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A Genius, Two Friends, and an Idiot

By Ernesto Gastaldi

God will punish you, Jelly Roll.
You scared the bejesus out of me.
Well, it ain't smart
to live alone, Tom.
You start seeing scary shadows.
Red shadows.
God will fry those savages in hell.
I see them dragging their beasts
and belongings through the valley.
And I think,
"What a waste of the Promised Land."
You see here.
These little flags are us.
All this nothing is them.
- Does it make sense to you?
- It's Indian territory.
Every Friday in the days
of the Spanish conquest
they used to kill 12 savages
in memory of the 12 Holy Apostles.
Those traditions
ought to be kept up.
Hundreds of fine, Christian souls
are waiting for this land.
And willing
to pay good prices for it.
Not everybody's
as good a Christian as you.
Nowadays you need a practical excuse
for killing Indians.
Like Major Cabot.
When he found
all them wells poisoned.
We know, sure, in some way the major
did a bit of poisoning himself.
But he found lots of Indian beads
round those wells, didn't he?
All we need is an excuse.
Why don't we cook one up ourselves?
We get undressed like those savages
and get rid of some white trash loner.
'Fess up, Tom.
You've been chewing the fat
with Major Cabot.

No I ain't. Why?
You're saying
exactly the same he's been saying.
That's because him and me
are practical people.
- Pioneers of the old frontier.
- No.
It's because you're both
made of the same clay.
You both got the evil genius in you.
Good old Cabot.
Tell me, you fellas decided yet
who you're gonna scalp?
Hey, Frank!
Bring the gent a cup of coffee.
"Oh, look at my body."
Stop it, man.
You're hurting the fleas.
Looked like a rooster dance,
didn't it?
You're smart to grease that barrel.
If you want some good advice,
file down the sight too.
- Why's that?
- Why?
Sooner or later, strangers around here
get their guns
shoved up their...
- Don't want to get scratched, do you?
- Thanks.
Thanks? Thanks for what?
It's my name, Joe Thanks.
I'm impressed. I really am.
Hey!
- I know you.
- Do you now?
Yeah. You're the village idiot!
Somebody welcomes me
like that in every town.
You wouldn't talk like that
if I had a gun on me.
I'm looking for a man
who can shoot fast.
How fast?

Not one who shoots first
but if somebody shoots at him
he won't shoot second.
You sound like
a hard fella to please.
But you might give
Doc Foster a try.
Doc, one of these days you're going
to have to get up from this table
and go on out
and see what's going on out there.
Not a thing, never will be.
This town's
one long Sunday afternoon.
Careful, it's very hot.
Last I saw my missus
she was nine months heavy.
For all I know I got a family now.
Let me go home, Doc.
I'm waiting for somebody.
Somebody's already here.
- He ain't somebody.
- Nobody at all.
- Sorry, Doc.
- For what? Keep going.
Two.
One.
- Pass.
- Same here.
- Ten just to keep things going.
- Ten.
Up to 100.
What happens in this game
when a fella's got four cards alike?
What happens is, I'm out.
Same here.
Four aces in the same hand.
Never saw the like
in all my born days.
Even when I cheated.
Give this a try, Doc.
Colt Navy, model '86.
These nice folks
are wanting to see a duel.

- What duel?
- You know how it is in the West.
Two fellas come out of the saloon
and stand opposite each other.
One usually has
his legs spread apart.
Folks in the town get scared,
and edge backward to a safe distance.
Somebody plays a funeral march
on a bugle in the background.
Then nothing.
Not a sound.
Only the whistling wind
from the desert.
Let me tell you the rest.
In a few minutes you'll be one
of the deadest men that ever lived.
- Outside! My time's precious.
- I know. You're waiting for somebody.
Hey. Come on, everyone!
Doc Foster and the big guy
are gonna shoot it out.
They're gonna shoot it out, everyone!
Let's go.
When you're ready, Doc.
- Yours, Doc?
- Stand up. Stop acting like a booby.
Mighty pretty animal.
Don't play the clown.
Nobody takes care of you, huh?
- Poor critter was thirsty.
- Next shot's for you.
You hear me?
Sorry, Doc.
Shoot when you feel like it.
No, Doc. Uh-uh.
Did you like the show?
Good. That makes me happy.
If you'd be so kind.
Whatever you can afford.
Seems fair to me.
Anything you want to give, folks.
For the fastest gun on earth.
- Thanks.

- There you go, folks.
See! Even the wind is on our side.
Watch your head, watch your head.
Thanks. Thank you.
Thanks. Remember, folks.
You've just seen a risky show.
I mean,
that is for Doc Foster.
Whatever you can afford.
I really appreciate it.
Thanks.
Thank you.
- There's people coming!
- For your collaboration.
A cavalry coach!
Free the horses
and take them to the stables.
Give them water.
After resting they'll need fodder.
The Wild West.
We've been expecting young ladies
to work in the boarding house.
- The boys made a mistake.
- Yes, electing you sheriff.
I'm a colonel.
For your information, my man,
we're on our way to Fort Christabel.
Major Cabot might have sent
someone to meet me.
Oh, my darling, oh, my darling
Oh, my darling Clementine...
Hey, Doc. You'd better pick it up.
Doc, why don't you just go home?
You've been lucky, friend.
I've got a job to do.
So have I.
Come in.
She was just a child. You hear me?
Only a child.
- Who?
- My sister!
You raped her, you never waited,
promised to marry her.
- Her?

- Yeah, yeah, yeah!
Let them hear you!
I want you to get yours
in front of everybody.
You ravished my only little sister!
- The man is a maniac!
- You broke her heart!
- He's not a maniac, he's an ass.
- What's it to you?
That beard!
That beard!
That's the key to it all.
What key?
- The key to the perfect plan.
- This ain't none of your business!
Good idea, Doc.
But this ain't none of your business.
- What are you doing?
- Go home.
- Out! Just go.
- Don't do that!
My balls!
Fascinating hand you got.
I never saw such a deep life line.
That's a scar. I disarmed a man once
by grabbing his knife blade.
Life line interrupted.
It's going from bad to worse.
Death's waiting disguised as an Injun.
Don't join Cabot, you'll die.
You're a maniac too.
My friend has
red whiskers like yours.
Fake, but you can't tell.
Let's send him
to reconnoitre in your uniform.
Don't try to go to the fort yourself.
You'll get killed.
Lieutenant!
Men! Men!
Soldiers! Men!
- Carry on, I'm being followed.
- Are you a bandit?
Stop!

You don't look like those ruffians
on the wanted posters.

Do they make you look ugly
to frighten the public?

Well.

They're trying to show
the evil that's inside us.

Stop!

- Kiss me!

- What?

Papa's sending me back to Washington.

I've never kissed an outlaw.

My girlfriends will die of envy.

Kiss me or I'll scream!

Sure.

A madman and a maniac
were in my room.

They both pulled my beard.

I don't want them to escape.

Take them, men!

- There's a man in her bed!

- A man in her bed?

A man in her bed!

- Where?

- Right here.

Hey.

Oh, God.

Oh, God. Save me.

Just this once

and I swear I'll never do it again.

He's over there.

Get out of here, you dogs.

Come on!

Leave me alone.

Get out of here!

My chickens!

My poor little chickens.

Hey, hey, come on now.

Leave me alone!

Oh, my poor chickens.

You a priest or a chicken thief?

Horrible beast.

Go on, get!

You Catholics

keep chickens in church?
- We caught the wrong man.
- Right chicken, though.
Thieves. God will damn you!
He can't. We work for him.
You thieves. Chicken thieves.
Oh, my poor chickens.
Come, my sons.
Let's look for the real one.
- What kind of a place is this?
- A place of worship. Come on.
Climb aboard, kids. Get going.
Come on.
They're all beautiful girls.
As you can see.
- Where you going, friend?
- To see the madam.
Wait here and behave yourself.
- Mike, how you doing?
- Get a move on.
- Hey.
- You'll miss your connection.
It's solid silver
and blessed by a priest.
They used to cut the hands
off church robbers.
Carousel's off to paradise right now.
What better way
to spend your money?
Vamos, Maricones.
Are you, for a change,
trying to screw me, madam?
- Lucy?
- The offer stays.
Take it or leave it.
Lucy!
Lucy, come back.
It's an order.
Climb aboard.
The girls are ready and waiting.
Steam Engine, I been looking for you.
Well, now that you've found me
I'll see you around.
Let's empty the hall.

Come on!

Wait, Bill.

I haven't seen him for ages.

- We hardly said hello.

- No more hellos.

- One more and you'll be expecting.

- So?

- Don't tease him. He gets jealous.

- Jealous!

I've more important things on my mind.

I pulled her out of the gutter.

She was a flea hive.

I washed her, combed her hair.

I made a lady out of her.

I surrounded her with luxury.

I catered to her every whim.

She's cost me an eye and an ear.

But I already told you.

If you want her, name your price.

I can't do it.

- She's priceless.

- Name your price, Joe.

Please, name your price.

Don't be surprised.

And do not jump

to the wrong conclusions.

I'm only here

to perform an act of justice.

There he is. That's him.

- Thou art the man.

- You an informer now?

You've been touched by God's grace.

Is that not so, my son?

- Admit it, Bill. You've been touched.

- I've been touched.

Is it in here, my son?

Check it carefully, Padre.

- Why did I save you in the desert?

- Because you never cheat a friend.

It's all there.

- Thanks be to God.

- Thanks be to Joe.

Just think of it. The man before you
was already far away.

Free and clear.
When, like Paul
on the road to Damascus,
he was struck
by God's heavenly light.
Burdened with remorse, he returned.
His heart heavy with despair
for his misspent life
in sin and shame.
- Who's he talking about?
- You.
Me? Why, you...
His noble gesture
would not be known
if it weren't for the testimony
of this good soul.
I only did my duty
as a faithful son of the Church.
Son of a bitch!
When the prodigal returns
the heavens rejoice.
Glory, glory, glory.
On our knees we're bending.
Now the erring prodigal
Turns to the righteous way.
Glory, glory, glory.
Praying for thy blessing.
Our hearts in repentance
Pledge to Christ today.
Glory, glory, glory.
No hymns!
This is an honest house.
- We don't make fun of the Church.
- Joe!
- Where's he taking us?
- Keep counting!
Where was I? 315, 320.
\$325 in charity.
That old bag only offered me 200.
You see, Bill.
Honesty is the best policy.
You're richer
and a priest kissed you.
Disgusting!

Why do you have to act worse
than you already are?
Sure, Twinkle-Toes here
never pukes, does he?
He doesn't do it in his hat.
He knows to do it
where decent folks do it. The privy.
You're wrong, Lucy.
If you'd spent less time
walking the streets
and more time sitting
with decent folk on the privy,
you'd have met Joe before me.
I've been dreaming
a weird dream.
The red of the rising sun
touches the mountains.
They seem bathed in blood.
The peaks throw long shadows
down into the bottomless valley.
In the clear blue sky
a hawk glides, wide and easy.
- The whistling wind?
- No.
The wings cleaving the air.
- What's that?
- Shh.
That's horses' hooves.
And now...
from behind the rocks
appears a man on a white horse.
He's the ancient ruler
of these lands.
The shadow of a dead king
reaches out for a fleeing man.
His silhouette is dark
against the red sun.
Ringed with a halo of eagle feathers.
- Like rays of light.
- Oh, yeah?
It's your old man.
He's looking for you.
My old man never had feathers.
I'm a white man.

My face is sunburnt.

The color of my ass says I'm a white.

Look!

What's wrong with being an Injun?

Your dad was, your mom was white.

So what? Black, white, red.

What difference does it make?

- We're all somebody's children.

- She was white.

So white

the other whores called her Ghost.

I'm not bragging.

What I told you is all I know.

I'm a lone wolf.

I don't run with the pack.

Know why they call me Steam Engine?

I got fed up with city society
and jumped a train.

That's right. The man who gallops
on an iron horse.

- That's far enough.

- You're at the end of the road.

- You crazy? You gonna fight?

- You're at the end of the track.

- What's happening?

- Jump!

Bill!

Bill. You all right?

Did you get hurt?

Yeah, I'm all right, Lucy.

Whoever planned this railway?

Maybe they're gonna build a bridge.

I remember

when this place was nothing.

- Is this where the rails stop?

- This is the end.

Of the Western Railroad Company.

Those are all the tracks we got left.

And where's the Pacific?

- Answer me that.

- He's right. Where is it?

Listen to what I tell you.

There's no future for railroads
in this country.

- Where are you going?
- To look for a new job.
The company left us high and dry
and we're skedaddling.
Joe, Bill, come on.
There's still some hot coffee.
Come on, Bill.
Take it easy, Bill.
Don't go getting yourself plastered.
I don't get plastered.
I just get happy.
Come on. You call that happy?
Injuns are gloomy by nature.
Bill, a chief's son
shouldn't fly off the handle like that.
Oh, yeah?
If I had a handful of men
who really knew where their balls are,
I'd screw this whole goddamn country.
Loneliness.
That's what it is.
The loneliness of genius.
Open your ears, genius.
Can you do that?
I've got a proposal for you.
We could work together.
Yeah!
What a fantastic idea.
- A triad.
- Not what I had in mind.
Are you in or out?
Well, if there's a chance
to snuff somebody out. Who's the guy?
- His name is Major Cabot.
- Is that the famous Indian hunter?
Someone who without a doubt deserves
our complete respect.
Look here, Bill. If you can get
all of \$300 or a bit more together
we could make
a fast \$300,000 out of it.
How much is that again?
The amount the major didn't give
to the Injun Agency.

What do I have to do?

- You've been in the army.

- Right. Like all white men.

Rank?

Deserter.

- How'd you like to be a colonel?

- Could be nice for a change.

What do you say, Lucy?

Where you gonna get the uniform?

That's on its way

but you'll need whiskers.

Whiskers?

Like these?

The guy you're standing in for

has a real set.

Then I'll grow my own.

Just give me time.

All the time you want

wouldn't give you whiskers.

They don't grow on Injuns.

On me they do!

Because I'm not an Indian!

- What is it?

- Shh!

Someone's coming.

A wagon or a stage...

That's what the stupid redskins do

to hear far-off sounds.

In the age of the telegraph they still

throw themselves on the ground.

- Coming this way?

- Who?

How do I know?

You believe you can put your ear

to the ground and hear a stagecoach?

- An escort?

- It's being followed.

- How many riders? Injuns?

- Four. No, the horses are shod.

- Joe, they're shooting!

- Yeah, I know.

How the Christ can you know

without your ear to the ground?

They're shooting at a colonel

with a red beard.
See? When you're not an Indian
you get it wrong.
Where are you? There's the coach
and there's the idiot.
But where are the four riders?
Here we are, Steam Engine.
Mortimer!
What are you doing
with the beads on?
It's the fashion.
But what ain't never the fashion
is witnessing.
Throw down your gun.
You shouldn't have seen
what you just saw.
Why? What did I just see?
You saw the colonel.
You saw us made up in beads.
Oh, you got beads on, huh?
I swear to God I never even noticed.
- In any case, you noticed us.
- Me?
No! No!
- So who the hell are you talking to?
- Myself.
I always talk to myself.
You know what prairie folk are like.
I talk and I listen.
Hoping that someone somewhere
will hear and answer me.
For the sake of the old days
when we worked together.
Remember?
Mortimer.
Jelly Roll will hate you
for even thinking about such an idea.
Why don't you answer me?
- Let's cut it short.
- No! It's a joke.
No!
Stop!
Don't shoot.
He's my brother.

Where did you get hold
of a sister like her?
Come on. Let's have a better look.
Be a good girl.
Bring up the curtains.
To save his life and make us happy
you'll have to split into four.
Stop!
Don't lay a hand on my girl.
Christ! How many are you back there?
Leaving out the women
and unarmed men, just me.
But I'll split into four
to make you happy.
Now cool off, buster.
We only meant to have a little fun
with your girl.
Why not, Joe?
Let them have a little fun.
Let's all have fun.
What's wrong with that?
Why take chances, darling?
There are too many of them.
Throw down your gun.
Throw it down, darling.
- I missed!
- Naturally. He moved.
- What do you mean, naturally?
- You can only hit sitting targets.
Throw it away.
You'd be better with a bow and arrow.
I was so scared.
- Keep it up and I'll name my price.
- Name it!
Oh, Bill!
How come you call him darling
and me brother?
The true fact is
I can't make up my mind.
I don't know who I love most.
Told you.
But you had to have it your own way.
I'm... going to die.
Well, we're sorry as we can be.

- Yeah! It's real!

- Please!

Don't let me die like this.

Not knowing.

- What, Colonel?

- Why do you all keep pulling...
my beard?

Didn't have time to tell him.

Soon Major Cabot will know
he's dead.

- Back to square one.

- Yeah.

- He's getting the hang of it.

- Jesus! Is he moving!

He's not heading for Cabot.

He's going to Jelly Roll.

What's this Jelly Roll like?

He believes in an eye for an eye.

Well, we didn't get them all, did we?

One got away.

Yeah. But three of them are dead.

So? Everything depends
on how you tell it.

He did it.

Shot them right between the eyes.

He threw me the gun, Jelly Roll.

I'd never shoot your men.

Hey, keep moving! Come on!

You caught their attention
with your creamy thighs.

- I didn't force them to look.

- Pity you can't hit a moving target.

- Poor Steam Engine.

- Right. But I was wise to them.

And I got out of the way.

- You see?

- I can hit six out of six!

But you didn't know
that Mortimer was...

wise to you.

I didn't. Where did you go?

To my right.

Like you should have.

It's easy to hit a moving target.

Now only four of us know
Colonel Pembroke is dead.
It's good to meet a man
who catches on so fast.
What are we gonna do with Mortimer?
Bury him in a Mexican cemetery.
Wise guy, huh?
- Trust him. He's with me.
- Looks like you're with him.
Let's see if we can raise the colonel
from the dead.
"We're not ordinary people."
We're not ordinary people,
Major Cabot, we're Americans.
The prairies must be firmly anchored
to our great country
if we're to realize our ideals.
- How's that?
- It'll do.
Now the beard.
Jesus!
Oh, well. But with the proper...
trousers and boots,
shoulders,
a little spit and polish
here and there...
Well, what do you think?
- I think he's fine.
- So do I.
Then... there's no doubt about it.
They'll shoot you.
Keep saying it, Bill.
We're not ordinary people,
Major Cabot...
Not that. You said it all night.
The instructions.
Goddammit!
I'm fed up with this clown act!
Go to the fort,
pass yourself off as Pembroke.
- Confiscate the \$300,000. Then?
- Then?
If they haven't strung me up,
I head due east fast and meet you.

If Cabot gives me an escort,
you'll stop the coach
shove a gun in my neck
and say "Move and I'll shoot."

- Go on.

- If there's no escort, don't do it.

We get the hell out of there
and live happily ever after
on a beach.

- Fine.

- Perfect. What are you so sore about?

That'll do, Michelangelo.

What am I so sore about? Look at him.

Think he'll pass for a cavalryman?

- You think you'll pass for a colonel?

- That's what I'm saying!

They won't even let us into the fort.

They'll eat us alive.

- Too bad for them. Let's go.

- Giddy up, there!

Whoa!

A wagon without a driver.

Who the hell are you talking to? Me?

A colonel in the United States Army?

Keep on croaking.

I can't understand a word you say.

If what you're saying is words.

You know what you can do with it.

Hey!

Let's have a little respect here.

- He sees beyond the mountains.

- I see right in front of my nose.

If an old redskin can see it too,

I'm screwed.

- What was that?

- The Western Railroad Company.

On its relentless march to the sea.

This is where I get off.

- Good luck, Colonel.

- The branch is too big for that Injun.

Hey, Joe.

Give old Dry Branch there a hand.

Whoa!

Whoa!

Attention!

Whoa!

Colonel.

Welcome to Fort Christabel, Colonel.

I'm Major Cabot.

- We're not ordinary people, Major...

- Later, Daddy.

This is, I presume, Miss Pembroke?

- Yes, presumably she's my daughter.

- Many a flower's born to blush unseen.

And waste its sweetness

on the desert air.

Shall we go inside?

- Who did you build the gallows for?

- Oh. That Indian, sir.

A horse thief. Follow me.

This way.

I've had the best quarters in the fort
prepared especially for you.

I'm astonished, Major Cabot.

Frankly, I never expected to meet up
with such a polished gentleman.

- This makes it worth it.

- Compliments on the set-up.

Beneath these rough uniforms

lurk hearts of purest gold.

Sergeant Milton looks like a bear

but he's just a child grown too fast.

In here.

The rest of us are ordinary people.

We're not ordinary people,

Major Cabot, we're Americans.

Colonel, would you care for a cigar?

I think it's a flavor you might enjoy.

The prairies...

Yes, indeed.

Daddy, you're smoking!

Of course I'm smoking.

The prairies must be firmly anchored...

If that's anchored

you'll burn to death. Take it off.

There you are.

The best quarters

prepared especially for you.

And wastes its sweetness
on the desert air.
I'm gonna waste your sweetness,
little girl.
Let's go, Sergeant.
It's all over, Bill.
They got you by the short hairs.
- Son of a bitch!
- It was our plan.
For you to dress like a colonel.
And you did it.
What's the matter with you?
Why do you suddenly trust me?
Poor Bill baby.
That takes all the fun out of it.
Now we have to think
about the third member.
He's sly so we have to think hard.
What did Jelly Roll call him?
- Joe Thanks.
- What?
- Joe Thanks.
- The names these people have.
You'd better send
your men after him.
Where, sir?
Jelly Roll says you can't grab him.
He's here, he's there.
Slippery as an eel.
- Where we gonna look?
- That's your own problem, my boy.
- Just get him, will you?
- Yes, sir.
I want him in my office immediately.
What are you doing here?
Who are you?
What do you want?
An egg.
An egg this small.
Pale green and speckled brown.
You'd call it
the color of buffalo shit.
A baby buzzard with a hooked beak.
He sticks out his pink-green neck

then his bare big toe.
Mama buzzard,
like any loving mother,
swoops down
with a nice, fat piece of carrion.
I know the desert sun
can affect the brain.
Shh!
High above...
Papa buzzard, his wings steady,
ensures nothing disturbs the little one
munching on the tender, rotten meat.

Suddenly:

Thunder shakes the mountain.
The rocks are burst asunder.
And the dust of death rises
up, up, up into the sky.
Papa buzzard weeps in the heavens.
Weeps for his murdered mate and baby.
"Make them stop killing everything."
Who?
They're here with their dynamite.
Drilling holes in the rock and: boom!
All dead.
Papapas, mamas, helpless little ones.
What's worse,
it's hard for a fella to relax.
I sleep in a cave under Red Rock.
Tell them to stop.
- Get out of here.
- My mistake.
I heard you're protecting buzzards.
I am.
I feed them flesh of people
who enter my office and bother me.
Now get out of here!
Stop!
Just a minute.
Did you talk to anyone else about...
Did you mention your concern
for the buzzards to anyone before me?
No, I came straight here.
You did the right thing, my boy.

Guard!

This Cabot runs a lousy prison.

Not a match in the place.

He's out to break me

with slow torture.

He said he'd waste my sweetness.

This'll learn you to listen

to that baby-blue-eyed wise guy.

What's Joe got to do

with us being here?

Jelly Roll cheated us, not Joe.

You got a noose around your neck

and still you stand up for him.

- Answer me!

- No!

I'm standing up for him

because he's a friend of mine.

I can count on him.

If you're still counting on him

to name his price, forget it!

Because it's too late.

Say what you will.

The only thing I regret

in my whole life is Joe.

Me too.

\$300,000!

He has everything worked out.

Never makes a slip. A genius!

Know what I'd do if I had him here?

Tear off his head and eat it like this.

Go ahead but don't ruin your dentures.

Oh, Joe!

- Joe! Joe!

- Lucy!

I knew he'd get us out.

Oh, sure.

Am I making a mistake

or are you also a guest here?

You couldn't be more right.

Oh, that quietens my heart.

This is a pleasure.

They'll string us up in the morning.

At least we'll swing together.

- Will we, Joe?

- The Injuns are always pessimistic.

- It's working out how we planned.

- Is it?

It's like playing pool.

The ball bounces into another ball
and drives it into the hole.

Where are you going?

No power on Earth can persuade us
to go forward with this railroad.

So you can save your breath.

We're going back.

We're through.

Think it's worth blowing up a mountain
just to get to the Pacific?

I tell you, it's full of stones
as hard as metal.

Never seen anything like it.

Milton!

This is all alluvial rock.

Those railroad men didn't see
what was before their eyes.

This is quartz. Pure quartz.

Scratch it and you'll have
an avalanche of nuggets.

Take a pickax

and you'll find pure gold.

Like I found on that chair.

I had it tested.

Pure gold.

Gold.

I've said there's gold here
for 15 years but nobody...

Nobody believed me.

Seems we've lost our horses.

You're the linguist, Sergeant.

It's all yours.

- I'll try

- Don't overdo it.

I'll trade a wide tract of grazing land
with plenty of good water and buffalo
in exchange for

this useless piece of sand and rock.

And to show that I mean business

I'll even sign a treaty.

- What did he say?
- He'll only deal with the colonel.
The one who just came to the fort.
Not with a son of a bitch like you.
- That screws us.
- That depends.
Ask him if he ever met the colonel.
He says
he knows him only by reputation.
Then tell him the colonel
will be delighted to shake his hand
and strike a bargain.
- But Colonel Pembroke...
- Is enjoying our fort's hospitality.
You're only hanging the two of us?
Get going.
Come on.
This way.
I think he's fine.
Just fine.
This way, Colonel.
Get moving. On the double.
- Come on.
- Colonel Pembroke, sir.
My fellow officers and I hope
you'll accept
our fort's humble hospitality.
Miss Pembroke, you come to us
like a desert flower.
- How charming.
- Not at all, Miss Pembroke.
- I hope you won't pick my petals.
- They must be plucked, not picked.
May I accompany you to the table?
Remember when Indians surrounded us
in the Black Mountains?
A bedraggled squad of cavalry
trapped on a hilltop
encircled by a swarm of Indians.
I was a mere lieutenant.
And you, Colonel.
Were you a major or a captain?
I was a general.
I never met a funnier man

than your father.

Yes. Me neither.

Seeing there was no way out
the colonel said, "Dismount.

We shall stand and die together."

It was a massacre.

Oh, you mean they got us?

- I'll get you if you bail on us.

- What should I do?

- Tomorrow you talk to an old Indian.

- About the 300,000?

- Trifles!

- What trifles?

Your father asked

why I wasn't decorated

for that day's deeds.

As I told him,

the joy of serving my country

has been satisfaction enough.

We are not ordinary people.

We are Americans.

Shit!

- No fun playing alone, is it?

- I need a queen, I got a jack.

- Turn it into a queen.

- Gone crazy or were you born that way?

Let me see it.

- What?

- Let me see it.

Jack.

Queen.

- See? Easy.

- If I could do that at a poker game!

You can do better than that.

Watch this.

Now...

One,

two,

three.

- Kids' stuff.

- Let me try.

I get it.

The trick is to open the cards.

The trick is to get the door open.

There it is. Yeah!
You got bad cavities.
Shut your mouth or I'll fill them.
I can shut you up and open the lock
with one shot. The keys!
Halt!
Left face!
Attention!
- Where do you come from?
- El Paso.
- Don't we know each other?
- I don't think so, sir.
- I'm from a different place.
- What kind of place?
A place where men are men, sir.
I'll teach all of you
what a real man is.
That's my job here.
I'm gonna hit this fella
and he's gonna smile and say,
"I didn't feel it,
I'm a soldier of the 5th Cavalry."
- Let's try.
- As you wish, sir.
- Did it hurt?
- No, sir.
- Why not?
- I'm a soldier of the 5th Cavalry.
- Did it hurt?
- No, sir.
- Why not?
- I'm a soldier of the 5th Cavalry.
- Did it hurt?
- No. It wasn't my foot, it was his.
Silence!
Left...
face!
To the quartermaster's store.
Forward...
march!
Hey, you!
Stop!
Stop him.
I know him.

He's crazy.

Grab him!

That guy insulted our major.

- Come down here.

- No. I wanna be free.

Listen.

- Come down here.

- I'm afraid you're gonna beat me.

Go back to your cell.

- The major doesn't like escapees.

- No. I don't care about the Cavalry.

- Saw down that pole.

- Sergeant! What are you doing?

No. Stop it.

Make them stop, Sergeant.

- Make them stop, Sergeant! Sergeant!

- Are you gonna come down, then?

Yes, sir.

No. No, Sergeant.

I wanna be free like a buzzard.

- I want to be free!

- He's crazy! Saw it down.

Make them stop, Sergeant.

That's dangerous. I wanna live.

I wanna live.

No. Don't. No. No.

No!

Get him out of that wagon.

Open wide.

And now?

Now it's solitary confinement for you.

You! Bring me the keys.

- Back inside?

- Sir.

Give them a hand.

Come on.

Look at the sun, Sergeant.

Bye bye!

Shoot him down!

Shut the doors!

Stop, you fool.

That cannon's loaded.

Don't shoot, you stupid...

It's pointing at the ammunition wagon.

- What do you want?
- I forgot my hat.
If you don't mind, Sergeant.
I'm afraid I have a very bad habit.
Pass the hat round, Sergeant.
Come on.
Whatever you can afford, boys.
Put it in the hat.
Come on.
- Come on, men.
- Thanks.
Hurry up, Sergeant.
Hey, you.
My gun.
Take it to him.
- Give, men.
- Thanks. Hurry up. Not too tight.
Thanks.
Thank you.
You're doing fine, Sergeant.
Your turn now.
Thanks.
Careful with that cigar.
Don't forget,
you're a soldier of the 5th Cavalry.
Whoa! Take over, Major.
- The stupid Indians are falling for it.
- Sergeant.
You let that madman get away
with horses and a cannon.
Who's stupid?
Colonel.
I think we should take positions.
Don't try anything
or I'll send the sergeant to the fort
and he'll do awful things
to your daughter.
- Yeah, you told me.
- Right.
Look happy.
You only have to sign your name.
It'd be easier if I had to kill
I can't write.
Is this the Indian?

But this old man knows me well.

He's known me since I was a kid.

- You've grown up. You have a beard.

- He sees beyond the mountains.

He's probably recognized me.

- The chief says...

- I'm not deaf.

- You can understand him? How?

- I'm a lip-reader.

- The chief says...

- I'm not deaf.

- I'm not either. What did he say?

- He's willing to sign.

If Colonel Pembroke's here
to witness.

Okay, I'll watch you sign.

Let's get on with it.

- Everything all set here?

- All ready. You just need to sign.

What's he want? A little extra bonus?

A bottle of whiskey?

- You better tell him, Sergeant.

- No, you better tell him, Colonel.

The chief is satisfied with the treaty
but asks why you're giving them
this land full of water and buffalo
for a hole in the rock
full of nothing but fool's gold.

Fool's gold?

Sure, it's gold. But what the hell?

Anybody can buy gold dust.

Joe Thanks was the other partner.

The one you sent the boys looking for.

All the time

he was locked up in the next room.

- I can't figure out why he did it.

- I'll tell you.

He was in cahoots with the old Indian,
cheating me out of that territory.

To succeed he had to use you.

To force me to present you in public
as Colonel Pembroke.

The 300,000 greenies were an excuse
to get you working for him.

He just wanted
the Indians to get the land back.
Indians! You're right!
That fella has a thing about Indians.
He was in cahoots
with that decrepit redskin.
That's why he got me into this mess.
To screw me.
Now you're gonna screw him.
Yeah. All right.
Major, Joe may have scr...
done us wrong
but Bill wouldn't double-cross
a friend.
- He'd prefer to hang?
- Bill has Indian blood.
Indians don't even double-cross
people who double-cross them.
Indians, no. Me, yes.
I'll double-cross anyone.
- You, my ma, my pa.
- Don't let them drag you down!
If Joe did what he did,
he must have had a good reason.
I got 1,000 good reasons
to give him right back what I got.
Genius!
I'll show that son of a bitch!
Now you're talking
like I like to hear.
- When do you want me to betray?
- The \$300,000 is to be split.
All we have to do is follow
your friend's plan to the letter.
But with one tiny variation.
Ah, Colonel Pembroke, sir.
I hereby consign to you \$300,000
to be returned to the U.S. Government.
Colonel, may I have
your signature, please?
It's time to make your mark.
Captain.
- Major.
- The escort is assembled?

- Yes, Major. Assembled and waiting.

- The coach will be leaving shortly.

The sooner it's underway,
the less chance it'll get lost.

Thank you. Thank you, Colonel.

Escort!

Attention!

Will you allow me to escort you
as far as Albuquerque?

- And if I don't?

- Very kind.

- May I assist you?

- Thank you.

Here's the variation I told you about.

When he holds up the coach
he's not gonna get the money.

Excuse me, my dear, would you mind
showing a little surprise to your papa?

He is going to...

get this.

I'd like to see Joe's face.

I'd really like to see his face.

Yes. You'll see it.

You'll be there when he opens it.

Stop!

He's riding slap bang into it.

Stop!

Stop! They wanna kill...

Colonel Pembroke!

They wanna kill Colonel Pembroke!

- Not a man in black on a black horse?

- No.

I see a man in white on a white horse.

- But it comes to the same.

- It's Joe!

They wanna kill Colonel Pembroke.

They wanna kill Colonel Pembroke.

- They want Colonel Pembroke's life.

- Who? Who?

Who wants to kill me?

I do.

Major, order your men
to drop their guns over there.

He's an assassin.

Do what he says.
Out of the way.
I will give that order.
Our colonel's life is at stake.
Do what this man says.
Escort! Throw down your guns.
Over there.
Escort! Follow me!
Mind handing me that box of money?
Major!
I order you to give him that box.
Very well, Colonel.
Excuse me.
Thanks.
Thanks.
I never saw
a prettier army officer's daughter.
Thank you.
But please... don't hurt my father.
Then I'll take you as a hostage.
Come on, Major.
I think you're a little confused.
I'm only a major.
He's a... He's a colonel.
We got a long trip. Move!
So long, Colonel. Miss.
Hurry up!
Save the major! Get moving!
Hurry up! Everybody this way!
Come on!
And if you can't save Major Cabot,
at least save the money!
What am I supposed to do now,
Colonel?
- Stay put and guard the pass.
- Yes, sir, Colonel.
Now you realize
who the real genius turns out to be.
Surprised?
Your partner double-crossed you.
He and I planned this together.
Here's Jelly Roll and his boys
to settle accounts.
Where's the money?

It's quite safe.
On the stagecoach.
Safe? With Steam Engine?
Don't shoot! It's Major Cabot!
He's gaining!
I found his driver's gun.
- I don't see him any longer.
- We made it!
- Are you hurt?
- No. He hit the shaft.
Give me the chest. The chest!
- What are you gonna do?
- Get off this merry-go-round.
And put the money where it's safe.
See you
in St. Louis, Missouri, honey.
Joe!
Faster, damn you!
Hey! You got just what I want.
Now.
- Where's she going? Stop her.
- Hold her.
Oh, please! Please, mister.
- Now!
- Let me go. Let me go, I tell you!
Blast!
Don't. There's gonna be an explosion.
Stop it!
Stop!
There's two men down there!
\$300,000
gone up in smoke!
Come on, you dope.
Joe! Bill!
- Bill, are you okay?
- No.
- What's the matter? You hurt?
- Yes.
- Where?
- Here.
I wanna know something right now.
- What the hell's going on?
- It's working out like we planned.
Hey!

Is this the head pay office?

Sure. This is it.

Get in line, boys.

- Come on, boys.

- There's something for everybody.

- Come on.

- Hey, mister.

Thanks for giving us the job
of blasting that rock.

- I hope it suited you.

- You did a good job.

- Almost smothered us to death though.

- Beautiful piece of work, Joe.

Don't thank me.

The credit goes to my partner.

Thanks, boys.

- That's it. Thanks.

- Thank you.

There you are, Jelly Roll.

So I've been crossed
but not double-crossed.

That's about it.

There are times in life
when you think money's
the most important thing there is.

But once you get it
maybe you wish you hadn't.

- Where are you going with the money?

- Hush, now.

Remember?

A ray of the dying sun
touches the mountains.

They seem bathed in blood.

The peaks throw long shadows
down to the bottomless valley.

In the blue sky a hawk glides,
wide and easy.

- Wings cleaving the air?

- Yeah.

Not that horse again.

Here's the money, Grandpa.

Why are they dressed like this?

Isn't that the way you wanted it?

- Goodbye, Joe.

- Why? Where are we going?
Now you know why I'm going with him.
Gonna screw America.
Bringing Grandpa too?
He stays. He represents the past.
The son of a bitch
had it all figured out.