understood  
you ain't making no effort to influence  
the sober judgment of the jury.  
- Certainly not.  
- There you are.  
- Compliments of the prisoner.  
- Jury to the rear!  
Bull's-eye.  
- Join me, Your Honor?  
- Don't mind if I do.  
Don't spill none of that liquor,  
son. It eats right into the bar.  
To the unfortunate lady  
with the bullet in her face.  
The man that fired that bullet  
was hauled out of here feet first.  
And he ought to be.  
Any man that'd shoot at a picture  
of Lily Langtry ought to be killed.  
It's just retribution.  
It's justifiable homicide,  
that was my ruling.  
Right.  
You an admirer of Miss Lily's, too?  
Well, that's putting it mildly.

She's the most beautiful woman I ever met.

Met?

You mean to tell me you met Lily  
Langtry, the real her, in the flesh?

Oh, many times.

What an actress.

How'd you get to know her?

Well, that's a long story, Judge.

Bart, you and Blackjack  
get yourself a drink, huh?

Mighty fine liquor. What do you call it?

- Rub of the brush. Go on.

- Rub of the brush?

- Did you get to know her real well?

- It's got character.

I said, did you get to know her real well?

Now, Judge, you forget a gentleman  
never discusses a lady in a barroom.

Who said it's a barroom? This is a courtroom.

Say, tell me, is she as  
pretty as them pictures?

Why, the picture's never been made  
that can do justice to Lily Langtry.

Is she good-natured?

An angel.

- I'll never forget the night we met.

- Yeah?

I'll never forget it as long as I live.

Who was that?

Oh, that's Mort Borrow.

He cleans up around here.

Go on about Lily.

Oh, yeah, Lily.

How about a verdict?

Can't you see we're still  
considering the evidence?

Two aces. COWBOY

Bet a dollar and a half.

Stay once.

Get away from here. You  
smell of formaldehyde!

I'll call that.

You been down around Lanno Bay, ain't you?

Sure.



Well, you know how it is at sunset.  
You can look out and that water ain't  
exactly blue, and it ain't exactly purple.  
It's a kind of color a man can  
feel, but he can't put a name to.  
Yeah.  
Well, that's Lily's eyes.  
By gobs!  
I'm out. COWBOY  
I'll stay out. Here we go.  
Got 10. Got a nine.  
You know how bright and  
coppery and gold-like  
a young chestnut horse is  
running in the bright sun?  
- Yeah.  
- Well, her hair is something like that.  
In the daytime.  
You mean it's different at night?  
Well, not different,  
but just sort of more so.  
- How so?  
- Well...  
Well, you know how it is at dusk when you  
see a prairie fire reflected in the sky.  
A sort of a deep... A  
beautiful kind of blushing...  
- Red?  
- Red.  
- Well, that'll give you a rough idea.  
- By gobs.  
I got a lock of her hair.  
You mean to tell me you actually  
got the real... From her head?  
I don't suppose you'd ever  
part with that lock of hair,  
no matter what a man was willing to give?  
A man don't trade things like that.  
You see that sword up there?  
I wore it in the civil war.  
Always meant to be buried with it.  
Now, if you was willing to swap, why...  
Would you really like to have it?  
I'd rather own it than the state

of Texas. Let's have a look at it.

I haven't got it with me.

Where's it at?

It's with my stuff in El Paso.

So, you was in the civil war, huh, Judge?

- El Paso, huh?

- Yeah.

- Cavalry, huh?

- I suppose you could write for it.

Yeah.

Wouldn't take long to get here by mail coach.

Oh, two, three weeks.

- Two or three weeks, huh?

- Yeah, about.

But I wouldn't part with that lock  
of hair for anything in the world.

The jury's ready, Judge.

That bottle

of whiskey gone already?

Yeah, and if he ain't paid for it,  
you better start collecting now.

- What's the verdict?

- You know what the verdict is. Guilty.

There's only one thing I can do.

You're sentenced to hang, that's my ruling.

Turn loose the prisoner's hands.

- But, Judge, you just ruled...

- I didn't finish my ruling.

The court sentenced the prisoner to hang,  
but the court didn't say when. So  
long as there's reasonable doubt...

What reasonable doubt, Judge?

We just caught him with Chickenfoot's horse.

- Ain't any room for doubt.

- Order!

I been talking to the prisoner.

He's a friend of Lily Langtry's.

Stands to reason no friend of Lily  
Langtry goes around stealing horses.

Leastways, there's a reasonable doubt.

You mean, you're setting  
aside your own ruling?

That ain't what I said. When

I make a ruling, it stands.

But, Judge, you just sentenced the man.

His sentence is suspended  
for a couple weeks until I can  
look into the matter further.  
That's my ruling.

- Hi, Mort. How's business?

- Just lost a customer.

Well, I'll be down for a shave in a minute.

All right, you're next.

- Howdy, Judge.

- Hello, Evans.

Jersey Lily special.

Pardon me, you don't happen  
to have a twin brother, do you?

No, not me.

Well, you'd better pay  
me that money you owe me.

You're loco, brother.

I don't owe you nothing.

You owe me \$60.

\$60.

If you're interested, that's the  
man that sold me the roan horse.

Then, he's the man that stole...

\$84 and 6 bits.

Fined \$80 for disorderly conduct,  
and \$4 and 6 bits for  
carrying concealed weapons.

Now, you men get some rope and string him up.

String him up? Why, he's dead already.

We hang horse thieves,  
don't we? String him up!

Come inside, son.

You can have his horse and outfit.

- Rub of the brush?

- Rub of the brush.

- El Paso.

- El Paso.

Good morning, Judge.

Who are you?

Who are you? What are you doing here?

Stranger. Stranger, come here.

Straighten out my neck, would  
you? Grab a hold of my head.

Now, jerk it quick.

Thank you. It's my neck.

You see I was hung once, but  
my friends cut me down in time.

Now when I don't live right,  
why, the crick comes back on me.

Now, who are you, anyhow?

And what are you doing here?

Why, don't you remember?

Why, I'm the fellow that  
filled the inside straight,  
and won Chickenfoot's horse.

So long, Judge.

Hey, Pete, are you glad I  
won you from Chickenfoot?

Well, that makes it nice.

Here.

Wait!

Wait!

That lock of hair, Lily's hair,  
you promised to write to El Paso for  
it. Don't you remember? We drank on it.  
When are you going to do it?

Huh?

- You ain't going to crawfish?

- No, the first post office I come to.

Straighten her out, would you, son?

Thank you.

You mangy old scorpion, you  
might have got us both killed.

- What you want to go to California for?

- See the Pacific Ocean.

It's just like the gulf down at Lanno Bay.

It's bigger.

Why don't you stay around Vinegarroon awhile?

We could have a lot of fun together.

We could talk about Lily and...

No, I'm on my way.

Listen,

it's a great country here, west of the Pecos.

A fellow could really  
make something of himself.

Why, when I first come  
here, I didn't have nothing.

Now, I'm boss of the whole section.  
Well, that's mighty fine, Judge.  
You know, I cottoned to you  
the first time I seen you.  
Why don't you put in with me?  
Well, I tell you, Judge,  
it's nice of you to ask me,  
but I'm heading for California, and  
nothing short of hanging can stop me.  
Wait a minute. You can't go.  
You're under suspended sentence.  
- Why, you hung Mr. Evans for that.  
- Huh?  
You're under suspence, anyhow.  
Who are you? What do I know about you?  
How do I know they ain't looking for you?  
You're under arrest for disorderly  
conduct, for disturbing the peace, vagrancy,  
and you're on the way back to  
town with me, and that's my ruling!  
So long, Judge.  
By gobs, he stole my gun.  
We hired out for farm  
work, Miss, not a civil war.  
This ain't no fit place to homestead in.  
Land's no good when there's  
always lead flying over it.  
If you'd shoot back, maybe  
they'd stop bothering you.  
We did shoot back.  
And so did Shad Wilkins, and  
he ain't trying it no more.  
What about your own quarter section?  
- If you leave, you'll lose it.  
- We don't want no part of it.  
All right, Hod. If you feel that way,  
we'll try to get along  
with just Eph and Henry.  
Not me.  
Henry, if we only had one  
man, it'd be a big help.  
Sorry, Mr. Mathews.  
Call themselves men.  
Wade, what do we do?

- I know what to do.  
- No, no, wait. That's not the way.  
Don't even think of it.  
Wade, aren't you going to stay for supper?  
I'll be back.  
Well, they left.  
Of course they have. What did you expect?  
My hands quit, too. You  
can't blame them for leaving.  
There won't be a hired man  
left in this part of the country  
if we don't do something about it.  
We hire new hands, same thing will happen.  
What's old Mathews going to say about it?  
He keeps passing the  
buck to the Lord Jehovah.  
I say, let's do something about it ourselves.  
- That's right.  
- That's what I like to hear.  
Let's give the judge the same  
thing he gave Shad Wilkins.  
Maybe if some of us went down and  
appealed to Roy Bean for justice...  
Justice. If you'd seen him yesterday,  
pretending to try that prisoner...  
The man didn't have a chance.  
- I wonder if they hanged him.  
- Don't they always?  
He was the same as dead  
even while he stood there.  
I've kept on seeing his face all day.  
What is it, Daughter?  
The man I told you about,  
the one that was hanged.  
I saw him plain as day,  
looking in the window.  
You're seeing things, Jane  
Ellen. There's nobody out there.  
I saw his face, I tell you.  
Come in.  
Good evening.  
Pardon me for intruding like this.  
Oh, no, you're not. It's  
just... Well, I thought you were a ghost.

Well, I guess you're partly to blame I'm not.

- I just stopped in to thank you.

- Father, this is Mister...

- Harden.

- Welcome, Mr. Harden, welcome.

Glad to meet you.

Oh, Mr. Harden, this is  
our neighbor Wade Harper.

This is the man I told you about.

You mean to tell me Bean  
tried you, and let you go?

Well, she was my lawyer. I guess  
she's the one that got me off.

- I knew you weren't a horse thief.

- Thanks.

How did you know that?

I just knew.

Are you working anywhere?

No, I'm heading for California.

Mr. Harden, I suppose a body that's just  
been hanged is apt to be a bit hungry.

You must stay for supper.

- Well, I don't want to put you out any.

- Oh, no, not at all.

Matter of fact, we had some  
company that just disappointed us.

Uh-huh. We were hoping somebody'd  
show up to take their place.

Make yourself at home,  
now. Make yourself at home.

Wait till you sink your teeth  
into some of Jane Ellen's stew.

Oh, Lord, for that which  
thou hast sent us in our hour of need,  
make us truly grateful.

Bless this food to our use and  
ourselves to thy service. Amen.

Let me help you.

How about some hominy?

- Here, Wade. Give him some milk.

- All right, all right.

Give him some milk.

I think he likes it here. I think we got him.

- What's he doing now?

- Feeding his horse.

Wade, he could probably take the place of two men. He's so big and strong.

- Well, I don't know how strong he is.

- Strong enough, Wade.

Now, Jane Ellen, we'll leave you alone with him, and you kind of add on a little more welcome.

- What'll I say?

- Oh, just keep smiling at him.

And, Daughter, if it should come up natural

- like,

you might hint what a handsome man he is.

Handsome?

We need him terribly bad, Daughter.

We got to get that corn husked.

We need him terribly bad.

- Listen, your father don't mean for you to...

- Shh.

Look out.

Everything all right, Mr. Harden?

- Fine, thanks.

- Good. Now, I'll go see about your bunk.

- Oh, don't trouble.

- No trouble at all. Come on, Wade.

- Can I give you a hand?

- Oh, no, thanks.

- Won't you sit down, please?

- Well, I won't argue with you.

If I had to wash dishes, I guess I'd give up eating.

Well, what do you do about the dishes when you're home?

Home? What? You mean in a house?

Well, you live in a house, don't you?

No. No, my house is all out there, all one room with a sky for a roof.

- Well, it's a big place.

- Got some space to rent.

Well, I guess California's your next stop, huh?

California, but I don't stop. Oregon next, I guess.

Well, all places aren't just the same.



Wouldn't you rather stay a  
little longer in some places?  
No, they're all the same,  
beautiful when you leave them.  
Well, it's like the turtles.  
Carry their houses with them.  
If I had to build me a  
house, I'd have it on wheels.  
Not me. I'd want my house so  
that nothing could ever move it.  
So down deep that an  
earthquake couldn't shake it,  
and a cyclone would be  
just another wind going by.  
Well, you say, "Who wants to be a turtle?"  
And I say, "I hope you'll  
be very happy in your house. "  
- Well...  
- Oh, say, wait a minute.  
What?  
I'll bet I know something we could agree on.  
What's that?  
Well, in about a week now,  
we're going to husk the corn,  
and I'll bet you'll agree that that's fun.  
Well, you know, I think husking  
corn's the greatest fun in the world.  
- Husking corn, fun?  
- Oh, yes!  
- Well, I'd rather wash dishes.  
- Oh, no.  
It was a fine supper, and good cooking.  
Oh, Mr. Harden.  
What a handsome man you are.  
I doubt that, but I'm a tired one.  
Well, I hope I see you in  
the morning before I leave.  
Get out of here! Hey!  
If anybody'd told me yesterday  
I'd be playing tag in a cornfield  
with a lot of cows...  
If we had some men that would ride fence,  
there wouldn't be any cows in the cornfield.  
You were sure cute last night.

Now you're making fun of me.  
Well, that's... That's  
more fun than picking corn.  
Hey, look at your father. I wonder what's up.  
I tried to stop them.  
They wouldn't listen to me.  
Wade!  
Yes, yes. It's the wrong  
and lawless thing to do.  
- I begged them not to. I told them.  
- Who? What happened?  
Wade Harper has rounded up some of the men.  
They going to town to lynch Judge Bean.  
- When did they leave?  
- About an hour ago.  
They took our wagon.  
Thunder and lightning! You  
back from California already?  
You got to get out of here,  
and don't stop for nothing.  
Did you write to El Paso?  
Listen, just get on your horse  
and get, because they're after you.  
Did you write? Who's after me?  
The homesteaders. They're  
going to string you up.  
Why, that bunch of plow-pushing sod!  
They're outside right now,  
a whole wagonload of them.  
A wagonload? Why, I can  
handle a train load of them.  
I'll tear their livers out.  
What'll it be, gentlemen?  
It'll be Roy Bean. Where is he?  
He's out for a while.  
That's because you came  
down here and warned him.  
Make a move and I'll kill you.  
Cole, start collecting them shotguns,  
uncork them rifles now and set  
them down this end of the bar,  
easy-like.  
Go on.  
Get back. Get back.

Now, I'll take yours, Judge.  
The drinks are on me, gentlemen.  
We're not drinking with  
you, Harden, nor him, either.  
I ain't serving none of my liquor  
to no bunch of tomato-kissing,  
- plow-pushing...  
- Now, Judge,  
we don't want any harsh words to spoil  
this friendly little get-together.  
Get-together?  
Why, this pack of weasels invade  
the dignity of my courtroom,  
come in here armed with malice  
aforethought to kick up a rumpus...  
Now, look, you being a judge, you know  
there's always two sides to any question.  
These men have come here  
with a legitimate grievance.  
We're not asking you to speak for us, Harden.  
No, nor me, either.  
Well, that makes it unanimous. I'm  
going to talk for the both of you.  
There's a law here against fencing land  
that seems nothing short of  
murder to people raising crops,  
but it's common sense to men running cattle.  
I've seen this kind of war before.  
It's happening now, back  
in Kansas and Nebraska.  
The cattlemen came in first,  
then the homesteaders moved  
in and fenced them out.  
They had crops for one year,  
and then a dry spell, drought,  
so the homesteaders moved out,  
and the rush and thistle and jimson moved in.  
And the big spaces were all broken  
up by little quarter sections,  
and the homesteads left empty,  
and the houses caved in, and the  
land, no good for man or cattle.  
You spoiled the land, then you  
came here to spoil this land.

This here's a big country.  
Yea, but it ain't big enough for cattlemen  
and homesteaders, and it never will be.  
Now, clear out here. That's my ruling.  
All right, Bean, we're going.  
We're going back to build our fences.  
If you do, you better build  
coffins along with them. Now, get.  
You sure told them off, son.  
Yep, and now I'm going to tell you off.  
I'm sorry I stopped them from lynching you.  
They got a right to defend their homesteads.  
You know this ain't homestead  
land. You just said so yourself.  
- The government didn't say so.  
- I'm the government here.  
Judas Priest, I don't see how you  
can talk up for scum like that.  
They proved up on their land,  
and they got deeds to it.  
When you make war on them, you're making war  
on their women and kids, too.  
Those people were starved out last year.  
I heard about those cattle  
being stampeded over their crops,  
and there's too many strays running  
loose in that valley right now,  
only they're not strays.  
What do you want me to  
do? Arrest them cattle,  
and fine them a couple  
dollars apiece for trespass?  
Now, look,  
those people don't take up much room with  
their little shirt-sized pieces of land.  
Why don't you be a real  
judge for all of the people?  
Why don't you try to see their side of  
it, and help them instead of fight them?  
Make peace around here instead of war.  
There's plenty of room for everybody,  
then everybody'd look up to you.  
And then someday, maybe they'd put  
up a statue out there in the street,

a statue with a carving on it.

"To Roy Bean, the real judge. "

What are you doing? Catching a fish?

I guess I'm wasting my time.

Hold on, wait a minute. You

write that letter to El Paso yet?

- No!

- You promised. We drank on it.

I didn't have to write it.

I had it on me all the time.

You did? Well, why didn't

you give it to me then?

You old bullhead, if I'd have

given it to you, you'd have hung me.

Wouldn't you?

- I might've at that. Let's have a look at it.

- I haven't got it with me.

Suffering, bleeding

Chickamauga! Where's it at?

I left it over at the Mathews' place.

- How is she?

- Huh?

- I'll ride right over with you.

- No, no.

You mean you're gonna crawfish?

You ain't going to give it to me?

- Sure, I'll give it to you.

- When?

When the last steer's out of the valley.

All right, I'll pass the

word around to the boys.

No, you don't. You're going

to help run those cattle out,

and I'm going along with

you to see that it's done.

Don't you trust me, Cole?

When I was a kid, I had a pet rattlesnake.

I was fond of it, but I

wouldn't turn my back on it.

You're all right.

I'm going back now, and gathering

my stuff for the roundup.

- And that lock of hair.

- Yeah, yeah, the lock of hair.

He defended Bean. He said he was right.  
Said the homesteaders spoiled this  
land for the cattlemen. We all heard it.  
I don't care what you heard.  
He couldn't be two-faced.  
He's not that kind.  
If he took Bean's part, he  
only did it to stop trouble.  
Miss Mathews,  
looks like every time I get into  
trouble, you always speak up for me.  
They're trying to tell  
me you spoke up for Bean.  
Well, I did try to tell  
them Bean's point of view.  
There you are.  
It's always been my experience  
that when you know the other fellow's  
point of view, you usually get together.  
Well, why didn't you tell  
him our point of view?  
I did, and we got together.  
You won't have to patrol  
your fields any longer.  
Judge gave me his word they'd  
round up all cattle in this valley  
and take them out of here.  
You think he'd keep his word?  
Well, I'm going along with  
him to see that he does.  
Well, what makes you  
think we'd take your word?  
Take it or leave it.  
Harden,  
you're a sneak and a liar.  
Miss Mathews!  
I'll be back.  
California's that way.  
I got something to tell you before I go.  
- Well?  
- How's Wade?  
He's fine, just fine.  
You know, you're not the  
prettiest girl I ever saw.

Well, that's great news. Who asked you?  
But you've got the prettiest hair I ever saw.  
Why do you like to make fun of me?  
'Cause I like you, I guess.

- And you think my hair's pretty, huh?  
- I never saw anything like it.  
- Oh, could I clip a lock?  
- No, you can't.  
- Will you clip one?  
- No, I won't.

Come around here, take sides with Bean,  
and knock out my best friend, and...  
Tell you how much I like you,  
and how much I might miss you?

- All right?  
- No.

Here, these are yours.  
Well, thanks a lot.  
Jane Ellen!  
Go on, Cole. Go on.  
Well, so I says to her...  
I said, "Miss Langtry,  
"do you plan to go back to England  
when you finish your American tour?"  
And she said to me... She said,  
"No. " Said she loved the  
United States too much.

- Yeah?  
- She planned to stay here  
for the rest of her life.  
She told me that when she got all  
through her work in the theater,  
that she wanted to settle down  
someplace out here in the West.  
By gobs.  
Some quiet little place way out on the range,  
away from all the lights and the crowds.  
She kept asking about Texas especially.  
She says that ever since she was a  
little girl, she'd heard about Texas,  
and it'd always been the dream of  
her life to have a home here someday.

- She did?  
- She did.

Last herd just come in, Judge.

Well?

Huh?

Oh.

By gobs!

A lock of her own hair!

It's kind of dark, ain't it?

Yeah, she uses lots of shampoo on her hair.

She does?

It's beautiful. Beautiful.

I'll never forget this, Cole. Never.

- Let me see it, will you?

- What for?

I ain't going to keep it.

I'd like to see you try.

- All right?

- All right.

I know how you feel, son.

Almighty God,

we offer thee thanksgiving for  
thy help and thy divine bounty.

Thou has poured thy blessings on our land.

Thou hast visited the

Earth and made it plenteous.

Thou hast made it soft with drops of rain,  
and the land that was desolate

has become like a garden,

and the waste places are

become fenced and are inhabited.

Thou hast made the tree of

the field yield her fruit,

and the Earth, her increase.

Thou hast broken the bonds of our yoke

and delivered us out of

the hands of our enemies,

so that we shall dwell here safely,

and none shall make us afraid,

and for this, thy divine bounty,

Oh, Lord, we thank thee. Amen.

Amen.

- Amen.

One foot up and the other foot down

Swing them pretty girls 'round and 'round

Here it is.



- What?

Tell me something first.

Where do you keep my lock of hair?

Oh, uh...

Show me.

Nobody can see that, not even you.

Look, Cole, the best piece of  
homestead land in the whole country.

It used to belong to one of  
the hired men that left us,  
and now it's anybody's. You just claim it.  
Yeah, that's a fine piece of land all right.

Yeah, look at the feed on  
those slopes over there,  
and that strip along the bottom  
is just fine for wheat or corn.

And, Cole, look, that  
little knoll right there,  
it's just begging for a house.

- Do you know how to build a house?

- No, how?

Well, you... You...

Well, you have the kitchen there,  
and the bedroom over there, and  
the living room right in the middle.

It would have to have the  
right things in it, too.

What sort of things?

Oh, fires and lamplights, warm beds,  
the smell of coffee in the morning,  
the sound of rain on the roof.

Gee, that's a nice house, Jane Ellen.

Jane!

Look!

Go to your homes!

Protect your houses!

Hey, Wade, grab another team,  
we'll take a section of rail fence  
and knock down a strip of corn.

Maybe we can start a backfire.

Take the two end sections, Wade!

Cole! Cole! Cole!

Hey, get out of here! Move!

Look, the house!

Dad! Dad! Dad! Dad! Father!

Help! Help!

Come on, hurry up!

- Watch out for his leg and shoulder.

All right.

Take it easy.

- Have you seen Jane Mathews?

No.

So I hereby christen this town Langtry!

No man ever gave a woman a whole

town afore, but I'm doing it,

and from now on, this whole section's

going to bloom like the Jersey Lily herself!

Quiet! I ain't through yet.

Miss Langtry's coming soon

to play a night in Fort Davis,

and I want every legal

resident of Langtry, Texas,

to go over and see the

godmother of this here town,

a town of cattlemen, for cattlemen,

and by gobs, run by cattlemen!

Now, in honor of this great occasion,

I'm dishing out free beer to one and all,

and anybody found sober after sundown

is liable to arrest for disorderly

conduct, and that's my ruling!

Start the music!

"And man that is born of

woman has but a short time to live.

"He cometh up and is cut down like a flower.

"He fleeth as if it were a shadow,

and never continueth in one stay.

"In the midst of life, we are in death. "

The wagon train's left. The

people have all gone, Jane Ellen.

I'm staying. Nobody's going

to drive me away from my land,

not with cattle, or fire, or

killing my father, or anything else.

I'll be here long after Bean and

his gang of murderers are gone.

Sure you will, and me, too.

I don't want you.

I don't want any of Roy  
Bean's friends around.  
Wade Harper was right. I didn't  
believe it then, but I do now.  
You knew we were going to be burned out.  
That's why you herded all the cattle out,  
so they wouldn't be burned with our crops.  
No, I don't need your help. Not now.  
I can do what I have to do alone.  
I'll be back.

Why, Cole!

By gobs, man, I'm glad to see you.

Why, I never wanted to see a  
man so much before in my life.

- What for?

- What for?

Don't you know what for?

She's coming to Fort Davis.

- Lily Langtry's coming to Fort Davis.

- Langtry?

Langtry, yeah, and you and me  
are going over there together.  
You're going to introduce me to  
her. By gobs, I'm going to meet her.

- I just can't believe it.

- I want to talk to you, Judge.

Yeah, all right. And look what  
I got to tell her when I see her.

Langtry, that's the name of this  
town, a great town after a great woman.

- I said I wanted to talk to you, Judge.

- Sure.

Cole, it's a great day.

I tell you, it's the greatest  
day in the history of Texas.

- Some fire, huh?

- Yeah, wasn't it, though?

- Yeah, too bad.

- Yeah.

Yep.

- I wonder who was behind it?

- Oh, a fire don't need nothing behind it.

Fire has a way of moving  
on its own. Here's how.

Before I drink with you, Judge, I want to know you had nothing to do with it. Me? Why, how can you say a thing like that? Didn't I round up all them cattle for you? Wasn't I right here in the saloon when the fire broke out? Didn't...

Well, I was, and what's more, I ain't got no idea who done it. Now, drink up.

- Don't you believe me?

- No.

Now, listen, son, I told you how it was, and I don't want you calling me no liar. Now, drink hearty.

Will you swear by that?

There ain't no reason I should, but I'm willing.

All right, I swear by my sword there I had nothing to do with it.

I swear by the revised statutes.

By gobs, if there was a Bible in town I'd... Where's that lock of hair?

- Right here with me.

- Let me see it.

Swear on that?

All right, it was me. I burned their houses and crops.

- I run them varmints out.

- Nice going.

And if you think...

If you think I'm sorry, you're crazy.

I'm proud and glad I rid the country of them.

It was either them or us, and now

the range grass will grow back,

and some day, the cattlemen

will put up a statue of me

out there on the street,

and they'll write on it,

"Judge Roy Bean, he give us back the land. "

You get warrants in Fort Davis, don't you?

Yeah, that's where they get them,

but they don't know how to spell my name.

- It's been tried before.

- I'll get one.

This time, you're going to get  
what's coming to you, Judge.

Cole!

You and me's friends. I done what I  
had to, and you think it was wrong.

But if it was my own son  
come over here with a warrant,  
he'd have to be first on the draw.

I aim to be, unless I get it in  
the back before I get out of here.

So long, Cole.

Make out a warrant against Roy Bean.

Raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear to carry  
out the duties of deputy sheriff  
in Jeff Davis County in the state of Texas?

Yep.

Thanks, Sheriff.

How much are tickets?

\$2 apiece, all over the house.

First come, first served.

- How many seats in the house?

- Four hundred.

- I'll take them.

- How many?

All of them.

Much obliged.

Let me have two tickets.

If I was you, Judge, I wouldn't set  
foot in Fort Davis to see Adam and Eve.

Me, either.

A deputy's star  
makes the finest kind of a target.

How you know you're not heading into a trap?

Sure looking for trouble,  
going over to Fort Davis.

Taking an awful chance, Judge.

Them hombres just waiting down there for you.

Why, you pack of yellow  
bellies, give me them tickets.

You mean, you're going to Fort Davis alone?

Not by a jugful, I ain't.

You're all going with me as a guard of honor,

right up to the opera house,  
but I'm going in alone.  
I don't want nobody in there with me no how.  
I ain't sharing the Jersey Lily with no one.  
Now, come on, we got a  
day's ride ahead of us.  
I'm going to dress, and you  
fellows proud yourselves up a bit.  
Chickenfoot, my sword.  
I ain't wore this uniform since Chickamauga,  
but it still fits right smart.  
Bean and his men are  
coming! Get off the street!  
Bean and his men are coming!  
Bean's coming! Bean's coming!  
Hey, look!  
They must have heard I was coming.  
All right, boys, take your places.  
Hey, this is the stage entrance.  
Now, remember, I want strict  
privacy all during the show.  
You'll get it.  
Third seat in.  
- Pardon, sir, your seat is back here.  
- No, it ain't. It's right here.  
Say, when does Miss Langtry go on the play?  
Right after the curtain.  
She's about to go up now, sir.  
- Go up?  
- The curtain, sir.  
Now?  
Yes, now.  
Now.  
Don't make a move, Judge.  
I'm coming down to get you.  
Come shooting.  
- The war's on.  
- Yeah.  
Wish I was in there to see that show.  
- I bet the judge is having a good time.  
- Yeah.  
Hey!  
Let's you and me stand up and shoot it out.  
That suits me, Judge.

Put up your gun. We'll draw.

All right.

- Ready?

- Yeah.

Now, you see what you done?

You stopped the show.

I was going to see Lily.

Now it's too late.

No, it isn't, Judge.

She's back there now, waiting to see you.

What?

She knows all about you,

Judge. She wants to meet you.

She told me so herself.

Come on, let's go back and see her.

My hat.

Where's Miss Langtry?

Put me down. I can walk.

Put me down, I tell you. That's my ruling.

Miss Langtry, I'd like to present

an old admirer. Judge Roy Bean.

I'm pleased to meet you.

Cole, come here quick!

Look!

See, what did I tell

you? They're coming back.

Wagons by the score.

It's the promised land.

Jane Ellen,

someday, Texas is going to be

the biggest and the finest...