

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

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EXT. SANTA FE TRAIL - DAY

These words appear on screen:

SANTA FE TRAIL. 1867

A WAGON TRAIN consisting of just two or three covered wagons is making its way across the flat grasslands, west from Coffeyville towards Wichita and Dodge City.

It's only a few months after the death of Billy's father, Paddy. Now the family is on the move again, travelling in one of these wagons: KATHLEEN and her young sons BILLY and JOE.

The trail mostly follows the Verdegris River, across flat fields and mostly empty countryside. KATHLEEN, still in widow's weeds, sits next to Joe, who's about 5-years-old now. Billy, still a baby-faced 9-year-old, sits beside the DRIVER, a middle-aged, scrawny-looking individual with thin features, unwashed clothes and hair and blackened teeth. From time to time, surreptitiously as possible, he swallows a mouthful of whisky. His hands shake, but his eyes are clear and fierce.

Billy keeps asking him questions, pointing at things, like some dark clouds gathering along the horizon.

BILLY

What's that?

DRIVER

(shrugs)

Maybe a dust storm comin'.

BILLY

A storm? Won't that be just exciting?

DRIVER

Depends what you call exciting. If it comes, you'll wish it never come.

Kathleen leans forward.

KATHLEEN

Now Billy, don't you go bothering Mr...?

She pauses.

DRIVER

Hurley, ma'am. Will Hurley.

KATHLEEN

Mr Hurley. He has better things to do.

Billy looks at the horse plodding calmly on in front of them.

BILLY

Don't this wagon drive itself?

HURLEY

What the hell...?

KATHLEEN

Billy, you come in the back now.  
Sit with Joe.

A beat.

BILLY

Okay, ma.

He and Kathleen exchange seats. With Kathleen now beside Hurley. He takes a sideways look at her. Despite her black, drawn down hat and clothes, her beauty is still visible.

HURLEY

Feel real sorry for your loss, Mrs McCarthy.

KATHLEEN

Thank you.

HURLEY

And with two young-uns! Sure gonna be tough. It's one hell of a tough world out here.

KATHLEEN

We'll survive.

Now Hurley turns his head and looks into her eyes.

HURLEY

Gonna need a man to look after you.

KATHLEEN

I just lost my husband, Mr Hurley.  
Sure, I don't need anything but a new home for my boys and me.

Hurley grins, displaying his black and missing teeth.

Behind them Billy is listening intently. Reaching forward carefully, he takes hold of his mother's hand, and she gives him an answering squeeze.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

The wagons have drawn in - but the dust storm has struck. A fierce wind drives dense clouds of dust across the landscape, obliterating it. The world is almost black as night.

Inside the closed wagon, lit by a couple of lamps, the family ride it out, listening to the battering wind, the howling storm.

Joe is afraid and nestles close to his mother. Billy plays his tin whistle - and stares discreetly across at Hurley, who has removed a gun from his holster and is cleaning and checking it.

It seems he is unaware of being watched. But then, suddenly, he raises his head and stares straight back at Billy - and opens his mouth in a truly malevolent grin, his gimlet-eyes shining in the swaying lamp-light.

EXT. SANTE FE TRAIL - DAY

The wagons are on the move again, still rolling across open countryside. Once more, Billy is sitting up front with Hurley. Behind them, Kathleen is reading something from her small travelling Bible to Joe.

Billy scans the almost featureless rural landscape - then notices something. Some dark shapes moving across the other side of the river. Moving at first like a dense shadow, then emerging into animal form. Billy stares in awe at the sight.

BILLY

Look, ma!

KATHLEEN

What is it?

She and Joe look up. And see what Billy is seeing: a great herd of big animals moving across the landscape. Hundreds, maybe even thousands of them.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

What are they?

HURLEY

They're Bison. You never seen 'em before?

Kathleen crosses herself.

KATHLEEN  
No. Not in New York!

HURLEY  
Plenty of 'em out here. Big herds.  
Folks make a deal of money on the  
hides.

KATHLEEN  
Are they dangerous?

Hurley laughs.

HURLEY  
Not as dangerous as rattle snakes,  
Mrs McCarthy. An' a whole lot  
easier to see.

Billy stares at the vast, moving herd, his eyes alive with excitement. He looks back at his mother.

BILLY  
Ain't this a great place, ma? Ain't  
we so lucky to be out here in this  
country?

Kathleen looks back at him, uncertainly.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

They've pitched the tent beside the wagon, and lit a fire under the stars.

Hurley throws some more logs into the blaze. We see the dark silhouette of Kathleen sitting on a large log, watching him.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Billy and Joe are inside the tent. Joe is sleeping, some kind of pacifier in his mouth. But Billy is lying down awake, hearing the crackling of the fire and seeing its bright light through the tent curtain.

And then hearing the quiet voices of Kathleen and Hurley outside.

EXT. TENT - NIGHT

Hurley pulls the cork out of a bottle of whiskey with his teeth - offers the bottle to Kathleen.

HURLEY  
Care for a drink?

KATHLEEN  
No, thank you.

HURLEY  
(slurred)  
I thought you Irish were all  
drinkers.

Kathleen doesn't reply.

Hurley takes a long drink from the neck of the bottle; wipes his mouth with his hand. The bottle is already half empty, and it's clear that Hurley is already drunk.

After a moment he walks unsteadily over to Kathleen, and sits down beside her. She shifts away slightly.

KATHLEEN  
You said you wanted to talk to me  
about something, Mr Hurley?

He grins.

HURLEY  
Well, sure I do. I wanted to  
say...you're a very good-looking  
woman, Kathleen. Beautiful. Real  
beautiful. Makes a man ache, see a  
beautiful, unattached woman like  
yourself.

KATHLEEN  
I'm Mrs McCarty to you, Mr Hurley,  
and I'd like you to respect that.

She looks around, starts to get to her feet.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)  
If you have nothing else to say,  
then if you don't mind I shall  
retire.

A beat. Hurley suddenly reaches out, and grabs her arm.

HURLEY  
No. You sit down! I ain't done.

CUT TO:

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Billy hears the slightly raised voices.

KATHLEEN V.O.  
Let go of me.

HURLEY V.O.  
Ain't gonna hurt ya. Come on now.  
Might even enjoy it. You been  
missin' a man, huh!

KATHLEEN V.O.  
Please - don't...

Billy slips quickly, quietly out of the tent.

EXT. TENT - NIGHT

We are with Billy, as he creeps silently forward.

Hurley has pulled Kathleen off the log, onto the ground and is kneeling over her, almost pinning her down.

Kathleen is struggling.

KATHLEEN  
Let me go or I'll scream!

Hurley leans in, his face close to hers.

HURLEY  
You don't want nothing to happen to  
your boys now, do you?

KATHLEEN  
You wouldn't! You wouldn't...hurt  
them?

By way of answer, Hurley grins, exposing his black teeth.

Kathleen goes rigid. Hurley yanks open the top of her dress.

Billy, right behind them, reaches out and pulls the gun from Hurley's holster. Stepping back smartly, holding the gun with two hands, he cocks it.

Hurley turns round in a fury.

HURLEY  
Give me that gun!

BILLY  
No!

Kathleen sees Billy's hands tremble as he holds the heavy gun. Hurley sees it too.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Stay back!

Hurley has no intention of doing so! He starts to get up.

Kathleen hits him hard across the face with the bottle of whiskey. He shouts in pain, puts his hands to his face - and sees they are covered in blood. And the next moment, he sees Kathleen holding the gun and aiming right at him, a grim, determined look in her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

The lone wagon moves down the trail.

Billy sits in front next to Hurley - like his keeper. Hurley has a black, swollen and shut eye and a cut on his cheek.

We move into a MONTAGE, but keep returning to the wagon, seeing Hurley's eye mended, or Kathleen and Joe sleeping, and Billy always staring out with avid and keen interest and appreciation.

So the sights we are seeing are largely Billy's POV. Music - American folk and maybe some Irish too - plays over them.

We see place names on weathered boards: WICHITA, DODGE CITY, LOS ANIMAS.

Just outside Wichita, through Billy's eyes, we see a large encampment of tents: a camp of INDIGENOUS PEOPLE. There are few amenities, some smoking fires, and just a few horses. Members of the TRIBE sit around passively, apparently with nothing to do. But a group of WOMEN and CHILDREN are occupied making hair ropes.

Hurley spits on the ground when he sees them. "Indians!"

We see COWBOYS riding on horseback, practicing with lassos.



Lines of Cottonwood trees.

Lonely wooden farmsteads in seas of sunflowers.

A group of Elks on the move.

Wagons travelling in the other direction, loaded to the brim with Bison hides.

The spectacular Elk Falls. Spraying in spumes of water.

The small, mostly recently-built towns are seen - or glimpsed - more like in a dream. Brick and frame buildings - saloons, hotels, law courts, Real Estate offices...all blurring into a sun soaked single entity, that melts away again.

And all the time, the further west they push, the landscape changes. The flat, arid plains, the flat and endless grasslands, give way to hills and valleys and forests. A greener world.

Stopped beside the Arkansas River, Hurley fixes something on the wagon while, nearer the water, in front of some trees, Billy and his little brother play some physical game. But Billy is really looking out for his mother - protecting her - as she bathes on the other side of the trees in the river, and washes their clothes.

Once more on the Trail - as a small group of blue-coated CAVALRY ride past, their officer raising his hat to Kathleen. Billy is so excited to see them, standing up in the wagon, and waving after them.

A small group of Adobe houses, caught in the sunset.

A last camp. They all sit around the fire, on which Hurley is cooking supper. It's a quiet, moonlit evening, filled with the noise of insects. And then something spooks the horses!

Hurley is immediately alert.

HURLEY

It's all okay. I'll just check.

He holds out his hand. Kathleen reaches into the folds of her skirt, brings out his gun - which she's been keeping from him - and hands it over.

He cocks the gun, moves away, swallowed quickly up into the darkness.

Billy, listening intently, looks in the opposite direction.

BILLY  
It's coming from over there.

He stands up.

KATHLEEN  
(scared)  
No, Billy!

BILLY  
I gotta see. It's alright, ma.

He's gone, almost before Kathleen can protest again. She draws Joe closer.

We follow Billy. Faint moonlight illuminates the dark shapes of trees and boulders. From somewhere close comes the sound of running water.

And then a FIGURE suddenly emerges in front of Billy, and stops. And doesn't say anything.

Billy takes a few steps forward, trying to get a clearer look at the MAN. Thinking suddenly that he's seen him before; recognizes him.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
(quietly)  
Pa...? That you...?

The ghostly figure seems to smile, and open out his hands in benediction.

Then he's gone, as if he never was there at all.

And we see a board on which is painted the name:

PUEBLO

And beyond it, snow-capped mountains.

EXT. WAGON - PUEBLO - DAY

Kathleen, Billy and Joe all crane their necks forward to get a first glimpse of their destination.

What they see is smoke rising from dozens and dozens of chimneys! Pueblo, it seems, is a big, well-established place.

EXT. MAIN STREET - PUEBLO - DAY

As the cart makes its slow way down the street, crowded with other vehicles, the family continue to stare out at the buildings, many of stone and brick as well as wood, and the walkways crowded with an assortment of PEOPLES and races almost unknown to them.

Pueblo has a majority population of HISPANICS and MEXICANS, as well as GRINGOS - white and black AMERICANS.

Kathleen keenly surveys the shops - finally seeing what she's looking for.

KATHLEEN

Will you stop here, thank you, Mr Hurley.

The wagon draws up - outside a small pawn shop.

Moments later Hurley is lifting out of the back of the wagon a largish, well-travelled trunk. He puts it down on the sidewalk, and Kathleen in turn puts a couple of coins into his hand, without another word.

Then looks at the children.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Come along, boys. Billy, will you help me?

BILLY

Sure, ma.

He and Kathleen pick up the trunk and the three of them enter the small shop.

INT. PAWN SHOP - PUEBLO - DAY

There are piles and piles of the cheapest junk imaginable. In the centre of these mouldering heaps sits an old, shrunken FIGURE - a gimlet-eyed, bald, unfriendly-looking MAN.

He glances at the small family, shrewdly.

PAWN BROKER

Good day to you, ma'am.

KATHLEEN

And a good day to you, sir.

(Kathleen sounds more Irish than we've heard her before!)

PAWN BROKER  
What can I do for you?

KATHLEEN  
I'm looking to pawn a few  
valuables. Not for long, of course.  
But - we've just arrived. I need -

The old man nods.

PAWN BROKER  
Yes...  
(beat)  
What do you have?

KATHLEEN  
Billy, will you...?

Billy opens the trunk, and lifts out a bolt of material -  
placing it on the old man's desk.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)  
This is -

The old man fingers the material.

PAWN BROKER  
Fine linen.

KATHLEEN  
IRISH linen! Part of my trousseau! I  
have several more bolts. In Ireland  
they would be worth a goodly  
amount, sir.

The old man nods again. Tries to peer into the trunk.

PAWN BROKER  
Anything else?

A beat.

From Kathleen's expression we realize that she has NOTHING  
else of value.

Then:

KATHLEEN  
Yes!

She starts to remove her gold wedding band from her finger.  
The old man eyes her, almost suspiciously.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

(noticing)

My...my husband's dead!

She places the ring next to the bolt of cloth, in front of him. The old man seems to consider.

JOE

(abruptly)

Ma, I'm hungry!

Billy puts a hand over his brother's mouth.

All at once, the old man's expression softens, changes. He picks up the wedding ring and offers it back to Kathleen.

PAWN BROKER

You should keep this, my dear. It ain't worth six cents...but it will give you some - protection, in this town.

A beat.

Kathleen takes the ring back, and kisses it.

The old man's rheumatic eyes fill with tears.

PAWN BROKER (CONT'D)

There's a hotel down the street. The Lamb. I happen to know that the owner is looking for good kitchen staff: a waitress and a cook.

(beat)

Can you cook?

KATHLEEN

Yes.

PAWN BROKER

Then I suggest you apply for the post. And take your linen with you. I'm sure the owner will be pleased to use it.

As he's been speaking, Kathleen's eyes have also been filling with tears. After all, she's exhausted, terrified...and alone.

She stares back at the old, shrewish man.

KATHLEEN

Thank you, kind sir.

INT. LOBBY - THE LAMB HOTEL - DAY

Kathleen and the two boys enter a lobby that is remarkably plush, Kathleen and Billy still carrying her trunk.

Several respectable-looking MEN and WOMEN pass through the lobby, some entering the restaurant that leads off it, as Kathleen approaches the front desk. Behind it stands a middle-aged but still voluptuous-looking blonde WOMAN, busy with her date and appointment books.

She looks up.

KATHLEEN

Excuse me. I'm looking for Kitty Johnson.

WOMAN

Well, you just found her.

KATHLEEN

Mr Travis said you were looking for a cook and waitress.

KITTY JOHNSON looks her up and down.

KITTY

What's your name?

KATHLEEN

Kathleen McCarty

KITTY

These your kids?

BILLY

Yeah. My name's Billy. This is my brother, Joe.

(beat)

Ma, am.

Kitty smiles, enjoying the boy's gumption.

KITTY

Got a husband?

KATHLEEN

No. He died back on the Trail.

Kitty nods. Sighs.

KITTY

Okay. I'll take you on for a period - see how things work out.

(MORE)

KITTY (CONT'D)

You get a room upstairs and three dollars a day. A working day is twelve hours. The food is free.

(beat)

That suit you?

KATHLEEN

(smiles)

That's fine.

KITTY

I got to emphasise - this is a very genteel establishment. I won't put up with anyone coming in here badly dressed, or drunk, or foul mouthed. There's no gambling in here, and no wickedness. And I expect my staff to be regular and polite to our customers.

KATHLEEN

I'll be that alright. You don't need to worry.

A beat.

Kitty seems to look at her again, and soften.

KITTY

You're Irish?

(Kathleen nods)

We got a number of Irish folk here in town. Every other Saturday we put on an evening of Irish music and dancing here in the hotel. I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

Kathleen smiles.

INT. RESTAURANT - THE LAMB HOTEL - EVENING

It's obviously Saturday. The restaurant is crowded, most of the tables taken. The MEN for the most part smartly-dressed and many of the WOMEN wearing evening gowns.

There's an IRISH BAND on stage, playing traditional instruments, and the big plush room is filled with music, laughter and loud voices.

Kitty plays hostess, moving between the tables, making sure the champagne is flowing freely and exchanging jokes and pleasantries with the GUESTS.

Kathleen is one about 6 WAITRESSES serving the food and drink. They are busy and they all look frazzled - but Kathleen still has time to keep her eye on Billy and Joe, standing around the edge of the room - and surreptitiously give them tit-bits of food.

Billy of course is into the music - tapping his feet, doing little dances when the fiddle kicks in.

A MIDDLE-AGED, rather portly, florid-looking MAN at one of the tables gestures to Kathleen. His date is a very YOUNG WOMAN, with a freckled face and red-hair, wearing a very tight evening gown.

Kathleen hurries over.

KATHLEEN

Yes, sir?

FLORID MAN

We want some more champagne.

KATHLEEN

Of course, sir.

He looks her up and down.

FLORID MAN

You're new here?

KATHLEEN

Yes, sir.

FLORID MAN

Very pretty.

He smiles, reaches out a tubby hand to stroke her bare arm. His companion kicks him in the shin. He winces.

YOUNG WOMAN

(to Kathleen)

I'm sorry.

KATHLEEN

That's all right. No offense taken.

YOUNG WOMAN

You're Irish!

(Kathleen nods)

Me too.

KATHLEEN

I'll get you some more champagne.



She moves away - is intercepted by Kitty.

KITTY  
How's it going, Kathleen?

KATHLEEN  
Fine. Thank you.

KITTY  
You're a good worker.

KATHLEEN  
I'm a hard worker.

Kitty smiles, starts to move away.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)  
Miss Johnson!  
(Kitty looks back)  
My son Billy...  
(she hesitates)  
He...he'd like to go up on stage.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOLROOM - PUEBLO - DAY

Billy is sitting with at least thirty other CHILDREN, varying in ages from 5-years old to around twelve, thirteen.

Most of the CHILDREN are ANGLOS - white Americans. A few are Hispanic or black of Mexican.

The TEACHER is a prim-looking, white, middle-aged WOMAN. She can't keep control. No-one is listening to her. They're all talking, several of them is Spanish. Suddenly, she loses it. She starts screaming and screaming, lashing out...

Many of the KIDS flee before her rage...

Then one of the OLDER BOYS stands up, takes out a gun, and fires a bullet into the ceiling.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Billy walks onto the stage. He's not at all nervous. It's like he's in his element.

The band start playing; the BANJO PLAYER and the FIDDLer take up the song.

Billy starts to dance a jig. Then he breaks into song.

The whole restaurant is captivated. They clap along. Billy is a star.

His mother takes a moment to recognize the effect he has on people. And someone else does too: a smartly-dressed MAN in his early thirties, who is eating alone.

He clocks the relationship between Billy and his adoring and very beautiful mother.

EXT. MAIN STREET - PUEBLO - DAY

Kathleen walks down to the grocery store.

She passes a group of COWBOYS, who block her way along the sidewalk, staring at her and licking their lips. One of them whistles.

COWBOY 1

What's your name, honey?

She tries to walk round them. They stop her.

COWBOY 2

It's mighty hot! You wanna go swimmin' with us? Don't need no costume.

They snigger.

KATHLEEN

Will you just let me pass?

COWBOY 1

It's just a little fun.

KATHLEEN

Not for me, it isn't!

She pushes her way past. And walks on a few steps, reaching the front of the store. Before she opened the door the smartly-dressed man we saw watching her in the restaurant suddenly appears, smiles and tips his hat.

SMARTLY-DRESSED MAN

Allow me, ma'am.

He opens the door for her.

KATHLEEN

Thank you.

She smiles in return, gratefully entering the store.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Blinds on the windows make the interior cooler and darker.

Kathleen becomes aware of a group of HISPANIC WOMEN talking in Spanish together. One or two of them glance briefly at her, then turn away again.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Kathleen exits the store with two or three heavy bags of groceries. Glancing down the sidewalk she notices, with obvious unease, that the cowboys are waiting for her.

Then someone calls to her.

SMARTLY-DRESSED MAN

May I offer you a ride?

She looks round and sees him sitting in a smart-looking buggy.

She hesitates for just a moment, then nods gratefully, and the man puts her bags into the buggy and helps her up on top of the wagon box, where her feet don't touch the floor.

KATHLEEN

This is very kind of you.

SMARTLY-DRESSED MAN

Any decent gentleman would do the same, ma'am.

He quietly urges the horse on. As the buggy gathers a little pace, Kathleen bounces on the seat and makes a surprised sound. The man laughs.

SMARTLY-DRESSED MAN (CONT'D)

It's a spring seat. Should 'a told you. Hold on.

She does so. They trot past the gang of cowboys.

SMARTLY-DRESSED MAN (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce myself, ma'am. My name's Henry Antrim. I served with distinction in the Union Army during our recent Civil War.

KATHLEEN

Antrim is an Irish name! My name is Mrs Kathleen McCarty. I'm from Ireland too. County Wicklow. Near Dublin.

ANTRIM

I ain't never been. But my family's from there. The north, that is. One day I'd love to see it. I hear it's very green.

KATHLEEN

That's because it rains all the time! They say that if you can't see the mountains then it's raining. And if you can see them, then it's about to rain.

Antrim laughs. They approach the hotel. Antrim draws in.

ANTRIM

Let me help you out!

He walks round, takes her hand to help her down, and holds it a moment, looking at her.

ANTRIM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry this has been such a short ride, Mrs McCarty. I've enjoyed your company.

She blushes a little.

KATHLEEN

Thank you, Mr Antrim.

Watches his buggy drive away, thoughtfully.

INT. RESTAURANT - THE LAMB - NIGHT

Kathleen emerges from the kitchen. It's late. The restaurant is empty - except for a solitary FIGURE sitting by herself in one of the booth's.

Kathleen walks over - and recognizes her: the young IRISH WOMAN with the freckled face and red hair. She looks rather the worse for wear, slumped forward over a glass and a nearly empty bottle of champagne.

KATHLEEN

Miss!...Miss! Sorry! Do you want anything else? We're closing.

The young woman looks up, shakes her head.

YOUNG WOMAN  
You finished your work?

KATHLEEN  
Yes.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Then sit down. Have some champagne.

KATHLEEN  
I don't -

YOUNG WOMAN  
Ssshhh! Don't say no!

She empties the bottle into her own glass, then pushed the glass in front of Kathleen.

KATHLEEN  
Thank you.

She sips some champagne.

YOUNG WOMAN  
You work so damn hard. I've  
watched.  
(beat)  
How much you earn?

A beat. And then Kathleen takes three dollar coins out of her pocket, and puts them on the table.

KATHLEEN  
Just got paid.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Three dollars! Jesus Christ. You  
know what I earn?

She reaches into her own pocket, pulls out a tight roll of dollar bills. Throws it onto the table. Kathleen stares at the money, incredulous.

KATHLEEN  
You earn that much?! How?

YOUNG WOMAN  
How do you think?

The question hangs there a moment.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)  
I'm a prostitute. This is a high class brothel. I'm surprised you didn't notice.

KATHLEEN  
I -

YOUNG WOMAN  
My name's Hattie. What's yours?

KATHLEEN  
Kathleen.

HATTIE  
What do you want to do with your life, Kathleen?

KATHLEEN  
I want to run a restaurant and maybe a boarding house.

Hattie laughs.

HATTIE  
You'll need more than three dollars.

A beat. Kathleen stares at her.

KATHLEEN  
You think I should...?

HATTIE  
What else can a woman do? Listen, talk to Kitty, she'll set you up. You're pretty. You'll make a lot of money. Maybe we'll go into business together. We could run the smartest bordello in Pueblo!

She laughs. Kathleen suddenly notices the dark rings under her eyes, the heavy make-up covering her bad skin.

And shrinks back.

EXT. FARMSTEAD - DAY

Antrim's buggy moves down a track, stops by some fencing.

Antrim and Kathleen climb out, and look over the herd of cattle fenced in on the other side.

ANTRIM

Always thought I'd like to buy a ranch; drive cattle. That's what a man out here is supposed to want.

KATHLEEN

You don't want it any more?

ANTRIM

It was a dream that died.  
(beat)  
Along with other things.

He bites his lip. Kathleen sees the emotion in his eyes.

KATHLEEN

Do you want to tell me about it?

A long pause.

ANTRIM

I lost my wife. We hadn't been married long. Typhus.

KATHLEEN

I'm so sorry.

He glances at her.

ANTRIM

At least I know she's in heaven with our Lord Jesus. It's a great comfort.

Kathleen nods, crosses herself.

A long beat.

KATHLEEN

I lost my husband - on the way here. He died...I don't know. Felt like he died of disappointment.

ANTRIM

And left you with two young kids? That's tough. Out here, woman on her own...

He shakes his head.

She moves a little closer to him.

KATHLEEN

Do you still have dreams?

ANTRIM

I guess so. I'm not too old.

He holds her gaze.

ANTRIM (CONT'D)

I have to tell you, Kathleen: these weeks we've been seeing each other, they've meant a lot to me. I thought one could get used to being lonely, but it ain't true. We're all human. We need other people.

(beat)

Even so, it's got to be the right person. Sometimes, one just gets a feeling. Comes out of nowhere. But you know it's always the Lord's doing.

He moves away. She watches him, a different look in her eyes.

He looks back at her.

KATHLEEN

It's true.

He smiles.

EXT. MAIN STREET - PUEBLO - DAY

We are CLOSE ON: a WANTED POSTER nailed to a board.

The poster features crude drawings of three Hispanic-looking YOUNG MEN. "WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE FOR RUSTLING AND THEFT."

PULL BACK - to see Billy staring up at the poster. Billy is dressed quite smartly, his hair combed.

KATHLEEN

Billy, come along!

Kathleen is waiting with Joe, whose hair has also been brushed. Kathleen herself is wearing what Billy knows is her best dress, reserved for special occasions.

Dragging his feet, Billy joins them - as they pass Kemp and Dunlap's Dance Hall, on the corner of Second and Sante Fe, then the Capitol Saloon and a Drug Store.

Groups of HISPANIC and MEXICAN MEN hang out on the street corners, as wagons and cattle pass down the thoroughfare.



BILLY

Ma, where are we going?

KATHLEEN

I told you. To meet Mr Antrim.

BILLY

Why?

Kathleen doesn't answer - and a moment later sees the buggy outside a narrow frame house, set next to a log cabin with the words BEER SALOON on the roof.

KATHLEEN

Well, here we are.

Billy grimaces.

Kathleen knocks on the door and a MEXICAN WOMAN opens it, and shyly gestures them inside.

INT. ANTRIM'S HOUSE - DAY

Antrim, dressed smartly as usual, greets them in the parlor, with a big grin.

ANTRIM

Welcome. Welcome to my humble home.  
Please, make yourselves  
comfortable.

He says something in Spanish, curtly, to the Mexican Woman, who hurries into the kitchen.

Leaning forward, he takes Kathleen's hand and kisses it.

ANTRIM (CONT'D)

My dear Kathleen.  
(glances at the children)  
So these are your boys!

Kathleen smiles and nods, and looks at Billy, expecting him to volunteer his name. But Billy, unsmiling, remains silent.

KATHLEEN

This is Billy, and this is Joe.

ANTRIM

Billy and Joe! Glad to make your  
acquaintance. I have something for  
you.

He picks up a couple of blue Union soldier's caps, and gives them one each.

JOE

Thank you!

He puts his cap on; it's far too big and sits down over his eyes and ears.

KATHLEEN

Billy?

BILLY

(surly)

What?

KATHLEEN

Aren't you going to say thank you to Mr Antrim?

A beat.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - EVENING

They've returned to the tiny little bedroom which is all they have to call home.

Billy lies on his small bunk, facing the wall.

KATHLEEN

Billy! What is the matter with you?

Billy doesn't answer.

Kathleen sits down next to him.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

This isn't like you. What is it?

Billy turns towards her.

BILLY

I HATE him!

A beat. Kathleen steadies herself; speaks calmly.

KATHLEEN

Mr Antrim is a decent, honest, religious-minded man. You have no reason to hate him. He has had his share of sorrow too.

Billy turns his face back to the wall.

BILLY

He's lying to you! I know it.

She sits beside him, puts her hand on his shoulder.

KATHLEEN

Billy, I know what you're feeling.  
You're thinking about your father.  
I want you to know, whatever  
happens, Mr Antrim will never  
replace your father. How could he?

A beat.

BILLY

(quietly)  
I saw him!

KATHLEEN

What do you mean? Who did you see?

BILLY

My father. On the trail. He's still  
looking after us!

Kathleen doesn't know what to say. She leans down, and kisses the back of his head -- and moves away.

We stay TIGHT on Billy's poor, suffering face. He doesn't cry thought. Billy never cries.

EXT. MAIN STREET - PUEBLO - DAY

There's a great and sudden commotion in the town. PEOPLE are already hurrying out of their houses and places of work, having heard the news and the wild shouts.

And now there are gun shots fired into the air, and a storm of dust as RIDERS come galloping down the street, hollering, firing.

COWBOY 1

(shouting to the CROWDS)  
We got 'em! We got 'em!

More and more WHITE FOLK (mostly) come out to see.

Billy rushes out of the Hotel - in time to see the rest of the posse, riding more slowly, come down the street. They are bringing with them the three HISPANIC MEN on the WANTED POSTER.

The three men are tied with ropes and have already been beaten. At least one of them looks barely conscious.

The CROWDS follow them down to the Courthouse, many of them now jeering and shouting insults at the wanted men. Billy has joined the throng. Already, it's more like an angry mob.

MAN IN THE CROWD 1  
Fetch the Sheriff!

MAN IN THE CROWD 2  
No. I say we lynch 'em. String 'em up!

There are loud cheers. Passions are running high.

There's no sign of the Sheriff, or the law. Already, groups of MEN are throwing ropes over low-hanging beams and fashioning nooses - as if they were waiting for this moment!

Small groups of MEXICANS and HISPANIC MEN and WOMEN start appearing at the entrances to the side-streets. But they don't interfere. Dare not interfere.

Billy pushes his way to the front. The three wanted men are being roughly pulled off the horses that brought them by many willing hands.

Billy sees that one of those pairs of willing hands belongs to Henry Antrim. Antrim's face is a mask of hatred. He hauls one of the men to a rope and roughly puts it around his neck, and tightens it.

Someone calls out:

MAN IN THE CROWD 1  
Here's the Sheriff! Here he comes!

The SHERIFF, gray-haired and slow, saunters towards the scene - and surveys it.

MAN IN THE CROWD 1 (CONT'D)  
What you gonna do, Sheriff?

SHERIFF  
Not a lot I can do now. 'cept let justice take its course!

He folds his hands.

Groups of WHITE MEN hoist the barely-conscious HISPANICS into the air - to huge cheers, whistles and applause. Billy stares at the bound mens' last struggling and pathetic moments. Shocked. But unable to look away.

And then Kathleen has frantically pushed her way through the crowd to his side.

KATHLEEN  
Billy! Billy!

She wraps her arms around him, turns his face from the scene.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)  
Oh God! Oh my God! Oh my God!

The three dead, and dangling figures.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - PUEBLO - DAY

Kathleen and Antrim exchange vows in the small Presbyterian church.

There is just a handful of local WITNESSES. Clearly Antrim is not a popular figure, though we don't know why.

Billy is forced to give away his mother, standing next to her at the altar, but keeping his head down the whole time. His brother Joe wears the army cap that Antrim gave him.

The Bride and Groom are blessed, and declared to be "Man and Wife."

INT. ANTRIM'S HOUSE - PUEBLO - EVENING

The "new" family sit around a small table in the parlor, as the Mexican SERVANT serves them a meal.

Antrim pours a glass of wine for himself and for Kathleen. Billy and Joe look on.

Antrim raises his glass.

ANTRIM  
I drink to my beautiful wife! And  
to my new family - my boys!

KATHLEEN  
Thank you, Henry.

They clink glasses, drink.

Antrim gestures for the servant to get lost.

ANTRIM

I have some news. Unfortunately the bank has withdrawn my credit. I have been saddled with business debts - the result of an unfortunate investment. My business partner has absconded with all our profits.

He pauses, looks genuinely grief-stricken.

ANTRIM (CONT'D)

As a result, we have no choice but to move on, out of the reach of our creditors. We shall travel to Santa Fe, a far bigger and more prosperous city than this God-forsaken place! Once there, we shall make a new start.

(looks at a shocked  
Kathleen)

My darling, please believe me, I will still have enough capital to fulfill your dreams of owning a restaurant and a boarding house.

(beat)

Trust me.

Kathleen looks back at him.

EXT. ANTRIM'S HOUSE - DAY

It's very early morning, as the sun rises (perhaps because Antrim wants to escape possible creditors).

A couple of GUYS are helping Antrim to put his possessions into the back of a covered wagon.

Kathleen carries a sleeping Joe out in her arms.

Antrim lifts Billy up onto the seat, then helps Kathleen in also.

They're ready to go.

But just before they do, Antrim takes a small package out of his pocket, and looks at Billy.

ANTRIM

I know you didn't think much of my first gift, Billy. But I think you might get more use out of this.

He hands the gift to Billy - who pulls out a pack of playing cards.

Looks at Antrim.

BILLY

What is it?

ANTRIM

It's a game called monte. They play it in all the saloons, in all the gambling joints, in all the brothels across the west. You learn to play and deal monte, you gonna be rich, I promise you that.

For the first time, Billy looks thoughtful.

ANTRIM (CONT'D)

Ain't you going to say thank you?

Billy just looks back at him.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - SANTA FE - DAY

These words appear on the screen:

SANTA FE. NEW MEXICO

We have CUT FORWARD in time. Billy is now 17 years old - but he still looks like a Kid: lean, fresh-faced and beardless, with those same stunning blue eyes and ready smile.

Now he's sitting at a round table in back of the saloon, dealing Monte - Mexican Poker. We see how dextrous he is with his slender hands as he sprays the cards across the table, into the hands of a mixture of GAMBLERS: AMERICANS, MEXICANS, HISPANICS, etc. They drink and several smoke cigars as they play. There is even a WOMAN gambler.

The saloon is crowded and noisy, but the gamblers around the table concentrate intently on the game, which is coming to its conclusion.

Billy deals a fourth card all round - the gambler's indicating whether they want it dealt face up or face down - a thumb's up gesture meaning face up. They can bet more if the card is face down.

There are still seven PLAYERS in the game, but now three of them jack their cards in.

BILLY  
Four in play. Stake up!

One WOMAN. Three MEN. Put more money into the pot.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Final card.

He deals the fifth and final cards. The woman and one of the men ask for face down.

One more of the MEN jacks his cards in. It's a big pot. One or two other PUNTERS gather around the table to watch.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Showdown.

The FIRST MAN reveals his cards.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Three of a kind.

The SECOND MAN - heavily-built, sweating, anxious - reveals his cards, with a grin.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Flush.

It's the WOMAN'S turn. Her last card is still face down. The three that are face up are a four and three threes.

There's a beat. Slowly she turns the last card over: it's a Joker!

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Joker's wild. Four of a kind. The lady wins.

He pushes the pot of money across to her. The heavy-set man glares angrily at Billy, as if he's been cheated, and reaches inside his jacket. There's a moment of tension - broken by the arrival of the Saloon OWNER.

OWNER  
Everything here okay, Billy?

BILLY  
Sure, Mr Lawrence. Everything's just fine.

The heavy-set man takes his hand out of his jacket...and suddenly we hear A SHOT

CUT TO:



EXT. DESERT - DAY

We see a target pinned to a post - and HEAR a second SHOT. It puts a hole in the target, which is already full of holes.

Billy re-loads his gun, slips it into his holster. And steadies himself.

He draws, fast, and fires - and hits the target again, smiling to himself.

Then suddenly notices something else: below the target a rattlesnake is slithering fast across the sand, towards the bush. Billy aims and fires - and misses. Fires twice more - and misses both times.

And the rattlesnake has gone!

Billy is frustrated and angry with himself. Behind him, we see a tethered horse, obviously bought with his saloon wages.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE AND RESTAURANT - SANTA FE - DAY

A modest wooden dwelling, advertised as a Boarding House, with a couple of horses tied to the railings outside.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Billy is sitting by himself, reading a copy of The Daily New Mexican. The headlines features stories about shootings and killings, mainly between Americans and Hispanics, frequently over possession of farming land.

Immigration is a big theme. The land grab of wealthy Americans is depriving the new immigrants of jobs and housing, and creating vendettas and a wave of brutal crimes.

As Billy reads, his mother Kathleen can be seen in a fury of activity. She has finally achieved her own dream! This is clearly her boarding house and restaurant - but she's equally clearly short of staff and serving most of the tables in the restaurant.

We watch her for a moment. She's such an amazing, strong woman - and so determined to make this venture work.

Her clientel is mixed: respectable FOLK mixed with some rough COWBOYS and itinerant WORKERS.

But it's all business.

There's a pause in her frantic journeys from the kitchen to the restaurant, in which she leads a very respectable-looking MAN in his mid-thirties over to Billy's quiet table.

KATHLEEN

Billy!

Billy looks up.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Billy, I want to introduce you to one of our very important guests. His name is Mr Ash Upson.

ASH comes forward with a friendly smile.

ASH

Hi there Billy. I see you're reading my paper!

BILLY

What...sir?

ASH

That's my paper. I write for the New Mexican. I believe you're reading some of my copy right now.

Billy stands up.

BILLY

Well, sir, I sure am pleased to meet you. We - my mother, brother and I - are immigrants here, and you are telling our story.

ASH

I'm trying, Billy. Your mother has told me a great deal about your experiences out West. I'm afraid it's a familiar story. Not only are the indigenous American peoples being driven out of their ancestral lands, but the new immigrants like you and your family are also being prevented from buying into these new territories by investors in New York and what they call the "Rings", which are...

He looks at Billy's confused expression.

ASH (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter. It only matters who you are. I'm very glad to meet you, Billy. I hope I...

He pauses, glances back at Kathleen.

ASH (CONT'D)

Your mother is a wonderful woman.

BILLY

Don't I know it?

Ash nods. Some unspoken relationship has almost immediately been forged between them.

INT. BEDROOM - BOARDING HOUSE - EVENING

This is the boys' bedroom. There are some cut-out pictures of horses and cowboys which Billy has stuck to the wall.

His brother Joe, now around 13 years old, is in bed. Billy sits down on the edge of it, takes out a pack of monte cards.

BILLY

Hey Joe! Wanna learn a trick?

JOE

Sure!

Billy takes four cards out of the pack and holds them up.

BILLY

Four Queens. Right?

Joe nods.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm going to shuffle them. After that you got to pick out the Queen of Hearts.

He shuffles the cards, deliberately keeping the Queen of Hearts visible, until the last moment, when he pushes it among the others, rather obviously.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You choose.

Joe's hand goes straight for the right card, takes it out.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Show me!

Joe turns over the card. It's the Joker.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
That's the wrong card, Joe.

JOE  
But...!

Billy puts the joker back among the Queens, shuffles them - turns them over to show Joe that once more there are just the four Queens.

BILLY  
This time, the Queen of Spades.

He shuffles, keeping the Queen of Spades visible till the last moment - then offers his brother the choice again. And once again Joe chooses the Joker! He's absolutely mystified.

JOE  
How'd do you do that?

BILLY  
Oh. Nothing is what it seems,  
little bro.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

A big moon hangs over Santa Fe, and the boarding house.

INT. RESTAURANT AND BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

Billy helps his mother tidy up in the kitchen - already looking wretchedly tired, black-eyed, exhausted.

BILLY  
You gotta get some sleep, ma.

KATHLEEN  
Sure I will. But I don't care  
about being tired, Billy, because  
this is my place, my own place, and  
I'm happy.

A beat.

BILLY  
Where's Antrim?

KATHLEEN  
You mean - where's your father?

Billy grimaces.

BILLY  
Why isn't he here, helping?

Kathleen suddenly looks uncomfortable.

KATHLEEN  
He went off earlier. Said he had a  
Church meeting.

BILLY  
Maybe I'll go and fetch him. I  
think I know where his church is!

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - SANTA FE - NIGHT

Billy walks down the shadowy street. Groups of DARK FIGURES are silhouetted against the moonlit sky. In the Santa Fe Plaza piano music spills out of a saloon, and there's a burst of laughter.

Billy walks past the Church of San Miguel into downtown. A few DRUNKS are lying unconscious on the edges of the dusty road, and someone SHOUTS in Spanish from an upstairs window.

And then Billy notices a FIGURE moving alongside him in the shadows, and pauses.

BILLY  
Who's there?

HISPANIC YOUTH V.O.  
Hola, Gringo.  
(Hello, Gringo)

THREE YOUNG HISPANIC MEN appear from the shadows and block his path.

BILLY  
Hola, Amigos.  
(Hello, friends)

HISPANIC YOUTH  
Qué estás haciendo aquí, en esta  
parte de la ciudad?  
(What are you doing here,  
in this part of town?)

Billy catches a glint of a knife blade, and moves his hand, visibly, down towards his holster.

BILLY  
 Qué es para ti?  
 (What's it to you?)

HISPANIC YOUTH 2  
 Este es nuestro territorio, Gringo  
 (This is our turf,  
 Gringo.)

Billy's trigger finger itches.

BILLY  
 Haciendo un recado para mi madre.  
 (I'm doing an errand for  
 my mother.)

The three youths glance at each other then break into good-natured laughter. Billy smiles his radiant smile. They move apart to let Billy through.

HISPANIC YOUTH  
 Segui  
 (Go on!)

Billy walks on. There are lights ahead, shining from the windows of a brick house. Billy knocks on the door. After a moment the door is opened a crack and a pair of eyes look out at him.

Then the door is opened wider and a young BLACK WOMAN ushers Billy inside.

INT. BORDELLO - NIGHT

Billy looks uncomfortable. In the dimly-lit room he can see many WOMEN of various ages and ethnicities. Some of them wear dresses, others are partially stripped to their underwear.

They talk in subdued tones to a small number of MEN who, it seems, are being invited to choose between them.

The black woman who let Billy inside regards him with an almost sympathetic smile, seeing his unease.

WOMAN  
 Miss Killeen will be here  
 momentarily. Would you like a beer?

BILLY  
 No thank you, miss.

A moment later the large, dark-haired, bejewelled MADAME, JOSEPHINE KILLEEN, bustles in. Billy is pointed out to her.

MISS KILLEEN

Good evening, young man. How can I help you?

Billy is almost tongue-tied.

BILLY

I'm looking for...

He dries up.

MISS KILLEEN

This your first time? Ain't you a lucky boy. We got some of the prettiest, cleanest, most willing girls in the whole state right here. Just take a look!

BILLY

No, I -

Miss Killeen indicates a number of GIRLS, who turn and look as seductively as they manage, at Billy.

MISS KILLEEN

It's eight dollars a night! But if you're looking for something a little different then I can offer you the beautiful Molly Williams and her daughter for just fifteen.

She indicates MOLLY and, beside her, a CHILD of about ten-years-old.

Billy finds his tongue.

BILLY

I'm looking for Mr Antrim. I know he comes here.

Miss Killeen's look changes.

MISS KILLEEN

What do you want him for?

BILLY

He's my...he's my father.

A beat.

MISS KILLEEN

We have to be so discreet here. It's the nature of the business, you understand? I can't -

BILLY  
Where is he?

Miss Killeen doesn't answer, but almost involuntarily her eyes dart towards a closed door. It's enough for Billy. He strides over, opens the door and walks into:

INT. CORRIDOR - BORDELLO - NIGHT

Dimly-lit - with several doors leading off it.

Billy stops - listens. HEARS a WOMAN'S laughter and, a moment later, a MAN'S laughter, which he recognises at once as Antrim's.

He pushes open the door.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - BORDELLO - NIGHT

There are three WOMEN in the room with Antrim, in different states of undress. There's a trolley loaded with drinks. Antrim, leaning back in an armchair with one of the WOMEN on his lap, is drinking whiskey - and clearly drunk.

He looks over at Billy, with a crooked smile.

ANTRIM  
Why, if it isn't the kid!  
(beat)  
What'd'ya want, Billy? Wanna lose  
your cherry? That it?

He laughs. The WOMAN climbs off his lap, covers herself.

BILLY  
Why don't you come home? Your wife  
needs you.

Antrim's face darkens. He stands up.

ANTRIM  
Now, boy, you don't tell ME what to  
do. I do what I like. That's how it  
is out here. Your ma never sent you  
over here, now did she? Course not.  
She has every reason to be grateful  
to me. So you just run on home like  
a good boy, or God help me I'll  
whip your fucking Irish ass!



Billy stares back at Antrim, his blue eyes blazing, as if to say: "You just try!" His hands clench into fists. One of the WOMEN laughs nervously.

And then Miss Killeen opens the door, and breaks the tension.

We're CLOSE on Billy's face.

Suddenly it starts moving at speed across the frame, and the wind is whipping back his hair - and he's smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT GRASSLAND - SANTA FE - DAY

Billy is riding his horse across open country. He's galloping fast, already easy in the saddle, but still thrilled by the experience, and the freedom of it.

As he thunders through the frame he leans out and down in the saddle, so his body is pressed to the horse's flank and his head close to its flying legs.

Seen from a distance, it looks like there's no-one in the saddle. It's one of the cowboy's coolest tricks.

Billy rights himself, and with a yell brings the horse to a sudden, dramatic stop.

Another pass:

Billy is galloping down the same stretch of grassland, this time holding a lasso in his hands. Whirling it around as he approaches a post - then throwing it, in a perfect arc, the lasso landing sweetly over the post.

INT. TENDIJON - DOWNTOWN SANTA FE - EVENING

This is a cheaper joint. Billy is testing his skill and trying to make money gambling at one of the tables in the joint.

Most of the other PLAYERS are MEXICAN and HISPANIC. But there's also one AMERICAN, an intense-looking guy who acts almost as if he's crazy. The rest of the GAMBLERS try to pretend he's not in the game.

But the American is getting crazier by the play. He loses to a Mexican, and then to an Hispanic player. We see that his bundle of money is getting depleted, and he's getting desperate.

The DEALER starts a new game, dealing out the cards. On the second round the American places all his remaining money.

But the other cards don't help him. He's becoming more agitated by the moment. Billy throws in his hand just to watch him. The Mexican and Hispanic players continue their duel with the American - to the final showdown.

They show their cards. The American has a straight - but it's easily beaten. The dealer starts to rake up his loses.

DEALER

You lose, sir.

AMERICAN

No. No, I don't. I don't lose. I never lose. These fucking vermin these fucking half-breeds cheated!

The American takes out a gun and shoots the Mexicans and Hispanics around the table: one, two, three, four.

Then he looks at Billy. But Billy has already drawn a bead on him, his gun pointed at the American's chest. Just in case!

The American nods, then calmly gets up - and walks out, leaving the dead slumped forward on the table, or sideways onto the floor.

A WOMAN SCREAMS!

INT. KATHLEEN'S BEDROOM - BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

It's late. Kathleen, in her nightgown, prays before a small icon of the Virgin Mary.

Then stops, hearing a heavy tread on the stairs.

The door opens and Antrim walks in, almost falls in he's so drunk. He's red-faced, and angry. Bears down upon her.

ANTRIM

What the fuck, woman?! You sent that fucking kid to spy on me?!

KATHLEEN

Don't shout! You'll wake them.

ANTRIM

I'll do what I want! And you can't stop me. I don't like you spying on me. You understand me?! What I do is MY business!

KATHLEEN  
I didn't ask Billy to spy on you.

ANTRIM  
Liar. You're a fucking liar.

He pushes his face into hers.

KATHLEEN  
Go away!

ANTRIM  
Sure I will!

KATHLEEN  
Now!

ANTRIM  
Fucking bitch.

He hits her across the face with his fist. Her lip explodes. But she stares back at him calmly.

KATHLEEN  
(steely)  
Never do that again!

A beat.

Her fierce stare seems suddenly to sober him. Antrim turns and walks out, his heavy boots sounding back down the stairs.

Kathleen reaches for something to staunch the blood from her bleeding lip - glances at herself in the mirror.

Then Billy quietly walks into the room.

BILLY  
Ma?

She turns round - and Billy sees the state of her face. His whole expression contorts.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
I'll kill him! I swear.

He turns as if to leave; Kathleen grabs his arm.

KATHLEEN  
No, Billy. Please. Sit down. Listen to me. Please. Sit down.

After a moment on inner struggle, he accedes.

They sit down on the bed together. Kathleen tries to smile, gently touches his face.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I know this is hard. But don't go after him. Don't rile him. Don't say anything to him.

BILLY

But, ma...

KATHLEEN

Billy, Billy, listen. He owns this place. Everything is in his name. If he walks out on us, what do we do? Where do we go?

BILLY

But it's not right. He shouldn't hurt you like this.

KATHLEEN

I know. But he needs help. I have to try and stop him drinking. When he's sober, he's still a good man.

(beat)

Now go back to bed. Please. For my sake.

She tenderly kisses his forehead.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Our Lord be thanked! He gave me the best son in the world. I love you, Billy.

BILLY

I love you, ma.

And they hug.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - SANTA FE - DAY

First Kathleen and then Billy kiss the feet of a small statue of the Virgin Mary, then put their fingers into a bowl of holy water and cross themselves.

They kneel at the altar to receive communion, the Latin phrases rippling through the celebrants.

PRIEST

E nomine patri, et filii et spiritus sancti...Amen...

Billy looks up at a crude painting of the Crucifixion, fixated by the image of Christ, tortured on the Cross. The crown of thorns. The nails in his hands and feet. The bleeding wound in his side. And still a young man.

The PRIEST gives his final blessing.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine  
upon you, and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance  
upon you, and give you peace.

BILLY

(fervent)

AMEN!

EXT. CHURCH - SANTE FE - DAY

They exit the church.

Antrim is waiting for them. He looks agitated. Kathleen is puzzled.

KATHLEEN

Henry - what is it? Is something  
wrong?

ANTRIM

We have to talk.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

There is a small office behind the front desk. Kathleen and Billy sit down with Antrim.

A beat.

KATHLEEN

Well...? Are you going to tell us?

ANTRIM

We're in trouble. Seems I'm more in  
debt than I thought.

KATHLEEN

Have you been gambling? Is that it?

He doesn't answer.

ANTRIM

Fact is, the bank won't give me any more credit. So I have to sell this place.

KATHLEEN

But we're making a profit! We're doing so well.

ANTRIM

It's not enough. We have to sell. I'm sorry.

BILLY

Are you really sorry?

Antrim doesn't answer. Looks at Kathleen.

ANTRIM

The good news is - I've heard there are jobs going in Silver City. Ash Upson told me about them.

(beat)

Just a minute

He opens the door.

ANTRIM (CONT'D)

Ash, can you come in here a moment?

Ash Upson has obviously been primed to wait for the invitation. Now he comes into the room, looking uncomfortable - but doing his best to smile at Kathleen and Billy.

ASH

Hi folks.

ANTRIM

I just told them about the good jobs there are in Silver City.

ASH

Well, I believe that's mainly true. Silver City is a mining town and it's getting pretty prosperous. New businesses of all kinds are springing up there. Matter of fact, I'm moving there myself. Lot of good material to write about, for sure.

KATHLEEN

When are you going?

ASH  
Couple of weeks.

ANTRIM  
Should be able to sort things out  
here by then.

Ash looks at Kathleen.

ASH  
I don't mean to sell the place to  
you, Mrs Antrim.

KATHLEEN  
Doesn't seem as if we have any  
choice, Mr Upson.

BILLY  
I don't want to work as a miner. I  
want to be a cowboy! A real  
American.

ASH  
Plenty of cattle herds and open  
ranges around Silver City, Billy.  
It's like America's last frontier.  
Out there you can be whatever you  
want to be!

And Billy smiles back at him.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Some of the windows are shuttered. There are signs saying  
"SOLD".

There are two covered wagons standing outside. Upson and  
another GENTLEMAN are riding in one, Billy's family in the  
other.

Kathleen's battered box is the last thing loaded.

Now the DRIVERS urge the horses forward. Kathleen stares back  
at the building that was her dream for a last time, and her  
eyes fill with tears, which she discreetly tries to dry.

But Billy notices, and takes her hand.

BILLY  
Ma...

KATHLEEN

(quietly)

It's okay, Billy. The Lord giveth,  
and the Lord taketh away. Praise be  
the Lord.

She crosses herself.

Antrim is sitting up front with the driver. He's already  
telling him a tale, and laughing at his own joke.

Billy looks as if he could kill him!

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Snow-capped mountains against the horizon, but scrub and semi-  
desert down on the plain - as the two wagons continue to move  
west.

Adobe buildings and a silent group of APACHES under some  
trees.

The sun starting to sink.

EXT. CAMPSITE - EVENING

Dark now. The fire on which they've cooked food is dying  
down. There are three or four tents set up in front of the  
wagons.

Ash gets up and walks towards one of them.

ASH

Well, goodnight folks. See you in  
the morning.

ALL

Goodnight.

ANTRIM

Guess we should all turn in.

(looks at Billy)

What do you say, Billy? I guess you  
think you're in charge now, don't  
you?

Billy stares back at him, but doesn't answer.

Antrim is visibly riled.



ANTRIM (CONT'D)  
Let me tell you something, kid.  
You're just a punk. No-one cares  
what the fuck you think!

KATHLEEN  
I care.

ANTRIM  
Then tell your fucking son to speak  
to me. Respectfully. Like I was his  
fucking father. Or I swear I'll -

Kathleen glances between them. Antrim is boiling with fury,  
Billy strangely cool, controlled.

KATHLEEN  
Just stop it! Let's all get some  
sleep.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

They all try to settle down. The inside of the tent is still  
illuminated by the glowing embers of the fire.

And then they all see it! They see the rattlesnake slithering  
quickly inside. Antrim panics.

ANTRIM  
You SEE that! Oh, my God, where'd  
it go? Where'd it go? Where the  
fuck is it?!

Kathleen reaches over and grabs her youngest son, pulling him  
close.

But they all look for the snake.

Antrim is beside himself with terror, almost frozen by fear,  
his eyes swivelling.

ANTRIM (CONT'D)  
It's here! I know it's still here.  
Dear Jesus...  
(beat)  
Oh my God!

Suddenly, the snake rattles and rears up just a couple of  
feet from Antrim, ready to strike.

Antrim screams.

In those few seconds Billy has drawn his gun and shot. The bullet blasts the head off the rattler, and the dead snake collapses.

A long beat.

Billy, the gun still in his hand, exchanges a look with Antrim - in which many things can be read.

For the very first time, Antrim looks scared of the Kid.

On Billy's face we see the hint of a satisfied, victorious smile.

End of Episode 2.