

A BULLET FOR GOD'S BOUNTY

by
Don Stroud

WGAW #2242698

1733 Rogue Isle Ct.
Carlsbad CA 92008

510.847.6527
don2@pobox.com

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS (1880s) - EARLY MORNING

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

In the distance, 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
(to Hugo, 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.

With a gentle prod from Bourrat's spurs, Hugo CLOPS down a winding road towards the sprawling WESTERN TOWN below.

They pass a newly-erected sign that says "WELCOME TO PROSPERITY Pop. 1576".

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - SAME

Bourrat leisurely rides along the main street.

The citizens of Prosperity have seen many cowboys amble 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 in front of the livery store next to the hotel.

OLD MAN
Good morning, young man!

BOURRAT
And 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 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 puts three of the apples into a saddlebag. Then 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, my
friend.

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

Mother, we talked about this. I made father a promise, and this is my chance to live up to it.

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

THOMAS

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

Walks past 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, is waiting 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 DANCE HALL 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

Who 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.

One of the dance hall girls, CORA, strolls up to Bourrat.
 She's buxom. Girl-next-door cute. With a smile that lights up
 the room.

CORA
 Hello there, mister.

BOURRAT
 Hello to you, *mademoiselle*.

CORA

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

BOURRAT

Far away, *mon chéri*. 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 in California. When my... business, was done, from there I traveled to here.

CORA

Just got into town?

BOURRAT

Minutes ago. I still have the desert dust deep in my clothing.

CORA

Is that so? Well that won't do. You could probably use a good scrubbin' down. You know, I've got a nice, big, cast iron tub up in my room... big enough for two...

BOURRAT

How much I would enjoy a nice... bath. However, I must apologize. For now, I am working. But when I am done?...

CORA

When you're ready, you just ask for 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.

WRIGHT

Loses yet another hand. He throws down his cards.

WRIGHT
God-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 over to the table, bottle in hand.

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. I did not
realize. "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.

MAYHEW
(eagerly)
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, please excuse my friends. They can be rude more times often than not.

BOURRAT

It is quite all right. Even the finest of cheeses have the worst of aromas, *n'est-ce pas?*

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 play, 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 shit 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 on the mountains, but I never been in it.

BOURRAT

Never? 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? Nah, I'm from back east.

BOURRAT

St. Louis, perhaps?

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

The two men are so focused 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.

(a 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 hat.

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? A boil?

WILLIAMS

You're talking crazy, Mister.

BOURRAT

Or something more embarrassing. Like... 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 not only that, he's doing
his best to nonchalantly inch his way towards the front door.

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.

BANG! William fires.

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 the iron bars of a jail cell.

He 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!

BOURRAT

Attempts to make himself more comfortable on the hard cot.

BOURRAT

The man I shot, "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. You have amazing aim, kid. The bullet went right through the muscle.

Bourrat SIGHS with contentment.

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 are his two young deputies: DEPUTY OSBOURNE, a muscle-bound hulk; and 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!

Preyer puts a hand up to quiet Williams. He enters Bourrat's cell. Unlocks the handcuffs.

WILLIAMS
What the hell...?!? Why're you
lettin' him go?!?

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
This was in his coat pocket.

Preyer hands a folded poster to Sullivan.

INSERT - POSTER

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

BOURRAT

Slowly rises from the cot. Rubs his wrist. 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.

But I don't get how you figured Clem for Crane. He's got to be eighty pounds lighter than those sketches.

BOURRAT

Instinct, you could say. 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 rash actions led you to believe I was after you. But Crane was on the run. I had to move quickly.

PREYER

Do you want to press charges?

WILLIAMS

Charges?!?

BOURRAT

No. Let us consider this a misunderstanding, and leave it at that.

PREYER

Williams? You okay with that?

WILLIAMS

Yeah. Sure. Okay.

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
(whining)
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. His brow is furrowed
in thought.

WILLIAMS
(jingling coins)
Doc?...

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

Sullivan takes the coins. The 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. Fake
aims out the window.

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.

PREYER

You're right.
(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, the stagecoach driver? That was an accident.

SULLIVAN

(sternly)

Preyer...

PREYER

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

Bourrat returns his pistol to its holster with a spin.

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 the 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 falls 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. He quickly calms down when he sees his guest.

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

BOURRAT
(stepping forward)
Just Bourrat will do.

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

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".

Griffin throws his arms wide.

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

BOURRAT
Very impressive. I saw the mining
operation in Calico when I passed
through earlier this year, but
yours is definitely larger.

GRIFFIN
In just four years, it's become one
of, if not 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. A plume of smoke billows from the mouth of the mine elevator. Bourrat instinctively ducks. The dog YELPS.

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)
 Simon... why don't you go see
 what's up?

SIMON
 Gotcha. Sure thing, Sheriff.

Simon runs off, wrangling his dog.

BOURRAT
 There is trouble?

GRIFFIN
 Nothing major. The Indians have an
 issue with our prospecting. "Sacred
 land" and all that clap-trap. Every
 once and 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 a
 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 begins searching 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 nicknacks.

One entire section of the hall is covered with mounted animal heads, interspersed with various guns and animal 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 a 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 here 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 a bounty, I had him do some further investigation. You have an impressive resume. 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, even! 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 man who has done an evil must be held accountable. How else will he learn? How else can he better himself?

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 it down on a side table.

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, before being saved by 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 he packed his wife Esther and daughter Emily onto a train, and we all set off for 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 silver 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 them. 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. Unpredictable. Dare I say, frightening. So after a couple of weeks went by, with no word from my friend, I became concerned. Had he felt 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 some money. But it was... not to be. Mt 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 him. But I couldn't get through to him. Before I could do anything, he... he shot Esther dead. Preyer was able to restrain Deward. I ran into the house, to rescue poor Emily. Luckily we escaped before the roof collapsed.

Bourrat looks over at Preyer. Preyer is stoic. Unreadable.

BOURRAT

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

Preyer pulls back his sleeve. Exposes a deep 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 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 steel 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?!?

BOURRAT

(in French)

Hello, little one. That's a very pretty dress.

EMILY

(in French)

I sewed on the flowers myself.

BOURRAT

(in French)

Your French is excellent!

EMILY

(in French)

Josephine teaches me.

JOSEPHINE, the nanny, runs into the room.

JOSEPHINE

Emily! 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 ran off.

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 what brought Mallol back.

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 has returned 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 circumstance. What is needed is someone who has the skill, the patience, the ethos to bring Deward back alive. Mister Bourrat, what is needed 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 at the El Dorado.

BOURRAT

Bourbon...?

GRIFFIN

As much as you'd like.

BOURRAT

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 accommodating. Very well, I accept your terms.

GRIFFIN

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

BOURRAT
Gentlemen 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
Wonderful.

Bourrat slugs down the last of his bourbon. PLUNKS his glass
on the bar.

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

It's been a long day. I need to relax.

PREYER

I'm sure you do.

GRIFFIN

You can see yourself out.

Griffin climbs the stairs, unbuttoning his cuffs 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..."

Outside the window, the sun showers the town with its bright light. 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 collections of 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 of the women of France. 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. It was a long time ago, and 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

The light. There is no light like this anywhere else I have been. It is pure. Cleansing. In the presence of a light such as this, nothing but truth can survive.

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.

SULLIVAN
 Is it possible that we could have
 some 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.

Sullivan perches on the edge of the tub. Examines Bourrat's bandage.

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

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

BOURRAT
But I did rest. Young Cora did all
the work.

Sullivan ignores Bourrat's teasing.

SULLIVAN
Well, despite your best efforts,
you have healed up nicely.

BOURRAT
So I may ride again?

SULLIVAN
If you must.

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 to you, 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

It started accidentally. 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 him, I remembered my... earlier life. And my regret that the man who betrayed me could not face justice for his misdeeds. How he would never experience what his actions did to the people 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 well with silver 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 here for... similar reasons.

But a decade out here 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

I'm just saying... 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 (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...

THOMAS

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

And his throat has been torn 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 return 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.

Several PALLBEARERS lower a 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

Emerges from the murky darkness.

He dismissively passes by Griffin. Looks into the grave. Crosses himself.

BOURRAT

(to Griffin and Preyer)

How many?

GRIFFIN

...Six.

PREYER

(ahem) Actually, McCoy 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

Nope. 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
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?

A beat, as Bourrat weighs Griffin's words.

BOURRAT

I will.

GRIFFIN

Oh, that's wonderful! Thank--

BOURRAT

But I have conditions.

GRIFFIN

(thrown)

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.

 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 darkness.

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 a 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 the job I am preparing to do could be more dangerous than I at first thought.

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. But... 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. It's so awful. Seems like every day there's someone stealin', cheatin', or dyin'.

BOURRAT

What brought you here in the first place?

CORA

My parents. We were in Kansas City. We had a pretty house, lots of friends... I was 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 of 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... I thought I'd be trapped here forever.

Bourrat sits up. Wraps his arms around her.

CORA

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

She BURSTS INTO SOBS. 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 to you.

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

BOURRAT
 On the soul of my mother, I
 promise.

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRIFFIN'S MANSION/DINING ROOM - MORNING

Griffin sits at 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 the
 best of luck.

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 edge.

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

BOURRAT

Take 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 SIGHS. Puts 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
 We gotta get goin'. T' make it
 there an' 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 Dance Hall 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 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 financial 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.

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 a moment,
while I examine the site.

PECOR
No argument from me there.

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 McCoy boy, there should 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, if you don't need me no more... it's a long ride back t' Prosperity, an'...

BOURRAT
I understand. Thank you for your help. And the company. I will see you when I return.

PECOR

'Til then.

His horse glides 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 smolder in 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 with a green label.

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 stage 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 has dropped below 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 - 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.

Packing up his gear, Bourrat can't help but smile.

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

He rubs Hugo's snout lovingly. The horse NICKERS. 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. SHOOTS 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 cocks his head, listens intently, as if he's aware of something unseen. He smiles.

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.

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.

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 violence.

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, by your own hand, I am bound tightly. I cannot possibly be a threat. And since I am not going anywhere, I am a 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 mulls over Bourrat's description. LAUGHS softly.

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. 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, in a moment of 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 wilderness with just the clothes on my back... and this revolver. And I was intent on not 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 RAW SILVER. A
 handful of it.

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

(getting it)

You went to Griffin with your find.

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 holding her.
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 shortest of the men 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 war.

BOURRAT

And then? Did you seek help from the law?

MALLOL

(darkly)

I went to the Sheriff, 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? To lose everything?

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. He can see the emotions battling for control of Mallol's face.

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 with his boots.

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

Bourrat is out of time. He starts running.

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

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

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - LATE AFTERNOON

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

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.

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.

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

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

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 darkness. 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.

EXT. ARIZONA WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON

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

He stops short.

EXT. HUNTING CABIN - SAME

He's made it to the hunting cabin.

Bourrat bursts into a dry LAUGH. He 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...

HIS KNIFE. The knife he hid before he set out.

With much difficulty, he begins cutting at his bonds.

As Bourrat 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. Strokes his mustache.

PREYER
...I am truly disappointed.

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

BOURRAT
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 his deputies)
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 that route.

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

Now, 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

Now, 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. And then 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 Simon 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 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 miles and miles and miles of rocks and washes and caves out there. Not to mention the goddamn rattlesnakes and coyotes. Mallol could be anywhere, hiding 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

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

(sigh) I figured he wouldn't. Oh well. Let's get on with it. Osbourne, get his boots.

Preyer steps back. Motions to his deputies. Osbourne pulls out a knife. Simon GIGGLES like a madman as he brings his dog forward.

BOURRAT
(horrified)
You men are truly evil.

PREYER
Guilty as charged.

Bourrat's bonds are almost cut. But he needs more time. He begins to LAUGH hysterically.

SIMON
(rattled)
What's gotten 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. They burst into LAUGHTER.

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

BOURRAT

Cuts through his bindings.

Whips his knife at Preyer. Impales his gun hand.

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

OSBOURNE

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.

OSBOURNE

Scrambles at his holster for his gun.

BOURRAT

Throws himself at Osbourne. He catches the deputy under the chin with his knee. Knocks him right out.

Bourrat wheels to face his next combatant, only to find...

SIMON

Brandishing his own huge knife at Bourrat.

SIMON
Let's have us some fun!

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

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 grabs Simon by his shirt. PUNCHES him in the face. Simon collapses.

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 and Osbourne are 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!
 (realizing)
 Bourrat...
 (to the guards)
 The gondola! It's 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...

FWOOOSH! 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 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.

LEELOU

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 MALLOL

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 MALLOL

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 climbs the walls. Envelop the furnishings.

MALLOL

Takes aim at an oil lamp next to Griffin's head. It SHATTERS. 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 moment of "what the hell".

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 his pistol. With the other hand he fumbles with 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 OUT

OVER BLACK

The faint TINKLING of a barroom piano playing "Why Don't The Men Propose". A soft female voice SINGING ALONG.

CORA (V.O.)

"Why don't the men propose, mama?
Why don't the men propose?..."

FADE IN:

INT. "THE EL DORADO"/SUITE - MORNING

Bourrat's eyes flutter open. He finds himself in a room filled with sunlight. Under clean sheets. Listening to the distant parlor music coming from downstairs. 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

The El Dorado. Doc Sullivan forced the manager to let you recuperate here. You should'a seen him! Rantin' like a rabid dog until he got his way.

BOURRAT

How long...

CORA

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. Sullivan patched them up right. Mallol's been in contact with the Rangers. They're here now. Dealin' 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 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

Quiet now. You go back to sleep. And I'll make you a promise: when you wake up, I'll be right here.

BOURRAT

You... swear...?

CORA
 I swear on the soul of your mother.
 She seems to be good at holdin'
 people to their word.

Bourrat squeezes her hand tightly.

CORA
 Get your rest.
 (picking up the tune)
 ...la-la-la... "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 OUT

OVER BLACK

Cora continues SINGING.

CORA (V.O.)
 "But tho' he'll dance and
 flirt/Alas, he won't propose..."

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

Joins them in strolling down the street. 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? Doctor Sullivan?

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. Her hair is done. She has bandages on her wrists.

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

The Rangers have been processing Preyer and all the others. Almost two dozen men. But Griffin's still in bad shape. I've treated the burns, but he's still in shock. He might not make the trip. If all goes well, they can take him in a couple of days. In the meantime, I'm doing my best to keep him alive. So he can stand trial.

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

Is that so?

SULLIVAN

As a matter of fact, yes, it is.

BOURRAT

But your oath 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 gunslinger! I'm not a war 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
 You know what? You want to judge me, then go ahead! Do whatever it is you think is right! I'm so goddamn 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. He leaves without saying goodbye.

Sullivan collapses into a chair. CRIES 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 a coin 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.

BOURRAT
(in French)
And so the adventure ends, my friend.

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

And where do things stand with Griffin and his men?

MALLOL

I have spent an entire 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 the doctor 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 those two witless deputies. 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 rein. Hands it 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... you're leaving!

BOURRAT

Yes. I was planning on finding you before I left, but the coach cannot wait. The driver must leave 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 the West has come to a close. My romance with the life of the wanderer has ended.

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

But there are still things in America I have not experienced. So many wonders to see. How can 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 is not alone.

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 dancing girl get-up. She's wearing a beautiful dress. With silk gloves. A dainty parasol. A fancy coiffure. Her smile lights up the town.

Bourrat takes her hand. Kisses it.

CORA

Belle?...

BOURRAT

Tout à fait, chéri.

He helps her into the coach.

MALLOL

"Not alone", indeed. All the best to you both, *monsieur*.

The two men shake hands.

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 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.

A knowing look passes between the two men.

Bourrat tips his hat in a farewell to Mallol. RAPS on the roof.

The Stagecoach Driver SNAPS his whip. The coach RATTLES away.

Mallol waves to them as the coach 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 coach 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 new 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.