

THE UNDERGROUND

Written by

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INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - DAY - MANHATTAN, NEW YORK, APRIL
1904

BLACKNESS.

Sounds of STRIKING a pickax into rocks. SPARKS. CREAKS.
GROANS of steel beams. Men SHOUTING in GAELIC.

ECU on JOHN SULLIVAN, a burly, red-bearded Irishman in his
mid-30s, entranced. Digs feverishly non-stop into dead-end.

SAM KNIGHT, a Black man in his mid-20s uses a wheelbarrow to
cart loads of dirt back to the compression chamber door. He
smiles at every glum dirt-caked worker. HUMS bass riff aloud.

SAM KNIGHT

Home sweet home! OO-EE!

(Approaching John)

Workin' too hard, John Sullivan!
Don't get so tuckered out ya can't
dance a jig with Tessa tonight to
our fresh rags at Almacks!

(looks around fondly)

Let's start our own city down here!

John doesn't respond. Continues digging, a ceaseless machine.

SAM KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Serious. Bella 4 months with-child.
Her mafioso daddy gon' kill me.

Sam scratches his head. Scoops dirt into wheelbarrow. Smiles.

SAM KNIGHT (CONT'D)

Fo' yeas down heh, John. You an'
me! We dug it an' it's near done.
Now, we gon' live down heh. Thrive!
You an' Tess could join! Other than
Almacks, 'sno place up there fo us.

Silence. Sam winces. Shrugs. Wanders off with wheelbarrow.

One solid blow from John strikes solid stone. The intense
reverberation causes a crack in the air-tight door's seal.

SHRILL WHISTLING of air escaping.

Sam rushes to fix the breach. A steel beam hoisted against
the ceiling for structural support crashes down upon John's
head. Knocked unconscious, he is buried alive in an instant.

CUT TO BLACK.

ACT 1

INT. PASSENGER TRAIN CAR - DAY - HAVRE, MONTANA, APRIL 1905

Sleeping across the coach car bench, John is awakened by a TRAIN WHISTLE. Alone in the car, he reassesses his reality. A splitting pain rocks his skull. He buries his face in hands.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR

Last stop! Havre! Last stop! Havre,
Montana! Get yer asses off my ass!

A baritone voice speaks to him from beyond his throbbing field of vision of the train car surroundings.

VOICE (O.S.)

O Johnny! Always dreamin' of me!

John sighs. The giant peripheral blur companion slowly clarifies. John shakes head in denial. Hurries off the train.

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY

Blinded by the sunlight, John shields his face and surveys the town of Havre, Montana. To his disappointment, the town has been devastated by a recent fire. Horrified, he scans it.

Most buildings razed, only remnants of a foundation left under soot. Several brick buildings, like the general store and church survived on key corners and are open for business.

Crews of CHINESE LABORERS work to build more replacement buildings. One ELDER CHIPPEWA MAN sits on the steps of a barely standing stoop leading to ashes. He glares at John.

WAR-CRIES resound from unseen distance. GUNSHOTS. SCREAMS.

Shaking his head, John shifts his weight back to the train as it's doors close. WHISTLES. Starts its rocking departure.

DAGDA, a vine-covered orange-bearded unkempt giant Celtic Earth God, wields huge club. Dwarfs John. Scans it disgusted.

DAGDA

Sorry sight! Shoul'da sought refuge
deep under New York, ye ask me!

JOHN

Ne'er asked ya, mate.

From beside the station agent box to right, stands DEPUTY JONES, 30, black slicked hair, short beard, constant smile.

Behind him are trigger happy cowboys, including GROVER, 35, broad and bow-legged with handle-bar moustache, and CLETUS, 29, thin blue eyed baby-face blonde. They laugh at John.

Deputy Jones approaches.

DEPUTY JONES

Railroad's built, son. Don't need
no more desperate Irish drunks.

JOHN

Just passin' through now...
officer... Jones. Ne'er mind me.

DEPUTY JONES

Callin' me officer? You musta come
straight from Hell's Kitchen!

John shoulders his sack. Shuffles off platform.

EXT. MAIN STREET HAVRE - DAY

Cletus and Grover tail John down strip, parallel to tracks.

A pair of Chinese coal miners, DEWEY CHEW and BENNY CHEW, 20-30, twins with queue haircuts, exit the adjacent depot. Both weary, Dewey is more jumpy, as Benny walks with calm.

John gravitates toward the twins. Keeps a recurring eye on the cowboys to his rear with hands on their holsters. John accelerates. Keeps hand upon revolver in his waistband.

Giant Dagda trots alongside John. Nudges him, grinning.

DAGDA

I bet ya wonder which God those
poor bastards obey... It ain't me!

JOHN

No, don't really care one bit.

DAGDA

Well, they're severed like most yer
sad lot. Lone n' lost pawns!

The ramped up pursuit down Main Street continues. The Chinese men descend through an open cellar of the general store.

DAGDA (CONT'D)
 Ye oughta folla those lads to
 safety if ye lek keepin' yer life!

Annoyed, John follows Chew Brothers down a dark staircase.

INT. SPORTING EAGLE SALOON - CONTINUOUS

John is overwhelmed upon entering the bustling saloon. Low ceilings and low light define the crowded open floor plan. A piano player butchers Scott Joplin ragtime tunes. Several tables are populated by rambunctious drunken cowboys. One table is occupied by Chippewa-Cree men drinking in silence. They wield hatchets under the table. They watch the cowboys do shots of rotgut and play the knife game.

The Chew Brothers quickly disappear through a side tunnel.

One man's finger gets nearly severed, resulting in a screeching howl and uproarious laughter. The Native men glance at each other, shaking their heads, baffled.

John waits in tortured limbo to make a move. The tailing cowboys enter, prompting John's advancement to corner bar.

John waves at the tired bartender, SVEN BEARFIST, 25-35, half-Native, half-Scandinavian man with grand yet effortless stature, hair in a ponytail under a bowler derby and casual attire held up by suspenders.

SVEN BEARFIST
 Welcome to Sporting Eagle! Drink?

JOHN
 Whisky. Simple.

Grover and Cletus join a table of cowboys. Dagda hovers John.

DAGDA
 Don'tcha start day-drinkin', John!

SVEN BEARFIST
 Payin' up, or startin' a tab?

JOHN
 Start a tab. I got nowhere to be.

SVEN BEARFIST
 Then, you're in the right place.

Sven slides John full whisky glass. Notes sale on tab.

JOHN
 (curious)
 Unique lookin' chap ey!

SVEN BEARFIST
 Aho! Ha! Half Chippewa, half-Swede.
 Name's Sven Bearfist. Drunk cowboys
 call me Mr. Biggun. I just let em!

John chuckles, strained. Nods. Doesn't introduce himself.

John is startled by MICHAEL MURPHY, mid-30s, dark curly hair, mutton chops, styled mustache. Takes the open adjacent stool.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 Aye lad, ne'er seen ya 'round
 Havre. Must be PURE Irish!

Michael orders two whiskeys. Passes one to skeptical John. John moves slow, raises glass to toast. Offers pained smile.

JOHN
 (tired, reserved)
 Slainte.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 Slainte! Part o' the land ya from?

The two take first sips. Savor respectfully.

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
 What's ye name? Mine's Michael
 Murphy. Dubliner born n' bred.

John sips his whiskey.

JOHN
 John Sullivan. From Dublin myself.
 Or, moved after Land War '80. Aye.

Offers hand. Michael accepts. They shake briefly.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 Dooblin lad! Instinct ne'er fails!
 No tellin' how two chaps like us
 landed in this circle o' Hades!

JOHN
 Yep. No tellin'. Jus' drinkin'.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 That's the feckin spirit mate! Keep
 nationalistic traditions alive!
 (MORE)

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
 (tries a cheers, ignored)
 Hope ye not comin' for railroads!

John shoots concerned glance to his countryman. Nods. Shrugs.

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
 Jobs dried up now most railroads r'
 done. Damn Cantonese finished it.

JOHN
 Ye don't say? Well, I came out for
 railroads, but not eager like.

John sips whisky. Swats the throbbing vision of attention-seeking Dagda to left. He straightens his posture. Stretches.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Worked the dirt 13 years. Sewers,
 even new subways. Broken, tired.
 Lookin' for easy coin. Or more fun.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 (understanding)
 Other work's here. None easy.

JOHN
 May call it quits. Head to Canadia,
 o'er the border. They're nicer, ey?

Michael laughs. Nods. John finishes his second drink in a gulp. Dagda blurs. His booming shouts for attention stifled.

DAGDA
 Quit 'fore ye end in a shit-trench!

JOHN
 (to Dagda)
 I need a break from ne'erendin'
 pain! I need a break from you!

DAGDA
 Me? The pain's life, ma boy! The
 truth! Can't escape it forever!

MICHAEL MURPHY
 (concerned)
 Need a break from me? We only just
 met, friendo! Ha! Ye OK, like?

JOHN
 (disoriented)
 Aye, uh... yep, yep. Jus' dandy.

DAGDA

Question is, how ye endure life's
pain? Standin like our Cu Chulainn?

John flags Sven. Orders them both another round.

SVEN BEARFIST

Say, how ya plan to settle the tab?

John fishes around in his pockets with exaggerated vigor.
Pulls out a crumpled \$2 bill, one Silver Barber quarter.

JOHN

Down to my last IOUs here buddy.

SVEN BEARFIST

We don't take fake money. Sorry.

MICHAEL MURPHY

I'll cover his tab, Mr. Biggun.

JOHN

No ye won't. I still have me pride!

SVEN BEARFIST

Hmmm. Say, I only offer to a select
few, but you can fight me for it.

JOHN

Fight ye for it? I don't get it.

SVEN BEARFIST

Oh, sure ya do. Look like you been
fightin' your whole life.

JOHN

OK. I win, tab's clear. If you win?

SVEN BEARFIST

Eh, nothin' too crazy. You just
work my shift here tomorrow.

John thinks on it. Nods. They shake hands.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Jesus, I'll pay for it! Ya looney?

JOHN

Perhaps I am.

John downs third glass to dull Dagda back to far peripheral.

DAGDA
 (muffled)
 I'm an immortal bein'! ALWAYS here!

DAGDA nearly vanishes, silenced. Clammy, John notices a worried Michael waiting. Nods. Grounds himself in reality.

JOHN
 Hey! I'll try me blistered hand at
 any new trade I find to be hirin'!

Michael listens. He nods, smiling. Checks his watch.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 I hear ye! Speakin' o' work, I'm
 late for me shift at the general
 store o'erhead. Next drink on me!

John, assesses parting with a fellow countryman. Applies his newfound warmth thanks to the whisky. Stands. Hugs Michael.

JOHN
 Thanks Michael. Been ages since
 I've met a friendly Irish face!

MICHAEL MURPHY
 Well, that's a bloody shame! Where
 ya been livin', Hell's Kitchen?

Michael laughs in free jest. John does not. Michael slowly adjusts to solemnity upon seeing John's grim expression.

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
 Take a load off, eh? Havre burnt to
 the ground last year, but the city
 lives on n' thrives down here, hey!

Michael grabs John by the shoulders to spread cheer.

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
 These here tunnels lead to any
 goods or services ye might need!

Micheal leans close to whisper in mischief.

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
 I suggest the bordellos! But, word
 to wise: avoid the Chinese trap.

JOHN
 Huh? Why?

MICHAEL MURPHY
 Trust ye fellow countryman, hey?

Grins. The two part ways. John finishes Michael's drink as Sven Biggun approaches. Acknowledges a level of inebriation.

SVEN BIGGUN
Ready for your beatin'?

JOHN
I think I might be ready, yeah.

SVEN BIGGUN
I'll give you another round to up
the ante an' boost your certainty!

Sven pours another glass of whisky. John nods. Smiles. Feels peace until out of his peripheral, Dagda silhouette lingers.

DAGDA
Think ye can be rid o me that easy?

Dagda slaps drunk John on the shoulder. John frowns.

DAGDA (CONT'D)
I created whisky! Y'need new means!

John pounds his fist into his head. Wobbles. Stands. Slams glass on bar to get Sven Biggun's attention. Sven grins.

JOHN
OK Mr. Bearfist! All ready mate!

Sven shouts with thunderous voice to stop music and activity.

SVEN BIGGUN
OK bastard! Clear tables for
tonight's cheap fun! Myself,
undefeated boxing champion, VS.-

JOHN
(blinks, drunken)
John... John Irishman.

SVEN BIGGUN
John Irishman! Clear out mongrels!

Sven wraps each mid-hand, wrist. Offers to John who declines.

John scans blurry faces, nauseous. Notices a man sitting at the back Faro card table, DEPUTY JUDD JEFFERSON, 33, stocky, bald with handlebars, blue murderous eyes grilling John.

John vomits to the crowd's disgust.

John refocuses on the matter at hand. Sven is ready for John.

SVEN BIGGUN (CONT'D)
 OK, John Irishman, just for you,
 we'll abandon London Prize Ring
 rules. No ref. No ground hits. No
 below the belt. No biting. Good?

John nods. Shakes sloppy drunk stupor off.

SVEN BIGGUN (CONT'D)
 OK then! LET'S FIGHT!

Crowd goes mad as fighters advance. Sven has locked-in
 stance, quick, light steps. John moves loosely, fists low.
 Blurry Dagda watches from where a ref may stand. Shakes head.

DAGDA
 Terrible form, mate. Just awful.

John trips in his attempt at fancy footwork. Sven catches
 John in the side of right temple with left hook mid-fall.
 Advances to connect again with face jab and uppercut to
 stomach, sending John to the outside of the circular ring.
 John somehow lands on his feet, more sober than before. He
 recalibrates. Sven advances to take advantage of the combo.

DAGDA (CONT'D)
 (bored, cleaning nails)
 Lemme know when.

John ducks what could have been a haymaker, and darts under
 and to the side, circling Sven to deliver two rib shots. Sven
 groans. Laughs. Charges again with tight defense. Sven's
 left, right combo's ducked by John, before a following right
 hook hits John above the left ear. John lands on his ass.
 Sven waits for John to get up. The crowd cheers Sven. John's
 head reverberates in electrified darkness causing paralysis.

SVEN BIGGUN
 Good to go on? No count.

DAGDA
 Get your arse up. You're
 embarrassing your ancestors.

John slowly gets to his feet. Shakes off pain. Nods to Dagda.

JOHN
 Alrighty. All yours, Dag!

Sven laughs. Thinks it an insult addressed to him. Charges.
 Dagda laughs in a state of relief. Steps behind John.

DAGDA
 Oh ho! Now, he says! At last!

Dagda's fists meld through John's fists, animating him like an avatar, as Sven approaches with a flurry of punches. John and Dagda practice a traditional Irish stand down tactic of staying in place and not retreating, ducking first hits before Dagda works Sven with rapid haymakers from torso to head, final blow sending Sven over the line, a TKO.

The crowd is stunned for a moment following the unexpected knockout, before losing their minds. Many men congratulate John before returning to tables practicing their punches.

DAGDA (CONT'D)

Tried telling ye! Ye need me, John!

JOHN

Wasn't exactly a fair fight, ey?

DAGDA

"No help from Gods" wasn't a rule!
Think he lacks war Gods? Other gods
don't help poor drunks like I do.

John walks to Sven who is regaining consciousness, confused. He helps Sven to his feet. Sven dusts himself off.

SVEN BIGGUN

Where in hell did that come from?

JOHN

Guess I got my second wind.

SVEN BIGGUN

I'll say. My first loss. Not sure
how to handle it. You a pro?

JOHN

Won contests. To be fair I cheated.

SVEN BIGGUN

You cheated? You a shark? How?

JOHN

Got a warrior God at my side.

SVEN BIGGUN

Ha! Whatever you say! God, no God,
you laid me out. We're square.

Sven shrugs. Disappointed, he heads back behind the bar. Starts cleaning glasses. John approaches again.

JOHN

Sven, ye one solid fighter. I'll
cover yer shift tomorrow anyway.

SVEN BIGGUN

Really? Why?

JOHN

Why not? Right thing to do. Plus, always wanted to try barkeepin'.

SVEN BIGGUN

No shit. Meet me here tomorrow.

(quizzical)

Hey, how were you able to eat those punches I gave you? Makes no sense!

JOHN

Me internal pain makes any external pain a pure lollipop cakewalk.

Sven nods, confused. They shake hands out of mutual respect. John turns. Notices Deputy Jefferson eye-balling him from the Faro table. THE BANKER, a middle-aged Chinese man dealer, is the only other participant, preparing next game, terrified. Deputy Jefferson beckons John to join. Skeptical, John approaches the table slowly with hands in his pockets.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hi. I know you?

John notices the Deputy's gold star. Gets uneasy. Steps back.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

Nope, but I know you're a cheater.

JOHN

Ah. Ye think so? Prove it.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

I don't have to prove what I know.

JOHN

OK, grand. So what's your point?

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

Point is, you're a cheater. I fuckin' hate cheaters.

JOHN

Yer entitled to feel how ye feel.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

I seent you cheat in a savage's game. Wanna challenge ya to a gentleman's game. See how ya do.

JOHN

(laughs)

OK. And what game may that be?

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

Faro. I'm the King of Faro here.
Now sit down. Let's play!

JOHN

King of Pharaoh? Never heard of
such redundancy. Not a big fan of
kings.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

You must be fresh out west. Best
get to know this game. Have a seat.

JOHN

Nay. Not a gamblin' man. Nothin to
gain by playin' yer silly game.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

I swear boy, if you don't sit your
MickMack Paddy Whack ass down...

JOHN

Or what? Deputy? Jefferson? Shoot
me dead an' get away with it?

Deputy Jefferson draws gun and points it at John. Smiles.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

Don't need you to play to do that.

JOHN

Yeah? Go ahead then. Ye said you
hate cheaters. Know what I hate?

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

What's that, Mr. Paddy Whack?

JOHN

I hate lawmen, cops, police
officers, whate'er ye protected
racist bullies, kidnappers and
murderers wanna call yourselves.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

I keep this town safe!

JOHN

(laughing, retreating)

Ok then, I don't see this talk
goin' anywhere, so on that note-

John turns to leave. Closes eyes. Exhales. Starts walking.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
Hey! You don't walk away from me!

Deputy Jefferson takes his frustration out on The Banker.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON (CONT'D)
You dumb fucking Chink! Don't think
I saw that sleight of hand?!

Jefferson slaps cards out of dealer's hands. Slaps his face.

THE BANKER
No, sir! Please, no. I do nothing!
I do not cheat. I never cheat!

John turns back to intervene. Hesitates.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
Like I trust that! Y'all are all
the same, invading this country!

Points gun at crying Banker's head. Smiles at John.

THE BANKER
No please! I promise! No cheating!

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
I'll give you front row seats.

JOHN
For Gods sakes, man! Lower the gun!

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
Oh, I don't think I'll shoot him.

Abruptly, Deputy Jefferson unsheathes a buck knife and stabs The Banker's hand on the table, pinning it to the surface. The Banker shrieks in agony. Deputy Jefferson aims at John.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON (CONT'D)
(to John)
But... I do feel like shootin' YOU!
(to Sven Biggun)
Biggun, find me a white banker!

John shakes himself from this stupor. Exits through the side tunnel. Deputy Jefferson doubles over in laughter.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

INT. UNDERGROUND HAVRE - TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

A tunnel forces John to crouch, escaping mid-panic attack.

INT. UNDERGROUND HAVRE - MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Passes by shops: tailors, dentists, soap makers, potters etc. The tailor approaches first. Shouts in Cantonese. Waves him.

TAILOR

Ní shìgè yòu zàng yòu féi de dà
pìgu! You too big, you fat boy!

The stern Chinese man uses rope to measure John's shoulders. John nonchalantly shakes the eager man's attempts. Smells himself. Groans. Notices stains, tears. Jiggles belly.

JOHN

No thanks! I like me style, big
boned, like. Maybe, next time!

INT. UNDERGROUND HAVRE - TUNNEL - NIGHT

John traverses a long dark tunnel. From afar, he sees red.

INT. UNDERGROUND HAVRE - RED LIGHT DISTRICT - CONTINUOUS

The clay-walled cluster of red-lit rooms of rough pleasure have a variety of sultry women hovering in front. DANIELLE MACNAMARA, 45, bigger woman with blonde curls, elegant poise with hustler's eye, chats up two employees, LITA WOLFHEART, 28, Chippewa-Cree woman with tense posture and piercing eyes, and ERIN O'NEAL, 25, tall with red-hair, freckles and bright green eyes that always find optimism.

DANIELLE

I know y'all are tired. Ya don't
think I am? 30 years in business!

LITA WOLFHEART

Sure you're tired, but you're set!
Ya don't have to fuck these losers!

DANIELLE

I'm all used up after sad decades.
They don't want me now! They want
my sweet, exotic breadwinners!

LITA WOLFHEART

A fake motherly figure you are.
Y'know I had a real mother, right?

Lita glances away, trapped, trembling. Erin caresses her.

ERIN O'NEAL

Silver linings to every situation,
Lita. We'll make it through sister.

LITA WOLFHEART

I used to have a real sister too.

ERIN O'NEAL

I know baby. Such evil in the world
takin' good from us, but, I still
believe in higher power and things
happenin' for a reason. Like
meeting you. We save up here, we'll
buy land an' raise sheep together!

LITA WOLFHEART

Erin, I love you, but sometimes you
act like a lil' lost lamb yourself.
For 10,000 years my people thrived
on THIS land, free! Before greedy
settlers and the army pushed my
people back and forth over the make-
believe border! Never needed money!

ERIN O'NEAL

That surely sounds like a dream!

DANIELLE

OH! So you DON'T want money now?

LITA WOLFHEART

I just need food and a warm place
to sleep without fear. Human rights
you devils put a price tag on!

DANIELLE

Hey now! There's price tags on the
liquor ya can't live without, and
one on you too lil lady.

(noticing John approach)

We got a John here, probably
already in ear shot, get ready!

LITA WOLFHEART

He better get ready to get his
pecker snapped off if he picks me.

John addresses the ladies in passing. Erin reaches out.

ERIN O'NEAL

Hi there beautiful man! Ye look
just like home! Reckon we'll get
along just fine! C'mere big boy!

John holds her soft hand in his for a moment. Looks up into her eyes. Smiles a pained smile. She returns a pained smile.

BLACK OUT.

INT. ALMACKS DANCE HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

TESSA MAE, 25, poised young black woman, with two bulbous hair buns, dressed in a 1904 party dress. She guides him onto the empty dance floor near the ragtime band with Sam Knight on bass. The couple dances the cakewalk and other dances like the Grizzly Bear, Turkey Trot, Bunny Hug and Camel Walk.

The band takes a break. John and Tessa hold each other close. Closer. Tessa Mae makes the first move to kiss him. Their first kiss. They laugh. Kiss again, more passionately.

Tessa grins down at his much shorter beard. Frowns. Looks up.

TESSA MAE

I'm so happy with ya baby. My fancy-dancin' Long-John. Haha! I don't want this night o' dancin' to end.

JOHN

(bittersweet disbelief)
Nei'er do I, me sweet queen. But... e'rything ends, dudn't it?

TESSA MAE

Real love's the one exception. Love is our only chance to share a human connection to the true foreverness.

Tessa caresses his red face.

TESSA MAE (CONT'D)

We may die, or be pulled apart by an evil world. But what we feel now, is the feelin' of forever. I don't wanna forget this feelin'.

JOHN

I know I ne'er will. I promise you, Tessa, I'll be yours 'til endtimes.
(pauses, sad)
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Just wish I had more money so you didn't have to raise Rockefeller Jr.'s babies for a livin'.

TESSA MAE

Don't worry 'bout daddy's boy! Or money. You're enough! We may never be married by law, but by soul.

JOHN

We got married when first we looked into each other's eyes. Someday...
(genuine smile)
Dunno how, I'll make a fortune move us to Safety Harbor, Florida, start a grapefruit grove by the beach.

TESSA MAE

Sounds like heaven! But, heaven is wherever you and I are together.

They kiss, long and passionate. RAGTIME music starts up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND HAVRE - BROTHEL - EVENING

John wakes up in the bed of Erin, who nudges him awake with a smile. She gestures it's time to pay with an open hand. He pays her with his last \$2 bill and quarter. She frowns.

ERIN O'NEAL

Usually I charge a lot more. But...

The rambunctious rooms for romping are cramped with six single spring beds. All occupied in open display action.

ERIN O'NEAL (CONT'D)

You remind me of my big brother back home in Chicago. He's nice too. A proud meatpacker.

JOHN

That's... an odd thing to say.

ERIN O'NEAL

Is it?

JOHN

I think so, like. Yes it is.

ERIN O'NEAL

I miss him is all. He kept me safe.

JOHN

It's OK. I understand. Sorry I
don't have more to give you.
Thought there'd be more work here.

John stands up. Awkwardly gets dressed quickly.

ERIN O'NEAL

Don't be sorry. You're a sweet lad.
(reaches for him)
Hey don't go! Got work for ya here.

John stops. Mostly dressed. Turns in skeptical confusion.

JOHN

Huh. Y'do? Like what?

ERIN O'NEAL

I mean, if ye haven't noticed, this
is a dangerous town, with dangerous
men. Sometimes they get outta hand.

JOHN

So... you need a pimp?

ERIN O'NEAL

(blushing)
God no! I don't NEED a PIMP! What?!

JOHN

So, you WANT ME to be a pimp, like?

ERIN O'NEAL

I don't like that word! You're just
nice. Strong. A good man, is all.

JOHN

Lady, ye don't even know me.

ERIN O'NEAL

Feels like I do. Think on it? Or
return the favor later, come by my
quarters? You kinda owe me now!

Tessa Mae's image arrives in his mind. He can barely focus on
Erin or their surroundings of many people having sex at once.

JOHN

Yeah sure. I'll think on it. OK!
See ya 'round! Bye fer now!

John wanders out.

INT. UNDERGROUND HAVRE - TUNNEL - NIGHT

Crouches and nearly crawls through another smaller tunnel. It opens to a larger section which still requires him to stoop.

INT. UNDERGROUND HAVRE - LITTLE CHINATOWN - CONTINUOUS

In the open area of a long row of dark places of business curving out of sight, handfuls of Chinese workers shuffle along. Dagda waits, seated peacefully, content on the ground.

DAGDA

What a ride with the fae! We needed that! Dry nobs bound to fall off! Go see her again soon, John!

John sighs. Ignores Dagda. Turns to encounter a chop suey noodle stall. His stomach growls.

The NOODLE LADY, 50-70, tiny Chinese woman with high energy takes notice of John's loitering. Erupts with glee. Shakes his hand. Guides him to bench at makeshift kitchen's stove.

NOODLE LADY

You just call me NOODLE LADY, OK?
You don't ask my real name, OK?

JOHN

OK, ma'am, no problem at all.

NOODLE LADY

You big boy, na? Big boy need most food, eat most noodles! Too hungry after drinky drink and sexy sex?!

JOHN

Uh, maybe so, ma'am. Been too long since I had a decent meal.

NOODLE LADY

Of course! You come right place! Noodle Lady take care you! Like chop suey? Special egg? Two egg?

JOHN

Not sure, but I like eggs an' trust ye know what ye doin' down here!

She smiles with delight. Begins cooking. Sings old songs.

He eats a bowl of piping hot delicious noodles, egg and chicken that satisfies. Temporarily. His splitting headache returns. The image of Dagda in his peripheral vision follows.

DAGDA

Ye shall need eat more than a puny noodle bowl to get full. Ye know I have me cauldron o' plenty! John!

JOHN

Yes, but you ne'er season that infinite pile o' food. I'll keep it in mind when starvin' in a desert.

John continues past the noodle stall to the rest of curving Little Chinatown. Hears classic Orient music. Through open door to unmarked room fragrant incense floats to him.

Upon getting closer to the opening, John sees SING LEE, 40-55, scarred Chinese man with an eye patch, long hair, fu manchu moustache, meditating in center of many-pillowed smoky opium den. Sing opens his one eye. Grins. Reveals gold fangs.

SING LEE

Welcome, John Sullivan.

JOHN

What? How'd ye know me name?

SING LEE

Oh, the bar patrons love gossip.

John ponders who shared his info. Sing loads a long pipe.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

Care for a smoke? You look pained.

John looks both ways down the empty tunnels in this far stretch of the underground, uneasy and looking for escape. To his left is an obvious dead-end. He shudders.

JOHN

Don't smoke tobacco. Bad for lungs.

SING LEE

(grins)

Oh no, sire. This is pure opium.

JOHN

Gee willikers, man. You're offerin' hard drugs? Not my cup o' tea. No.

SING LEE

It's better than the fermented corn
syrup in your cup o tea.

JOHN

(points)

What's with the vampire teeth? Ye
some blood-sucker? Dopin' up prey?

SING LEE

Oh, these?

(Sing laughs, chomps)

Gold implants. To strike fear in
the hearts of my enemies, haha!

Sing reclines on a triangular pillow, holds the long pipe
over an oil lamp. The opium vaporizes and rises into his
lungs. Breathes out the fumes with a relaxed sigh. Smiles.

The process and result intrigues John. He's still hesitant.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

No pressure, John. Relaxing's free.
(eyeballs John's grunge)
Also, I run the best laundry in
Havre, if you need cleaning up...

JOHN

Tired from travels, head throbbin'.
I do fancy rest on ye fancy pillas.

SING LEE

It's why they exist! And for pain?
It's why my magic medicine exists!

John shuffles into room lit by red-cloth filtered torches.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

I welcome all in my place of
refuge, even my enemies. But please
remove shit-caked shoes outside.

John scrambles back to the entrance. Kicks off his cruddy
shoes. Returns to the offered space of comfort. Plops down.

John notices other patrons further from door. Benny and Dewey
Chew are side-by-side. LISA, 15, thin and pale blonde girl
wearing sportin' lady's dress, sprawls, mouth agape, snoring.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

Meet my friends. Oh, and for your
first taste, my coin covers you!

JOHN

That's grand, since I'm broke.

Sing grins. Leans to light pipe over red lamp. Gestures for John to try. Reluctant, John finally leans in and inhales.

John holds for a minute. Flops back stunned. Hacks up a lung. Laughs. Pats belly. Closes eyes.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Aye. God shite, laddie. Naymo pain.
'Slike bein' a kite flyin' in the
bright sunshine of an Irish summer.

Sing Lee watches the reaction. Laughs. Sniff. Frowns. Sniffs. Gags. Unable to stomach stench, quickly confirms suspicions.

SING LEE

Apologies, but I need you washed
before continuing business here.

John opens his eyes in a confused stupor.

JOHN

Ey? 'Sa' matta?

SING LEE

You reek like fermented feces. Have
you never bathed in all your days?

JOHN

Some days I bathed, sure. Rough
months on train cars since leavin'
New York City on New Year's.

Sing Lee springs to his feet. Pulls John to his feet with a surprising ease and strength. He offers guidance with a firm but gentle smile in John's disoriented face.

SING LEE

A thrilling story I'd love to hear,
after bathing. Can't allow rotten
cheese smell to deter customers.

John zones out. Nods and smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM/BATH HOUSE - NIGHT

FADE IN:

A steaming splash of water from a heated kettle awakens John. He finds himself sitting in a half-full bathtub. He settles into this therapeutic situation with a euphoric smile. Another dumping of hot water on his body interrupts his daze.

He expands his awareness to acknowledge Sing Lee on the other side of a low curtain, heating water pots over a coal stove.

In an adjacent bathtub, John's clothes soak in cloudy water.

Sing realizes John is awake and staring at him, disturbed.

JOHN

My clothes...

SING LEE

They must be sanitized as well to lounge in my sacred space. No worry-

Sing Lee points across the room to the folded stack of trousers, shirt and coat on a tilting rack.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

I have extra garments from a hired gun of your stature... never returned for them last week. Safe to say he died for a lost cause.

John looks down at himself, ashamed and vulnerable.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

I didn't play with your ding dong. Not even mad it's bigger than mine! It's not the size of the bloke, but the punchline of the joke!

Sing retreats from his self-deprecating attempt to get a laugh. John stares numbly ahead through his surroundings.

JOHN

Say, how's yer King's English so bloody proper for a Chinaman?

SING LEE

Well, John, that's because I was born in this lovely country, in the fine dystopia of San Francisco!

JOHN

Interestin'.

Sing dumps one more hot kettle of water in the tub. Claps.

SING LEE

Should be good, comrade. Forget how
to wash yourself? I'll call in a
workin girl if ya need a new mommy.

JOHN

(pained yet stoic)
I'll be fine.

SING LEE

(pretend offended)
Even grown men need a mommy, John.

Sing Lee exits.

Deputy Jones passes by the open laundry room, spotting John
immediately. Approaches grinning. John scoffs.

JOHN

Goddamn, can't a man bathe here
without gettin' courted by cops?

DEPUTY JONES

We just keepin' an eye on ya's all.
Takin' notes of company ya keep!

Deputy Jones backs away, laughing.

John sighs, defeated. Spots nearly empty whiskey bottle by
the tub. Snatches it. Swigs backwash. Submerges into tub.

FADE TO:

INT. OPIUM DEN - NIGHT

Sing Lee is mid-story. Switches between English and Cantonese
while entertaining the barely cognizant Chew Brothers.

John enters opium den. Returns to comfort. Sing Lee welcomes
John to the story by passing the long pipe. Holds over lamp.

SING LEE

Welcome John. Y'know they named all
Chinamen in the USA John? Also they
named all sex buyers John! Classic!
(pauses, squints)
You have a scar across the side of
your skull there. Didn't see that
when your hair was so greasy!

John hits the pipe hard. He becomes insecure. Rubs the
textured scar exposed as a chasm running from his ear to the
top of his skull. Sing points to his own scar and eye patch.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

I too have a fine scar long upon my pretty face. We're a pair of modern pirates with commoner head trauma!

JOHN

Yep, it's the bain of my days. A reminder of all I lost.

SING LEE

Say, John, ever been hypnotized?

JOHN

Huh? God no. Why'd ye ask?

SING LEE

Just curious. I dabble in the art. However, have no fear. You can only hypnotize the willing! So they say.

Uncomfortable silence. Sing nods.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

We'll share our stories in time. As for now, yes, about pirates! I was just entertaining my lively guests-
(to snoozing patrons)
-And almost concluded the tale of Ching Shih, prostitute turned most successful pirate of all time.

JOHN

Sounds like some wild tale, that.

SING LEE

One of my favorites! I would start from the beginning, but I hate repeating myself. Maybe next time.

JOHN

OK, whatever ye like.

SING LEE

I like pirates. I LOVE Ching Shih. I WAS her in past life.

JOHN

Whatcha mean past life? Ye believe ye were a woman? A prostitute?

SING LEE

Where have you been? Living in a
black and white world of white
barbarians and their pagan-
persecuting 2-dimensional
children's story of heaven n' hell?

Dewey Chew rustles restlessly. Nudges his sleeping brother to
make sure he's still alive. Gestures to Sing Lee.

DEWEY CHEW

親愛的先生，請再來點甜品! More for me,
my friend, Sing! Miss you!

SING LEE

Oh my silly sweetheart, Dewey Chew!
我總是有更多給你，有趣的傢伙先生!
(to John)
Duty calls, but go on please!

JOHN

Just been livin' in this hell where
ye see me. Never think about what
comes next. May be my problem!

SING LEE

(tapping his eye patch)
I see. Well, I suppose not all of
us grew up in the temple, learning
forbidden wushu and meditation.
(lights Dewey's pipe)
No time to relay all Buddha's
teachings, but WE are trapped in
this endless cycle of living and
dying until one attains nirvana.
Enlightenment. So very tiring. I'm
close though, to my true release.
(pause)
One desire keeps me from its peace.

JOHN

What desire is that?

SING LEE

To be one of the greatest
storytellers of all time.

JOHN

Ye don't say?

SING LEE

Indeed, I do say. Writing my first novel now, one to immortalize my abused compatriots, in this stolen land and my long lost motherland invaded by the eight nations.

Sing Lee stifles rage. Grits teeth. Gold fangs glint in the light. Suppressing wrath, he notices John reclined, watching.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

More than my lust to pen the great American novel that will never see the light of day, due to my hue...

Sing manifests his journal and a feather quill with inkwell from the ground's shadows. Crushes the quill in his fist.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

I long to be narrator and protagonist of my own epic tale and have the freedom to tell it MY way.

Silence occupies the opium den. John clears his throat.

JOHN

THAT sounds like one noble desire to me. Most stories are drivel now. We need new bards, new voices.

(pauses)

Don't you feel guilt? For sellin' this dope? Which I am enjoying...

Sing sighs. Clutches dangling gold pouch. Weighs on a scale.

SING LEE

My crime is rebellion. And a means to an end. I plan to make the world a better place. Trust, I didn't choose this role. I, too, am a victim here. Similar to my dear Chews, or my sweet sleeping Lisa, enjoying a consensual break from her father and brother's peni...

Makes a tally in notebook. Turns grinning to shocked John.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

And good storytelling is simply telling a convincing lie that leads strangers to universal truth. Truth recorded becomes history. History so uncanny, it becomes a myth.

Sing settles back on a cushion. He takes a sip of a small brown bottle and shudders. Passes to John who accepts. Sips it, confused. Shudders with more cold violence.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

Speaking of modern myths, I know a good one. Heard of Death Valley?

JOHN

Nay, I have not. Don't sound much like my idea of a vacation getaway.

SING LEE

No. Not under normal circumstances or judging by the surface.

Sing twirls his stringy fu manchu mustache.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

A stray gold-digger passed through. Claimed to hit Death Valley with a team. Only he returned, with odd reports.

The kettle on a small stove SCREECHES. Sing took a moment to pour boiling water into Oolong tea. Hands mug to John. Sits.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

Said he fell through a soft spot in the terrain, and found himself in another world beneath the surface.

JOHN

Another world?

SING LEE

Abandoned tunnel networks. Vast chambers filled with ineffable treasures and proof of an advanced species who lived there long ago.

INT. SPORTING EAGLE SALOON - SAME TIME

SHERIFF JEFFERSON, 55, stout, short Caucasian with mutton chops, enters crowded saloon from street stairs. Scans every menace he sees, enraged. Spots son Deputy Jefferson at Faro table, now with white banker in midst of a game. Approaches.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON

A! Quit playin down here! Any news?

Startled by his father's unexpected appearance, Deputy Jefferson stands. Shakes his head sadly.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
No sir, haven't heard anything yet.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
I'm worried 'bout her, Judd. This ain't like her. Heard nasty rumors.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
Me too, daddy. Can't be true!

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
Well all the same, we need to do somethin' whether it's true or not.

Deputy Jones enters from subterranean tunnel. Smiles.

DEPUTY JONES
Y'all won't believe who I seen already shackin' up with ol' Sing!

INT. OPIUM DEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

JOHN
And? What happened? They got filthy rich on the discovery and retired?

SING LEE
No.

Lisa awakens and croaks out to Sing.

LISA
Sing? Singy! Should be gettin' back soon, huh, papa? Back to workin'?

Sing tends to Lisa. Calms her. Caresses her face.

SING LEE
It's OK, baby. No need to work. Just relax tonight, OK? Your new daddy will take care of you.

LISA
Thanks for bein' so nice to me. Someday, we'll take the train across Europe together, right?

SING LEE
Of course. You're my princess.

Lisa smiles at him, disheveled and lethargic. She gives him a gold coin. He lights her pipe. She exhales. Sleeps again.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

He returned to San Fran to report,
fund a team. No one believed him.

JOHN

And so you believe them?

SING LEE

(wild-eyed)

Of course I do. I lack dogma. I
have to believe in something.

Sing stands. Paces with hands interlocked behind his back.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

Has to be something more than
wasting away in this hole, getting
rich, bored, waiting for death by
Deputy. Or entitled vigilante!
Y'know I sleep in my safe room now!

JOHN

Fuck deputies! And vigilantes. I
got qualms 'bout how ye get coin,
but got more against the crooked
strong arm of the law. Bully
soldiers for robber-barons they
are! They should be scared of us
"illegal aliens"! We should unite!

SING LEE

Well-said, John. I concur. Enough
about me. What are you after?

JOHN

(mulls it over)

Freedom. Rest. A place to belong.

SING LEE

Universal aims! I can help. Not
that you'll find those prizes here.
You never told me about New Year's!

JOHN

Huh, I'm no bard like ye. Subway
digs finished last October, I had
no work. Drank at the basement pub,
stayin' to meself, studyin' folks.

Sing offers his brown bottle. John sips.

JOHN (CONT'D)

There were some nights I'd take part in bare-knuckle contests, take home \$20. After an accident one night, I had to take an odd job for the Irish mob. The Gopher Gang.

SING LEE

I see. What about this "odd job"?

JOHN

Oh, well, all started at the pub-

John is cut-off by GUNSHOTS. SCREAMS. More GUNSHOTS. UNINTELLIGIBLE DRUNKEN YELLING. Sing and John both jump up. John grips concealed Luger. Sing crouches. Peeks around corner to survey danger down tunnel. ROUGH VOICES echo.

SING LEE

Coast is clear. Casual casualties. Say, you really know how to use that evil death tool on your hip?

JOHN

I know how to point and shoot.

SING LEE

You also won a boxing tournament?

JOHN

About five or six of 'em, yep. Why?

SING LEE

How'd you like to be my bodyguard?

JOHN

Wha? Bodyguard? I dunno. Folks think I'm a tough guy, but nay.

SING LEE

Sure you are! Have you seen yourself? You've surely killed a man or two, likely in self-defense.

JOHN

(horrified)

What in hell makes you say that?

SING LEE

Instinct.

The two make a serious form of eye contact. Sing Lee extends his hand to make the official offer.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

Whatever you expected to earn via
hard labor you found out here in no-
man's land, I'll quadruple it.

Dagda materializes, tired, forces out of the opium den fog.

DAGDA

Stop, John! He works for our enemy!

John twitches. Ogles the hand and meaning of the words.

JOHN

How do I know I can trust you?

SING LEE

You don't. Trust is assuming a
stranger'll put your interests
above their own. I don't advise it.

DAGDA

Exactly! Took words from me mouth!

JOHN

(increasingly nervous)

How can I know you're a good man?

SING LEE

Haha! I can promise and give my
word I'll also cover food, drink,
and all the free opium you could
want without killing yourself.

Without a further thought after the last offer, John shrugs.
Shakes Sing Lee's hand. Sing hugs John in celebration.

JOHN

Guess I got a death wish. Sounds
loads easier than bustin' rocks!

SING LEE

May get to liberate the law of some
"crooked strong arms" as a bonus!

GUNSHOT. Michael scrambles around the bend. Doubled over and
breathless, he tries to speak, interrupted by more GUNSHOTS.
SCREAMS. SCUFFLE. People RUNNING.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Sheriff posse comin'. Lynchin' all
chinks on their way to Sing.

SING LEE

Ah... They come for me at last?
'Twas only a matter of time...

JOHN

Fuck mate, ye don't say!

SING LEE

We shook on it mate. I knew I'd
need your help sooner or later!

MICHAEL MURPHY

You work for this asshole?

JOHN

Recent development. Told ye. I came
to work. You two know each other?

MICHAEL MURPHY

Wish I didn't.

SING LEE

Who's he? Looks like all the other
hairy bleached brutes to me. And I
don't appreciate your slander sir!

MICHAEL MURPHY

Ye got worse than that comin' hey!
Sheriff blames you for his daughter
turnin' to a whore fiend down here.

SING LEE

He blames me? I support free will.
She's accountable for her actions.

MICHAEL MURPHY

She's only fifteen years old!

SING LEE

Age of consent in Montana and most
states in this disgusting country
is ten years old. Look it up!

Frantic, Michael looks around the surroundings.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Jesus man! That's her strung out on
the ground now. What in God's name!

Michael wants to strangle Sing. John gets in his way to
prevent the attack with large open hands. GUNSHOTS. SCREAMS.

JOHN

Let's think. Civil-like. If the mob
sees us here, we're all dead men.

SING LEE

I'll take the Chews to my safe
room, built for this exact purpose.

Sing curses. Kicks the Chews to their feet. Shepherds them to
the safe room in the den's rear against their will.

Michael turns to confront John in a state of confusion.

MICHAEL MURPHY

You're willing to die to protect
this chink scoundrel?

JOHN

(flinching at the slur)
Guess I am. Don't call him that.

MICHAEL MURPHY

I see how it is. He got you. Just
like everyone else in this town!

JOHN

Maybe it's free will. Maybe it's in
the cards. Maybe I'll atone come
Judgment Day. Maybe not. We'll see.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Well, you're a fool, and he's a
crook. Wanna be his patsy pal?
That's your business. But I'd be
cursed by the Father for not
helpin' a fellow Irishman get out
of this mess. The mob knows me.
Likes me even. I'll talk to 'em.

Bullets RICOCHET down the hall. WHOOPS of unseen mob amp up.
GUNSHOTS. The Tailor appears. Runs frantic around the corner.

A round hits The Tailor. Falls in front of opium den. Crawls
onward to safe room. Knocks hard. Shouts Cantonese. Dies.

Sing Lee pokes head out of safe room. Acknowledges fallen
friend. Scowls. Sees first sign of cowboys. Returns inside.
John and Michael make eye contact. Look at Lisa in panic.

Michael steps forward as the gang of nearly a dozen manifests
at the opium den entrance with guns drawn.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. LITTLE CHINATOWN - NIGHT

The half-drunk mob scans opium den. Several spit and curse. Sheriff Jefferson rustles to front, smoking a corn cob pipe. At his side is Deputy Judd Jefferson, who scowls at John.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

This orange son of a bitch again!

Sheriff Jefferson exhales a solid cloud toward the two Irishmen standing outside the opium den. Spits at their feet.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON

The hell's that Slant-eyed demon,
huh? Ya silly micks saw him! And
tell me where's my little girl?!

Michael raises palms nervously to ease the tension. Smiles.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Yes sir, we saw him run, thattaway!
(pointing to dead end)
Quick! He can't be too far off!

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

That's a dead end ya goon! Ya dirty
paddies know somethin'! Answer pop!

Deputy Jefferson moves nearer, gun pointed firmly from Michael to John and back to Michael. John advances from the entrance as distraction. Meets the deputy face to face.

Deputy Jefferson imprints the barrel of his gun into John's chest. John doesn't back down. Deputy Jefferson laughs. Sheriff Jefferson shakes his head, impressed. Spits.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON

Gots a real ginger cowboy here,
boys! Steely balls! Say, give this
fuckin' tough guy a badge and gun!

Unconvinced, Deputy Jefferson stares for a prolonged period of time through John's eyes and face. Shakes his head.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

Ain't balls or bravery. The man's
just plumb stupid. Suicidal!
(lightens up, smiles)
That's all he'd need for a job as a
lawman in this town. You game, red?

JOHN
 Already found meself a feckin' job.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
 What? Workin' for that chink thug?

JOHN
 It's not ye business...

John smiles wide at the sheriff father and deputy son.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 I'd ne'er be so desperate to be a
 copper. Never much believed in 'em.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
 Never believed in lawmen? Ya don't
 have to! Ain't like we're Santa!

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
 That's right. We run this town
 whether you like us or not.
 (turns to sheriff)
 It's clear whose side he's on.

Deputy Jefferson cocks the hammer back. Raises the barrel to
 John's forehead. John takes a deep breath.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
 I'm only gonna ask one more time
 before my son's trigger finger gets
 impatient and you end up brainless.

Sheriff Jefferson steps closer to speak to the side of John's
 face. Anxious, Michael takes another step closer to the
 cluster of four men, but ultimately does nothing to help.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON (CONT'D)
 Where's my daughter, boy!? Lisa?!

On queue, a RUFFLING noise amongst pillows within the dark
 opium den draws attention from the gang of lawmen.

LISA (O.S.)
 D-Daddy? Bubby?
 (coughing)
 I-I was on my way home in a minute.
 Just... hangin' out with friends.
 Listenin' to music. Pirate stories.

Both Sheriff and Deputy Jefferson are paralyzed by shock. It
 gives John the chance to punch the Deputy's Colt from his
 hands. The gun fires upon hitting ground, killing one of the
 lingering cowboy goons. John draws the Luger from his waist.

The gang is caught off-guard by the fallen ally. John slugs Deputy Jefferson once in the stomach with full force. With the Deputy winded, John spins him to face the mob with Luger buried into his temple. Backs up against dirt wall.

One cowboy fires toward John's exposed head. Hits the wall.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
Don't shoot me, ya dirty dogs!

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
Cease fire! Hold yer fire!

The Sheriff points the gun at Michael for collateral. Michael flinches and raises his open palms higher. Dagda tsk tsks.

DAGDA
(to John)
This is ye brain on drugs.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
Murphy! Two years known ya from the general store as a law-abiding man.

Sheriff scratches his own temple in frustrated confusion.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON (CONT'D)
Who's ya buddy? And why in hell're you here, outside this opium den?

LISA
Daddy, it's not them! I like it down here! Sing's nice. Never hurts me! I love him! He's my new papa!

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
With my fifteen year old daughter!
(to Lisa)
Daddy's here baby, don't worry now!
(back to Michael)
Explain this for me, Michael!

Michael shakes his head, face contorted, on the verge of tears. He looks into the opium den and back at the mob.

MICHAEL MURPHY
Sheriff, I know this looks a mess, but it's not what it looks like!

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
Looks like my baby's strung out in an opium den after... After-

DEPUTY JONES
 (from center of the mob)
 Turnin' tricks is what they callin'
 it now, Sheriff. Turnin' tricks.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
 (seething)
 SHUT THE FUCK UP, JONES!
 (back to Michael)
 How is THIS not a fucking MESS?

Michael hesitates a moment, gulping his anxiety down,
 nodding, trying to choose the correct words.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 You're right, sheriff, 'tis a mess.
 We just happen to pass by. Givin'
 John the tour. That's when we heard
 shots, the Chinese ran. That's it!

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
 OK, Mr. Passerby. Still don't
 explain why your friend JOHN HERE,
 has a pistol to my son's head!

Michael darted his wide-eyed gaze between all parties.

MICHAEL MURPHY
 I uh, I-I- Well, yes, ya see...

Michael stutters. Makes exaggerated faces. John struggles to
 hold resisting Deputy Judd. Buries the gun harder into his
 temple. John notices one eye watching. Sing has safe room
 door cracked. Gets John's attention to signal something John
 can't decipher. Sing makes finger gun. Beckons him to room.
 Baffled, John shakes head. Sing nods. Closes door to sliver.

JOHN
 Look, gents. Enough small talk.
 None of us wanna die today, right?
 How 'bout a civil solution?

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
 Civil solution? Ha! No way you're
 getting out of here alive, man.

JOHN
 One bold guarantee from you!

SHERIFF JEFFERSON
 He's right, my dear son. We can't
 sit here in this situation all
 night. Let's make some kinda deal.

Sheriff Jefferson scratches his mutton chops. Spits.

SHERIFF JEFFERSON (CONT'D)

If Michael ain't a liar, and you
have no hand in my daughter ruining
her's and our family's reputation,
we may let you live, not in this
town, but maybe another, IF ya let
my son go... an' give me Sing.

JOHN

Hmmm... an interestin' offer. So
what'll ye do with this man, Sing,
if I turn 'em over to ya?

SHERIFF JEFFERSON

(laughs)

Justice'll be served for the plague
he put upon Havre. We're clearin'
all the Chinese out tonight!

All the other cowboys hoot and holler. Stomp their feet.

John appears disappointed. Shakes head. Clicks tongue.

JOHN

That's what I thought you'd say.

Abruptly, John releases Deputy Jefferson. Kicks his rear full
force into the Sheriff. Both men topple to the ground.

John gives a quick look and nod to Michael in the confusion.
He sprints into the opium den toward the safe room.

Michael follows close behind. Ducks a few cowboy rounds. Sing
opens the door wide enough for entry. John stops. Turns.

SING LEE

What are you doing?!

Michael enters safe room. Bullets fly into opium den. John
aims his Luger. Sheriff stands with help from his son.
Sheriff dusts belly off before John fires into it. Puts old
man down with a THUD. Deputy Jefferson screams. Holds father.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON

Stop shootin' willy nilly ya fools!
My sister's in there! Pop! No, Pop!

John ducks last shots. Slips into the safe room.

INT. SAFE ROOM - NIGHT

Lanterns light the cramped room stocked with jars of food, water, kerosene barrels, bedding. Sing grins, fangs glow.

SING LEE

(whispers)

Good job, Johnny Boy.

MICHAEL MURPHY

Good job? Good job?!

(paces in tight space)

We were THIS close to striking a deal and keeping our lives!

BANGS echo at the door. BULLETS fire upon it until several round pierce through the thick mud around the steel frame.

JOHN

If yer deal meant sacrificin' all Chinese in this town, then no.

John shakes his head in disgust at Michael. Glances at Sing and the Chew brothers. On the verge of tears.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We were never near a deal.

MICHAEL MURPHY

You'd die for some strangers who don't even speak English?

JOHN

Gaelic's me mother tongue. English was forced on me. 'Tis the language of our common enemy. Did ye forget?

More outside BANGS. SHOUTS. GUNSHOTS.

MICHAEL MURPHY

This land's chock-full o' enemies.

Dewey Chew interjects with a finger.

DEWEY CHEW

We know more enemy than you!

JOHN

Exactly me point. Most enemies a-speakin' English. More call for us foreigners to stick together.

BENNY CHEW

We all deserve better.

MICHAEL MURPHY
OK, you may have a point.

Michael looks at the silhouette of Sing Lee and The Chew Bros with newfound sympathy. He extends a hand.

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
Apologies for me... bigot speak.
Maybe I seen too many fellas lose
work to the hard workers from yer
country, and be retired by poppy.

Sing extends his hand to shake Michael's. He smiles, flashing his gold fangs. Michael still seems quite uneasy by Sing.

Something that sounds like a small EXPLOSION. Ensuing FLAMES erupt outside the door. All the men flinch.

MICHAEL MURPHY (CONT'D)
Chrise Almighty!

The new smoke begins to siphon through cracks in the door.

JOHN
Bastards tryin' ta burn us alive!

SING LEE
Yes, John, not uncommon treatment
in societies run by savage swine.
(sniffs)
They're torching my molasses. Oh
fun! May want to hold your breath!

JOHN
How can you be so calm?
(coughs from smoke)
This isn't a situation where I can
fulfill my bodyguard obligations.

SING LEE
Well, lucky for you, with some
preparation comes the lack of a
need for such physical services.

MICHAEL MURPHY
We're all bout to die here. Say yer
prayers, if ye even believe in God!

SING LEE
No need for YOUR God here, mates!

DAGDA
Well, feck ye too, mate.

Sing stuffs a saddle bag with gold bars. Fills a rucksack with handfuls of gold coins from a dusty safe. He holds one coin to the others. The image on the coin is his likeness.

SING LEE

How many Chinese laundry men d'you know with their own currency?

JOHN

I s'pose just one.
(squints closer)
That's meant to be you? Ye should ask for your money back!

Sing swings shelving as secret door. Reveals tunnel. Wiolds lantern to show everyone that it's a tunnel. Laughs.

SING LEE

'Tis my money. My name's on it!

Sing points to character on coin. John shakes head confused.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

What, so you can't read Mandarin?

JOHN

Do I look like an orange, mate?

Sing nods. Hands frowning John the saddle bag of gold bars. Then the rucksack of coins. Grins wider.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Feckin' hell?
(shouldering both bags)
Guess I'm ye mule too, eh?

SING LEE

That's your annual salary if you can carry that much. I can't hack it, my back's ruined. Perturbed!

John struggles slightly under the surprising load. Grunts.

Sing shrugs. Removes two bars from one bag. Hands them to the Chew brothers. The two men jump for joy. Shout in Cantonese. Clink their bars together. Pretend to drink them. Dewey drinks his gold longer. Embraces the suddenly bothered Benny.

Sing notices an annoyed Michael Murphy huffing and puffing. Removes one more bar from the bag. Extends it in offering.

A euphoric Michael sticks two quick hands out to receive the heavy token before Sing quickly retracts it to his chest.

SING LEE (CONT'D)
Oh ye like gold, huh?

MICHAEL MURPHY
(looks around sheepishly)
Well, sure. Who doesn't?

Sing smiles sarcastically and nods his head at Michael.

SING LEE
I'll gift you this little...
treat... on one condition...

MICHAEL MURPHY
...and that is?

SING LEE
If I ever hear the word 'chink'
come out of your mouth again? I'll
use this bar to bash your face in.

Michael shivers at the vocalized threat and unwavering one eye of Sing glowing in the smoky lantern light. Nods. Sing hands him the gold bar. Michael looks down at it in shame.

BANGS of kicking upon the burning door. The THUD of an axe. Sing looks at each companion quickly.

SING LEE (CONT'D)
OK gents, time to skedaddle!

The posse files into tunnel as Sing holds door open. He picks up lantern. Shuffles backward. Pulls the heavy shelving door.

Safe room door turns to ash, gives from sledgehammer SMASH.

GUNSHOTS whizz past secret door as it closes, igniting barrel of kerosene. Resulting EXPLOSION slams the heavy door shut.

INT. ESCAPE TUNNEL - NIGHT

With joy, Sing leads bewildered group with kerosene lamp. Behind Sing, John struggles to follow in the tight passage. Bends forward as a hunchback under the weight of gold. John wipes sweat from eyes. Struggles to see. Bumps head on low beam. Sudden ringing. Dark green consumes his sight.

Dagda returns from the side. The giant face of the earth god stares through the thick soil and into John's soul. He claps his hands in thunderous applause. Laughs. Shakes head.

DAGDA

Tryin' to escape fate? Ye only move
toward me. The truth o' who ye are.

JOHN

Feck ya! I'm nobody! Leave me be!

DAGDA chuckles. Sing stops crawling through the tunnel. Turns shocked to address John behind him.

SING LEE

What was that, Johnny Boy?

John stops. Shakes head. Drips sweat. Looks at the dark tunnel wall. Closes eyes. Palms skull. PULSES.

JOHN

Nothin'. Symptoms of a work injury.

Sing nods in understanding.

SING LEE

Well, you're not "nobody".

DAGDA

He's my son of the third realm! My
solid boy! Ye can't have him!

Sing grins.

SING LEE

Sh. Hear that? Sounds like a mouse.

Turns back forward. Holds lamp out in the dark tunnel. Calculates next moves. Turns to group. Raises lantern light. Puts finger to lips. Waits for total silence.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Way out is ahead. Become shadows.

JOHN

Let's wait here for fuss to die.

SING LEE

Now's when we take the midnight
train. I know the schedule, John.

(to group)

No noise from anyone, or we ALL
shall die together tonight.

John stifles doubt. All agree. They proceed single file through an even more narrow access point to the side.

John gets stuck due to baggage. Michael pushes him from rear. Sing pulls until the bodyguard is free and frowning.

Sing waits for the last of the posse, Dewey Chew, to catch up to his position at the top of the tight dirt-carved stairs.

Crouched under rickety trap door, Sing holds finger to lips.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

The depot is 200 meters on left. Be silent like shadows, and follow me.

Sing opens the trap door. The bright full moon greets them.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

On mostly deserted street, a band of vigilante cowboys patrol guns drawn. They talk amongst themselves, laughing. They fire a few rounds in the sky for shits. More giggles.

COWBOY VIGILANTE #1

No more Chinese! No more sheriff!
This is our fuckin' city now boys!

The band passes. Stone-faced Sing pokes his head out. Scans.

Chippewa-Cree Elder from burnt porch observe him, silent. A Native man wields rifle, concealed under porch, using it as a makeshift bunker used for picking off lone cowboy vigilantes. The Elder looks to the left. Looks to the right. Nods.

Sing slinks out of the ground hole like a smooth and silent serpent. Crouches into the sliver of the nearby building shadow. Waits until John and the others are on the street.

Sing gestures toward group to wait in shadow of adjacent building. He moves with stealth to pile of burnt building rubble rotting upon Main Street's sidewalk. John joins Sing behind rubble. Smoke pours from ventilation shafts over opium den. Sing shakes his head in disgust. John readjusts the weight of the saddle bag and rucksack. Kneels.

Sing is gestures coast is clear. Waves group to join. Michael and Chew bros advance. Sing taps John to advance. They creep along Main street, lacking cover, illuminated by moonlight.

Ahead, the leftover mob BURSTS through saloon entrance. Sing grabs John's sleeve. Lifts palm behind. They all freeze.

Deputies Jefferson and Jones carry body of Sheriff Jefferson. Pause upon descending stairs. Block trajectory to the depot.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
 (sobbing)
 Those sons of bitches killed daddy!

John gestures to retreat back to mound. Sing wags finger.

DEPUTY JONES
 We gonna get their scalps buddy!

The first distracted cowboy steps onto street ahead. Sing gawks frozen. Turns to John.

SING LEE
 Run.

Before it can be debated, Sing sprints toward the depot. John shakes the stupor. Nods to the others behind him. The goons of the posse are sluggishly alerted by Sing's blur flying by. John sighs. Starts Trudges under weight. The fugitives cross the stairway threshold of the underground entrance. Deputy Jefferson holds his father's limp head. Identifies criminals.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
 DIRTY MOTHERFUCKERS!

Deputy Jefferson drops father's head with a THUD. Reaches for his holstered pistol. Points the gun up the stairs. Fires. Accidentally shoots his own man in the leg, COWBOY GOON #1.

COWBOY GOON #1
 (holding leg, wincing)
 Ow! Goddamn it Dep! Ya shot me!

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
 Oh! Boo hoo! Don't get in the way!

The two Deputies and remaining goons scramble to the street.

DEPUTY JONES
 Stop! Y'all're under arrest for the-

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
 No! These invaders are NOT under
 arrest. Kill em all! An' scalp em!

Deputy Jefferson fires the first well-aimed shot that hits Benny Chew in the head at fifty meters away. Dewey Chew stops in his tracks. Doubles back. Slumps in horror by his unrecognizable brother suffering from spasms. The men open fire at fugitives. John looks back to see the Chew bros down. John stops to return for help. Bullet WHIZZES by his head. John keeps running. Holds saddle bag behind head and rucksack on his back, which catches another stray bullet or two.

Michael nears depot, where mostly concealed Sing waits behind train car. Sing gestures with X arms. Points past his position. Signals them to run, lose gunmen in pursuit.

The lawmen advance to the place of the deceased Benny Chew. Dewey Chew cries over the body. Sing witnesses, horrified.

The cold Deputy Jefferson addresses his men.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON (CONT'D)
Deputy Jones. Y'all hunt those damn paddy traitors and bring me Sing.

DEPUTY JONES
That's a real master plan Dep Jeff.

DEPUTY JEFFERSON
No, now I'm Sheriff Jefferson. That redhead shot daddy. Get his scalp.

Deputy Jones nods solemnly. Picks three men to join him.

Unraveling Dewey screams in Cantonese. Sheriff spits on him.

DEWEY CHEW
You sick man. Why? My brother...
(looks down at Benny)
Why, my brother?

SHERIFF JUDD
I ain't ya brother. And neither is he, not nomore. He's dead as shit!

Sheriff Judd raises the pistol to Dewey's face.

DEWEY CHEW
Why... you so mean? Where is love?

SHERIFF JUDD
It's like you uncivilized heathens never heard of Hammurabi's Code!

Presses barrel of the gun against Dewey Chew's eye.

SHERIFF JUDD (CONT'D)
An eye... for an eye!

ECU on Sheriff Judd's face as it widens to a beastly grin of pure satisfaction.

GUNSHOT.

END OF ACT 3

ACT 4

INT. BURNED OUT HOUSE - NIGHT

Within the ruins of an old house remaining from the 1904 fire, John lies on his stomach, concealed by singed burlap sacks. He has eyes on Main Street and the railroad depot across the street 100 meters to right. His face and arms are covered in soot applied from the ashes as shadow camouflage.

From this vantage point, John can see the one eye and fangs of Sing shimmering from behind the wheel of a coal car. Sing makes two-fingered hand gesture alerting him to group of cowboys heading his way on the late night patrol.

John's head pain REVERBERATES. Dagda sits beside him.

DAGDA

Oh gee, boy-o. If ye listened to
Dagda, ye woulda had a great night!

Annoyed, John wants to offer retort but keeps quiet. Ignores the earth god in favor of the situation on the street.

DAGDA (CONT'D)

Ye coulda been in high spirits if
ye didn't hate me and me comp'ny!

JOHN

I don't hate ya! Ye jes... LOUD!

DAGDA

Oh I'm loud? Ye just summoned
killers with cowardly weapons!

JOHN

Shite.

EXT. MAIN STREET HAVRE - CONTINUOUS

With guns drawn, Grover and Cletus approach from just out of John's sight. They heard the delusional shout.

GROVER

Gaht dayum! You hear that yellin'
Cletus? Think we found the bounty!

CLETUS

I heared sumpin' aright, Grover.
Somewhere in these parts?

GROVER

Yep. You take left, circle round.
I'll go take a looksee in this here
haunted house.

Grover steps up on the porch to the burned out house and gets a sudden chill. Tightens up coat. Walks in.

INT. BURNED OUT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

John holds his breath. Slowly buries his face in the soot. Hears an UNZIP. A stream of piss soaks back of his head.

DAGDA

Yep. Night coulda been a whole lot
better. Smells like Grover needs to
drink more water. OO-EE!

Grover shakes longer than necessary. Buttons trousers. Sighs.

EXT. BURNED OUT HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Grover walks out. Sits. Places his gun down beside him. Sprawls out to relax under canopy of stars. Cletus shuffles around the right side of the house.

CLETUS

Never gon' get the bounty at this
rate. I'm bored. Tard! Near sunup!

Grover props himself up on elbows. Yawns. Smiles warmly.

GROVER

Them outlaws prolly long gone. Now
Judd Jeffy Junior's sheriff, reckon
we should get out too. Havre bound
to be a ghost town b'next year.

CLETUS

What town d'ya reckon we go? Butte?

GROVER

Who cares? As long as we're
together Cletus, I don't! And...
speakin' of Butte town...

Grover reaches a gentle hand out for Cletus to come closer.

GROVER (CONT'D)

When ya gonna let big daddy Grover
go to town in your Butte?

Cletus gets flustered. Holds up his belt buckle seriously.

CLETUS

Not after last time! We damn near
got caught red-handed and hung.

GROVER

Not as hung as you, hoss. C'mere...

They embrace during sunrise. Birds sing. They move into kiss.

They are distracted by train WHISTLE SCREECH from station.
Coal engine car straight across Main fires up in a BOOM.

John, Cletus, Grover all see across distance, Sing Lee use a
rope dart chain to choke the conductor into submission. He
uses the sharp dart dangling from remaining rope to pop two
consecutive train guards in the face upon their approach.

The train sluggishly rocks into backward then forward motion.

INT. BURNED OUT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

John springs to his feet from the soot pile with gun drawn.

EXT. BURNED OUT HOUSE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

John startles the two cowboys who draw their guns and hold
fire in a standoff. John shoulders the saddle bag and ruck
sack without lowering his eyes or the gun.

JOHN

That's my train.

GROVER

Like hell it is. You come with us.

JOHN

So they can kill ye two lovebirds
afterward for sodomy? Ye know what
Good Christians do to ye for that?

CLETUS

Hey Mack, we just love each other!
We ain't no devil-worshippers!

JOHN

Tell the judge. Or don't, if ye
wan' escape? Help carry this load.
Les catch this train to a new life.

EXT. MAIN STREET HAVRE/TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The load is split up between John, Grover and Cletus. They run across main street to catch the slow-creeping train.

Michael Murphy sticks his head out of the side of the back coal car. Grins. Nearly gets head knocked off by platform.

The three men with divvied loads of gold bars catch up with the back coal car. They toss individual gold bars in to lighten their load so they can run faster as it moves faster.

Michael Murphy collects and stacks loose gold bars. Reaches out a hand to attempt to pull them up.

MICHAEL MURPHY

C'mon ruffians, grab my hand! Run!

Cletus is the fastest of the three. He gets close enough to grab Michael's hand as the coal caboose crosses the threshold of the train station platform. There waiting is Deputy Jones with revolver aimed at the surprised Cletus, who takes a sudden slug to the forehead. He collapses in the tracks.

Grover SCREAMS. Falls back from the train pursuit. He ducks a couple slugs. Makes his way to the body of Cletus. Grover drags Cletus a few feet to the short wall's cover of the train station platform. He cries. Yells. Fires a few shots from below the platform. Hits the foot of lawmen.

Grover glances down at Cletus's bloody face stuck in a smile. Screams in delirium. Kisses the bloody face all over. Holds Cletus's leaking forehead bullet hole up to his own forehead.

Grover jumps up to the platform with guns a-blazing at the scattered lawmen. Taking out three before the empty CLICK. Ducks low behind a pillar. Reloads from ammo belt. Hops from behind pillar with gun drawn high. Immediately in gross point confrontation with twitching Deputy Jones walking with gun drawn from the hip. A brief moment of breathless eye contact. Both pull the triggers. Deputy Jones tumbles off platform.

Grover crumples to the ground under his gut shot. He sighs. Looks back down at the smiling lifeless body of Cletus. Closes eyes. Puts barrel of pistol in his mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

GUNSHOT.

John flinches from the shot. Looks behind him, mid-run, flailing and missing the catch of Michael's arm.

JOHN
C'mon! Almost!

MICHAEL MURPHY
Ya got it in ye, John!

With a burst of speed, they make contact. Michael pulls John on board. They collapse into the coal stack. Laugh.

INT. CONDUCTOR TRAIN CAR - MORNING

Sing laughs. Pulls THE CONDUCTOR, 50, lassoed with the rope dart like a dog on a leash. Makes the man walk on all fours.

John and Michael enter. Sing salutes. Smiles. Shrugs. Unties rope from Conductor's neck. Throws hands up. Innocent.

The crying conductor looks up at Sing Lee, confused.

SING LEE
Fancy seeing you fine fellows here!
Either of you honkies know how to
drive a train like this one here?

Michael scoffs. Shakes his head.

John looks into the control station and furnace, lost.

JOHN
Seen it done once or twice.

SING LEE
Well it doesn't matter. Since I do.
You goys can shovel coal, I'm sure.

Sing shakes head down at the conductor praying on his knees.

SING LEE (CONT'D)
No sense keeping hostages, huh?
After a day they lose their luster.
Gotta start feedin' em... Nah.

Sing roundhouse kicks the conductor in the chest. Knocks him back to the edge of the open door of the train car. The disoriented Conductor struggles for breath. Panics at the moving scenery directly behind. Clutches the door frame.

CONDUCTOR
Oh god, please, NO! I'm sorry I
called youza chink! I got a family!

SING LEE

Oh, you will be sorry. Tomorrow
when you wake up in a ravine.

(advances)

Remember to tuck and roll!

With a flying kick, Sing kicks the conductor off the train.

Stupefied, John shakes his head.

JOHN

Woah, Sing, that was too harsh.

Michael just gestures at Sing, wordlessly, helplessly.

SING LEE

Don't worry, baby. He'll be fine! I
had to do that for the Chew bros.

(amused)

Know who won't be fine? The fat ol'
sheriff. That scalawag's SO dead!

MICHAEL MURPHY

Yeah, well his son's not dead.

SING LEE

Oh the NEW sheriff of bohunk-
nowhere USA? Like I give a rat's
ass. A local nobody! Dime-a-dozen!

A bullet SHOT flies through the train car. RICOCHETS. The New Sheriff, Judd Jefferson rides alongside them on his horse. Bounces, fueled with rage. Shouts. Tries to steady his aim to fire another round. Horse hurdles over a boulder.

Annoyed, Sing grabs shovel. Scoops load of coal. From around the edge of opening, flings black powder into Sheriff's face.

The pursuit stops. Sheriff Judd nearly flies off his horse as both himself and the noble steed sputter blinded by the black cloud. Jefferson fires blindly in vain toward the train car. The train flies past to freedom. Out of sight.

Back in the train car, Sing wipes the dust off his hands theatrically. Takes a seat in the conductor's chair and lounges back with hands interlocked behind his head.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

Look at us! Real gang of fugitives!

MICHAEL MURPHY

You're... amused? This is just the
beginning! The cavalry will be
waiting at the next big station.

JOHN
Not good. We need a real plan.

SING LEE
Plan is: bust through blockades,
blasting those G-men.
(to Michael)
Hey Mikey? Mind checking out the
attached passenger cars for foes?

Begrudgingly, Michael glances at John. Obliges. Exits.

JOHN
Is there a Plan B?

SING LEE
Superior to Plan A? No. But we have
six hours on this runaway train to
Spokane to think all about it.

JOHN
What a feckin' hangover.

John finds whisky flask. Sips. Sprawls on dirty floor. Sighs.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Start runnin' an' ye can't stop ey?

SING LEE
True words, my friend. By the way-
(eye twinkling)
Why ya runnin' Johnny?

Caught off guard, John looks up. Frowns. Sing eagerly awaits.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

Michael pulls S&W .38 from ankle holster. Checks rows one by one. Hears movement. Advances to front rows, gun raised.

Michael is stupefied to find Erin, Lita, and Lisa sitting in the floor between the seats. They are equally stupefied.

INT. CONDUCTOR TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Michael, Lisa, Lita, and Erin enter earshot of John's story. Shocked, Sing, refrains from revelation to get a confession.

JOHN
Long story short, I killed a man.

Michael stands aloof, observant. Lisa waves at Sing.

SING LEE

Oh, no way! Risque! Who?

JOHN

Police chief. On accident, like.

SING LEE

Oh! John the cop killer! 2 for 2
bud! I hired the best bodyguard!

JOHN

It's not a joke! My life is over.

SING LEE

Or maybe, it's only begun! What was
your life before? Digging sewers?

JOHN

At least that was a simple life.
Can't say I'm proud of killing.
Although, it's gotten easier...

SING LEE

I'm proud of you, Johnny! After all
you said and did back there, looks
like you found your true calling!

Sing takes out a sack of opium, a ferrocerium lighter, and
polished mahogany pipe. Gingerly, he packs a bowl of opium.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

John, say hello to our soiled dove
stowaways: Lita the fire-breather,
Lisa, of course sweet Lisa joined
us, glad of it. And Erin, who you
also know, and may owe some coin?

John twists around bewildered. Erin smiles sweetly. Waves.

LITA WOLFHEART

Good job on the two cops. You may
deserve your dick after all.

LISA

So, you're the man killed my daddy?

John nods. Wincing. Conflicted emotions.

LISA (CONT'D)

Gee, thanks. I been prayin' for it.
You messed up though by not killin'
big brother too. He'll track us.

SING LEE

Don't worry about him anymore. I
have a plan. John will protect you.
We'll pass you off as his wife.

JOHN

What the hell, Sing! No! No way!

LISA

I never saw a future as a wife, or
mother after mama died with Jeffy.

SING LEE

It's the only way to keep her safe,
John. You want her turnin' tricks?

John shakes head, pained, glum, anxious. Erin bites lip.

ERIN O'NEAL

I'd sure like to be your wife.

LITA WOLFHEART

What about us? Getting land
together? Did you forget?

ERIN O'NEAL

Of course! We will, baby!

Sing raises the pipe to his relaxed lips. Strikes lighter and
takes two sharp puffs. Shakes lighter closed. Holds in smoke
for momentary reflection. Exhales. Passes pipe to eager John.

SING LEE

We have ourselves a little party!
(laughs, gets serious)
Look, I don't care for the life of
crime. It's all means to an end. At
the end of the day, I'm a real life
pirate, seeking a strange treasure.

Sing pulls out a folded old pirate style map of the US.
Gently unfolds it. Holds it up for all to see. Points.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

HERE we are now. We head for the
coast, move and live like shadows
through vicious underworlds along
the Pacific. Transcend Spokane,
Portland, San Francisco, Los
Angeles, the brand new Las Vegas,
then HERE. Death Valley! Got it all
mapped out. We just gotta survive!
Don't worry, I know MANY people!

The others are dumbfounded as Sing folds and pockets map.

JOHN

Mate, you're a looney, huh?

SING LEE

Most geniuses are. As are you, my
cop-killing friend. Who were you
talking to in the tunnel?

(gestures to Michael)

Bet Mr. Silent Psycho Mikey here
has blood on his hands! Pray-tell!

Michael tenses upon the accusation. Shakes head. Stares at both men with resigned detachment masking subdued anger.

John lights up pipe.

MICHAEL MURPHY

I... used to... be a cop.

(glares at John)

In New York City.

John chokes on the smoke. Lita cackles.

Sing howls. Jumps to his feet. Points at Michael.

SING LEE

I knew it! Wee ding dong!

(wistful)

Makes perfect sense...

MICHAEL MURPHY

(nervous, clears throat)

The life's behind me now I'm on the
lam with you fine lot. Nothin' to
lose n' my ding dong's fine thanks.

LITA WOLFHEART

If you say so, chief.

Michael shoots Lita dirty look, betrayed. Sing sits back down, still laughing. Folds arms.

SING LEE

You prolly got the longest kill
sheet here, man! NOW you two fellow
countrymen have an awkward dynamic!

Michael crosses his arms tight. Leans against the wall. Stares in disappointment down at John. John returns Michael's stare, half-stoned. He shrugs off any guilt. Looks into the fire of the furnace. Hits the pipe again. Hard pull.

SING LEE (CONT'D)

OK go easy, Chief! We have limited supply until the next Chinatown!

(reaches for the pipe)

If you're smokin' all my stuff on this journey, I need to hear all about NYC New Year's! From the top!

(to Michael, warmly)

Certainly Michael wants to know how his old boss kicked the bucket.

Michael scoffs. Frowns. Sits. Pulls out flask. Sips. Seethes.

John lies on the floor. Closes eyes. Touches scar. Winces.

JOHN

I'd have to start months before New Year's, when the world collapsed on me. Beam crushed my head. Buried me alive. Died for five minutes of pitch black eternity. When I came back to life, there he was...

John peeks one eye open. He has an audience of five humans and Dagda. The giant is laid out on his stomach, gleefully and intently listening, with bearded chin in his palms.

John lays head back down. Closes eyes. Sighs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Aye, Sing. I may just need to hit that pipe one more time.

FADE TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET HAVRE - DAY

Slow and solemn, Sheriff Judd rides his tired horse into the ravaged town littered with bodies. Some of his men who weren't dead before have been hatcheted and scalped. Other Chinese men have been left for dead after the mass lynching.

He rides past Benny Chew's body that had not been moved from the spot of his death. Looks down in disgust.

Approaches the Jefferson family's brick house, next door to the jail. Ties up his horse. Looks upon his hometown enraged.

Enters the Jefferson house.

INT. JEFFERSON FAMILY HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Judd beelines through silent house for the back bedroom. From doorway of bedroom, looks down on Jeffy, 13, a frail, pail boy in nightgown, barely able to move a muscle.

Jeffy stares at ceiling, entranced. It pains him to move his eyes, but he gradually lowers them to angry older brother.

SHERIFF JUDD

Daddy's dead, Jeffy. Don't know where your whore sister is, but I'm leavin' to get the fuckers that ruined our family. Our whole town.

Jeffy tears up. Sheriff Judd glances with disgust at Jeffy.

SHERIFF JUDD (CONT'D)

You're the man of the house while I'm gone. Acting Sheriff of Havre.

Sheriff Judd sighs upon the somber scene. Inches backward.

JEFFY

W-w-wa-wait. Wait. Wha-what, whatcha mean? I'm still a boy.

SHERIFF JUDD

We'll see if ya don't get yer lazy polio-riddled ass out of that bed and buck up. Prove mama didn't die durin' your birth for nothin'!

Sheriff Judd leaves. Front door SLAMS. Jeffy stares upward.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Sheriff Judd barges into the jailhouse. One shirtless Native man locked in the cell must have died in the violent night either from lack of food, water, or warmth.

Upon the stone floor, passed out in a small puddle of blood is Dewey Chew. He is handcuffed to the guard desk and missing an ear. Sheriff Judd walks up and kicks him to consciousness.

SHERIFF JUDD

Hey! Hey! It's your lucky day, Ching Chong! Aren't ya glad I did "ear-for-an-eye" this time?

Disoriented with an overwhelming pain, Dewey holds his hand up to his missing ear. Shrieks. Panics. Stares wild-eyed.

Sheriff Judd links a dog collar and rusty chain around Dewey's neck. Hoists him up to his feet.

DEWEY CHEW

Ah! What? I not dog, you dirty dog!

Sheriff Judd slaps Dewey across bleeding wound. Dewey wails.

DEWEY CHEW (CONT'D)

You kill me now. Now.

SHERIFF JUDD

(laughing)

Why would I do that? I don't just go around killing EVERY Chinaman. I'm not some monster, after all!

Sheriff Judd pulls on the chain tied to Dewey's neck.

SHERIFF JUDD (CONT'D)

I'm a proud hunter. Apex predator. Huntin' a very rare, special prey.

Dewey stumbles as Sheriff Judd pulls him out the door.

EXT. MAIN STREET HAVRE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The two walk outside into the quiet carnage and the sunshine. Sheriff Judd loads ammunition and rifles into the saddle bag of his horse. Fixes Dewey with saddle on an adjacent donkey.

SHERIFF JUDD

My prey thinks it can hide. Thinks it'll escape into the deep dark underground, some other Chinatown.

(jerks chain)

Well, you, gonna be my hound dog!

A new train pulls in to the station. Train WHISTLE BLOWS. Dewey closes eyes.

BLACKNESS.

SHERIFF JUDD (CONT'D)

Here's our train.

END.