

A BULLET FOR GOD'S BOUNTY

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Revision 01: 2024.11.01

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EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS (1880s) - EARLY MORNING

Just before dawn. A thin ribbon of yellow lurks on the horizon. The desert sands are awash in mauve and indigo.

Through the ripples of the coming day's heat, a RIDER on a large WHITE HORSE appears, heading eastward.

The rider - DIEUDONNÉ BOURRAT - comes to a stop at the top of a small hill. He sports brand-new boots. Crisp black pants. An immaculate blazer. A purple silk shirt. A large silver bolo tie. A spotless black bolero hat with a silver band. A large, fully stocked ammo belt with a pearl-handed pistol in the holster hangs at an angle off his waist.

Bourrat looks eagerly into the growing dawn light. He pats his horse HUGO lovingly.

BOURRAT
(in French)
Watch, Hugo... Here it comes...

The sun appears over a mesa. The sky erupts in golden fire.

Bourrat LAUGHS to himself.

BOURRAT
(to the sun)
Content de te revoir, my old friend! We start another day together.

Bourrat gently prods Hugo with his spurs. As the steed CLOPS down a winding road towards the sprawling western town below, they pass a newly-erected sign...

INSERT - TOWN SIGN

It reads "WELCOME TO PROSPERITY Pop. 1576".

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - SAME

Bourrat and Hugo leisurely amble along the main street.

The citizens of Prosperity have seen many cowboys ride into town before, but this one, with his stylish clothes, causes them to stare.

Bourrat pulls up at a hotel, the "EL DORADO". He ties Hugo to the railing next to a roan pony. Bourrat straightens and dusts off his suit.

He notices an OLD MAN selling produce and dry goods at a stall in front of the livery store next to the hotel.

OLD MAN
Good morning, young man!

BOURRAT
A good morning to you as well.

OLD MAN
Oooh, lissen to you! Not from around here, is ya?

BOURRAT
No, *monsieur*. I am new to your town.

Bourrat picks up a large red apple. Admires it.

BOURRAT
Zut alors! Look at the color! I have not seen an apple in months. Where do you find such fruit out here?

OLD MAN
Brother-in-law's got a farm up in Iowa. Sends me a barrel or two when he can.

BOURRAT
Incroyable. I will take four, please.

OLD MAN
Certainly. That'll be two bits.

Bourrat hands the Old Man a shiny silver coin.

OLD MAN
Whoa, hang on, son! This here's a whole dollar!

BOURRAT
Yes, it is.

Bourrat tips his hat with a smile. Leaves the Old Man astonished.

Bourrat stashes three of the apples in a saddlebag. He lovingly offers Hugo the fourth. The horse CRUNCHES into his treat enthusiastically.

BOURRAT

After the journey we have just had,
you deserve something special, *mon*
ami.

The door to the livery store BANGS open.

THOMAS MCCOY, a young man in his 20s with a thick mop of copper red hair, swaggers out of the store with an armload of supplies. ANNABELLE MCCOY, his emotional mother, follows behind, tugging at him.

ANNABELLE

Thomas, please! Don't do this!

THOMAS

Ma, we talked about this. I made
Father a promise back in Omaha.
This is my chance to honor it.

Thomas stuffs his supplies into the roan pony's saddlebag. Ties a bright red bandanna around his neck. Jumps up onto his waiting mount.

ANNABELLE

It's too dangerous!

THOMAS

I'm not a kid anymore, Ma. And when
I get back, we won't have to worry
about money ever again.

Thomas kisses his mother's hand. He spurs his pony. GALLOPS towards the city limits.

Bourrat passes the weeping Annabelle as she watches her son ride off. There's a hint of sympathy in his eyes.

INT. THE "EL DORADO" - SAME

Bourrat pushes through the swinging doors into the hotel's saloon.

A few dusty, trail-weary PATRONS look up from their drinks as he strolls to the bar. A lanky man, MAYHEW, waits at the bar for his order to be filled.

In the far corner, CLEM, a thin man with shoulder-length black hair flowing from underneath a stiff bowler hat, coaxes a POIGNANT TUNE from his upright piano. A couple of SALOON GIRLS in frilly dresses work the crowd.

Mayhew takes his drinks. He passes by Clem.

MAYHEW

Dammit, Clem, stop it with that sad stuff. Play somethin' fun!

Clem gives him a nod. Starts a JAUNTY PARLOR SONG. Mayhew nods in approval.

BARKEEP

(to Bourrat)

What'll it be, mister? Mister?
Mister!

BOURRAT

Ah! *Excusez-moi*, I was lost in my thoughts. Bourbon, please, if you have it.

The Barkeep arches his eyebrows. Pulls down a fancy bottle from the top shelf.

BARKEEP

Bourbon's hard to come by in these parts. It's gonna cost you extra.

Bourrat SNAPS three shiny silver dollars down on the bar.

BOURRAT

Then I should probably buy the entire bottle, yes?

He takes the bottle from the hand of the astonished Barkeep. POPS the cork. Pours himself a shot.

BOURRAT

Merci.

Bourrat toasts the Barkeep. Throws down his first drink.

As Bourrat refills his glass, he returns his attention to...

MAYHEW

Plops down at a poker table on the far side of the saloon. Takes off his hat.

He hands out the drinks to the other men seated there: WRIGHT, a short man with a bushy mustache. PIZARRO, a Mexican *pistolero*. And with his back to the bar, WILLIAMS, a burly bald man with a Stetson perched on his head.

BOURRAT

Thoughtfully sips on his drink, watching the men. He pays particular attention to Williams.

A saloon girl, CORA, strolls up to Bourrat. She's buxom. Girl-next-door cute. With a smile that lights up the room.

CORA

I hope you don't mind me listenin' in, but that accent of yours caught my ear. Where you from?

Bourrat isn't paying attention. He doesn't take his eyes off the poker game.

BOURRAT

Far away, *mademoiselle*. The other side of the ocean.

CORA

Well now, that is a long way!

BOURRAT

But most recently, I found myself in Bodie. A small town west of here, in California.

CORA

What took you all the way out there? Prospecting?

BOURRAT

(laughs to himself)

I was on the hunt for something, yes.

Cora follows Bourrat's stare to the four card players.

CORA

Some-thing? Sure you don't mean some-one?

Cora's wit redirects Bourrat's attention from the table of men to the young woman at his side.

Their eyes meet. And a spark ignites.

A smile breaks out on his face. There's something about this girl...

Cora has the same reaction. A flush comes to her cheeks. This isn't some stumblebum. This guy is special.

CORA

Uh-huh. I thought as much. You got the look.

BOURRAT
And what look is that?

CORA
Them big clear eyes. Like a hawk.

BOURRAT
I will take that as a complement.

CORA
As well you should. So, you find
"what" you were looking for out
there in California?

BOURRAT
Not quite. But an individual in
Bodie told me to try my luck here
in Prosperity.

CORA
And how's that working out? You
feelin' lucky?

Bourrat ponders her question as he returns his attention to
the table of card players.

BOURRAT
Once I have finished my work, I
will let you know.

CORA
Well, how about when you've
finished up, you come see me?

BOURRAT
You will be my first priority. But
I will need to make myself more
presentable.

(pats pants leg)
I still have the desert dust deep
in every crevice.

CORA
Don't you worry about that none.
Right up those stairs, I've got a
nice, big, cast iron tub. Big
enough to make sure every bit of
you gets scrubbed down.

BOURRAT
How much I would enjoy a nice...
bath.

CORA
 Well, when you're ready, you just
 come find Cora.
 (into his ear)
 In the meantime, I'll make sure to
 keep the water hot.

BOURRAT
 "Hot". Indeed.

Cora kisses him on the cheek. Saunters off across the main
 floor. He admires her every movement.

Bourrat's attention is drawn back to the table when...

WRIGHT

Loses yet another hand. He throws down his cards.

WRIGHT
 Damn these cards! They's cursed!

He angrily pushes away from the table. STOMPS out the front
 door.

BOURRAT

Slugs down his drink. Adjusts his coat and hat. Squares his
 shoulders.

He strolls towards the table, bottle in hand.

CORA

Settles at the far end of the bar.

LOREN SMYTHE, the nattily-dressed owner of the El Dorado,
 joins her.

He hovers next to Cora. Follows her gaze to Bourrat crossing
 the room. Blows a cloud of cigar smoke over her head.

SMYTHE
 It's a sad day in the history of
 Prosperity.

Cora knows he's there, but doesn't look his way. She's
 focused on Bourrat.

CORA
 (indifferent)
 And how do you figure that?

SMYTHE

Time was you'd have a man like that wrapped around your dainty little finger before he knew what was happening.

CORA

I baited the hook. He'll be back. Don't you worry none, Loren.

SMYTHE

Let's hope so. I'd hate to think that you've lost your only reason for being useful.

He leans in close.

SMYTHE

And it's "Mr. Smythe" when you're not in my suite.

Cora finally looks at him. He lets the smoke leak out of his orifices. She withers under his glare.

CORA

Yes sir... Mr. Smythe.

Satisfied, he nonchalantly wanders off. Leaving Cora to EXHALE shakily as she turns her attention back to...

BOURRAT

Arrives at the poker table. He gives a little bow.

BOURRAT

Bonjour, gentlemen. I see that your companion has decided to give up the game. May I join you?

The three men SNICKER between themselves.

MAYHEW

We only play fer American money. So maybe you go on back where you came from, huh?

BOURRAT

I beg your pardon. My English is still not so good. "American money"? You mean... this kind of money?...

Bourrat opens a small leather purse. Flashes a mound of silver coins that could choke a buffalo. The card players' eyes pop out of their skulls.

WILLIAMS

Why, we'd be more than happy to share our game with you.

(kicks Mayhew's shin)

Wouldn't we?

MAYHEW

(eagerly)

Ow!... Uh... yes, yes! Please! Sit down!

Bourrat reaches for the empty chair. Mayhew jumps up. Pulls it out for him. Bourrat gives his new friend a polite nod. Takes off his hat and places it on the table.

WILLIAMS

I'm so sorry, Mister?...

BOURRAT

Bourrat. Dieudonné Bourrat.

WILLIAMS

(not understanding)

Errr... "Doo-don-ay"...?

BOURRAT

"Bourrat" will do just fine.

WILLIAMS

Well, Mister Boar-rat, again, please excuse my friends. They can be rude more times often than not.

BOURRAT

Quite all right. Is it not true that the finest of cheeses have the worst of aromas?

The three men aren't sure, but they think they've just been insulted.

WILLIAMS

...Suuuure. Shall we play? One dollar buy-in.

BOURRAT

Before we begin... shall we share a drink?

He holds up his expensive bottle of bourbon. The three men eye it thirstily. Bourrat refills their glasses. Pours a couple of fingers for himself.

BOURRAT

Tchin-tchin!

They all drink deep. Mayhew runs a finger inside his glass to get the last few drops.

Bourrat gives them all another pour. He gestures at the table.

Williams deals: Mayhew, Pizarro, Bourrat, then himself. Everyone throws in their opening stake.

As the three men evaluate their cards, they cast quick glances at their showy new partner.

WILLIAMS

If you don't mind me sayin' so,
that's some accent you got
yourself. Where you from?

BOURRAT

Ah, my accent! It gives me away
every time. Most recently, I am
from Canada. For many years I
worked as a trapper in the fur
trade.

WILLIAMS

That's hard work. My pappy did some
trapping up in Oregon. He hated it.
(to Mayhew)
Mayhew?...

MAYHEW

(to Williams)
Gimme one.
(to Bourrat)
I heard tell Canada ain't nothin'
but snow far as you can see.

BOURRAT

There is more snow that you can
imagine. Sometimes deeper than a
man can stand.
(to Williams)
Three, please.

Williams deals Bourrat his new cards. Bourrat betrays his hand with a quick smile.

WILLIAMS
 (to Pizarro)
 Pizarro?...

Pizarro waves him off. No new cards.

WILLIAMS
 All righty. Dealer takes two...
 (to Mayhew)
 Your call.

Mayhew grimaces. Throws down his cards.

MAYHEW
 Thanks for the crap hand, Williams.

WILLIAMS
 No one's forcing you to play,
 Mayhew. There's the door.

MAYHEW
 Ah, bull-puckey.
 (to Bourrat)
 You know, I ain't never seen snow.
 I mean, I seen it up high on the
 mountains, but I never been in it.

BOURRAT
 Then consider yourself lucky, my
 friend. Months and months of
 freezing cold take their toll on a
 man's spirit, believe me. But I
 will tell you this: I would rather
 put up with a year of the coldest
 of snows, than live another day in
 this brutal heat.

WILLIAMS
 Amen to that. It's hotter than
 Satan's backside today.
 (to Pizarro)
 Pizarro? You still in?

Pizarro GRUNTS. Throws in another dollar.

WILLIAMS
 (to Bourrat)
 Mister?...

Bourrat thinks for a second. Lazily throws in two dollars.

BOURRAT
 Call. And raise.

WILLIAMS

I see your two... and raise two more.

Pizarro SCOFFS. Puts his cards on the table.

WILLIAMS

Just you and me, Mister Boar-rat.

BOURRAT

As it should be. I see your four... and raise you ten.

The silver dollars TUMBLE onto the table. Mayhew and Pizarro eye the pot hungrily. Williams returns to his cards, the wheels turning in his head.

BOURRAT

(to Williams)

You say this heat is bothering you. Are you not a native of the territory?

WILLIAMS

(distracted)

Huh? Me? Nah, I'm from back east.

BOURRAT

St. Louis, perhaps?

Williams is taken aback to find that Bourrat's friendly countenance has become a focused stare.

The two men are so intent on each other, they fail to notice the piano music TINKLE to a stop.

WILLIAMS

I been through St. Louis a while back, yeah. What of it?

BOURRAT

Nothing. Nothing at all.

(beat)

I just find it odd that, for a man who is not born and raised here, a man who does not like the heat of the desert... you wear quite a heavy hat. Indoors, even.

WILLIAMS

My hat?

BOURRAT

Yes. Your Stetson.

WILLIAMS

What're you gettin' at?

BOURRAT

A person with a suspicious mind would think that you might be hiding something under there.

WILLIAMS

What the hell would someone hide under a hat?

BOURRAT

You never know. Money, perhaps? A small gun?

WILLIAMS

You're talking crazy, Mister.

BOURRAT

Or something more embarrassing. Like... a boil? Or... a tattoo...?

WILLIAMS

What are you goin' on about?

BOURRAT

A tattoo of a skull, with a knife through it?

WILLIAMS

Mister, I'm about to toss you through them front doors if you don't shut the hell up!

BOURRAT

But you have to admit, it is unusual, no? Everyone else in this establishment has taken off their hats. Me, your friends, the other... patrons...

As Bourrat gestures widely at the room behind them, he notices...

CLEM

At the bar. Also wearing a hat: a big heavy bowler. Not only that, he's not at the piano. And, he's doing his best to nonchalantly inch his way towards the front door.

Smythe notices his in-house entertainment isn't earning his keep.

SMYTHE

Clem! What in the name of God are you doing? Get back to that piano!

BOURRAT

Locks onto Clem's eyes. He sees abject fear in them.

In rapid succession:

Clem bolts.

Bourrat leaps up.

Williams pulls his gun.

Bourrat whips his pistol towards Clem.

Smythe ducks.

BANG! William fires.

Cora SCREAMS.

Bourrat falls backward as the bullet tears through his shoulder.

Even though he's injured, Bourrat maintains his aim all the way to the floor.

BLAM! Bourrat gets off a shot.

CLEM

Falls sideways as the bullet pierces his calf.

Off-balance, he SLAMS into the door jamb at full speed. Knocks himself out cold.

Clem's head BANGS against the wooden floor planks. His hat pops off.... along with his long dark hair. It's a wig, attached to the rim of the bowler.

BOURRAT

Starts to pass out. The last thing Bourrat sees is...

BOURRAT'S POV

A tattoo on Clem's bald scalp. A skull. With a knife through it.

BOURRAT

LAUGHS weakly as the darkness envelops him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAIL - AFTERNOON

Bourrat slowly comes to. As his vision focuses, he sees...

BOURRAT'S POV

The iron bars of a jail cell.

BOURRAT

Tries to sit up. He barely makes it halfway before he realizes he's handcuffed to a metal bed. And shirtless. And bandaged.

SULLIVAN (O.S.)
Welcome back to the land of the
living.

Bourrat clears his head. SULLIVAN, a scruffy and prickly man in his 60s, sits by his side.

Sullivan pulls back the thick bandage covering Bourrat's bullet wound.

SULLIVAN
You're a lucky young man. No major
damage.

BOURRAT
You are the sheriff?

SULLIVAN
No, not even close. I'm just the
town sawbones.
(off Bourrat's look)
I'm the doctor. Sullivan.

Bourrat RATTLES his restraints.

SULLIVAN
Sheriff Preyer wanted to make sure
you didn't cause another ruckus.
Not 'til he gets a chance to talk
to the three of you.

Sullivan nods towards the adjacent cells.

Bourrat weakly cranes his neck to see...

CLEM

Rests on a cot in the next cell. His bandaged leg is elevated.

WILLIAMS

Hangs forlornly from the bars of the door to the third cell.

WILLIAMS

C'mon, Doc, you can let me out! I didn't do nothin'!

SULLIVAN

The "nothin'" you "didn't do" put a hole in this man's chest.

WILLIAMS

Well... he shot Clem! Didn't he, Mr. Smythe?

SMYTHE

Reclines in the sheriff's chair. Looks menacingly in Bourrat's direction.

SMYTHE

I don't have many rules in my saloon, mister, but not shooting my employees is one of them.

BOURRAT

Attempts to make himself more comfortable on the hard cot.

BOURRAT

(to Sullivan)

The man I shot, this "Clem"... Will he recover?

SULLIVAN

(surprised)

He won't be kicking up his heels at the dance hall in the near future, but yes, he'll be fine. I have to admire your aim, kid. The bullet went right through the muscle.

Bourrat SIGHS with contentment.

BOURRAT

That is good to hear.

SMYTHE

Ain't that something. A killer
who's glad he missed his target.

BOURRAT

I am not a killer, *monsieur*.

SMYTHE

We'll let the sheriff make that
decision.

The front door flies open. SHERIFF PREYER struts into the jail. A dapper cowboy-wannabe in his late 40s, wearing a fancy custom gun belt and holster. He smooths his waxed mustache as he takes in his prisoners.

Right behind him is DEPUTY SIMON, a small man sporting spectacles. Simon leads a large slobbering DOG on a leash.

PREYER

(to Bourrat)

Good. You're finally awake.

WILLIAMS

Sheriff! I'm innocent! He pulled
his gun on me!

SMYTHE

I was there, Sheriff. For once in
his drunken life, Williams is
telling the truth.

PREYER

What are you doing here, Smythe?

SMYTHE

The French gentleman caused a
ruckus in my establishment. I'm
here to make sure he's properly
charged.

WILLIAMS

Sheriff, I swear, I didn't do
nothin'--

Preyer puts a hand up to quiet everyone.

He enters Bourrat's cell. UNLOCKS the handcuffs.

WILLIAMS

What the hell...?!?

SMYTHE

Are you sure that's a good idea,
Preyer?

PREYER

We just got back from the telegraph
office. I checked with St. Louis.
They confirmed the bounty for Clem.
Or should I say, "Ezekiel Crane".

SULLIVAN

(stunned)

You're a... bounty hunter?...

Preyer hands a folded piece of paper to Sullivan.

PREYER

This was in the Frenchman's coat
pocket.

INSERT - POSTER

A "WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE" poster for Ezekiel Crane. With two
accurate drawings of a heftier Crane/Clem. Including the
tattoo.

SMYTHE

Bolts from his chair. Snatches the poster from Sullivan's
hand.

SMYTHE

(reading)

"Robbery"... "Assault"... "Triple
murder"... Mother of God. Right
under my own roof.

The door BANGS OPEN again. DEPUTY OSBOURNE, a muscle-bound
hulk, enters the jail. He's sweating. Out of breath.

PREYER

And where the hell have you been,
Osbourne?

OSBOURNE

Sorry, Sheriff. Ma took a turn.

SULLIVAN

The cough came back?

OSBOURNE

Yessir. Worse this time.

SULLIVAN
Damn. I'll get over there as soon
as we're done here, son.

OSBOURNE
'Preciate it, Doc.

SIMON
(giggling)
You missed all the fun!

PREYER
Keep it to yourself, Simon.

BOURRAT

Slowly rises from the cot. Rubs his wrists. Tenderly flexes
his muscles.

BOURRAT
Thank you, Sheriff.

PREYER
I'm still having a hard time
believing we had a murderer here in
town, right under our noses.

Smythe tosses the poster at Bourrat. He lets it drop to the
floor.

SMYTHE
How in the hell did you figure Clem
for Crane? He's got to be eighty
pounds lighter than those sketches!

BOURRAT
The way a man holds himself can
tell you much about what is in his
mind. But mainly, it is the look in
the eyes. The eyes... they cannot
hide guilt.

WILLIAMS
You can't believe him, Sheriff! He
was gonna shoot me!

PREYER
(to Bourrat)
Did you have any intention of
wasting a bullet on this man?

BOURRAT
Once I realized he was not my
target, no, of course not.

(to Williams)
 I apologize if my actions led you to believe you were my target. But Crane was on the run. I had to move quickly.

PREYER
 (to Bourrat)
 Do you want to press charges?

WILLIAMS
 Charges?!?

BOURRAT
 Let us consider this a misunderstanding, and leave it at that.

PREYER
 Williams? You okay with that?

WILLIAMS
 Yeah. Sure. Okay.

PREYER
 Smythe?

Smythe seethes for a bit. Then gives a curt "go ahead" gesture.

Preyer lets Williams out. Williams grabs his Stetson. Stuffs it on his head. Stalks towards the exit.

BOURRAT
 (to Williams)
Monsieur, before you leave... I would appreciate it if you paid Doctor Sullivan for his efforts.

WILLIAMS
 But... but...

PREYER
 You did shoot the man.

Williams gives up. Digs some coins out of his pocket.

WILLIAMS
 Here you go, Doc.

Sullivan hasn't been paying attention. He's staring at the poster on the floor, his brow furrowed in thought.

WILLIAMS
 (jingling coins)
 Doc?...

SULLIVAN
 Hm? What? Oh, right. Thank you.

Sullivan takes the coins. Simon's dog GROWLS at Williams as he leaves in a huff.

BOURRAT
 Now. My property?

Preyer motions to Deputy Osbourne. Osbourne retrieves Bourrat's guns from a drawer. Hands them over.

BOURRAT
Merci.

Preyer admires Bourrat's equipment as he straps it on.

PREYER
 That's a nice piece.

BOURRAT
 Colt single action. I have handled many firearms, but this is my favorite. The balance is unmatched.

Bourrat whips out the gun. OPENS and CLOSES it quickly.

BOURRAT
 It is not as fancy as yours, though. Custom, I would guess.

Preyer shows off his shiny nickel-plated pistol.

PREYER
 .36 caliber. Just the perfect amount of kick. Hard to get ammo, but I've got a guy in town who makes them for me.

Deputy Simon interrupts the mutual firepower appreciation.

SIMON
 Beggin' yer pardon, Sheriff Preyer. But, he's prob'ly waitin' fer us up there.

Smythe's oily facade cracks a bit.

SMYTHE

Now, before things get too far afield, Sheriff, it will be made known that Mr. Bourrat here was found in my establishment? That must count for something.

PREYER

Sorry, Smythe. As far as I see it, the law got there first.

Smythe chews on his cigar in anger. Preyer ignores him.

PREYER

Let's get a move on.
(to Sullivan)
Can the Frenchman travel?

Sullivan is still lost in thought.

PREYER

Doc! Sullivan! What's wrong with you?

SULLIVAN

Huh? Oh, yes. He can travel a short distance.

(to Bourrat)

As long as you keep your arm in a sling.

(to Preyer)

And as long as you and your cronies don't manhandle him like you're wont to do.

PREYER

What, that stagecoach driver? That was an accident.

SULLIVAN

(sternly)

Preyer...

PREYER

Don't worry. It's only an hour ride.

Bourrat is not happy that people are speaking about him as if he's not there. He NOISILY returns his pistol to its holster with a spin.

BOURRAT

Excuse me, gentlemen. I am not unconscious anymore.

PREYER

No offense meant, mister. We just need to get on the road.

BOURRAT

And where am I apparently going?

PREYER

The Colonel wants to make you an offer.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SILVER MINE - SAME

A horse-drawn carriage RATTLES to a stop.

Bourrat climbs out, followed by Preyer, Osbourne, Simon, and Simon's dog.

The mine is perched on the edge of a cliff overlooking a wide river. A large wooden structure surrounding the mine shaft is built into the cliffside. Men scurry about, pushing ore cars and hauling equipment.

A cart loaded with metal boxes stamped "DYNAMITE" CLATTERS past Bourrat. It stops at a shack with a "DANGER!!!" sign on the door. Men gingerly move the boxes into the shack.

Preyer motions towards a large wooden table. A squat, balding man with thick spectacles, COLONEL H. WAYLON GRIFFIN, stands at the table. He brings a silver rock hammer down on chunks of ore. A nervous GEOLOGIST watches him.

GRIFFIN

There's no sheen. Where is this from?

GEOLOGIST

Tunnel five. The new section we dug out last week.

GRIFFIN

We dug there because you told me that you'd found traces in the strata.

GEOLOGIST

We did. But they were faint traces. I tried to tell you that there's the possibility of leeching from--

Griffin hurls the worthless rock past the Geologist's head. It arcs over the rim and drops into the river below.

GRIFFIN
 I don't pay you for possibilities!
 Keep going! If we don't--

Preyer COUGHS politely. Griffin whirls about, ready to
 unleash on whoever is interrupting him.

 GRIFFIN
 What the hell--

Griffin quickly calms down when he sees who his guest is.

 PREYER
 Colonel H. Waylon Griffin... This
 is Dee... Dee-you...

 BOURRAT
 (stepping forward)
 Just Bourrat will do.

Griffin shakes hands Bourrat's hand enthusiastically.

 GRIFFIN
 Mister Bourrat! A pleasure to meet
 you!

 BOURRAT
 For me as well, Colonel.

 GRIFFIN
 (scoffs)
 Forget that "Colonel" nonsense.
 That's for appearances. Call me
 "Waylon".

 BOURRAT
 Certainly... "Waylon".

Bourrat gives his new friend a tracker's once-over.
 Especially his eyes. His big, dark eyes.

Griffin throws his arms wide.

 GRIFFIN
 So, what do you think of my
 enterprise? Impressive, isn't it?

 BOURRAT
 Very impressive. There was a mining
 operation in Calico that I saw
 earlier this year, but yours is
 definitely larger.

GRIFFIN

In just four years, it's become one of the most profitable silver mines in the entire territory. The Lord has been very generous.

BOURRAT

But nothing lasts forever, no?

Bourrat indicates the table. The silver-less rocks.

GRIFFIN

Ah. Yes. Well, the sheen is tricky.

BOURRAT

"Sheen"?...

GRIFFIN

My pet name for the silver ore. The "sheen". It teases you at first, just showing itself along a creek bed, or a hillside. And then you must hunt it down, no matter where the trail takes you. Into the bowels of the earth, if need be.

FOREMAN (O.S.)

Fire in the hole!

A huge EXPLOSION shakes the ground beneath their feet. Bourrat instinctively ducks. The dog YELPS.

A plume of smoke billows from the mouth of the mine elevator.

GRIFFIN

Perhaps we should go somewhere more quiet, so we can talk.

BOURRAT

I have no problem with that.

Griffin directs Bourrat to a platform attached to a cable that leads across the river, down to the opposite lower bank.

GRIFFIN

I had this gondola installed so that I could quickly get back and forth, from my home to the mine.

Griffin invites Bourrat aboard.

As Preyer and the Deputies are about to climb on, a young COWBOY gallops into the mine area. He pulls the horse to a stop by the gondola.

COWBOY
 Sheriff! We've got a situation at
 the arroyo!

Bourrat notices Preyer and Griffin stiffen at the mention of
 "the arroyo".

PREYER
 (to the Deputies)
 Boys... why don't you go see what's
 up?

SIMON
 Gotcha. Sure thing, Sheriff.

OSBOURNE
 Sheriff, I was hopin' I could see
 Doc Sullivan over t' th' house--

PREYER
 The doc doesn't need your help. You
 go with Simon.

A beat, as Osbourne considers not obeying.

PREYER
 Go on now.

Simon runs off, wrangling his dog. Osbourne reluctantly
 follows.

BOURRAT
 There is trouble?

GRIFFIN
 The Indians have an issue with our
 prospecting. "Sacred land" and all
 that clap-trap. Every once in a
 while, they step over the line, and
 we have to deal with them.

Griffin motions to a WORKER. The man pulls a lever. With a
 GRINDING of gears, the gondola lurches out of its berth.

Bourrat holds onto the bench as the gondola sways. He
 gingerly looks over the sides.

GRIFFIN
 Not afraid of heights, are you?

BOURRAT
 I would not say I fear the heights,
 so much as I prefer to have both
 feet on the ground.

Preyer LAUGHS. Bourrat doesn't let it faze him.

GRIFFIN

As long as the brake is engaged,
we're in no danger. Otherwise,
we'd...

He mimes the gondola speeding down the wire and crashing.
Bourrat gives him a weak, fake smile.

EXT. GRIFFIN'S ESTATE - SAME

The gondola descends towards a gate set into a tall wall
built of logs, like a Cavalry fort.

The gate swings open. The gondola comes to a clunky stop in
its berth.

GRIFFIN

Home sweet home.

As Bourrat debarks, he takes in the environment. The thirty-
foot high walls surround a newly-built mansion, complete with
verandas on both levels. The only other way in or out of the
compound besides the gondola is another large gate on the far
side of the grounds.

Griffin leads Bourrat and Preyer towards the large house.
Bourrat can't help but notice all the armed guards prowling
the estate.

Bourrat and the men mount the stairs to the front door.

LEELOU, a beefy security guard with wild, unkempt hair steps
out of the shadows, right in front of Bourrat.

BOURRAT

Mon dieu! You are a big one!

Leeolou pats down Bourrat. He removes a knife. A pistol. A
hidden ankle gun.

BOURRAT

(off Griffin's look)

A man can never be too careful out
in the desert.

GRIFFIN

I apologize, but things being as
they are, I can't allow an armed
stranger into my house. Leeolou
here makes sure there's no danger.

Once he's done, Leeolou steps back. Griffin ushers Bourrat into the house.

INT. GRIFFIN'S MANSION - SAME

Griffin escorts Bourrat down the hallway. Every room is filled with expensive furniture and knickknacks.

One entire section of the hall is covered with mounted animal heads, interspersed with various guns and nasty-looking traps.

BOURRAT
(indicating the wall)
Quite a collection.

GRIFFIN
Thank you. I've always felt more at home in the outdoors. Of being in the wilderness. That's where a man knows he's a man.

BOURRAT
(taking in the opulent mansion)
Obviously.

INT. GRIFFIN'S MANSION/LIBRARY - SAME

Griffin leads Bourrat through a large set of double doors, into a library, complete with roaring fireplace.

Leeolou closes the doors behind them.

GRIFFIN
May I offer you something to drink?

BOURRAT
If you have it, bourbon, please.

GRIFFIN
A man of taste!

BOURRAT
I have come to appreciate the complexities of your American whiskey.

Griffin hands Bourrat a generously poured glass. Bourrat settles into a large puffy chair near the fire. Preyer sets up against a shelf in the background.

GRIFFIN

I have heard a lot about you, *mon-sewer*.

BOURRAT

I wish I could say the same, Col... Waylon. I was brought here in some haste.

GRIFFIN

All apologies, sir. But circumstances require a certain amount of haste.

BOURRAT

Do tell.

Griffin takes a chair directly across from Bourrat.

GRIFFIN

Once my man Preyer here found out you were in town on the trail of a bounty, I had him do some further investigation. You have an impressive resume.

(holding telegram)

The Bohls Boys. The Tulsa Kid. Montague Dixon, of all people!

Bourrat stops mid-sip.

BOURRAT

First you take my weapons, then you look into my past without asking. I feel our new friendship has taken a turn.

GRIFFIN

Again, I apologize. No insult was meant. It's just that... Those were some of the most dangerous men in the territories. In the country. Most of them had multiple murders to their names... yet you brought every single one of them in alive. Alive!

BOURRAT

That is true.

GRIFFIN

That's amazing. Truly amazing. But I have to ask: Why put yourself in such danger, when you'd still receive the same bounty for a corpse?

BOURRAT

I learned a valuable lesson in my childhood: a dead man cannot face justice. I believe every person who has done an evil must be held accountable. How else will they learn? How else can they better themselves?

Griffin's face betrays his feelings of admiration.

GRIFFIN

(to Preyer)

You see? This is exactly the man we need!

Bourrat finishes his drink. PLUNKS the glass down.

BOURRAT

You have me at a distinct disadvantage, "Waylon". Can we do away with all the mystery? Why am I here?

GRIFFIN

Of course! Of course.

Griffin takes a moment to collect himself.

GRIFFIN

After the war, like a lot of my fellow officers, I was lost. I spent a year at the bottom of a bottle. And the man who pulled me out it was my friend Deward Mallol, a fellow veteran. We both realized that we needed to leave our old lives behind, to start over. To that end, we decided that Arizona held the most promise. I wanted to try my hand at mining, while Deward meant to fulfill a childhood dream of raising horses. So I joined Deward, his wife Esther and daughter Emily, as we all set off to start our new lives.

BOURRAT

I have a feeling that things did not work out for your friend.

GRIFFIN

No, they did not. While I struck gold - well, silver, actually - almost immediately, Deward's land turned out to be mostly inhospitable terrain. And a disease swept through his small herd, killing every single one of his precious horses. Within a year, he had lost almost everything.

BOURRAT

Yet your risk has paid off handsomely. It must have galled Deward.

GRIFFIN

Don't think I didn't offer to help! He was my friend. I was more than willing to outright give him the money he needed to get back on his feet. But Deward is a very religious man. A very proud man. He refused my offer of help. Felt it was charity, and that he didn't deserve it. And that was the beginning of his downfall.

Griffin moves to the fireplace. STOKES THE LOGS thoughtfully.

GRIFFIN

Deward was always an... excitable type, but after the horrors he faced on the front lines... His moods became mercurial. Dare I say, frightening. So after a couple of weeks passed, with no word from my friend, I became concerned. Had he fallen victim to his demons? I asked Sheriff Preyer to accompany me to Deward's home, to see how he and his family were faring. I had hoped to convince him to accept financial help. But it was... not to be. My worst fears had been realized. I found his house ablaze. And Deward was on the porch, holding a gun to Esther's head. He was almost unrecognizable. Gaunt.

Unkempt. Ranting. The look in his eyes...!

Griffin hits the bar. Refills his glass. Swigs deeply.

GRIFFIN

I pleaded with him to let her go. To let me help. But I couldn't get through to him. Before I could do anything else, he... he shot Esther dead. Preyer was able to restrain Deward while I ran into the house, to rescue poor Emily. Luckily we all escaped before the roof collapsed.

Bourrat looks over at Preyer. Preyer is unreadable.

BOURRAT

You were able to overpower a man so out of his mind?

Preyer pulls back his sleeve. Exposes an angry scar.

PREYER

He got a knife in me before I caught him with the butt of my pistol.

GRIFFIN

It wasn't long before Deward was tried and found guilty. My good friend, the man who saved my life on and off the battlefield, would spend the rest of his life in prison.

BOURRAT

That is a very sad ending, to a very sad story.

Griffin LAUGHS to himself. A pained laugh.

GRIFFIN

If only that were the end! Months later, I was awakened by cold sharp steel pressed against my neck. It was Deward. He looked like a savage. Luckily Leeolou discovered him in my room.

BOURRAT

Leeolou was living at your house?

GRIFFIN

At that point, I was a man of substantial means. I had taken the precaution of hiring security to watch over my property.

BOURRAT

Yes, of course.

GRIFFIN

Before I could stop him, Leeolou put a bullet in Deward. He was severely wounded. But he threw himself through the window. Disappeared into the wilderness. The next day I contacted the prison, only to find out he had escaped the previous week.

PREYER

They didn't think to let us know. Didn't consider him a threat.

Bourrat visits the bar. Pours himself a refill.

BOURRAT

Mallol escaped from prison. He could have gone anywhere. What brought him back to this place?

A small COUGH from the doorway catches their attention.

A young girl with long black hair, EMILY, hides halfway behind the cracked-open doorway.

GRIFFIN

Emily! What are you doing here?

JOSEPHINE, the nanny, runs into the room.

JOSEPHINE

Mon dieu! You are not supposed to interrupt the Colonel!

GRIFFIN

(aggravated)

What is she doing downstairs? You're supposed to keep an eye on her, Josephine!

JOSEPHINE

I am sorry, Colonel. I was preparing her for bed. I turned my back, and she had run off.

(to Emily, in French)
You are a naughty girl!

EMILY
 (in French)
I'm sorry, Josephine.

Bourrat lights up when he hears French in her soft voice.

BOURRAT
 (in French)
Your French is excellent!

EMILY
 (in French)
Josephine teaches me.

BOURRAT
 (in French)
That's a very pretty dress.

EMILY
 (in French)
I sewed on the flowers myself.

They share a smile.

Bourrat's tracking senses pick up the scared look in Emily's eyes. The shame in Josephine's eyes.

GRIFFIN
 You know she shouldn't roam the house! I specifically told you!

JOSEPHINE
 Yes. Certainly, Colonel. I am sorry. Come along, Emily.

As Josephine pulls Emily away, Emily gives Bourrat a small wave. He waves back.

BOURRAT
 Now I see why Mallol returned.

GRIFFIN
 I adopted Emily. I couldn't let my friend's daughter go into an orphanage.

BOURRAT
 That is very admirable of you. And what became of Mallol's acreage?

GRIFFIN

I bought it, at auction. To hold for Emily, so that when she comes of age, she can decide what she wants to do with it. It's all she has left.

BOURRAT

Ah. Now I see. Mallol wishes to reclaim what he believes you have taken from him.

GRIFFIN

Precisely! I hold no ill will towards my friend. But I also know he has committed a crime. I want him brought back, to face the consequences of his actions.

BOURRAT

Then why not send some of your men after him? You have a small army at your disposal. Or perhaps the sheriff and his deputies could apprehend him.

PREYER

Ha! Mallol's crazy. Me and my men are meant to keep the peace here in town. If he shows his face, then we'll step in.

GRIFFIN

With all apologies to the sheriff and his deputies, they don't possess the finesse needed in this situation. What is needed is someone who has the skill, the patience, and most importantly, the correct ethos, to bring Deward back alive. Mister Bourrat, what I need... is you.

Bourrat takes this all in. He sips his drink.

BOURRAT

And what are you paying?

GRIFFIN

Ten thousand. In silver.

BOURRAT

The doctor says I still need at least two days before my shoulder has healed enough to ride.

GRIFFIN

I would be more than happy to put you up here at my estate.

BOURRAT

Actually, I would prefer to stay in town. At the El Dorado.

GRIFFIN

Certainly, if that's what you prefer. Preyer here will set things up with Smythe, the owner. He owes me a favor or two.

BOURRAT

Will my accommodations include meals?

GRIFFIN

Of course!

Bourrat swirls his glass.

BOURRAT

And bourbon...?

GRIFFIN

As much as you'd like.

BOURRAT

Très bien. And Hugo will need to be seen to.

GRIFFIN

Who?

BOURRAT

My horse.

GRIFFIN

Oh. Of course. He'll have a stall in my personal stables.

BOURRAT

You're being very gracious.

(beat)

Very well. I accept your terms.

GRIFFIN
 Wonderful! Er, how would you like
 to...?

 BOURRAT
 Gentlemen still honor a handshake
 here in the American West, do they
 not?

 GRIFFIN
 They most certainly do.

The two men shake hands.

 GRIFFIN
 I'll have my coach take you to the
 hotel.

 BOURRAT
Merci.

Bourrat slugs down the last of his bourbon.

Preyer opens the double doors for Bourrat and Griffin.

Bourrat starts for the door. He stops.

 BOURRAT
 Oh, Sheriff... I will be at your
 office in the morning to collect my
 bounty for Crane.

 PREYER
 (put out)
 Fine. Whatever.

 BOURRAT
 Wonderful. Now, if you will excuse
 me, gentlemen, I am overdue for...
 a bath.

Bourrat tips his hat. Walks down the hallway. As he passes
 the wall of trophy heads, he LAUGHS to himself.

The front door closes behind Bourrat.

 PREYER
 You think this Frog bastard is as
 good as he thinks he is?

 GRIFFIN
 He hit a running target after being
 shot himself. He might be the only
 hope we have.

Griffin empties his glass.

 GRIFFIN
 God, I'm full of vile humors
 tonight. I need to relax.

 PREYER
 I'm sure you do.

 GRIFFIN
 You can see yourself out.

Griffin climbs the stairs, unbuttoning his shirt as he goes.

Preyer gives him a grim smile before leaving.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE "EL DORADO" - EARLY MORNING

A MAID walks by one of the suite doors. She pauses for a moment, listening to the SPLASHING AND LAUGHING from inside.

Blushing, she scuttles off to finish her chores.

CUT TO:

INT. THE "EL DORADO"/SUITE - LATER

Bourrat relaxes in a steamy cast iron tub, smoking a thin cigarette.

Silhouetted behind an ornate Chinese screen, Cora SINGS the parlor song "Oh Promise Me" in a soft feminine voice.

 CORA (O.S.)
 "Oh, promise me that someday you
 and I/Will take our love together
 to some sky..."

He holds his hand up into the sunlight that showers the room with warm brightness. The dust lazily dances between his fingers.

Bourrat salutes the sun with his cigarette.

 BOURRAT
 (to the sun)
*Content de te revoir, my old
 friend.*

Cora steps out from behind the screen, adjusting her bustier. She plucks the cigarette from Bourrat's lips. Kisses him.

CORA
You say somethin'?

BOURRAT
Just musing, *chéri*.

Cora dips a washcloth in the steaming water. Washes Bourrat's shoulders.

CORA
What's Paris like?

BOURRAT
Like no other city on Earth. There you can dine on the best food. View the most amazing art. There are tree-lined parks and ornate palaces. All the world's culture is there to be enjoyed.

CORA
(delighted)
Ooooh, that sounds so fancy! I've always wanted to see Paris. Will you take me there?

BOURRAT
Ah, *chéri*, I am afraid I cannot.

CORA
Why? Am I not pretty enough?

BOURRAT
You are more beautiful than any Parisian women I have ever met. Any man would be proud to escort you down the Champs De Elysee. No, there was an... incident that forced me to leave.

CORA
What happened? I want to know!
(poking him)
Tell me! Tell me! Tell me!

Bourrat grabs her wrists. Pulls her close.

BOURRAT
Believe me, I could never burden such a delicate flower such as yourself with such a story.

CORA

But don't you miss your family?

BOURRAT

My father was a small-minded, angry man who was happy to give his son over to religious zealots. Now, my mother... Ah, my dear *maman*... She was a saint. But she did not live to see my tenth birthday.

CORA

Oh, honey, I'm so sorry...

BOURRAT

It was a long time ago, and I have made my peace with it. What happened then has no bearing on my life now. And as for now... I find myself here. In the middle of nowhere. With you.

He kisses Cora lightly.

CORA

But you could go anywhere. Why stay here in this awful desert?

Bourrat lifts a hand into the bright sunlight streaming into the room.

BOURRAT

I grew up under the gray skies of northern France. We were lucky to have two days in a row where we saw the sun. But this light you have here... There is nothing like it anywhere else I have been. It is pure. Cleansing. In the presence of a light such as this, a man can feel cleansed of his sins.

CORA

Well I don't mind tellin' you, I'm sick of the sun. It makes everything hot and miserable.

Cora jumps up. Pulls down the shade. Returns to Bourrat's side.

CORA

If I could, I'd leave here without ever lookin' back.

BOURRAT
And where would you go?

CORA
If I could go anywhere? I've always dreamed of... No, it's silly.

BOURRAT
(mocking her)
"But I want to know! Tell me! Tell meeee!"

CORA
(giggling)
Stop it! Stop it! All right... I want go to New York City. To see the opera. I'd wear an expensive dress. I'd cover myself in diamonds. And I'd sit right up front.
(off his look)
I know, it's silly, right?

Bourrat pulls her close.

BOURRAT
No dream is silly. People need to dream, to keep themselves from despair.

CORA
Do you have a dream?

BOURRAT
I am living it, right now.

Cora is completely enamored. She starts to slip back into the tub...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

BOURRAT
Zut alors! We are awakened from our dream!

Cora bounces to the door.

SULLIVAN

Does a double take. Turns red at the sight of the pretty young woman in her unmentionables.

SULLIVAN

(flustered)

Oh, uh... My goodness.. Er, pardon me, miss... Is *Monsieur* Bourrat up... I mean, is he in... I mean...

BOURRAT

Come in, doctor. Your patient awaits.

Sullivan looks down at the floor as he inches past an amused Cora.

CORA

I ain't gonna bite you, Doc.

SULLIVAN

Young lady, is it possible that we could have a modicum of privacy during my examination...?

Bourrat beckons to Cora. She leans over the tub. He slips two silver dollars into her cleavage.

Cora sashays past Sullivan.

CORA

(with a bad accent)

Add-you!

BOURRAT

(in French)

Perfection!

Bourrat blows Cora a kiss. GIGGLING, she leaves the suite.

INT. THE "EL DORADO" - SAME

Cora closes the door. Leans up against the wall. Puts her hand to her chest. She can't stop grinning.

SINGING to herself, she bounces down the stairs.

Cora stops short when she realizes...

SMYTHE

Waits for her at the bottom.

SMYTHE

Well, didn't someone get up on the right side of the bed this morning.

CORA

Have you been down here all night,
waitin' for me?

SMYTHE

Out of concern, of course. You've
been entertaining our foreign guest
for...

(checks pocket watch)

...almost thirteen hours now.

CORA

I don't see what the big deal is.
You got that odd duck Griffin
footin' the bill.

SMYTHE

That's his consolation to me for
Preyer and his monkeys cheating me
out of my commission. A commission
I missed out on, I might add,
because my most valuable asset was
thinking with the wrong part of her
body.

CORA

I was just doin' my job.

SMYTHE

Your "job" is to bewitch any
gunslingers that enter my saloon,
and bring them to me, so that I can
be the middleman. You didn't do
that job yesterday. You almost
seemed charmed by our visitor.

CORA

But I thought I was supposed to act
all happy and attentive.

SMYTHE

"Act" being the important part of
the routine. I can't have my best
girl getting any silly ideas, can
I?

CORA

Now what's that supposed to mean?

SMYTHE

Just because he rode in on a white
horse, that doesn't mean he's going
to save anyone.

Cora is done with this conversation. She pushes past him.

Smythe startles her by grabbing her arm.

SMYTHE

Hope is a flower that does not grow
in this town, Cora.

He jabs his fingers into Cora's bustier. Fishes out the
coins. Pushes her towards the back of the establishment.

SMYTHE

Now go get yourself cleaned up.
Second shift at Griffin's mine is
off in twenty minutes.

As she obeys, Cora does her best not to let Smythe see the
tears in her eyes.

INT. THE "EL DORADO"/SUITE - SAME

Perched on the edge of the tub, Sullivan examines Bourrat's
wound.

SULLIVAN

I seem to remember telling you that
you needed to rest for a few days.

BOURRAT

I did rest. Young Cora did all the
work.

(wistfully)

Cora. Now that is a woman who could
make a man give up his wandering
lifestyle.

SULLIVAN

Well, despite your best efforts,
you have healed up nicely. At least
God's smiling down on someone in
this town.

(off Bourrat's look)

Osbourne, the deputy. I just came
from looking in on his mother. God
help me, I'm no miracle worker. If
she doesn't get to a hospital
soon...

BOURRAT

Can she not take a coach?

SULLIVAN

Sure, but how would they pay for it? Let alone the hospital? The family doesn't have a penny to their name. Poor devils.

Bourrat sits in silence as Sullivan finishes applying a new bandage.

SULLIVAN

All right, son. You're officially discharged.

BOURRAT

Are you saying I may ride again?

SULLIVAN

If you must. But keep a clean bandage on it for another couple of days.

Bourrat energetically hops out of the tub. Stretches. Sullivan keeps his eyes on the floor.

BOURRAT

At last! I am eager to get on the trail.

Bourrat sees the scowl on Sullivan's face.

BOURRAT

You do not approve, it seems?

SULLIVAN

You don't strike me as the bounty hunter type. You've got smarts. You've got a taste for the finer things in life. I can't imagine what possessed you to adopt this life.

Bourrat slowly gets dressed as he answers the doctor.

BOURRAT

I did not set out to become what I am. Would you be surprised to know I was in training for the priesthood?

SULLIVAN

No offense, but yes, that does surprise me.

BOURRAT

As a child, I felt the calling. God was everything in my eyes. And I was eager to serve him.

Bourrat straps on his gun belt. Pulls his pistol. Opens it to check the bullets.

BOURRAT

But there was a... man. A man I trusted. A man who did... something bad. Something very bad. And in return, in a moment of pain and rage, I stupidly did something worse.

Bourrat SNAPS his pistol closed.

BOURRAT

As a result, I had no choice but to leave my home. I put God behind me, I made my way to distant relatives in Canada, and started my life over.

SULLIVAN

So you're a fugitive.

BOURRAT

I prefer "traveler".

SULLIVAN

You went from servant of God, to gun-toting bounty hunter?

BOURRAT

A man stole from people I knew in Canada, an older couple who did not have much to begin with. I felt obliged to find the man, to bring him to justice. The skills I had learned as a trapper and a hunter allowed me to track the man down.

Bourrat points his gun at an imaginary target.

BOURRAT

And just as I was about to put a bullet through his temple, I remembered my... earlier life. And my regret that the man who hurt me could not face justice for his misdeeds.

How he would never experience what his actions did to me, and the other children he hurt. How he would never have the chance to learn to be a better person.

SULLIVAN

You showed mercy.

BOURRAT

Precisely. Mercy. We returned to the village, and the thief faced justice. What I didn't expect was the small reward I was given.

SULLIVAN

And you found your new calling.

BOURRAT

I had heard stories of the "Wild West" of the Americas. Of the criminals who ran free. And of the bounties.

SULLIVAN

So roaming the American wilderness gives you permission to exorcise your personal demons?

BOURRAT

A man sleeps better with more silver than lint in his pocket.

Sullivan surprises Bourrat by taking his arm.

SULLIVAN

I understand you're enamored with the freedom of the territories. The chance to reinvent yourself after tragedy. Believe me, I get it. I'm not out here in the desert because I'm some kind of angel. I've made mistakes, too. But a decade in the wilderness has taught me that there are worse things in the world than the things we run away from.

BOURRAT

And how does that relate to me?

SULLIVAN

All I'm saying is... just when you think you've seen the worst in people... they find new ways to let you down.

Bourrat looks deep into Sullivan's eyes. The old doctor is pleading without speaking.

TOWN PERSON #1 (O.S.)

He got another one!

COMMOTION from outside interrupts their moment.

EXT. THE "EL DORADO"/BALCONY - SAME

Bourrat and Sullivan step out onto the balcony.

A weather-beaten prospector, PECOR, spurs his horse down the street. A body covered with a blanket is slung over the back of the horse.

An emotional CROWD follows Pecor to the jail.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Pecor found another one! The poor boy! He's dead! Mallol killed another one!

BOURRAT

Glares at Sullivan.

BOURRAT

"Another one"?

He ducks back inside. Sullivan takes one last look at the scene below, before following him.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME

Pulling on his coat, Bourrat pushes through the crowd. Sullivan trails behind him.

PREYER AND THE DEPUTIES

Struggle to keep the mob back.

PREYER

Simon! Osbourne! Dammit, keep them away!

Too many people crowd the horse. It WHINNIES. Rears up.

The body slips out of the blanket. Falls to the ground at Bourrat's feet.

Bourrat finds himself looking down at...

BOURRAT'S POV

Thomas. The young man he saw when he first came to town. His hands are tied behind his back. His feet are torn and bloody.

And his throat has been gashed open.

A woman SCREAMS.

The crowd parts.

ANNABELLE

Stumbles forward. GASPING for breath.

She collapses on top of Thomas. Her dead son. She SOBS hysterically.

BOURRAT

Glares at Preyer. The Sheriff can't meet his stare.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

By torchlight, a PRIEST finishes a burial service for Thomas. Comforted by FRIENDS, Annabelle tries to keep her composure.

Preyer and Griffin do their best to blend in with the solemn group of mourners. Leeolou stands watch behind them. Deputies Osbourne and Simon lurk not far away.

PRIEST

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen."

Several PALLBEARERS lower Thomas' cheap pine casket into a freshly dug grave.

Annabelle picks up a clod of dirt. Throws it onto the casket.

The Friends escort Annabelle away, as other mourners pay their respects over the open grave.

Griffin intercepts Annabelle.

GRIFFIN

Mrs. McCoy, I cannot express the depths of my sorrow--

SMACK! Annabelle SLAPS Griffin as hard as she can.

ANNABELLE

Don't you dare! You brought that monster here! You and your money poisoned our town! I hope you rot in Hell!

Annabelle's resolve breaks. She SOBS. The Friends lead her off.

BOURRAT (O.S.)

Money cannot buy everything, no?

BOURRAT

Startles the men as he emerges from the murky darkness.

He dismissively passes by Griffin. Looks into the grave. Crosses himself as he mouths a silent prayer.

BOURRAT

(to Griffin)

How many others?

GRIFFIN

...Six.

PREYER

(ahem) Actually, the McCoy boy here was number seven.

GRIFFIN

Ah, yes, you're right. Seven men went after Mallol.

PREYER

The first one rode out on a Monday. Simon and Osbourne found him a few days later. The rest of them, the same thing: left town, were found days later. All in the same condition.

Bourrat throws some dirt into Thomas's grave.

BOURRAT

Were they all found in the same place?

PREYER

No such luck. All over the outskirts of town. Up in the hills. Down by the river. Never the same place twice.

BOURRAT

Binding a man. Forcing him to march barefoot through the desert. Leaving him to the mercy of the elements and the predators. Why force a man to endure such punishment? Why not kill him outright?

GRIFFIN

Deward, the poor man, has lost his mind. He needs help. And you're the one person who stands a chance of bringing my friend back in one piece. I'm sorry. I should have told you the truth. I was afraid you'd say no. Please, Mister Bourrat... will you find him?

Bourrat weighs Griffin's words.

BOURRAT

I will.

GRIFFIN

Oh, that's wonderful! Thank--

BOURRAT
But I have conditions.

GRIFFIN
Er, yes, certainly. Anything.

BOURRAT
First: You will triple the bounty.

PREYER
Now hold on--

GRIFFIN
(cutting him off)
Done.

BOURRAT
Second: I want half up front.

GRIFFIN
It's yours.

Off to the side, Osbourne clenches his jaw.

GRIFFIN
And finally: I want you to give the
boy's mother a thousand dollars. In
silver.

GRIFFIN
...Of course.

BOURRAT
Very well.

He extends his hand. Griffin takes it.

BOURRAT
We have clasped hands once before,
to seal a deal as gentlemen. Now we
must shake once more, to correct
that deal.

GRIFFIN
I said I was--

Bourrat startles Griffin by pulling him close.

BOURRAT
If we have to clasp hands a third
time... there will be trouble,
"Waylon".

GRIFFIN
...Yes. I understand.

Bourrat releases Griffin's hand. With a tip of his hat, he disappears back into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE "EL DORADO"/SUITE - LATE EVENING

Bourrat and Cora lie together in a tangle of bedding. He stares at the ceiling as the smoke from his cigarette coils up through the moonlight falling into the room.

Cora strokes Bourrat's chest lovingly.

CORA
Did I say somethin' wrong?

BOURRAT
Mais non pas du tout! Why do say such things?

CORA
It's just... I don't know. You're so quiet tonight. You're not talkin'.

BOURRAT
Apologies, *chéri*. You are the first person I have spoken to this much, other than Hugo, in months. No, I am just fighting with myself in my head.

CORA
Are you in trouble, or somethin'?

BOURRAT
No. Or perhaps, not yet. I believe that this new job I am preparing to do could be more dangerous than I first believed it to be.

Cora pulls him tight against her.

CORA
Then don't go. Stay here with me. I won't let anyone hurt you.

BOURRAT

You would be a most welcome guard. For the first time since I came to America, I find myself doubting my reasons for being here in this country. Yet, I cannot stay. I must go. I have given my word.

CORA

But... what if you don't come back?

BOURRAT

Then I do not come back. That is the risk.

Cora sits up. Gathers the covers around herself.

CORA

I hate this place. Seems like every day there's someone stealin', cheatin', or dyin'.

BOURRAT

If that is your feeling, then why not leave?

Cora turns to give him a scornful look, but she realizes he's not being mean. He really doesn't understand.

CORA

Oh honey, don't you get it? I don't have a choice.

BOURRAT

Yes you do. Everyone has a choice in how they live their lives.

She bites her lip. Something is weighing on her. She wants to talk, but it's so hard.

Bourrat takes her hand. Gives her the courage to speak.

CORA

When I was a little girl, we lived in Kansas City. We had a pretty house. I had lots of friends. I was so happy there. But Papa had dreams of strikin' it rich. Of showin' his parents he wasn't the fool they thought he was. He thought, out here, he'd finally catch a break.

She wipes tears from her cheeks.

CORA

What he caught, was consumption.
Both he and Mama. And so they left
a ten year old girl alone, out
here, in the desert, with nothin'.
The things I had to do to
survive...

The weight of her memories gives her pause. Bourrat squeezes her hand tightly.

CORA

I was in big trouble. That's when
Smythe stepped in.

BOURRAT

The *connard* with the cigars?

CORA

He made some deal with the sheriff.
So I don't go to prison. But for
the rest of my life, I... work...
for Smythe.

BOURRAT

(darkly)

There is a word for that, *chéri*. A
very bad word.

CORA

You don't understand. There's no
law out here. No real law. I'm no
better than cattle to these men.

Cora runs her hands lovingly through Bourrat's thick hair.

CORA

Then you come along, and I think,
maybe, there's a chance. A chance
for some happiness. A chance to get
free. But... if someone drags your
body into town, like that poor
McCoy boy... I don't know what I...

Bourrat cradles her.

BOURRAT

There there, *chéri*. I will not lie
to you: your fear is justified.
What I am about to do could cost me
much. But I promise you, I will do
everything in my power to return.

CORA

You swear? You swear you'll come
back to me?

BOURRAT

On the soul of my mother, I promise
I will come back. And then we will
leave this place. Together.

Cora kisses him deeply. Nuzzles her head into his chest.

Bourrat looks up to the full moon for assurance. But the pale
orb has only cold light to offer.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRIFFIN'S MANSION/DINING ROOM - MORNING

Griffin sits alone at the end of a long table. A plump MAID
brings him his breakfast on a silver tray.

GRIFFIN

Let me know when Mister Bourrat
arrives. I want to wish him luck
before he sets out.

MAID

Beggin' yer pardon, Colonel. Mister
Bourrat, he already come and gone.

GRIFFIN

(panicked)
He what?

MAID

First thing this mornin'. He
gathered up his horse. Took the
money you left for him. Then he
rode straight away.

Griffin's eyes dart about.

MAID

Somethin' wrong, Colonel?

GRIFFIN

(distracted)
...Huh? What? No. Just... let me
eat.

The Maid bows and retreats. Griffin gnaws on a piece of bacon, his mind whirling.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - SAME

Pecor slumps at a table. An almost-empty bottle sits precariously close to the table's edge.

A gloved hand shakes Pecor awake. Through blurry eyes, he sees...

BOURRAT

Takes a seat across from him.

PECOR

Whuzza... why ya wanna...

BOURRAT

Bonjour, my friend. Is this a bad time?

PECOR

What th' hell you want?

BOURRAT

To talk business. I was hoping I could hire you for the day.

Pecor fumbles for his bottle. Bourrat guides it to his shaky hand.

PECOR

Why you comin' t' me?

BOURRAT

Only you can show me where you found young Thomas McCoy.

Pecor CHOKES on his last swig of booze.

PECOR

Mister, yer crazy! After what I seen? Ain't nothin' gonna make me go back there!

Bourrat places a short stack of silver dollars on the table.

BOURRAT

Your cooperation would help me a great deal. And I would appreciate the company.

Pecor sobers up quickly. Hefts the money.

PECOR

If we're going, then we gotta get goin' now. T' make it there 'n back before nightfall.

BOURRAT

Wonderful. But on our way, I would like to take a short detour.

He smiles warmly at his new friend.

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - SAME

Bourrat helps Pecor up on his horse. Bourrat mounts Hugo.

BOURRAT

After you, *monsieur*.

They ride off in a cloud of dust.

As they GALLOP away...

OSBOURNE

Emerges from a hotel with a SALOON GIRL.

At the sight of Bourrat and Pecor, Deputy Osbourne ditches his companion without a word. He runs down the street, leaving the fuming young woman behind.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWN OUTSKIRTS - AFTERNOON

Bourrat and Pecor follow a road leading away from Prosperity, out into the countryside.

They come to a cleared area surrounded by a derelict fence.

Bourrat spurs Hugo through the collapsed gate. Pecor crosses himself before following.

The two men arrive at the charred remains of a house.

PECOR
 There ya go. Mallol's house. Though
 I got no reason why in hell you'd
 wanna come here.

BOURRAT

Dismounts. Walks around the ruined foundation.

He squats. Inspects what was once the front porch. Sifts
 through the grass.

BOURRAT
 (to himself)
 Ah, what have we here...

BOURRAT'S POV

He pulls a bullet shell from the grass.

PECOR

Nudges his horse forward.

PECOR
 What'cha got there?

BOURRAT
 A shell. A very unusual caliber.

PECOR
 Shoot, so many people flooded into
 th' territory after th' War, they's
 guns from all over th' world in
 Arizona now.

He looks off into the nearby rust-colored hills.

PECOR
 Thousands o' acres, almost none of
 it fit to live on. You ask me,
 Mallol'd been better off tryin' t'
mine his property, 'stead o'
raisin' horses. Shoot, I'd'a bought
 this land in a second. Still,
 surprisin' th' Colonel got it.

BOURRAT
 Surely the Colonel must have the
 means to buy up the entire town,
 should he wish.

Pecor has a terrible poker face. Bourrat stares at him with a
 "you know something" look.

PECOR
(cracking)
Well, I shouldn't be sayin'
nothin'...

BOURRAT
Your words go no further than my
ears, my friend.

PECOR
Well... I made a drinkin' buddy o'
th' county assayer. He says
Griffin's mine ain't give up
nothin' but dust in months.

BOURRAT
That is surprising.

GRIFFIN
He's been spendin' every penny on
diggin' deeper. He thinks the
silver's still down there, waitin'
t' be found.

BOURRAT
Does he not have enough to meet his
debts?

Pecor suddenly gets why Bourrat has asked. He LAUGHS.

PECOR
HAHAHA! I hope you got yer money up
front, son! C'mon, we still got a
ways to go.

Still LAUGHING, Pecor turns his horse back to the road,
leaving Bourrat with his thoughts.

Bourrat carefully pockets the spent shell.

DISSOLVE TO:

ARIZONA WILDERNESS - MONTAGE

Bourrat and Pecor travel through the sparse but beautiful
Arizona desert.

Bourrat's attention is not on his surroundings. He's dwelling
on all the things about this bounty that don't add up.

PECOR

Whips out his pistol. FIRES into the air.

BOURRAT

Spins in his saddle...

...just in time to see several COYOTES slink into the brush.

PECOR

Go on! Git!

(to Bourrat)

Damn kai-yotes. Been followin' us
fer hours.

BOURRAT

I have never seen one attack a
human before.

PECOR

Been a hard year. Game's scarce.
You saw what they did to that McCoy
boy. I ain't takin' no chances.

Bourrat lingers, watching the predators blend into the
undergrowth.

BOURRAT

(to the coyotes)

We are all just trying to survive,
are we not?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

Pecor leads Bourrat through a wall of low spikey trees, into
a small clearing.

PECOR

Jesus, Mary an' Joseph...

A large low rock sits in the middle of the space. A rock with
a dark stain running down the side.

BOURRAT

Dismounts. Surveys the area.

BOURRAT

I would appreciate it if you would
remain on your horse for the
moment.

PECOR

More'n happy t' oblige.

Bourrat examines the rock. Runs his fingers through the bloody sand.

BOURRAT

The boy was on the rock, I take it?

PECOR

Yeah. Kind'a laid out on it.

BOURRAT

Not much blood.

PECOR

How's that?

BOURRAT

If the coyotes tore into the boy, there would be much more blood. The entire rock should be soaked in it.

Bourrat takes in the pattern of foot and boot prints.

BOURRAT

Odd...

PECOR

How's that now?

BOURRAT

There are several sets of prints here.

PECOR

I don't see nothin'. How do you know all that?

BOURRAT

The Huron Indians in Canada. They taught me how to read the ground. To see the signs left behind.

(back to the prints)

One set is bare feet... the other was made by a new pair of boots... And then there are signs of... a coyote? A very large coyote...

PECOR

Can't hide his unease.

PECOR

Lissen, son, it's a long ride back t' Prosperity. We best git goin', 'fore dark.

BOURRAT

I understand. Thank you for your help. And the company. I wish you safe travels back to town.

PECOR

Hang on a minute. You ain't thinkin' of ridin' out into th' desert tonight? That's crazy!

BOURRAT

Then I am crazy. Time is not on my side, I'm afraid.

Bourrat flips him another coin.

BOURRAT

We will share a drink when I return.

PECOR

'Til then. God watch over ya.

He spurs his horse. They glide through the trees, headed home.

BOURRAT

Circles the area, mentally retracing the phantom steps. They lead to the other side of the clearing. And into the bushes.

Bourrat retrieves Hugo. Pats his snout.

BOURRAT

Now the real adventure begins, no?

Leading Hugo, Bourrat follows his new trail.

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - MONTAGE

Over hills, across rocky expanses, and through thickets, Bourrat follows the faint trail left by Thomas McCoy and his mystery companion.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - EARLY EVENING

The sun sits close to the horizon as Hugo pushes through the brush.

Bourrat and his horse emerge onto the rim of a dry riverbed. An arroyo.

Bourrat tethers Hugo. Descends to the creek bed.

BOURRAT'S POV

A flurry of horseshoe prints. Boot prints. Foot prints. Paw prints.

BOURRAT

Moves around the site, following the action only he can see.

BOURRAT

(musing)

One set of boot prints comes from the east. But these prints, the horses... they come from the west. Then there is a melee of some sort...

He squats down. Cocks his head as he evaluates.

BOURRAT

Then only two tracks. The ones we followed. The barefoot man, and his companion.

The wind shifts. Bourrat catches a whiff of something in the air.

He follows his nose, around a large pile of fallen rocks.

Bourrat discovers a small hunting cabin tucked behind the boulders, nestled against the arroyo wall. Ashes fill a small firepit.

INT. HUNTING CABIN - SAME

Bourrat steps inside. He finds a small bed, a cabinet with some provisions, and an empty bottle of whiskey.

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - SAME

Bourrat picks through the ashes in the firepit with his knife.

He uncovers the charred remains of a bright red bandanna.

The bandanna seems familiar. He holds it close, trying to remember.

Bourrat stands. Scans the area as he tucks the bandanna into his pocket.

BOURRAT

(to Hugo)

Each leg of this hunt leads to another mystery, no? I feel like we are missing an important piece of this puzzle. And I do not like being in the dark.

Bourrat realizes the sun is touching the horizon. He pulls his gear out of his saddlebags. Offers Hugo one of the apples.

BOURRAT

You've earned a rest, my friend. We'll bed down here for the night. And tomorrow, hopefully, we'll come to the end of our search.

Hugo's only response is the CRUNCHING of his treat.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - LATE EVENING

Bourrat sleeps under the star-filled sky, his hat covering his face. A small fire CRACKLES nearby. Hugo grazes nonchalantly on the edge of the campground. His saddle and bags are draped over a large rock.

OSBOURNE

Slinks out of the darkness. Keeping an eye on Bourrat the entire time, he quietly makes his way to the saddlebags.

He slowly unbuckles the saddlebag. Reaches in. Roots around.

Osbourne freezes when he feels cold metal pressed against the back of his head.

BOURRAT

Nonchalantly COCKS his gun's hammer.

BOURRAT

Can I help you find what you're--

Moving with a speed that belies his beefy bulk, Osbourne spins. Knocks the gun out of Bourrat's hand.

Too surprised to defend himself, Bourrat is battered by Osbourne's meaty fists.

Bourrat gets his feet under him. Ducks a punch. Gets in some decent blows.

Bourrat stuns Osbourne, but doesn't rattle him. Osbourne is too big. Too solid.

Bourrat tries to choke Osbourne. Osbourne flails about. Osbourne slams Bourrat into the makeshift hunting cabin.

Dazed, Bourrat's grip slips. Osbourne gets a handful of Bourrat's clothing. Pulls him off. Slings him across the arroyo.

The two men catch their breath. Osbourne wipes the blood out of his eyes. Bourrat painfully props himself up against the rock.

Osbourne wobbles. He pulls his gun. Takes shaky aim at Bourrat.

BOURRAT

What... have I done... to you?...

OSBOURNE

(emotional)

Every day, I see Griffin and Preyer slingin' money around like they're emptyin' a chamber pot. They got more money than God! But they never take care of those of us that do their dirty work! That silver Griffin give to you... That's my money! I earned it, dammit! I need it!

BOURRAT

We all... need money...

OSBOURNE

You just wanna throw it away on fancy clothes, and that whore you're ruttin' with. But my ma... My ma is dyin'! You don't know what it's like, watchin' your mother suffer right in front o' you? When someone could help?

BOURRAT

You are... not the only one... who has suffered...

BLAM! Osbourne fires a round into the ground next to Bourrat.

OSBOURNE
Shut up! I don't care about anyone
else! Now tell me where you stashed
that bounty money!

Bourrat summons his remaining strength. Pulls himself up to
where he's sitting.

OSBOURNE
Don't move! I don't want to shoot
you! Just tell me where the money
is!

Bourrat seems punch-drunk. His eyes focus beyond Osbourne.

BOURRAT
Cheval. Un pas à droite.

OSBOURNE
What? What the hell did you just
say?

BOURRAT
I said, you should not have done
this.
(beat)
Cheval. Un pas à droite.

OSBOURNE
Speak English, dammit!

BOURRAT
My friend is upset with you.
(beat)
Cheval. Un pas à droite.

OSBOURNE
Friend? What friend? You set out
into the desert all by yourself!
Like an idiot!

BOURRAT
Coup!

OSBOURNE
I don't speak--

WHAM! Hugo, who has moved beside Osbourne at Bourrat's
command, KICKS Osbourne hard.

The gun FIRES as it flies out of his hand.

Osbourne sails across the campground. He lands in a heap. Clutching his midsection, he GASPS for breath.

Bourrat drags himself to his feet. Collects his gun.

BOURRAT

Now, can we put... this ugliness behind us... and talk for a moment?

Osbourne tearfully GRUNTS. Bourrat takes that as a "yes".

BOURRAT

You made many mistakes tonight, *mon ami*. You attacked a man who had never done you any harm. You failed to pay attention to your surroundings.

Bourrat squats down. He's eye to eye with Osbourne.

BOURRAT

And you failed to think that perhaps, instead of stealing... you could have merely asked for help.

OSBOURNE

(pained)

Ask...?

Bourrat holsters his weapon.

He kicks aside his bedroll. Digs into the dirt. Retrieves a sack.

He picks up Osbourne's hat. As Osbourne watches, Bourrat shakes multiple shiny silver coins out of the sack into the hat.

He offers a hand to Osbourne. Hesitantly, Osbourne takes it. Bourrat helps his beaten opponent off the ground.

OSBOURNE

Why... Why are you...

BOURRAT

When I was a boy, I lost my mother to a disease that could have been cured, had my father not drunk away the money for the medicine. In her last moments, she gasped for air and tore at her bedsheets. It was the most horrible thing I have ever experienced.

And I would do anything in my power
to spare another person that pain.

Bourrat places the filled hat into the stunned Osbourne's hands.

Bourrat picks up Osbourne's gun. Returns it to its holster.

BOURRAT

Go. Ride back to your mother. Then
leave Prosperity as soon as you
can. Head for Santa Fe. And never
come back.

Osbourne looks from the hat to Bourrat and back. Bourrat just smiles.

Fearing some sort of trap, Osbourne slowly backs away, still not believing that Bourrat is just letting him go.

Osbourne pushes through the bushes. Disappears into the inky night.

BOURRAT

(weakly)

Bon chance, deputy.

Now that the fight is over, Bourrat allows himself to sit heavily on the ground. He tenderly checks out his multiple injuries.

Hugo bumps his muzzle against Bourrat. Bourrat leans his battered face against the warm fur of his friend.

BOURRAT

Did he not know that no man on
horseback travels without a friend?
Perhaps we forgive him this one
time, no? And wish him safe
travels?

Hugo NICKERS in agreement.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - MORNING

Day breaks above the hills in the distance, lighting the sky on fire.

BOURRAT
(to the sun)
*Content de te revoir, my old
friend.*

Favoring his aching body as he packs up his gear, Bourrat can't help but smile.

BOURRAT
(to Hugo)
There are many horrors in this world, eh? But we must appreciate the small moments, like right now, where beauty is all around us.

He rubs Hugo's snout lovingly. The horse nuzzles him.

BOURRAT
And I appreciate you being here to share it with me.

With the new morning behind them, they ride off up the arroyo.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - LATE AFTERNOON

Bourrat picks his way through the rocky riverbed of the arroyo.

He stops Hugo. Hops off. Crouches down to investigate the riverbed.

BOURRAT'S POV

Two sets of boot prints that lead up the slope of the riverbed.

BOURRAT

Ties up his horse. Pats him reassuringly.

BOURRAT
Do not fret, my friend. I will be back.

He climbs to the rim of the riverbed.

Bourrat finds disturbed soil and rocks... another trail.

BOURRAT
(to himself)
McCoy's boots... but the second
tracks are not leather soles...
This is not the one who met him at
the cabin...

He pulls his gun. COCKS the hammer.

With all his senses focused, Bourrat follows the faint trail.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - LATER

Bourrat ascends a rocky hillside, carefully scanning the way forward.

He freezes. Senses something.

RRRUMBLE! Large boulders TUMBLE down the slope.

Bourrat ducks to the side. FIRES towards the place where the rocks fell.

PWING! Bullets ricochet off the rocks, just missing Bourrat. He scrambles into a safe position.

Bourrat tries to get a bead on his attacker, but the sun is in his eyes.

BOURRAT
(to the sun)
I sing your praises, and this is
how you repay me...

Bourrat listens. No more gunshots or landslides.

BOURRAT
Mallol! Deward Mallol!

No response. Just the ECHO of his own voice.

Bourrat takes a deep breath. Holsters his pistol. Steps out with his hands up.

BOURRAT
I am sure you think I am here to
kill you, *monsieur*. But I assure
you, I am not. I want to talk.

Bourrat waits. A slight breeze blows the dirt around.

Bourrat listens intently, as if he's aware of something unseen. A slight smile creeps onto his face.

WHACK! Bourrat is knocked out by an unseen attacker.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAVE - LATE EVENING

Bourrat slowly comes to. All he sees is darkness. He realizes he's got a burlap sack over his head.

Someone removes the bag.

Bourrat winces. As his eyes adjust, he sees he's in a small cave. And he's not alone. Bourrat has finally found...

MALLOL

Ragged. Unkempt. A filthy rag tied around his head and over his left eye. Pelts tied around his feet. He stands by a small fire burning in a circle of rocks.

MALLOL

Another one of Griffin's mercenaries. And from the condition of his face, one who's already seen some action, it would appear.

BOURRAT

Dieudonné Bourrat. And there is no need to introduce yourself, *Monsieur* Mallol.

MALLOL

A Frenchman? Is Griffin having to recruit his butchers from overseas?

BOURRAT

Not exactly. I have been wandering the American territories for some time now. I only recently happened upon Prosperity, and the Colonel's offer.

MALLOL

Let me guess: To bring me in. Alive.

BOURRAT

That was the offer, yes. But I have come to understand that there may be more to your situation than I was originally told.

MALLOL

It doesn't matter what he told you. You've come a long way for nothing.

Bourrat looks over his guest's quarters.

BOURRAT

It is fortunate that you found such a hidden lair. The desert can be very inhospitable.

MALLOL

I've endured worse. Four years of crawling through the muck and mire with a rifle in my hands taught me more about survival than I ever hoped to know.

Bourrat notices the hides Mallol is using for shoes.

BOURRAT

Should you not be well supplied with boots by now?

MALLOL

I must have hit you harder than I thought. You're talking nonsense.

Mallol goes through Bourrat's things. Notices his knife is missing from its sheath.

MALLOL

You lost your weapon?

BOURRAT

(shrugging)

It must have fallen out during our brief melee.

MALLOL

You're not cut out for the bounty hunter business, are you, son?

BOURRAT

I would be hurt by that insult, had I not allowed myself to be taken.

MALLOL

(scoffing)

"Allowed"? I don't think so.

BOURRAT

You were on the northeast corner of the ridge. You forced me into the crevice created by the boulders. You then circled around to the west. Came up from behind the rock with the crack in it.

MALLOL

How did you...

BOURRAT

I am very good at what I do. But even an amateur would have known you were coming.

(sniffing)

I know of an establishment where you can get a good bath, my friend.

Mallol SLAPS him. Bourrat works his jaw side-to-side.

BOURRAT

Apologies. But that does not change the fact that I wanted to meet you in conversation instead of conflict.

MALLOL

Huh. And what did you hope to get out of meeting me?

BOURRAT

Your side of the story. Griffin and the lawman have told me their version. But my gut tells me they have not been entirely truthful.

Mallol looks at him with suspicion. In response, Bourrat acknowledges his bindings. His helpless position.

BOURRAT

As you can see, I am bound tightly. By your very hands. I cannot possibly be a threat. And since I am not going anywhere, I am a very captive audience. Please, indulge me.

Mallol sizes up the situation. He's surprised by Bourrat's behavior, almost charmed. The man does seem to genuinely want to talk.

Mallol settles down on the other side of the fire. Rests a pistol in his lap.

MALLOL

What did they tell you about me?

BOURRAT

That you moved here after the war, looking to start a new life for your family. That you suffered multiple misfortunes which upset you to the point where you went mad, and you killed your wife.

MALLOL

That's what they said, is it? Well, I'll give them this: they didn't lie about the first part. I thought getting away from the South was going to be a new beginning for us. But everything went wrong. I was lied to about the property I bought. One of the horses I bought had an illness that the breeder didn't tell me about. Within a couple of months I lost the entire herd.

Mallol pulls a well-read, fire-damaged Bible from a nook.

MALLOL

I asked God over and over: Why? Why was this happening to me? Was it because I killed my fellow man? Because once, in a moment of drunken weakness, I violated the sanctity of my marriage? Because I felt I could escape His judgment by moving a thousand miles away?

Mallol brandishes the pistol. Bourrat watches intently.

MALLOL

But He didn't answer me. And I was left with my failure. I felt a despair that ate into my soul. So I marched off into my worthless acreage with just the clothes on my back, and this revolver, with no intention of coming back.

I wandered for two days in the wilderness until I could go no further. I sat on an outcropping, closed my eyes, and put the barrel to my temple.

Mallol pauses. Bourrat can see bliss overcoming him.

MALLOL

But I was wrong. So wrong. God was listening. He was there with me. He put fear into me. Fear that made my hands shake like an aspen. Fear that made me miss. And in the shock of that moment, He rendered me unconscious.

Mallol roots around in a small chest in the corner.

MALLOL

When I came to, I had fallen down into a rift between the rocks. And there in front of me...

He opens a small leather pouch. Shakes out a large handful of raw silver.

MALLOL

Silver. A vein six inches wide. On my property. The worthless property which almost made me take my life. The Lord allowed me my human weakness, only to show me that He would always be there to answer my prayers. And with His abundance in my hands, I went back to my family, to beg their forgiveness, and to stake the claim to my Heaven-sent fortune.

Mallol's face darkens. His moment of bliss has passed. He clenches the silver.

MALLOL

But where God goes, so goes the Deceiver. And that foul demon had found purchase in the soul of the man I considered my friend.

BOURRAT

You went to Griffin with your find first.

MALLOL

I had hoped to get his advice, for how to protect the fortune for my family. But the look in his eyes... Never had I seen a more covetous look. He harassed me daily, wanting to purchase my claim. It was during this time that I discovered his mine had gone dry. He was beside himself. He could not fathom a life lived without the hunt for his precious "sheen". The more I said no, the more he pushed. Until his obsession drove him to commit the ultimate sin.

Mallol places the silver back in the chest.

MALLOL

One night a trio of masked men broke into my house. They held my family at gunpoint, refusing to release them until I signed my property over to Griffin. Foolishly, I engaged them in struggle. I got a knife into one of them, right in the forearm. But they had me at a disadvantage. I couldn't beat them all.

Mallol looks up at Bourrat. His eyes are filled with tears.

MALLOL

My Esther, she is... was full of spirit. She never backed down from a fight. And she wasn't about to let some ruffian harm her family. She turned on the man I stabbed. Like a wildcat. But while they were grappling... His gun went off. And I watched... I watched my beloved Esther die. The shock paralyzed me. And allowed the man a chance to fire at me.

Mallol touches the dirty rag covering his eye.

MALLOL

I lay on the floor, fighting to remain conscious. The last words I heard before darkness claimed me was the runt of the pack saying, "Let's have us some fun".

Mallol loses himself in his thoughts. Bourrat watches his face as emotions play over it.

MALLOL

When I came to, I found I was in the desert. Left for dead. And next to me, coyotes were... were swarming about my wife's corpse. Somehow, I fought off the scavengers. When my rage subsided, I was presented with yet another test of my faith. My first thought was to bury Esther, to obey the scriptures. But my heart, my concern for my daughter, set me on the course to Emily. I struggled through the wilderness for days, until I came to the smoking remains of what had been my home.

Mallol puts a shaky hand on the lid of the chest.

MALLOL

The only things that survived the blaze were this chest, hidden under the stone hearth, and the Bible given to me by my mother before I set out for the war.

BOURRAT

And then? Did you seek help from the law?

MALLOL

(darkly)

I went to Preyer, to tell him what had happened. But he didn't hear a single thing I said. In his mind, I had killed my wife and burned down my house to hide my guilt. His deputies overwhelmed me, and that was that. I was convicted on the spot, and sent to prison for the rest of my natural life.

BOURRAT

And where was your friend the Colonel through all of this?

MALLOL

He never once showed his face. And I let my anger with him get the best of me.

When I escaped, I made my way back to him, to get my vengeance. But... I hesitated. The Lord's words were in my head like the ringing of a church bell. "Thou shalt not kill". And despite every effort I made... I could not.

BOURRAT

And yet you have no problem with the killing of the men sent to find you. Men such as myself.

MALLOL

(angry)

How dare you. After everything I did in the war, I swore to God I would never kill again!

BOURRAT

To knowingly send a man out with no food, no water, no means to defend himself? On a journey of days? Through this treacherous desert? What man could survive such an ordeal?

Mallol is stunned he's being accused. He thrusts his charred Bible in Bourrat's face.

MALLOL

A pious man knows God will not abandon him!

BOURRAT

A man like you?

MALLOL

I was put to a test. God judged me, and found me worthy. All of you amoral devils who come after me, I subject you to the same test. I leave your fate in God's hands.

Bourrat shifts his position. He's no longer acting passive. He's now confidently sitting forward. Looking right at Mallol.

BOURRAT

My friend... Deward... I hate to disagree with you. But you survived because you were skilled, and you were lucky. God had nothing to do with your fate.

Mallol delivers a hard backhand to Bourrat's face.

MALLOL

(furious)

Shut your atheist mouth. I was willing to let you talk. But I will not allow you to blaspheme in my presence.

Bourrat shakes off the hit. Continues to stare right into Mallol's eyes.

BOURRAT

You misunderstand me. I am no atheist. I definitely believe that there is a God somewhere up there. But what I do not believe is that He pays attention to any of the souls here on Earth. He breathes life into us, yes. But then He exiles us here, without a moment of hesitation. And just to make a point, He then turns his back on us. God is up there, to be sure. But He is laughing at us the entire time.

MALLOL

I feel sorry for you. You've closed your heart to the Lord. You don't understand the vastness of His presence. He is always watching. He is always with every one of His children.

BOURRAT

He is, is He? Always looking over His flock?

MALLOL

Absolutely.

BOURRAT

So tell me this: where was He when a young boy had his trust violated by a man he believed in? A man of God, no less? Where was this incredibly loving Lord when the boy lay bleeding and broken in a cold basement, his innocence stripped away forever? Why did God not pronounce judgment on the man?

Why did He leave the boy to exact his own vengeance? And to lose everything as a result?

A horrified look dawns on Mallol's face as he understands what Bourrat is saying.

BOURRAT

You hide behind your faith. You justify your actions based on words in an ancient book. But every one of those men you put to your "test"... they all died. Killed by exposure to the elements. Torn apart by wild animals.

MALLOL

(in denial)

Then... they were unfit. Sinners all. Not worthy of His protection--

BOURRAT

Deward! By sending your defenseless pursuers into the wild, you are just as guilty as if you put a bullet in their heads. Their fates were not in God's hands. They were in yours.

A heavy silence hangs between the two men. Bourrat can see the wheels turning behind Mallol's eyes.

Mallol places his Bible back into the chest. He picks up the burlap sack that had been over Bourrat's head.

MALLOL

(softly)

I hope you remember your prayers. Because tomorrow, no matter what you believe, your life will be in God's hands.

Mallol roughly replaces the bag over Bourrat's head.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - DAWN

Mallol once again rips the bag off of Bourrat's head.

Bourrat winces from the blinding light.

BOURRAT
 (to the sun)
*Content de te revoir, my old
 friend...*

As his eyes adjust, Bourrat realizes they're back on the rim of the arroyo. With his arms bound behind him.

MALLOL

Tightens the ropes around Bourrat's wrists.

MALLOL
 Follow the arroyo west. If you stay constant, it's a two day walk.

BOURRAT
 What of Hugo? If you've killed him--

MALLOL
 Calm down. I would never harm a horse.

Mallol spins Bourrat around.

MALLOL
 I'll give you the same message for Griffin that I gave the others: I want my property back.

BOURRAT
 Why not return with me, and deliver it yourself?

MALLOL
 (amused)
 You've got spirit, I'll give you that.

Mallol's head falls. A softness comes over him.

MALLOL
 If what you say is true, I'm sorry those men died. But, for what it's worth, I truly hope you don't share their fate.

BOURRAT
 You don't--

Mallol pushes Bourrat down the hill.

Bourrat TUMBLES into the arroyo. Lands in a cloud of dust.

When Bourrat gets his feet under him, he sees that Mallol is gone.

BOURRAT
Mallol! Mallol!

Again, no response.

Bourrat sizes up his options. He tests his bindings, but they don't budge. Then he realizes...

...he's still wearing his boots.

Before he can make sense of that, somewhere in the distance, a coyote HOWLS.

Bourrat is out of time. He starts running.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

Under the brutal sun, Bourrat stumble-runs along the dry creek bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun is finally setting. Bourrat tries to rest in the shade of a meager bush.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - EVENING

Bourrat ignores the stars shining down on him as he struggles to continue his trek back to civilization.

He trips. Falls hard. Cuts his arm on a rock. He's a strong young man, but he's exhausted.

Somewhere nearby several coyotes YIP back and forth. Bourrat hauls himself up. Keeps moving forward.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - EARLY MORNING

The glow of the coming sun is on the horizon. Almost delirious, Bourrat shuffles forward.

Even though he's exhausted, his tracking skills are still sharp. He comes to a halt. Reaches out with his senses.

Something is stalking him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

Another day exposed to the heat. Bourrat is almost unconscious, but he's still able to walk.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - LATE NIGHT

Bourrat is dead on his feet. He forces his body to move forward, one step at a time.

His willpower gives out. Bourrat drops to the ground. For a long moment he is completely still.

Without warning, a dark shape darts out of the blackness. Then another. And another. A trio of large coyotes.

The predators warily inspect their potential prey.

Eventually hunger overtakes caution. One of the coyotes nips at Bourrat's leg. He doesn't move. Emboldened, the coyote bites deep into the leg.

Bourrat jolts awake. Kicks the coyote in the head.

Bourrat flails about. YELLS. Struggles to stand. Makes as much NOISE as he can.

The coyotes are unsure of what to do. Bourrat kicks rocks at them. Runs at them.

Deciding their meal is too much work, the pack gallops off into the night.

The predators leave the half-conscious bounty hunter behind.

BOURRAT

(weakly)

We... are all... just trying... to survive...

With a supreme effort, he pushes himself to his feet against the arroyo wall. Taking a moment to gather his strength, he agonizingly stumbles forward.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

Faltering. Bleeding. Sweating. PANTING. Bourrat drags himself along.

He stops short.

EXT. HUNTING CABIN - SAME

Bourrat has made it to the hunting cabin.

He bursts into a dry LAUGH. Looks up to the sky.

BOURRAT
(to God)
Maybe You were watching over me,
no?

He sits down heavily on a rock. Leans back. Digs into the dirt and gravel.

A smile comes to his face when he finds...

INSERT

His knife. The knife he hid before he set out.

BOURRAT

Cuts at his bonds with difficulty.

As he tries to get free, he expends what energy he has left to move towards the shelter of the cabin.

PREYER (O.S.)
I must say...

PREYER

Steps out of the cabin, stroking his mustache.

PREYER
...I am truly disappointed.

Bourrat's heart sinks when he sees Simon follow Preyer out into the open. Simon is barely restraining his huge dog.

BOURRAT

Just the... two of you... to see to my fate?...

PREYER

I can't find that ape Osbourne anywhere. He cleared out overnight, looks like. He and his ma. Say, you didn't have anything to do with that, did you?

BOURRAT

Perhaps... he realized... I was coming back... to see you all... brought to justice...

PREYER

(chuckling)

A tough *hombre* up to the very end, huh? You know, you had me thinking you really could bring Mallol back in one piece. But here you are, tied up and near dead. Just like all the other nobodies we've taken care of.

BOURRAT

Slowly backs away from Preyer, trying to draw attention away from his attempt to cut his bonds.

BOURRAT

(weakly)

How... did you know... I would be here...?

PREYER

The first bounty hunter we sent out...

(to Simon)

Some half-Mexican kid, right...?

(to Bourrat)

...the kid came back same as you. Right down the arroyo. Luckily, we already had men out here prospecting, looking for Mallol's strike. They ran into the kid. Brought him back. He told us Mallol specifically sent him back along the riverbed.

BOURRAT

He was not killed?

PREYER

Not by me, no. Griffin was so angry, he had Leeolou strangle him. Dumped his body in one of the disused mine shafts.

Preyer puts a thin black cigar between his teeth. Lights it. Lets the smoke seep out of his mouth.

PREYER

When Griffin sent out the second one, a big Black buck from Chicago, I played a hunch. Had Simon post up here. Sure enough, days later, "Buck" comes stumbling down the creek, just like you.

Preyer pats Simon's dog. It GROWLS.

PREYER

Simon here, he isn't too fond of the Negroes. And his mutt likes them even less. So Simon "accidentally" loses control of the dog, and it... well, it has its way with ol' Buck.

The dog BARKS. Lunges. Bourrat doesn't flinch.

PREYER

We can't be bringing a torn-up man back to town, not even a Negro. People would start to ask questions. Then the Colonel comes up with the idea of hiding him just outside of town, someplace he'll be found. Sure enough, the townsfolk went out of their fool minds when they thought that Mallol had sacrificed a man to the coyotes. Mallol's legend just grew from there.

Preyer leans up against the shed. THUMPS it with his fist.

PREYER

So now, when someone rides out to fetch Mallol, we post someone here to welcome them back. He woulda been here when the McCoy boy showed up, but... you and Williams got into that little fracas. So I had to put that greenhorn kid here.

Preyer walks towards Bourrat.

PREYER

This time, though... This time I just had to be here. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to see you walk out of the desert with Mallol in tow. But, like I say, you let me down.

BOURRAT

Feels the ropes around his wrists giving way. He has to stall them.

BOURRAT

If... you know that Mallol... is at the other end of the arroyo... why not... go after him yourself?

PREYER

(scoffing)

You serious? Son, there's hundreds of miles of rocks and washes and caves out there. Not to mention the rattlesnakes and coyotes. Mallol could be anywhere, under a rock or behind a cactus, waiting to jump out at us. I don't care if Griffin gives me a sack of silver, I'm not risking my neck.

Preyer pulls his gun.

BOURRAT

Besides, who knows what Mallol would do to the man who put a bullet in his wife's head?

Bourrat hears it with his own ears: Preyer's admission of guilt. Of Griffin's guilt.

PREYER

So, here we are. Now, before things get ugly, I have to ask you: what did Mallol tell you?

BOURRAT

If you mean the location of the silver, I have no idea. He didn't feel compelled to confide in a man hired to capture him.

PREYER

Damn. I figured he wouldn't.
 (kicks at the ground)
 This should've been so simple. One
 of you trigger-happy saps rolls
 into town, Smythe gives you the
 sales pitch...

BOURRAT

Smythe... He is involved?...

PREYER

(chuckling)
 Involved? Hell, he's the one put
 the idea in Griffin's head!

Bourrat hangs his head. Another level of corruption.

PREYER

Oh well. Let's get on with it.
 Simon, get his boots.

Preyer steps back. Motions to his deputy.

Bourrat needs more time. He backs away in mock fear.

BOURRAT

Wait! Do I... Do I not get any sort
 of last request?

PREYER

Like what, Frenchie?

BOURRAT

I merely wish to ask a question.

PREYER

Just one?

BOURRAT

There is one thing I do not
 understand. The boots...?

PREYER

Huh. You're about to snuff it, and
that's what's on your mind?

BOURRAT

It has been bothering me since I
 began this job. Why make it look as
 if Mallol forced his victims to
 march barefoot?

PREYER

Fair enough. To the townspeople, it makes Mallol look like a monster. But I've got a cousin in Philadelphia who runs a stagecoach depot. He gets all these wannabe cowboys coming through, heading out to "the Wild West" for fortune, or adventure, or Lord knows what. I send him the boots, and he tells these rubes they're the boots Jesse James was wearing when he was shot. He gets over twenty bucks a pair! Can you believe that? I get half. And I throw some money to the boys for their fun.

Simon GIGGLES like a madman as his dog pulls on its leash.

BOURRAT

You men are truly evil.

PREYER

Guilty as charged.

Bourrat bursts into hysterical LAUGHTER.

SIMON

(rattled)

What's got you so tickled?

BOURRAT

You don't seem to understand. I know about Mallol's silver. I know you and your men attacked Mallol. I know you killed his wife. I know what you've done to the bounty hunters.

PREYER

And? What good does all that knowledge do you?

BOURRAT

I will contact the Texas Rangers. I will have them arrest you. Your men. Griffin. And I will see you all go to prison.

Preyer and the deputies exchange amused looks. Now it's their turn to LAUGH.

PREYER

That's a pretty good plan there,
Frenchie! Except, the way I see it,
you'd have to get free first. And
that would take some sort of
miracle.

BOURRAT

Cuts through his bindings.

Whips his knife into Preyer's gun hand.

Preyer's gun drops to the ground. BLAM! It goes off. The
bullet hits...

SIMON

Right in the thigh. He SCREAMS. Falls to his knees.

PREYER

AAAAAH! Kill him! Kill him!!!

SIMON

Releases the dog. It lunges.

BOURRAT

Puts up his arm to block the attack. The dog slams into him.
Knocks him down. Clamps its jaws onto his arm.

Bourrat grabs a rock. CLUBS the dog in the temple over and
over. The dog WHIMPERS. Collapses.

He scrambles to his feet, only to find...

SIMON

Brandishing his own huge knife at Bourrat.

SIMON

Let's have us some fun!

A chill goes up Bourrat's spine. The taunt from Mallol's
story... it was Simon.

Simon starts towards Bourrat...

BANG! A bullet shoots the knife out of Simon's hand.

Everyone looks up at...

MALLOL

On the rim of the arroyo, astride Hugo. Holding a smoking pistol.

SIMON

It's him!

BOURRAT

Takes advantage of the surprise. Scoops up Simon's knife. Stabs him in the shoulder.

Simon SCREAMS. Bourrat PUNCHES him in the face. Simon falls.

MALLOL

Guides Hugo down into the riverbed.

BOURRAT

Places his head against Hugo's.

BOURRAT

I am... very glad to see you.
(to Mallol)
Both of you.

MALLOL

Dismounts. Takes in the defeated men. Simon is unconscious in the dirt. Preyer mutters to himself, clutching his ruined hand.

PREYER

(babbling)
Not my fault... Griffin wanted them
dead... Griffin's fault...

BOURRAT

(to Mallol)
How much did you hear?

MALLOL

Enough.

He CLUBS Preyer with his gun. The sheriff falls over unconscious.

Mallol tosses Bourrat a canteen. Bourrat drinks deep.

MALLOL

(looking Bourrat over)
It seems that you passed the test.
Barely.

BOURRAT

You... followed me...

MALLOL

What we were talking about earlier... What you said to me... Your words stayed with me. I felt that we needed a chance to finish our discussion.

BOURRAT

I would be more than happy to continue our debate. But right now, there are other matters that require my attention.

MALLOL

You could have killed these men.

BOURRAT

A dead man cannot face justice for his actions. These men will.

MALLOL

It's not just this scum. All of them need to be brought to justice.

BOURRAT

Then we are of the same mind. Are you willing to help me do what it takes to finish this?

Mallol answers by retrieving Bourrat's weapon from Hugo's saddlebags.

Bourrat straps on his gun belt. Relishes the feeling.

BOURRAT

Let us get to it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRIFFIN'S ESTATE - EVENING

The squad of armed guards stand watch all around the compound.

Griffin paces on the mansion's porch. Leeolou watches him impassively.

GRIFFIN

What in the name of all that's holy is keeping Preyer?

I told him to bring Mallol here
right away, right after he does
away with the Frenchman. No "games"
this time.

A high-pitched METALLIC SQUEAL echoes out of the darkness
beyond the compound wall.

GRIFFIN
What was that?

CLANK-CLANK-CLANK. WHIRRRRR. The noises grow louder.

GRIFFIN
(panicked)
It's the gondola!
(to the guards)
Oh my God... Mallol and the
Frenchman! Stop them!

The men run to the gondola landing. Throw open the doors.
They try to stop the gondola. The controls don't respond.

GUARD #1
They've sabotaged the brake! We
can't stop it!

GRIFFIN
Then shoot them! Shoot them!

The guards aim their rifles up into the ebony sky above the
river.

A small light FLARES high in the darkness.

GRIFFIN
What the...

The blaze grows closer... closer... closer...

FWOOSH! The out-of-control gondola BURSTS into flames.

GRIFFIN
Get back! Get away from--

CRASH! The gondola SHATTERS the wooden landing. Flaming
timbers fly everywhere.

Metal boxes TUMBLE out of the collision. The lids POP OPEN.
Burning sticks of Griffin's dynamite SCATTER across the
ground.

GRIFFIN

Run! Run!

The guards scramble for safety before...

BOOM! BOOM!! BOOM!!! The dynamite EXPLODES.

The guards limply cartwheel through the air.

Flames and debris rain over the compound.

GRIFFIN AND LEELOU

Dive for safety as burning timbers SHOWER the mansion. PUNCH through the porch. SHATTER windows. KNOCK shingles off the roof.

The building CRACKLES as the fire spreads.

GRIFFIN

Get a brigade going! Save the house!

The few men who can still help begin drawing water. Shoveling sand.

GRIFFIN

I'm going to lose everything...

Before Leeolou can stop him, Griffin dashes up the porch stairs. Dodges flames as he pushes his way into the house.

BOURRAT AND MALLLOL

Drop over the fence on the far side of the compound.

Griffin's men are too distracted to see them skirt the edge of the fence, in the shadows, towards the back of the mansion.

A panicky GUARD stumbles across them. Mallol gets in a good pistol-hit. Knocks out the guard.

The two intruders continue their slow advance.

LEELOU

Takes in the chaos surrounding him.

He suddenly realizes Griffin is no longer with him. Angrily, he runs into the mansion.

BOURRAT AND MALLLOL

Creep around to the rear of the mansion.

Some of Griffin's guards are loading up a carriage with chests, silverware, and other valuables.

Bourrat jumps one of the guards. Mallol takes on the others.

The guard gets a knife in Bourrat's arm. Despite his injury, Bourrat overpowers his foe.

Mallol uses a combination of fists and pistol-whips to render his opponents unconscious.

MALLOL

You're hurt.

BOURRAT

I will survive. Hurry, we do not have much time.

INT. GRIFFIN'S MANSION - SAME

Bourrat and Mallol slip through the back door.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! A hail of bullets. They dive for cover.

GRIFFIN

Empties his pistols at his pursuers.

GRIFFIN

Die! Die!

BOURRAT AND MALLOL

Duck behind furniture as they attempt to flank Griffin.

Griffin's wild shots SHATTER oil lamps. The oil fuels the fires. Flames climb the walls. Envelop the furnishings.

MALLOL

Takes aim at an oil lamp next to Griffin's head. It EXPLODES. Glass impales his cheek and temple.

As Griffin reels, Mallol charges him.

LEELOU

Leaps into the room. Rams into Mallol going full speed. They SLAM into the wall.

GRIFFIN

Scampers up the stairs. Blood pours from his wounds.

BOURRAT

Joins the fight against Leeolou.

Leeolou is a brute. He seemingly feels no pain as Bourrat and Mallol pelt him with fists, furniture, bottles... anything they can get their hands on.

The house ERUPTS into flames around them.

LEELOU

Throws the exhausted men across the room.

He SPITS blood. Puts up his fists. LAUGHS at them.

BOURRAT

Drags himself up on his feet. He puts up his fists in response.

LEELOU

Charges. Takes a big swing.

At the last second, Bourrat feints to the side.

CLANK! Leeolou's fist goes straight into one of Griffin's decorative animal traps. It SNAPS shut. Slices into his flesh.

Leeolou SCREAMS. Tries to tear himself free.

The burning ceiling timbers CREAK. Bourrat helps Mallol scramble away.

CRRRRUNCH! The upper floor falls in. Leeolou disappears in an avalanche of flaming debris.

Exhausted, Bourrat and Mallol share a "what the hell" moment.

They collect their weapons.

Through the billowing smoke, the two men follow Griffin's trail of blood up the stairs.

The blood leads them to the large double-doors of the master bedroom.

INT. GRIFFIN'S MANSION/MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

In unison, Bourrat and Mallol KICK OPEN the master bedroom doors.

They are stopped dead in their tracks.

BOURRAT

Mon dieu...

GRIFFIN

Leans over a large four-poster bed. In one hand he has a pistol. With the other hand he fumbles at thick leather straps. Straps that hold...

EMILY

Bound tightly to the bed. In a filthy nighshirt. CRYING.

MALLOL

(weakly)

Emily...

Bourrat and Mallol are too stunned to move. Taking advantage of the pause, Griffin gets off a clumsy shot.

The bullet catches Mallol in the leg. He collapses into Bourrat's arms.

Emboldened, Griffin points his gun at Bourrat. A wide grin breaks out on his face.

GRIFFIN

Thank you, *monsieur*. You've fulfilled your part of our bargain.

(cocking hammer)

I no longer require your services.

BOURRAT

Is helpless with Mallol in his arms. He sees his lucky streak has finally reached its limit.

GRIFFIN

Pulls the trigger.

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! No more bullets.

MALLOL

Get... him...

BOURRAT

Drops Mallol. Charges Griffin.

The two men grapple. Despite his appearance, Griffin proves to be a physical match for the tired, injured Bourrat.

EXT. GRIFFIN'S MANSION/VERANDA - SAME

Bourrat and Griffin SMASH through the glass doors that lead onto the upstairs porch.

A burning piece of roofing comes loose. Catches Bourrat on the temple. Dazed, he falls against the railing.

Griffin snatches up the timber. Presses it against Bourrat's throat. The bounty hunter can't get any leverage to free himself.

Griffin's bloody visage fills Bourrat's fading vision.

BOURRAT
(gasping for air)
You... are... an evil man...

GRIFFIN
You dare to judge me? You? A filthy immigrant who takes money to ruin peoples' lives? I don't live by your morals! I live for the sheen! I kill for it!

BANG! Crimson blood bursts from Griffin's shoulder.

MALLOL

Has pulled himself up onto the bed. Holds his smoking pistol with a shaking hand.

GRIFFIN

Stumbles about in pain. Falls back against the burning railing.

The rail BREAKS. Griffin starts to plummet backward.

BOURRAT

Grabs Griffin's hand. Strains to stop him from falling.

GRIFFIN
Oh God! Pull me up! Pull me up!!!

BOURRAT

I told you... if we were... to
clasp hands... a third time... you
would not like... the outcome...

GRIFFIN

(panicking)

No! No! Please! I have money...!

Bourrat lets go.

SCREAMING, Griffin falls into the flaming debris below.

The fight is over. Bourrat collapses against the wall. Slides
to the floor.

He watches the fire dance across the house.

Bourrat's head falls to the side. He sees...

MALLOL

Cradling his freed daughter Emily. Both of them CRYING.

BOURRAT

Smiles.

He passes out.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

A soft female voice SINGING the parlor song "Why Don't The
Men Propose".

CORA (V.O.)

"Why don't the men propose, mama?
Why don't the men propose?..."

FADE IN:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Bourrat's eyes flutter open. He finds himself in a low room
with hewn log walls. Under clean sheets. And leaning over
him...

CORA

Dabs at his forehead with a cool wet cloth.

CORA
 (softly singing)
 "...Each seems just coming to the
 point/And then away he goes!"
 (to Bourrat)
 Mornin', *monsieur*.

BOURRAT
 (weakly)
Chéri... Where...

CORA
 We're in Doc Sullivan's office.

Sullivan leans into view. He's smiling for the first time in
 ages.

SULLIVAN
 This is beginning to become a
 habit, me patching you up.

BOURRAT
 How long...

SULLIVAN
 Four days.

Bourrat tries to sit up. Cora gently restrains him.

BOURRAT
 Mallol...!

CORA
 He's okay! He's fine. Both him and
 his daughter. The Doc here patched
 them up right.

SULLIVAN
 Mallol's been in contact with the
 Rangers. They're here now. Dealing
 with the Colonel and... all that.

Bourrat settles back into the bed. He feels all his bandages.

CORA
 You were pretty banged up. Had a
 bad fever for a couple of days.
 There was a point there where...
 where the Doc didn't think you were
 gonna make it.

Bourrat reaches out blindly. She takes his hand.

BOURRAT
You... are here...

SULLIVAN
You kept calling out for her. You
wouldn't stop kicking up a fuss
until I went to fetch her.

BOURRAT
You never... left my side...

CORA
Damn right I didn't. You made me a
promise, remember? I was gonna hold
you to it.

Bourrat LAUGHS. A laugh that leads to a COUGH.

CORA
Get your rest. I'll be right here.

Bourrat squeezes her hand tightly.

CORA
(continuing the tune)
..."For coronets and eldest sons
I'm ever on the watch/ I've hopes
when some *dis-tin-gue* beau a glance
upon me throws..."

Bourrat gives her a faint smile before drifting off again.

FADE TO BLACK

OVER BLACK

Cora continues SINGING.

CORA (V.O.)
"But tho' he'll dance and
flirt/Alas, he won't propose..."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EVENING

Bourrat stirs in bed.

BOURRAT
Chéri...

SULLIVAN (O.S.)
No such luck.

Bourrat finds the doctor sitting at his bedside, silhouetted by an oil lamp.

BOURRAT

Cora...

SULLIVAN

She's not here, unfortunately.
Smythe came looking for her earlier
today.

As Sullivan leans over to get some fresh bandages, his face falls into the light. His lip is bloody and split. His left eye is a swollen purple bruise.

SULLIVAN

(off Bourrat's look)

When I collected Cora yesterday, I
sort of forgot to mention it to
Smythe. Needless to say, he was not
happy.

Bourrat feels rage welling up inside him.

BOURRAT

When... When will I be able to
leave the bed?

SULLIVAN

Not just yet. You're still running
a fever. Another day or two, at
best.

Sullivan painfully gets up to retrieve some medical supplies from across the room.

Bourrat seethes in his injured impotence. His mind whirls.

BOURRAT

And Hugo? Where is he?

SULLIVAN

Your horse? He's over in the
livery. I took him there myself.

BOURRAT

If you would, please go to him now.
You will find apples in my
saddlebag. Give them to him. So he
will know I am alive.

SULLIVAN

Son, I can't just leave. I've still
got other patients that--

BOURRAT

Please, doctor. After all I've been through... He is all I have.

Sullivan wrestles with his conscience. But those are real tears he's seeing in Bourrat's eyes.

SULLIVAN

All right. But stay reclined. Don't get up and wander around. We need to keep that fever down. You hear me?

BOURRAT

I hear you.

Sullivan gives Bourrat one more "don't move" look as he shoves himself into his coat. He closes the door behind him.

Bourrat WINCES as he tests his flexibility. He sets his jaw. Steels himself for a great deal of pain.

He throws the covers off.

CUT TO:

INT. THE "EL DORADO" - SAME

The usual assortment of drunks, card players, and Saloon Girls while away the cool desert evening.

Smythe lurks off to the side of the bar, watching his patrons spend their money.

BOURRAT

Storms through the swinging doors.

The easy going, jocular man who first entered the hotel is no more. In his place is a seething, coiled weapon of rage.

Smythe goes pale. He grabs one of his big GOONS.

SMYTHE

Get that bastard out of here!

Smythe scuttles down the hall towards his office.

As Bourrat passes, sots slug down their drinks. Cardsharks scrape up their winnings. They scurry out of the saloon.

The Goon brandishes his pistol as he steps into Bourrat's path.

GOON
Stop right there, Frenchie. Mr.
Smythe says you ain't welcome--

Before the Goon knows what's happened to him, Bourrat knocks him flat on his back on the wooden floor.

Bourrat looks around the room, silently daring anyone else to challenge him. No one takes him up on the offer.

Bourrat approaches TILDA, another of Smythe's girls.

He doesn't have to say a word. Trembling, Tilda points to the door on the far side of the staircase.

INT. THE "EL DORADO"/BACK ROOM - SAME

Bourrat enters.

On the far side of the room, he sees...

CORA

Huddled on a small bed under a dirty window. Her hair is an unkempt mess.

BOURRAT

Hurries to her. Crouches at her side.

BOURRAT
Chéri...

Cora lifts her head into the light. Her face is bruised. She tries not to CRY, but she can't help it.

CORA
I couldn't stop him...

Bourrat's eyes fill with tears.

INT. THE "EL DORADO"/OFFICE - SAME

Smythe fumbles stuffing bullets into a large pistol.

He SNAPS it closed just as...

BOURRAT

Kicks the door open. His revolver is already out and aimed.

The two men stare each other down for what seems like an eternity.

SMYTHE

What do you want from me? Sullivan went behind my back. You know that. I had every right to retrieve what was mine. And I also had every right to give them a reason to never pull a fast one on me ever again.

Bourrat's silence unnerves Smythe.

SMYTHE

You gonna say something? Or will we spend the evening pointing guns at each other?

BOURRAT

You knew... what those men... were doing...

SMYTHE

Hey, I never killed anyone! All I did was make Griffin an offer.

Bourrat's blood boils at Smythe's callous attitude towards the deaths he's been privy to. He aims his gun right at Smyth's forehead.

BOURRAT

(tersely)

I have seen my share of horrors since I came to this country. I have caused my share of horrors, as well. But the horrors I have experienced here in this God-forsaken corner of Hell were tempered by the single ray of light that is Cora. A woman you beat, whose only crime was showing tenderness to a stranger.

Bourrat bores holes through Smythe with his stare.

SMYTHE

Did some divine agent bestow sainthood on you in the last week? You're just a mercenary. A foreigner who rides from town to town, hurting people for a few measly dollars.

But you ride into Prosperity and suddenly you're some snow-white judge of virtue. Standing up for his maiden fair. I hate to break it to you, friend, but she's no maiden.

Bourrat's finger tightens on his trigger.

SMYTHE

What, you think killing me is going to clean Cora's heavenly slate? Absolve her of her sins? And believe me, my friend, there have been many.

Smythe drops his pistol onto his desk.

SMYTHE

Go ahead. Put a bullet in me, if you must. But let me tell you this: those Rangers could care less about sweet Cora's virtue. They'll see you as a murderer on par with Griffin and Preyer and the others. You'll be in chains for rest of your life. And poor Cora... well, she'll be without her defender. And easy pickin's for whoever comes next.

Bourrat wants so bad to kill this man. For a split second, Smythe thinks he's actually going to do it.

Bourrat EXHALES. UNCOCKS his revolver.

BOURRAT

I am not here to kill anyone.

Smythe can't hide his relief.

SMYTHE

Is that so? Then what are you here for?

BOURRAT

I am here... to make you an offer.

Bourrat uses his gun to push the office door closed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - MORNING

A beautiful spring day. Not a cloud in the sky. The street is filled with people coming and going.

BOURRAT

Strolls down the street, with just the hint of a limp. He sports all-new tailored clothes. New boots. New hat. He carries a small bouquet of flowers.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SAME

Bourrat enters the office, looking around.

BOURRAT

Doctor?

SULLIVAN

Darts into the room. Makes "shush!" motions.

SULLIVAN

(quietly)

She just finally closed her eyes.

Sullivan leads Bourrat across the room. Pulls back a curtain.

EMILY

Rests comfortably. There is color in her cheeks. Her hair is done. Her wrists are bandaged.

SULLIVAN

Cora came by and brought her some clothes.

BOURRAT

How is she faring? Is she well?

SULLIVAN

Physically, she'll recover. I'm more concerned about how she was affected by what Griffin did to her. If she can make sense of it all. And that will take time. Some people eventually cope, but some...

BOURRAT

(softly)

...they do not.

He gently holds Emily's hand.

BOURRAT
(in French)
*Do not let the horrors win, dear
one.*

He places the flowers on the nightstand next to Emily.

BOURRAT
(to Sullivan)
And your other patient?

Sullivan escorts Bourrat to another curtain. Opens it.

GRIFFIN

Sleeps a sedated sleep. He is bandaged all over. His left leg is missing below the knee.

BOURRAT
It has been a week now. Why is he not already on the way to Texas?

SULLIVAN
Griffin's still in bad shape. I've treated the burns, but he's still in shock. I'm doing my best to keep him alive so he can stand trial. If all goes well, the Rangers can take him in a couple of days. Good riddance.

Bourrat stares down at Griffin. A million different emotions surge through him.

BOURRAT
You think this monster's care is worth your time and energy?

SULLIVAN
It's not about the law for me. I took an oath. To do no harm.

BOURRAT
This oath... It allows you to turn a blind eye to the harm done by others?

SULLIVAN
I don't get what--

BOURRAT
A young girl, at the mercy of an amoral man. For well over a year.

Surely she would have suffered multiple injuries from his... abuses. Horrible, unspeakable injuries. And yet, you say her physical state is passable. I am no doctor, far from it, but... it seems as if someone was caring for her all this time. As if someone with medical skill was insuring that she was kept whole.

Sullivan goes pale. He starts to shake.

SULLIVAN
(stammering)
She... Well... She--

BOURRAT
How long?

SULLIVAN
I... I don't--

BOURRAT
How. Long. Did. You. Know?

Sullivan has kept his secret for too long. He returns to Emily's bed. Breaks down.

SULLIVAN
You have to understand... this poor girl would have died unless I treated her! What should I have done? You think I should have, what, stormed their compound? Shot them all dead? Carried her out in my arms? I'm not some hero! I'm not like you! I did what I could! With a gun to my head the whole time, I might add!

Bourrat says nothing. Keeps his back to the doctor.

SULLIVAN
What do you want from me? I did the only thing I was capable of doing!

BOURRAT
(sadly)
When I first came to Prosperity, you gave me words of warning. You told me, "Just when you think you have seen the worst in people..."

they find new ways to let you down." And you were right. Damn you, but you were right.

Sullivan's blood runs cold as he watches Bourrat slowly place his hand on the butt of his pistol.

Sullivan leaps up. Shakes his fist at Bourrat.

SULLIVAN

And what makes you think you can judge me? I'm not the one who crossed an entire ocean to escape his own misdeeds! Maybe you should turn some of that righteousness back on yourself! See how it feels!

Bourrat flinches. Sullivan's words struck a chord.

SULLIVAN

You know what? Do whatever it is you want! I'm so damn tired. I can't live with the guilt anymore!

Sullivan tenses up. Anticipates his fate.

BOURRAT

You will learn to live with it.

Bourrat removes his hand from his pistol. Turns to face Sullivan.

BOURRAT

We both will.

Bourrat leaves without saying goodbye.

Sullivan collapses back into the chair at Emily's bedside.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE "EL DORADO" - LATE AFTERNOON

A handsomely appointed stagecoach is parked in front of the hotel. Bourrat's trusty horse Hugo is tied up at the water trough.

Bourrat emerges from the hotel, carrying a suitcase and a small sack. He hands the suitcase to the STAGECOACH DRIVER. Puts coins in his palm.

BOURRAT

And there are more upstairs, if you please.

STAGECOACH DRIVER

Yes, sir!

The Stagecoach Driver heads into the hotel.

Bourrat strokes Hugo's muzzle. He pulls a bright red apple from the sack. Hugo MUNCHES on it happily.

MALLOL (O.S.)

Mister Bourrat!

MALLOL

Crosses the street. He's cleaned up. Wearing a new suit. Sporting a felt eyepatch. Using a cane to walk.

BOURRAT

Monsieur Mallol. You are looking well, my friend.

MALLOL

I can assure you, it's purely superficial. Inside, I'm still not quite myself.

BOURRAT

But you are strong. You will be.

MALLOL

From your lips to God's ears.

BOURRAT

Where do things stand with Griffin and his men?

MALLOL

I have spent most of a day with the Rangers. Reliving the entire ordeal one more time. But in the end, it was your detective work that sealed their fate.

BOURRAT

How so?

Mallol points to his missing eye.

MALLOL

When Sullivan worked on my wounds, he found that the bullet was still lodged into the bone. A .36 caliber bullet. Like the one you discovered at my house. The one that... killed my Esther. Both fired from the only .36 caliber gun in the area.

BOURRAT

Preyer unknowingly signed his own confession.

MALLOL

Indeed. And once he was found out, he turned on his boss. He gave up Griffin, Leeolou, even that witless deputy. What's the expression? "No honor amongst thieves"?

BOURRAT

So, what is next for you? Are you able to reclaim your property? You could wind up a very rich man.

MALLOL

The solicitor is working that out. I won't know for some time. But while I wait, I've been offered a job and housing at the church. It's only a small room, but Emily and I will make it work.

BOURRAT

I can think of no place better for you. I wish you the best. But your leg... The church is quite far. Will you be able to get to town?

MALLOL

Well enough, I suppose. If I take it slow, I don't think I'll be in any danger.

BOURRAT

No, that will not do. A man such as yourself should not be hobbling about the streets. You will need transportation.

Bourrat unties Hugo's reins. Hands them to Mallol.

MALLOL
 (overwhelmed)
 Oh, no... I could never...

BOURRAT
 You are a man who loves horses. And
 your daughter will love him too. I
 am confident that he will have a
 good life with you.

He hands Mallol the sack.

BOURRAT
 He loves apples. When you can get
 them, he would be most
 appreciative.

MALLOL
 ...Thank you. This means the world
 to me. But how will you get about?

The Stagecoach Driver appears, toting several large
 suitcases.

STAGECOACH DRIVER
 These are the last bags, sir.

BOURRAT
 Wonderful. Thank you.

MALLOL
 You're leaving!

BOURRAT
 I was planning on finding you
 before I left, but the coach cannot
 wait. The driver must depart soon
 if we are to reach Fort Worth.

MALLOL
 Is there no way I can convince you
 to stay? If... When mining
 operations begin, I'm going to need
 someone to help me run the
 business. Someone I can trust.

BOURRAT
 A tempting proposition. But no, I
 feel my time in America has come to
 a close. The evils I have
 endured... they have beaten my
 romance with your country out of
 me.

MALLOL

But... where will you go?

BOURRAT

It has been many, many years since I saw home. For a number of reasons. But perhaps... perhaps it is time I return.

MALLOL

Perhaps it is.

BOURRAT

And yet there are still so many wonders in America I have not experienced. How could I return to France without having seen the marvel that is New York!

MALLOL

New York? That's a big change from the one-horse towns you've seen here in the territories. A man could find himself feeling lost among the masses.

BOURRAT

My friend, no man is lost who shares his heart.

Something over Mallol's shoulder catches Bourrat's eye. Puts a huge smile on his face.

Mallol turns to see what's captivated his friend.

CORA

Steps out of the hotel. She's no longer in her saloon girl get-up. She's wearing a beautiful dress with silk gloves. Her hair is done up in a fancy coiffure. A dainty parasol is perched on her shoulder. Her smile lights up the street.

Bourrat takes her hand. Kisses it.

CORA

Belle?...

BOURRAT

Tout à fait, chéri.

Over Cora's shoulder, Bourrat sees...

SMYTHE

Standing just inside the door of the hotel.

The two men share a tense look.

At that moment, two TEXAS RANGERS walk by the hotel.

Bourrat makes a small motion with his head, silently indicating the Rangers.

With one last expulsion of thick gray cigar smoke, Smythe steps backwards into the dark recess of his domain.

BOURRAT

Watches his foe disappear into the hotel.

His business with Smythe done, Bourrat helps Cora into the coach.

MALLOL

"Not alone", indeed. All the best
to you both, *monsieur*.

The two men shake hands.

Bourrat gives Hugo one last scratch on his snout.

BOURRAT

(in French)

*And so the adventure ends, my
friend.*

Bourrat climbs into the coach. Closes the door. KNOCKS on the roof to tell the Stagecoach Driver to take off.

MALLOL

Just a moment!

Bourrat leans out of the window.

MALLOL

You refuse to take a life, but...
When you let Griffin fall... How
did you know he wouldn't die?

A sly grin creeps across Bourrat's face.

BOURRAT

I did not know. I merely took the
advice of a wise man... and put his
fate in God's hands.

Bourrat tips his hat in farewell. RAPS on the roof.

The Stagecoach Driver SNAPS his whip. The coach RATTLES away. Rubbing Hugo's muzzle, Mallol waves a last goodbye to Bourrat and Cora as the carriage leaves town.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STAGECOACH - LATE AFTERNOON - TRAVELING

Cora dozes next to Bourrat as the coach trundles along.

Bourrat can't sleep. He holds his free hand up to the sunlight coming through the window. Watches the dust motes float between his fingers.

As the carriage rounds a turn, the light falls on Cora's face. She scrunches her eyes. Reaches over. Pulls down the shade. Returns to napping against her man.

Bourrat's beloved sunlight is muted by the weave of the shade.

BOURRAT
 (softly, to the sun)
Adieu, my old friend. I have a new
 light to wake up to.

CORA
 (sleepily)
 ...You say somethin'?

BOURRAT
 Just musing, *chéri*. Just musing.

Cora snuggles in deeper. Bourrat kisses her gently on the head.

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - SAME

The Stagecoach Driver CRACKS his whip. The horses pick up speed.

The coach disappears into the rippling heat of the morning.