How far is Col. Rogers from this ranch?
About 30 miles southwest.

Does somebody claim Pancho Villa might actually be there?
All we know is two or three hundred Mexicans...
...under two of Villa's generals...
...attacked the town of Carrizal yesterday.

Defeated the Mexican regulars and then moved on to this ranch.

It's owned by an American woman.
If all she's got is a bullet through the brain, she's luckier than most.
- Can't get through yet? - No, sir!

Keep trying.
- Not much of a story. - Not much of a war.

Wind, sand, silence.

We're chasing one man, Pancho Villa...
...over some of the wildest country on earth.

You can me quote as saying that:
The punitive expedition U.S. Army...
...has him completely surrounded. On one side.

Gentlemen, this is Major Thorn. Mr. Kinglake, "New York World..."
...Mr. Dyson, "The Sun." - Major.

The major has been designated as awards officer by General Pershing.

Weren't you the executive officer of the 28th Calvary...
...under Colonel Rogers? - That's right, sir.

Then you were with Rogers when Villa crossed the New Mexico border...
...and attacked the town of Columbus.

- Got a field officer, I don't understand... - Major.

Your recommendation for the Medal of Honor...
...for this sergeant... - Boyce, sir. Sgt. Boyce.

Been approved by the War Department.

It came over the wire several hours ago.
- You can tell him he's officially a hero. - Boyce is dead.

He was killed yesterday in the fight at Guerrero.
That's hard news. I'm sorry.

I have another one with me. A boy named Hetherington.

What he did was worth the medal. I intend to recommend him for it.

- Does he know? - Not yet.

Colonel, I would like to keep him out of action and alive.

Until the medal is approved. That's the least we can do.

Permission to send him back to base at Cordura until we know?
- Granted. - Made contact with Col. Rogers, sir.

His scouts confirm our reports.

Wants permission to force march immediately and attack on sight.
Old Rogers wants a fight. Wants it badly.
Tell him to go ahead.
I can start early and join up with him...
...at the base of the mountain at Cusihuiriachic.
All right, Tom.
Does this order apply to anyone I may want to recommend for the citation?
- Yes, it does. - Thank you, sir.
- Colonel? - Yes?
Don't you think it's a little unusual, placing all this stress on awards?
I mean, appointing an officer of field grade as awards officer...
...and allowing him to take men out of action.
- Or is this Army custom? - There are good reasons.
- Would you care to mention them? - All right. Let me read you something.

"Paris, April 17, 1916.
The German bombardment of Verdun continued for the 43rd day.
Despite terrible punishment, the French army still holds firm."

Gentlemen, our country is gonna need an army soon. A big one.
With spirit to go with it.
In the meantime, it will have some live heroes to think about.
Colonel, I'd like to do a story on Major Thorn.
- The answer is no. - Why not?
He's a sort of Homer on horseback. Galloping around the country...
...looking for bravery in battles.
- Make a wonderful story. - I said, no.
You want to go to General Pershing, you'll get the same answer.
Wind, sand and silence.
And censorship.
Now, from the top of the mountain to the hacienda. How far?
Maybe a mile, "mas o menos."
Ask how many of Villa's men passed through yesterday.
One says 100, maybe 200. The other says maybe 400.
They are quartered here in the ranch at Ojos Azules.
Now, this Geary woman who owns the ranch...
What can she do?
- These bandits take what they want or... - She's giving aid to the enemy.
- She takes no sides, Seor Colonel... - No sides? Why, she's an American.
Gentlemen, you've heard what's going on in France.
Well, you've seen signs of it here. Planes, trucks.
The day of the soldier on horse is over, they say.
This may be the last cavalry campaign ever fought.
Well, if it is, we're gonna show them something they'll never forget.
At daybreak, I'm going to line this entire regiment up...
...in single line abreast.
And we're going to have a last, classic cavalry charge.
- I wish we had our sabres, sir. - Son, I wish we had them too.
Sir, did you say regiment in line, single line abreast?
You bet I said it.
I beg your pardon. We've never seen regiment in line. Even on parade.
Then this is your lucky day because you're gonna see it now.
Now, gentlemen, let's all pray God in his goodness will give us this battle.
We'll leave here at 3:00.
That should bring us to the top of the mountain by dawn.
That's all, gentlemen. Get some sleep.
Yes, Tom?
These are my orders from Col. DeRose.
- Is he one of your heroes? - Yes, sir.
You understand, Tom, that you too are to take no part in this action.
I understand, sir.
Can't you sleep, son?
Sure is cold. Gets in your bones nights and stays there all day.
I would like to read you something.
"Andrew L. Hetherington, Private.
L Troop, 6th Calvary, for conspicuous gallantry...
...at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.
On 14 of April, 1916, at Guerrero."
I'm recommending you for the Congressional Medal of Honor.
This is the highest honour our country can give a soldier.
I'm sending it to Washington. Meanwhile, you'll be sent to Cordura.
Stay there until we get the telegraph from the War Department approving it.
That is why you won't fight tomorrow.
Hetherington, I'd like to ask you a personal question.
I'd appreciate your answering.
What you did at Guerrero was a very brave thing.
What made you do it?
Try to remember. It's very important to me.
Try to remember how it was. What you felt. What you thought.
- Major. - Yes?
I'm sorry I got to crying. I couldn't help it.
I did remember how it was, but I didn't wanna say.
The honest truth is that at Guerrero, the Lord took hold of me.
- The Lord? - You see, major, I'd lost the faith.
Faith in what?
My father's church, Christ Resurrected.
- Was he a preacher? - Evangelist.
We were always travelling. At meetings...
...he'd play trombone, my mother the organ. I recited the Bible.
Would you believe by the time I was 8, | I knew the whole Bible by heart. 
Try me. Any verse, any chapter. 
- I believe you, son. | - I should know it. 
He beat it into me. 
I lost the faith and ran away. 
But at Guerrero, sir, I found it again. 
The Lord took hold of me again. | I swear he did. 
I'm sure glad I won't | have to fight tomorrow. 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Line the troops in column of fours! 
Guidons out! 
Line of troops in column of twos! 
Line of troopers boot to boot! 
Companies, halt! 
Left troops, envelop the ranch! 
Don't fire your pistols | until the charge strikes. 
Officers post! 
Seor Arreaga? 
Arreaga! 
- Draw pistols! | - Draw pistols! 
- Trot, ho! | - Trot, ho! 
- Charge! | - Charge! 
This way! Take cover, this way! 
What are we gonna do now, | lieutenant? 
- We can't just sit here, sir. | - Cover me! 
Okay, boys, I'm shooting one, | two, three, four bandoleers. 
And a rifle. 
- Here, the last two bandoleers. | - Shoot. You're faded. 
Come on, dice now. | You be true to Trubee, dice! 
Hey, natural! 
Come on, dice. | Right back, little Phoebe. Right back! 
Tom. 
I've been praying, Tom, and thanking | God for giving me a victory. 
A charge. Think of it, Tom. 
Maybe the last one for the old cavalry. 
How I wish your father | were alive to see it. 
Why, this'll make a whole issue | of the "Cavalry Journal," Tom. 
They'll cheer it on the floor | of Congress. 
Do you realize that I may have my | general's star before the week's out?
Thirty-nine years I've waited for today. | I'm 63, you know.
They'll put me out | to grass in August...
...but God in his goodness has allowed | me to gather the fruits of my years.
Tom...
...I hope you'll take what I have | to say in the proper spirit.
But Congress is apt to be | in a very generous mood...
...and if they just happen to have | a citation of mine to act on...
...well, a victory, a retiring commander, | my star would be pretty well assured.
- I don't follow you, sir. | - I led the charge myself, Tom.
But you were commanding. | Leading the charge is line of duty.
At my age?
At my age, most men have | their second in command do it.
But not me. | I led the charge myself, Tom.
But there's nothing about age | or rank in the citation, sir.
- You won't do it? | - I can't, sir.
Sir, I'm recommending | four men from this regiment.

They are:

...Cpl. Milo Trubee and | Pvt. Wilbur Renziehausen.
Four citations.
And you won't even consider | the possibility of mine?
- I didn't think you'd ask me, sir. | - Why not?
I've done as humanly much for you | as one man can do for another.
More than an officer should. Only you | and DeRose and I know how much.
Heaven help you, Tom, if anyone | else ever puts two and two together.
You have the authorization | from Colonel DeRose.
I request that an officer | be detailed to take those men...
...to the rail headed to Cordura. | - Take them yourself!
I can't operate | as awards officer that way.
There may be a fight at Peloncillos.
Take them! They're yours, aren't they?
And you can take | this Geary woman too!
She's under guard. Take her back, | under arrest on my charges:
Aid and comfort to the enemy. | Treason.
Any other damn thing in the book, but | you take her with you! That's an order!
- Yes, sir. | - You're not dismissed, major!
You are an awards officer | because I recommended you for it.
I could have recommended | a court-martial for you.
For cowardice in the face | of the enemy.
I could give you an alternative.
Only one, and you'd crawl | to Washington with my citation.
If I had it to do again, Tom...
...I never would.
You have to live with yourself, yes.
But I have to live with what I did for you.
Well, it's justice, I suppose.
What I saved you, I cost myself.
But don't misunderstand me. I didn't do it for your sake...
...but for your father's.
- Are you in charge? - Yes, I'm Major Thorn.
I have orders to take you to Cordura. It's about a two-day ride.
It will make it a lot easier on everybody and yourself...
...if you give me your word of honour not to try to escape.
Well, what's your decision?
You're the jailer. You decide.
This woman is to be watched at all times.
Conversation will be kept to a minimum.
- Take over. - All right, quickly now!
- Guard detail, mount. - This is not a guard detail, lieutenant.
"The snake's in the mountains" "The eels in the sea"
"Was a redheaded woman"
"Made a wreck out of me"
"And it looks like" "I'm never gonna cease"
"My wanderin'"
"If the whiskey don't get you" "Then a woman must"
"I'd climb me a mountain" "Sail me a sea"
"Till a redheaded wom..."
What are the charges against me?
He threw the book at you.
Specifically.
Loss of Nationality Act: Any American knowingly aiding...
...the armed forces of a foreign country can be deprived of their citizenship.
Major, why don't you let me go?
Admit that my arrest was ordered by an excited old man...
...who will have forgotten me in a week.
Who may not have the authority to arrest a citizen in the first place.
- Maybe. - Maybe?
The charges against me would never hold up.
"Aid and comfort to the enemy."
But you did quarter them knowing the American Cavalry...
...was operating in this area.
For the last five years, if you lived in this country...
...you quartered anybody who came along.
Or they quartered themselves. I've let them all in...
...and rationed them, and thanked God | when they were gone.
And another point, | if there is a Loss of Nationality Act...
...it must apply only in wartime.
- We're not in war with Mexico, are we? | - No.
So Pancho Villa's men | are not the armed forces...
...of another country, are they? | - Not exactly.
Then don't you have to admit, | anyone would have a difficult time...
...taking my citizenship | on grounds like these?
I guess they would.
Then why don't you let me go | and be rid of me?
Halt.
I give you my word, | I won't go back to my ranch...
...until your Colonel Rogers | has cleared out.
Lady, you're definitely much | too logical for a woman.
And now I suggest | we get back into formation.
Also, Ms. Geary, | you'll stay away from the men.
Not much in the line of rations, major.
Your cinch is too tight.
Hardtack and no smokes.
We won't be here long | enough for a fire, sergeant.
Chawk and Trubee are really worked | up about her smoking in front of them.
There's nothing I can | do about it, lieutenant.
I wish they had their tobacco rations. | They've been through a lot.
Excuse me, sir.
I haven't had a chance | to ask you yet...
...what you thought of the fight.
I mean, what was your professional | opinion? As an observer.
Well, I expect we'll get a big | write-up in the "Cavalry Journal."
But as a military operation, conceived | and carried out, it was a farce.
We all charged in there like | a whole gang of Don Quixotes.
- But we routed them. | - Of course.
But isn't it cavalry tradition to take | chances, to gamble against the odds?
That may be.
No officer ever takes | a command in the battle...
...with only hearsay knowledge | of the terrain and enemy positions.
Not even one still wet behind the ears.
Nevertheless, all the objectives | were taken.
Yes, because the Mexicans | didn't have rapid-fire weapons.
And because a few men, like you, | took the initiative at the right time.
Like myself?
Sir, you still haven't told me | exactly what kind of detail this is.
I will, in time.
Have the men prepare to march.
All right, prepare to march.
Stow it with your stuff.
Major, you know how long we ain't had no smokes?
I know.
Well, you tell her that we don't like it.
You tell her that she taunts us much more...
...someone will light them cigarettes and stuff them down her throat.
Sergeant, you carry a tune very well.
Do you know any Mexican songs?
Mount up.
Major.
What will happen to me after we get to Cordura?
I turn you over to the provost marshal. After that...
I haven't crossed the border in eight years, not since my father died.
I'll be frank with you.
I had a lot of bad publicity before I came down here and my family did. Most of it deserved.
Even though the case against me falls of its own weight...
...the newspapers will hang me.
I don't know what a major's pay amounts to, but I doubt if it's enough.
Would you be interested in $1000?
That wasn't a good idea.
I promised myself I wouldn't beg...
...but I am.
I'll stay with you as long as you want me to.
As long as I know you'll let me go...
...before we get back to the States.
- No. - Why not?
Because I wouldn't like the company I'd be in.
You stupid, military...
Lieutenant!
Who gave you orders to fire?
She's trying to escape. She's a military prisoner, major.
Or ain't she?
"My sister, she works in a laundry"
"My father keeps guzzling the gin"
"My mother, she takes in the washing"
"Oh, Lord, how the money rolls in"
They've been asking me questions, sir.
- Like what? - Like what I was doing here.
- What did you tell them? - I didn't tell them anything.
They took it mighty odd, though.
Looking at me like the meeting people did when I used to recite...
...like they couldn't be comfortable | with me around.
Send Renziehausen over.
The major wants to see you.
Your full name is | Wilbur James Renziehausen?
Yes, sir.
| - Where are you from? | - A farm near Alice, Wisconsin.
Why did you join the Army?
Looking for adventure.
Came out West to be a cowboy, | prospect for gold...
...fight Indians, anything.
The only trouble was | I couldn't ride or rope...
...the gold was all gone...
...now every Indian I met | was selling blankets or beads...
...but I did see the cavalry drill | at Fort Sam, so I joined right up.
Before you vaulted over the gate, | wasn't there another man...
...from Company C killed | trying the same thing?
Yes, sir, that was Corporal Brown.
You saw that happen, | but you went over anyway.
What made you do it?
- Try to remember. | - Well, major, I can't.
We had to get through the gate, | and somebody had to open it.
I was the nearest.
| - And you weren't afraid? | - No, sir.
No, sir. I wasn't afraid. Not me.
I wasn't afraid during the whole fight. | Honest, major.
Are you sure?
Then how do you explain this?
Your chin strap | is bitten clean through.
You must have been very | hungry or very scared.
There's no harm to admit it.
Everyone's that way in battle.
Still, you went over the gate.
Can't you tell me why? | Try to remember.
That'll be all, Renziehausen.
Yes, sir.
Yes, lieutenant?
Sir, as an officer...
...I have a right to know | the purpose of this detail.
I think you have too.
You're a very brave man, lieutenant.
You know my assignment | on this campaign?
I've heard about it.
I'm recommending you | for the Medal of Honor.
The Medal of Honor?
I think you should know that I'm recommending all the others. That's the purpose of this detail... to return to base until Congress approves the medal for all of you. All of us? You mean four men in one fight? Why, that's impossible. Well, that's for me to decide. The Medal of Honor. It must seem strange... to have the highest honour so early. Whatever you do in combat for the rest of your life will be an anticlimax. Yes, sir. Yes, sir, it will. Lieutenant... only you and Hetherington know about this. I want you to keep it quiet. I didn't tell you before, lieutenant... because I want true answers from all of you. If you tell a man he's a hero, then he thinks of himself as one... and then you've lost it. You've lost the true reason. Do you understand, lieutenant? I have a chance here... a chance that few men have ever had... to put my hand on the bare heart of heroism... to hear answers to one of the great questions... man has ever asked about himself. What is courage? - What is it that...? - Give me that bottle back. Give it back! Hand back that bottle, sergeant. What's wrong with me and the boys having a little of this? Spoils of war. If she tries to escape... you have my permission to do anything to stop her. Beyond that, what she has or does is none of our business. So hand it over. Whose side are you on, major? Me and the boys ain't had a drink or a smoke... since we crossed the border five weeks ago. Just whose side are you on anyway? I'm commanding this detail... and I intend to take her to base according to my orders. If all of you knew why you were detached from regiment... and what's gonna happen, you'd stop acting like squaws...
...and soldier the rest of the way.
Now, hand back that bottle, sergeant.
This may be the most unusual detail...
...the Army has ever assembled | for any purpose.
I've already told Lt. Fowler | and Pvt. Hetherington...
...I'm recommending all of you | for the Medal of Honor.
Now you all know.
Between here and Cordura | I will talk to each one of you...
...and after that I'll write the citations.
It is not only my duty to write | the citations for you...
...I consider it a high privilege.
This medal means, | among other things...
...that for a few minutes Hetherington | at Guerrero and the rest of you...
...at the ranch at Ojos Azules | did more than duty required.
For a few minutes | you acted and lived...
...yes, you lived beyond | what is normally understood...
...to be the limit of human conduct.
That'll be all.
Lieutenant, have the men clean | their weapons before they turn in.
Palomito?
Palomito.
Excuse me, Major Thorn. | Not very ladylike, I know.
Not ladylike.
And a senator's daughter | should be ladylike.
Ever hear of my father?
A United States senator.
Very important man.
Very rich man.
Convicted of selling Indian lands...
...in 1908.
Big scandal.
Big man. Big scandal.
You're not making notes | in your book, major.
No citation for me?
I've lived beyond the limits | of human conduct.
Haven't I, Palomito?
Been married three times.
My last husband shot a man | who was in love with me.
Happened in a hotel room | in Norfolk, Virginia.
Big scandal. Big man's daughter.
Big scandal.
They gave him custody | of my two children.
Now the bird is my child.
- And the bottle. | - And the bottle.
Palomito.
Mustn't wake his children.
Heroes.
Heroes.
Mustn't wake his children.
His sleeping...
...snoring...
...dirty...
...lecherous children.
All right, who did this?
Of all the stupid, senseless acts of pure savagery.
Speak up, who did it?
Speak up!
Lieutenant, have the men get ready to pull out.
- They haven't had their breakfast, sir. - They'll go without it.
There'll be no breaks today. Push them hard.
Detail, halt.
I got so much pain, major. Sir, I can't ride.
I got a boil.
I don't want to complain, but...
All right, get off your horse.
- I'll take a look. - Detail, dismount.
Bring those horses up and form a screen between us and the woman.
Drop your breeches.
Hetherington, watch the woman.
He sure looks the same all over, don't he, major.
Sergeant, get some wood and start a small fire.
You know, I haven't seen anything like that since we left Columbus.
I'd like to have your tequila bottle. I need to draw a boil.
Who killed my bird, major? Chawk or Trubee?
I don't know.
I wouldn't give them my sweat if they were dying of thirst.
- The boil is badly infected. - The answer is no.
If you don't give me the bottle, I'll have to take it.
You gonna draw it, major?
It'll be very painful.
It'll hurt like sin.
Turn him over on his stomach and keep his breeches down.
I'd like a word with you, sir.
I've been deliberating since last night...
...on the total effect of the Medal of Honor upon my career.
And I'm very grateful to you, sir, but I've decided...
...to stand on my privileges as an officer...
...by requesting my case be removed from consideration.
Why?
Well, there's an old service maxim, sir...
...that I'm sure you're well aware of.
Career officers should make themselves as inconspicuous...
...as possible, particularly junior officers.
- I wasn't aware of it. - Well, it's true, sir.
Too outstanding an exploit too early in one's career would make one...
...a marked man, a sure victim of the jealousy of one's superiors.
Request refused.
May I know why, sir?
I don't know of any precedent that allows a man to refuse a decoration.
I grant that, major, but between officers...
...and gentlemen, could there not be an arrangement by which the citation...
...my citation would never reach channels?
Absolutely not.
- But, sir... - Request refused.
Now lie still, hero. This ain't gonna hurt a bit.
Bandage him up, lieutenant.
I brought your tequila back.
That didn't hurt a bit.
I'm hit!
My ear, my ear. They shot off my ear!
You led us in here, major. Do you think you can lead us out?
- When are we pulling out, sir? - I don't know.
Well, in my opinion, the best time would be around midnight.
We could walk our horses to the mouth of the canyon...
...mount on signal, pour it on and ride through.
In the best tradition of the cavalry.
We have darkness and the element of surprise in our favour.
- I don't see any other choice. - Well, I do.
- Yes? - Waiting.
Waiting to see what they propose to do.
We can't wait. We'll soon run out of food.
We'll eat horse.
We're down to one-half canteens of water.
It might rain.
And if they attack?
I think we can fight them off.
They won't attack.
All he has to do is wait until you run out of food and water.
And then?
What'll they do to you?
Nothing. He was my guest, remember?
Why did I have to be the one?
At the ranch they were shooting at me, | I didn't even get a scratch.
Major, I gotta have a look at myself.
Lady. Lady, have you got a mirror?
I look pretty awful, don't I?
Now, that's all right, boy.
Sergeant of mine in the Philippines | once lost an ear.
When he got back to the States, | they made him a rubber one...
...and it looked so lifelike | you couldn't tell the difference.
Besides, people never notice.
Yes, they will.
Lady. Lady, would you look at a fella | who had his ear shot off?
Of course I would.
All they'll notice is what's | around your neck.
- Did you ever see the Medal of Honor? | - No, sir.
It's the most beautiful decoration of all, | as it should be.
I'd trade an ear for one any time. | Two, in fact.
Excuse me, sir, | but I'd rather have the ear.
Relieve Hetherington.
- When are we pulling out, major? | - I've meant to ask you, sergeant...
...you been feeling up | to snuff lately?
How come we ain't pulling out | of here?
I have a few questions for you, | sergeant.
Just one I'm asking you, major.
When you started | for the roof of the ranch...
...on your own hook, | were you thinking of the troop?
Did you see they were in trouble | and feel you had to do something?
I figured I'd make that roof | and kill me a couple.
And you'll get the Medal of Honor | for that.
Have you thought about the medal, | sergeant? What it means?
Sure. I can use the extra | 2 bucks a month.
- When's that start, major? | - As soon as Congress approves it.
I guess we're finished, sergeant.
You've been asking me plenty and | writing it down in that book of yours.
I ask you something | and you don't answer. Why?
I said we're finished, sergeant.
- Major? | - What is it you want?
I'm a pretty sick man, major.
No matter what the medics say. | Short-winded. One leg is stiff.
Rheumatism.
- Yes? | - I've been in the cavalry a long time.
I'd retire, but half a corporal's pay | ain't enough. You know that.
- What is it you want? | - Sir, when we get to base...
...I'd think it mighty kind of you | to transfer me to the quartermaster.
Maybe driving one of them trucks.  
When a man's put in a long stretch | of faithful duty...
...he's entitled to consideration.
I'm a little too old for combat, major.  
Let the young fight, | and save them boys...
...who've already served | their country.
- Take you out of combat? | - Yeah.
How can you tell me | you're too old and feeble to fight...
...when you fought as you did at Ojos? | Tell me that.
Listen to me, Trubee...
...I'll think it over.
But you have to tell me | what made you charge that corral.
I want to know what you felt | and what you thought...
...before you left the troop | and started out alone.
I don't know, major. I don't know.
Try to remember, Trubee.
A and D troops were pinned down | by crossfire.
Somebody had to get to that corral...
...and cause enough damage | so the troops could get through.
Yes, I seen them Mexicans there.
So you lit out on your own to save | the men of those troops.
- Isn't that right? | - Yes, sir.
You knew you might not make it, | but you had to try.
It was a... | It was a conscious act of self-sacrifice.
- Isn't that right? | - Yes, sir, major.
You put that in writing | and I'll swear to it.
- You'll swear to it? | - Indeed I will, major. Indeed I will.
You lied, damn you.
If there's one piece of truth | in your insect soul, I want it.
You lied, didn't you? | It isn't true, is it?
If you say so, it is. | If you say it ain't, it ain't.
I know my place. | I've been busted three times.
When an officer puts words | in my mouth, I let him.
But I don't see I give you proper | cause to lay hands on me.
- Have I, sarge? | - You're on guard.
I'm at my position, major. | I'm watching.
And listening for my answer.
- When you plan to take us out of here? | - That is my business.
It's my business too. The lieutenant | tells me that you aim to keep us here.
The lieutenant had no right.
- Right or wrong, you want my advice? | - I don't.
I don't need tactics | from enlisted personnel.
I may take you out, I may not. In either | case it'll be my decision, not
If you don't take us out, maybe I will.
Not while I'm alive to give orders.
It's daybreak, sir. It's been quiet.
Major, this is my last cigarette...
...so I'm gonna offer you a safe way out.
He's not really after us.
Did you notice yesterday some of their horses were being ridden double?
- That's what he wants. - Horses?
He could have a little fun by tying you all down...
...riding back and forth over you until you all die.
But at this point he has to be practical.
So my hunch is he wants the horses, not us.
If I were you, I'd let him have them...
...on the chance he may call off the siege.
I'm doing you no favour. I just happen to be fond of my own skin.
So think it over, major.
But not for long.
And now have the men untie the horses and turn them loose.
It's as unthinkable as surrendering.
Another day without water, and they won't be worth keeping.
We'll have to walk it to base either way.
We can manage a two-day walk.
- Why not give them our weapons too? - Don't be a fool.
It's a gamble, I admit.
If we lose, and they don't pull out, we'll be no worse off than we are now.
I'm willing to gamble to save our skins.
For the U.S. Cavalry to give up its horses to the enemy is cowardice.
And I protest it formally.
I want you men to remember that for the record.
That as an officer I protested any such act.
Give your orders.
Lead them out and turn them loose.
If this don't work, this is the last order you're ever going to give.
Move.
- How many miles you figure to base? - Forty, more or less.
- How many miles you figure to base? - Forty, more or less.
If my calculations are right...
...we ought to hit the Tex-Mex railroad tomorrow afternoon...
...then follow it right on into base.
- We gotta take her with us, huh? - Yes.
Feed her out of our grub?
I don't understand Spanish, but I understand enough to know...
...that she was yelling to Arreaga to kill us.
We have no choice. She's a military prisoner.
I want to say something to all of you about my decision today.
If we had been on scout duty, or supply or courier...
...I would have taken you out of here.
Most of us would have made it. But you five have...
...had more than your share of luck lately.
Congressional Medals of Honor are usually awarded to the dead.
My duty was to get you to base...
...without losing one of you to the law of averages.
You've heard about the war in Europe.
And just as sure as I'm kneeling here our country will be in it soon.
We'll need heroes to look up to.
To show us how to behave in battle. And you will be our example.
You'll probably be sent home on furlough...
...your pictures will be in the papers. People will point you out in the streets.
But no matter what you do from now on...
...you can never escape your new selves.
That is why I had to see that you were spared today.
- Coffee, major? - Thank you.
- Begging the major's pardon. - At ease. Just a minute.
- Well, Trubee? - That was a right moving speech.
What is it you want?
No grudge about you laying hands on me.
I don't carry a mean bone in my body.
But an ordinary soldier has to look out for himself...
...or he'll be took advantage of.
Major, I know something you may not figure I know.
And it puts me a leg up on you.
- Columbus? - That's the short of it.
But I don't plan to make a stink unless I have to.
There are two things I'm after. And I don't see as you can turn me down.

One:

Two:
You turn her over to me, and after I get through she won't be so damn fancy.
You let me put the bit to her.
- She'd have given up U.S. Soldiers. - That's enough!
Don't you rare up to me, major.
You're lucky I kept my mouth shut this far.
Now, you give me the woman instead of the medal.
You give me her or I'll raise such hell about Columbus...
you'll be the one in the stockade, not old Milo.

Major, major.
- Major, I'm so sick. - Better get some blankets.
I've been feeling poorly all day, sir.
But the run after that woman brought the weakness on.
- I feel sick. Weak. - You should have told me, son.
I didn't think I ought with such a long hike ahead, sir.
I've never been so bad off before.
I think it's typhoid.
The fever will go up and down for a day. If it breaks, he'll pull through.
- What'll take the fever down? - Quinine, rubbing alcohol and water.
Rubbing alcohol. You have some tequila...
...in your saddlebags. Bring it over.
Have the men cut some wood and build a litter. We've got to move.
Forty miles? We can't carry anybody 40 miles. The rest ain't up to make it.
We'll all make it. Or none of us will.
Just as easy to leave two behind as one.
I had one for the road.

Halt!
Renziehausen. We change around. Chawk.
Will he pull through?
I don't know. He has some kind of typhoid.
- You told Chawk about 40 miles. - Give or take a few.
- Did you ever think he might be right? - About what?
About the rest of us not making it unless we travel light.
Don't let me hear that again.
For the Lord thy God bringeth to a new land...
...a land of brooks, of water, of fountains and depths.
Will you shut up? You nose-wiping, holy-rolling preacher.
The tequila is almost gone.
I don't think he can stand another day like this.
- How much quinine have you left? - Ten.

We ought to try tomorrow to put him on it before the fever starts up.
I gotta have some water.
I gotta have some water, major.
Just one capful, no more.
That's enough.
I said you had enough!
Get some rest.
Let her up.
If you try that again, I'll prefer charges the day we get to base.
And what day might that be, major?
You don't know where | that railroad is anymore...
...than you know which end is up.
Prefer charges, huh? | I'll do the preferring.
You can't do nothing to nobody. | Tell the boys, major.
Tell them where they found them oak | leaves at Columbus. In a ditch, boys.
That's where he was while | we were fighting.
The dirty yellow-guts hid out | in a ditch!
If he'd been an ordinary soldier | like us, he'd be in Leavenworth.
The high mucky-muck is telling us | we're heroes, boys.
And trying to kill the lot of us.
I say blow him full of holes, | and let's find our own way home.
He won't shoot. He's a yellow-guts. | A yellow-guts!
Lieutenant, take their guns.
Mister, take their guns.
His too.
− Me, major, me? | − His too.
Now throw them away | as far as you can.
Now move.
You gonna get us to base, major?
We'll stand alternate guard tonight.
As far as I'm concerned, major, | you're on your own.
An officer's duty is to protect his kind, | but only to a point.
Covering up for cowardice | is beyond it.
Hearing Trubee has made | everything clear to me.
We've only been the means | of repairing...
...the damage done to your pride.
You can't be a hero yourself...
...but you can make as many heroes | as you want.
You're not trying to save | the men now...
...you're trying to keep | your own creations.
In the end we'll all die for your guilt.
If something should happen to you, | it'd be the best thing for all of us.
You need us, we don't need you.
Now, if something does happen...
...I won't participate, | but I won't lift a finger to prevent it.
Here's my gun.
Don't come any farther, sergeant.
I think it's time you and me | had a talk, major.
You wrote up that citation of mine yet?
Why?
What else you got wrote about me | in that book of yours?
You said something, that we'd get | in the papers about those medals.
You might.
- You mean, pictures of us?  
- Probably.
I can't have that. You drove me hard this trip already, but I won't have that.
Maybe you don't know it, but some men go into service to hide out.
A horse, you know, he don't ask no questions.
What are you driving at?
You write me up, and they read it up in Albuqueruque...
...and I'll have a rope around my neck, not no medal.
- What for?  
- Murder.
I got in a fight with a hunky I was working with on the railroad.
The short of it is I'm wanted for murder.
A year ago I was over in Tucson...
...they still had my picture up in the post office.
So it's your medal or my neck.
I'm sorry, Chawk. There's nothing I can do about it.
You mean you'll see me strung up?
No, I mean it's my duty to write your citation.
You gutless jerk, this ain't Columbus. There ain't no ditch you can jump into.
You'd faint before you'd pull that trigger.
Try me.
I got nothing to lose, Thorn.
I gotta kill you.
I need help.
- Tequila.  
- It's finished.
Give me two quinine.
Sleep, boy. Sleep.
How old are your children?
The boy was 5 when they took him away.
The girl a year younger.
Where are they?
I think he's falling asleep.
Don't go.
Have you ever talked to anyone about Columbus?
No.
Do you want to talk to me about it?
Nobody expected Pancho Villa to cross the border.
Most of us were asleep when, suddenly...
...he struck in the middle of the night.
My father was a very brave man. He was killed in action.
In all the years I had been in the Army...
...I'd never seen danger or been in action.
Suddenly there was firing.
I took my pistol and ran outside, then started for Regimental
There was confusion. | There was chaos.
Very few of us knew | what was happening.

Some bullets went through | some leaves...
...of the tree right close to my face.

I was standing next to a culvert | running under a railway...
...and I took cover.

There's a moment in life when you | stop being several things...
...and become one thing.

When I left that ditch, | I became one thing.

A coward.
- What did you think during the fight? | - Nothing.
- And afterward? | - I became two men.

One can't stand living | in the same skin with the other.

Can you explain what you did? | Even to yourself?
I've got no excuse.

One act of cowardice doesn't | make a man a coward forever.
Just as one act of bravery | doesn't make a man a hero forever.

What will happen if we reach Cordura | and Trubee talks?
Oh, it'll spread. Pressure will build up, | and they'll have to wash the dirty linen.
- What will that do to you? | - Dishonourable discharge.

A resignation at least.

Trubee doesn't want the citation.
- He gave you a choice. | - I can't take it.

How long must you go on atoning?
I'm not. What I'm doing is for them. | Not for me.

Otherwise, it has no meaning.
- You still think that they deserve... | - They do. They do.

You're still in that | railroad ditch at Columbus...
...unable, or afraid, to see out of it.

Heroes? Saints living in the desert?

Oh, my God.

They tried to rape me | and blackmail you.

It's a wonder they haven't | shot you already. No, Thorn...
...they're only men. | And damn poor specimens at that.

I have less right than | any man on earth to judge them.
Or to judge yourself, either.

You may be right what you say. | They're human beings.
But they're more than that. | They have one thing in them...

...that is a miracle and a mystery.

It redeems them.

They don't know themselves what it is, | but they have it.

I have to save it.
You really believe this.
If you do, Thorn...
...if you do, you may be worth all of them.
I have to turn in. Another day like this and I'll be a litter case.
And so will you, if you don't spare yourself.

Why don't you let the lieutenant take a turn at standing guard?
I'll do that.

Got an "officers only" sign on her, major?
Now you wouldn't gun me, major.
It'd be a mighty sinful thing to do.

Kill a hero?
You honestly think you can wait me out?

Don't you close your eyes, Thorn.
Don't you even blink.

Water!
Don't drink that! I order you not to drink that!
You'll be sick, all of you. Sick! This water's alkaline.
- We'll find water at the railroad soon. - What railroad, major?
There ain't no railroad. Nothing.
I don't believe you, major. I just don't believe you.
I signed up for the Army to be shut of the railroad.
I'll be a brass monkey, here I am again.

How far is it to base now, major?
I don't know.

What's down the other end?
Chihuahua City.

Why don't we be democratic, major?
They that wants to go south and back to the regiment can.
They that wants to go north and be heroes...
...or get kicked out of the Army can do that.
Let's go.

Trubee, get up.
I ain't carrying him no further! You hear me, major?
He's gonna die anyways.
You can leave him or tote him, but I ain't. I'm finished.
We're all gonna die in this God-forgot country.
And the buzzards will pick us clean.
And they'll say to our skeletons what heroes we was.
Trubee. Get on that litter. That's an order.
You wouldn't let that alkali go through you.
He knows how you feel, Milo. He had it at Columbus.
It wasn't from drinking alkali water.

We're going on. We made the railroad. That's the last lap.
Cordura can be behind any one of those hills.
If we're close to base, why not leave him and send a detail back after him?
Or don't you really know how close?
Make up your mind, Trubee.
On your feet or I'll wing you.
You shoot me and my kids will have no father.
Up.
I gave you an inch. The next time I won't.
- Now get on that litter. - Take him, sarge! Take him.
He won't shoot to kill. Can't you see it?
Might as well get off your tail, Milo.
I plan to take this buzzard any time now.
The first time he turns around or goes down, he's mine.
Sergeant, you worked on the railroad. Do you think this thing'll run?
- If it does we can ride to base. - Only one way to find out.
- Push it on the tracks. - Chawk, you crazy helping him?
Push.
Ladies and gents, this is the Spitball Express.
Heroes ride free.
Ladies at their own risk.
As far as majors go, the end of the line comes a lot sooner than they think.
All aboard!
Take a minute.
Major, I've been meaning to tell you, sir.
I told you a real whopping lie.
I really was scared in that fight. That's why I bit my chin strap through.
I bet I was as scared as you were at Columbus.
Really?
Not quite.
So, major, would you please not put me in for the Medal of Honor?
- Why? - Because I won't go home.
Not looking like this. I'm never gonna go home again in my whole life.
Thorn!
Take off them guns and let's have it out!
Come on, best men take over!
Get back on this car.
You gotta keel over some time.
You gotta close your eyes just once.
Could we have gone too far north and not enough east?
I mean, we could be above base, not below.
I don't think so.
- Then why aren't we there? - I don't know.
If we should be north of it, what's the next town?
I'm not sure. Probably Dublan.
How far?
Fifty miles, maybe.
I can't go on.
We have to do something.
Chawk's the strongest.
Let him follow the railroad to the nearest town.
He can send back help, food and water.
Don't you see what he's doing?
He's trying to kill us one by one.
Making us give up our horses so we can't get to base and talk.
Marching us until we're ready to drop and he's the only one left.
He knows where we are!
Don't you see it?
- You ignorant pigs! - Shut up!
I don't know about water, but we could eat.
Depends on the preacher boy up there.
He might be stringy, but he's been cooking a long time.
I order you to follow that railroad to the nearest town.
Did you hear me?
Go to bed, Georgie.
Me and the major is gonna sit up together tonight.
And in the morning, I give the orders.
Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land...
...that floweth with milk and honey?
- "Land of milk and honey." - To kill us in the wilderness?
Except thou make thyself... A prince over us.
"Prince over us." Amen. Sing out, preacher boy.
- Sing out with some... - Father.
Father?
You've no right to ask a woman to bear this.
I can't go on.
I don't care if he dies. I don't care if they all die.
They can get their medals in hell. That's where they're going.
And as for you, Thorn, you're crazy. Military crazy.
And I hope they kill you and put you out of your misery.
I swear to heaven I do.
"Snakes in the mountains" "Eels in the sea"
I can't remember the rest of that song.
I've known that for years. I can't remember.
Major.
You think it's anything got to do with that smack I got on the head?
Funny, I'm always getting hit | in the same place.
Right on the head.
I remember when I was a kid. | I was just a...
My old man gave me a whipping.
He took the belly band | off some harness and...
Boy, did he give it to me. Wham!
Right on the head, he give it to me.
I remember that, all right.
I remember. | I remember when I paid him back.
Years later, | I paid him back the same way.
Wham! I mean, right across it.
How are you going to stay awake?
Don't know.
Proud of myself. | First time in long time.
And when he comes for you, | you won't shoot him.
- I would. | - Hey, major.
Maybe you know some Mexican song.
- Give me the gun! | - No!
I'll stand watch.
Please try to understand.
Hey, major. Let's hear you sing now.
Come on, give us a song.
Sleep.
I can give you sleep.
I'm ashamed of what I've been | all my life.
My fault, not yours.
My guilt, not yours.
The ranch at Ojos Azules...
...that was my culvert.
The railroad ditch into which I crawled, | just like you did at Columbus.
Trying to...
...shut out a world that frightened me, | that I hated.
Most of all, I guess...
...I hated myself.
Here.
In this are their citations.
If anything happens to me, keep it and | turn it in to the commander at Cordura.
Swear you'll do this for me.
I swear.
Thank you.
You're the bravest man | I've ever known.
Now, that's all right, boy.
I opened my eyes this morning | and I wasn't sick any more.
I knew who you were. I knew everyone.
Major, it's the work of the Lord.
The Lord spared me because I've, I have had true faith in him.
He spared me.
Better get back on the car.
- Hungry. Thirsty. - Feed the boy, major. Feed him.
Give him food. Give him water.
Give him a woman.
My shoes. Where are my shoes?
I...
I threw them away.
Why?
Look, I don't know why.
Well, they were all ripped up. You know, like my ear's all ripped up.
When we get to base, I'm gonna buy you a pair of shoes...
...get me a new ear and we're going on a date together.
No girl's gonna look at you without no ear.
The major said they can make me a new ear out of rubber.
So good nobody'll ever know it. Fastens on with wax.
Do you believe that?
You'll be loving up some doll, she'll yank it right off you.
Let him alone.
You know something, squarehead...
...you ought to join up with some freak show.
I'll finish the job for him.
It's a good thing you're done there, major. I'd have broke his back.
On the handles.
Major.
I just can't make it.
This time it's the truth, I swear it.
I'm too tired.
Get aboard the car.
Renziehausen, on the handles.
All right, walk ahead.
Stay off the handles. I'll do it myself.
Get off! Trubee, get off!
Let go. You'll kill yourself.
Let go!
You'll kill yourself!
You'll kill yourself!
Is he dead?
Not yet.
All right, this is what happened:
Major Thorn surrendered the horses, and we were ambushed again.
Another ambush.
We drove them back but the major was killed by the Mexicans. Is that clear?
Is it?
Be sure it is. Be very sure.
What about her? She's gotta be shut up.
You want to go back to Ojos, don't you?
No need telling you what's in the store for you at base, is there? Is there?
I'm an officer and gentleman. By Act of Congress, officer and gentleman.
So you keep quiet and you can return to Ojos...
Wait a minute, hold it. That black book of his. Where is it?
I forgot.
The citations, I forgot.
- Where are they? - He burned them.
- You're lying. - I'm not. He burned them this morning.
- You're lying! - He said you weren't fit to have them.
- Give them to me. - He burned them.
Now I'll burn them.
- Wait, I want to see that first. - Lieutenant Fowler.
Let me see it!
"For gallantry, risk of life, upon his own decision... and with total disregard for his own life... Lieutenant Fowler, acting in the highest tradition of the service... displayed courage."
"Pinned down by murderous crossfire... this veteran rose to the heights of heroism."
He sure blows a man up awful big, don't he, Chawk?
All right, let's tear them up. Burn them and let's get out of here.
What's he write about you, Chawk?
The same kind of stuff.
He... He's wrote something else here.
It's kind of scribbled.
"All of them, Fowler, Trubee, Chawk, all of them... alike to each other, as I am alike to all of them.
In each of us, there lives a crippled child...
...mostly Chawk."
Crippled child...
"Times when I feel that he, others, not worth citations. Treacherous, vicious...
dishonest. They are also brave... noble.
I've seen them at Ojos. Perhaps, for another moment in their lives...
...they will live again | beyond the limit of human conduct.
That's why must make Cordura...
...prove something else | also lives in men."
He's got something here | he's crossed out.
"Judge not, lest ye be judged."
He crossed it out, | and then he wrote it again.
The rest of it's empty.
We shouldn't have done it. | We shouldn't have.
He pushed us too hard.
Base!
Base! Cordura!
He led us to Cordura.
Cordura.
Stop! Come back!
Chawk! Trubee!
Renziehausen! All of you, stop!
You'll be court-martialed! | You'll hang! You fools!
You fools!