



The Regrettable Incident at Black Molly's Old Saloon

– tragic and serious comedy in two scenes

by Christian Lanciai,

second extended version of September 1990,

Copyright © C. Lanciai 1989.

The characters:

Corky, drunk
Black Molly, bar maid
Rednose, alcoholic Indian
Tom Jordan, gambler
Apple-Jack, gambler, choleric hysteric
Morris, gambler
Big Ben, better customer
Tom Dolan, gambler
Daisy Mae, fat tart
Harry Goldwater, adventurer
Old Joe, old drunk
Dirty Dick Dunbolster, villain
Gloria Lovelace, preacher
Edward Scarecrow, decent outsider
Wild Bill Crackpot, gangster
Jesse Jenkins, gold digger
Bottomless, undertaker
The Sheriff, the shortest man of all
The Director, blundering loudmouth

and (in the first scene) other drunks, whores and bar customers.

The action is in California in 1849

Introduction.

In the Californian gold rush there was not much shooting in spite of the total absence of law. In this comedy the author has dared to combine two entirely different epochs: the lawless but idyllic days of the first gold rush and the wilder and more violent Wild West indulgence in atrocities of the latter half of the 19th century. The result is risking the opening up of an entirely new genre.

There is no literary precedent. In some ways the author has been inspired by the unjustly depreciated film "*Paint Your Wagon*" from 1969 with Lee Marvin as the old drunk and by Puccini's underestimated opera "*La fanciulla del West*" from 1910. Old Joe and Black Molly are thereby the only characters of this comedy that could be traced back to some real origins. All the others are typical clichés that could be found in any western yarn, with Rednose as the only exception. Possibly some influence could also be suspected from Dario Fo.

During the summer of 1990 there was a possibility of having the play staged, a possibility which unfortunately was lost in a quarrel between the director and the producer. The opportunity however involved many discussions with the director, who had so many new ideas about it that made a new version inevitable. The original version does not include the Director.

C.L. 14.9.1990.

The Regrettable Incident at Black Molly's Old Saloon

Comedy in two scenes.

First scene.

The stage is inside a saloon, with a bar to the left, a gambling table to the right with an entrance in the middle. Bar guests, gamblers, a bar maid, whores and drunks.

Corky (at the bar) Fill it up!

Black Molly (bar maid) You have had enough!

Corky I can pay. (*brings forth a pouch of gold dust and empties it in distraction all over the floor.*)

Black Molly You have paid enough. (*fills it up.*)

Rednose And what about me?

Black Molly You can't pay.

Rednose (upset) But it was I who showed the white man where to find gold! And I was thanked by being made an addict to liquor! And then, Black Molly, you have the guts to keep the bottle away from me!

Black Molly Blame the system.

Rednose We Indians can never be systematic.

Molly That's what I mean.

Rednose What do you mean?

Molly It's not our fault that the system is not systematic.

Rednose I don't get it. Fill it up now, please, for old friendship's sake and for my loyalty, Black Molly!

Molly The system won't allow it. You have to pay.

Rednose You served us Indians so generously in the beginning. Then we gave you our land and showed you our gold finds. Then you suddenly wanted money when you already had taken all and we had nothing left to give. Is that a fair system?

Molly That's what I mean, old Rednose. It's not our fault. It's the system.

Rednose Your system sounds like an illness.

Molly All systems are sick, for they never work in the long run.

Rednose And the system is greed.

Molly No, the system is capitalism.

Rednose It's the same thing.

Molly You still have to pay. We can't afford making people drunk for nothing.

Tom Jordan Be a sport now, Black Molly, and give him a round before he starts molesting you.

Rednose I never molest anyone. It's you whites who are molesting us Indians. And you don't even pay for it.

Morris Is he molesting you, Black Molly? Just call for me, and I will beat the teeth out of that sucker.

Apple-Jack Mind your own business, Morris, and keep your eyes out of other cards than your own!

Daisy Mae (fat tart by the bar) Why don't you molest me instead? (*flirts*)

Rednose You know that well, Daisy Mae, that I am not good at molesting people.

Tom Jordan Give Rednose something to drink, Molly. His beatitude doesn't cost much.

Rednose I will do anything for you, Molly, if you just give me the bottle.

Black Molly You will have it, if only you clean up here afterwards.

Rednose (blessed) I promise! (*is served some more.*)

Tom Jordan (at the gambling table) Three aces! (*displaying his cards triumphantly*)

Apple-Jack (small, bent, mean) Cheats!

Morris (calm) Show your cards, Jack.

Apple-Jack (sullen, shows his cards)

Tom Jordan Two kings. To get such a high pair, Jack, *you* must have cheated.

Apple-Jack (*rises in fury and draws his gun, Tom Jordan immediately reacts in the same way*)
Prove it, you fraud!

Big Ben (*big and steady*) No fighting in the saloon, boys! What is the matter now?

Apple-Jack (*suggesting Tom Jordan*) He says I am cheating.

Tom Jordan It was just a condescending joke. He first called *me* a cheat.

Apple-Jack If you are to joke at the cost of others, try someone else!

Big Ben (*to the others*) Who was cheating?

Tom Dolan (*the fourth gambler*) No one as far as I know.

Morris It happens every day. That's why so many are shot dead for nothing.

Rednose (*at the bar, to himself*) The more, the better.

Big Ben Drop your gun, Apple-Jack! No one has been cheating.

Apple-Jack That's what *you* say!

Big Ben What do you mean? I almost never play!

Apple-Jack (*still upset and waving his gun*) That's why! Whenever you play you always win!

Tom Jordan Put for god's sake down that pipe, Apple-Jack! We don't need it here, and you can't handle it!

Apple-Jack Can't I? (*shoots off by mistake, hitting the wall. The women cry out, and several men turn around.*)

Big Ben Put down that popper, Apple-Jack! Daisy Mae, come here a moment.

Daisy Mae (*a lewd whore*) What do you want, Big Ben?

Big Ben Take care of this child. He needs to be calmed down.

Daisy Mae (*to Apple-Jack*) What about a drink, sweetheart? (*taunts him*)

Apple-Jack (*blushing*) Certainly! Hem! Delighted! (*follows Daisy Mae to the bar.*)

Tom Dolan Shuffle the cards, Morris! It's your turn.

Morris (*shuffles*) What do we do when everyone has spilled all his gold on the ground here in town?

Tom Dolan Find new gold. At worst we'll have to make Rednose sniffle out some new lodes for us.

Tom Jordan (*sorting his cards*) His scent is as good as ruined by all the liquor we already poured into him to make him find us some more gold.

Morris An Indian can never be exhausted.

Tom Dolan No, but we are, and the gold! We are no youngsters any more!

Tom Jordan (*indicates Apple-Jack with Daisy Mae*) Still we have time to play.
(*enter suddenly Harry Goldwater in a grand style.*)

Harry Goldwater My friends! I have struck gold!

Tom Jordan (*rather indifferent*) Where?

Harry San Delano valley has several ores that I have claimed. If you don't hurry the people of Red Dog will take care of the rest.

Tom Dolan (*engaged with his cards*) San Delano valley. No one thought there would be any gold.

Tom Jordan (*turning to Harry*) Are you sure?

Harry (*produces two pouches of gold, pouring them out on the floor*) Here is the evidence!
(*the general gold fever immediately goes hysteric, getting everyone into a panic.*)

Tom Jordan (*rushes up*) Red Dog must not get there before us!

Morris (*breaks it up*) Pardon me, gentlemen, but I have to go to work.

Tom Dolan Do you think we will stay behind? (*breaks it up*)

(big throng at the exit, big noise and hubbub as everyone wants to get out first.)

Various voices Gold! Gold! Out of the way! Trample someone else, you clout! Let me through! Ouch! Not everyone at once, you fools! Then no one will get out! Shut up! Hurry on, up there! Don't block the exit! Move over! Let me through! Don't push! Ouch!

(Finally only Harry remains with Black Molly at the bar except the disappointed sluts, the melancholy Rednose, who still has his nose in the glass, and another old derelict drunk in a far dark corner of the joint.)

(Harry advances to approach Black Molly.)

Harry Come on, then!

Molly Is that why you scared off all the clients?

Harry Why else? We needed some peace and quiet, you and I. There were too many blokes in the way here.

Molly There are others more qualified than me to make advances on.

Harry You know I am not for cheap sales. Only the best is good enough for me, and that is free of charge. *(takes care of her)*

Old Joe (the old drunk, sings at random) For fifteen jugs of whiskey I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae, hick! *(falls off the chair)*

Harry Who is that?

Molly It's just Old Joe. Don't bother. *(They snog.)*

Rednose (philosophically, to himself) That's how it is every day. That's all the whites are thinking of – sex and money. *(drinks)*

Dirty Dick Dunbolster (makes a violent entry) Is that why you drove out the entire town, you cursed blackguard? Did you think you could have Black Molly all by yourself? Forget it! Black Molly is mine!

Harry Dirty Dick Dunbolster, have you seen the devil! What the hell are you doing in town, you bully, when the whole town is getting rich and you are left without?

Dirty Dick San Delano valley is false alarm. You will get lynched when they get back.

Harry On the contrary. I will be the most honoured citizen in town.

Dirty Dick All Red Dog has already taken over the entire valley except your claims, and you made all Red Dog invade the place. I have been watching you carefully and know all about your deceitful schemings!

Harry Don't give me all that crap. Come and have a drink instead.

Dirty Dick I will gladly have a drink with Black Molly but not with you, dirty old scumbag!

Harry What did you say, you carcass of rotten flesh?

Dirty Dick I was kind to you flattering you with undeserved honours, you stinker of a dressed up skeleton!

Harry Shut up, before you get stuck with your cock in the draft of your own garbage disposal!

Dirty Dick All you produce is bullshit, you impotent constipated wreck of vomit!

Harry Look who is talking, you farting utensil of diarrhoea!

Dirty Dick Listen to him, who is pissing and shitting down the beds of others without any control!

Harry If you want a fight, let's go out and not do it in front of the women.

Dirty Dick Women enjoy watching men fight over them, don't you, Daisy Mae? *(hugs her on the way giving her a wet kiss)*

Daisy Mae Indeed, but you could kill each other on the way while you are at it and not just play silly games.

Dirty Dick There you are, Harry, you retarded turkey bastard! She will gladly watch us kill each other! I will gladly kill you for Black Molly!

Old Joe (has risen and now approaches them, singing at random) For fifteen jugs of whiskey I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae! For fifteen jugs of whiskey...

Dirty Dick (to Harry and Molly) Who is this?

Harry An old veteran.

Dirty Dick (to Old Joe) Mind your own business, you old porcupine!

Old Joe But that's what I am doing, damn it! Hick!

Dirty Dick Don't meddle in our concerns!

Old Joe But that's what I am doing!

Dirty Dick Yes, but stop it then!

Old Joe But that's what I am doing! Hick!

Dirty Dick You could start sweeping the premises with that infected mop, Black Molly!

Molly No one touches Old Joe in here as long as I still have liquor left to sell!

Dirty Dick Are you his daughter then?

Molly No, but I appreciate him more than any other of the gangs here in town!

Dirty Dick Perhaps he has gold up his sleeves?

Harry Leave Old Joe alone, Dirty Dick! He hasn't touched you!

Dirty Dick Weren't we the two who were supposed to fight?

Harry Yes. Get to the point instead of troubling Old Joe!

Dirty Dick Put up your knuckles then, you vermin of Satan!

Old Joe But that's what I am, damn it!

Dirty Dick Shut up!

Harry Are you quite sure you want your delicate knuckles crushed against my jaws? Can you take it? Can you stand the sight of blood?

Dirty Dick Just don't imagine that I am afraid of you!

Harry Who the devil do you think you are afraid of then? Do you suppose yourself to be some tough guy?

Dirty Dick You smart impostor! I will remake your face to drive your teeth out of your neck!

Harry Do you want to fight, or will you just stand there puking bullshit?

Dirty Dick Says you, miserable failure of some ratshit! Who is spewing bullshit? All you can produce is nonsensical blather!

Old Joe (like before) For fifteen jugs of whiskey I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for...

Dirty Dick Quit singing when we are here to talk serious!

Harry Then get to the point at last, for all those fifteen devils!

Old Joe Fifteen? I can only see thirty-two. And they are all pink...

Dirty Dick Keep out of this, you blind drunk of a discarded carrion!

Molly Don't insult the guests!

Dirty Dick Don't start all that again! We have to start fighting!

Harry It's you who constantly interrupts the proceedings, you arsebrain!

Dirty Dick Says you with your vomited corrupted brains!

Harry Then draw at last some time, you scoundrel!

Dirty Dick I am only waiting for you, demented sloth!

(enter Gloria)

Gloria You incorrigible oafs! Although the whole town is evacuated there are still two ruffians left in the saloon who just have to fight each other! What will become of you, horrible monsters!

Rednose (to himself) Horrible monsters.

Gloria Alas, you people drive me to despair with your incurable wickedness!

Molly Get away, Gloria. Today is not Sunday. Let them settle once and for all.

Gloria Never in my life! (*steps between Dick and Harry taking them firmly both by their ears.*) Wicked men! And stinking dirty you are as well filling up the room with stench! You have been sitting here all day of course just drinking yourself to perdition! That's what I thought, you miserable hopeless bandits!

Dirty Dick Ouch! We haven't been drinking at all, Gloria! We just wanted to fight!

Gloria I believe you! You always just wanted to fight, you uneducated rapscallions! And then you blame it on that you just wanted to fight when you have been sitting drinking all day and departed from all senses so that fighting is the only thing you still are good for, you unintelligent beasts! It's all but ignorance! I shall read you out of your decay!

Dirty Dick No, anything, but not that!

Harry Whatever you do, Gloria, don't bring up the book!

Gloria That's exactly what I intend to do! That's exactly what you need! Who else will ever make you civilised? Apparently I came at the right moment! I have performed my good deed for today! I have stopped you from killing each other for nothing! And you haven't heard one sensible word all day! What luck that I arrived just now! You should be grateful! Now you will kindly sit down and quietly listen to me!

Dirty Dick (in a panic) No, not that, Gloria, we beseech you, spare us! Anything but that!

Gloria Now you shall hold your mouths! And listen carefully while I preach, you naughty rascals! (*opens a small black book and reads with considerable unction*)

Woe betide those who are heroes in drinking wine and who are apt at mixing strong drinks, those who give offenders their right of claims but bereave the innocent his due! (*Rednose listens.*) Therefore, like the tongues of fire devour the straw, and like litter sinks to nothing in the flames, so shall their cause rot away, and their wages shall vanish like dust, since they denounced the laws of the lord Zabaoth and despised the holy word of the holy one of Israel!

Dirty Dick Sigh!

Harry Sigh!

Gloria (triumphant) This is serious and no nonsense! (*goes on*) Therefore the Lord's anger has been turned against his people, and he stretches forth his hand to shake the mountains, so that dead bodies shall lie like vermin in the streets! (*stressing it, while snugly putting down her book*) That is you all right!

Molly That's enough, Gloria. You are scaring off the customers.

Gloria You have no customers! Ha-ha!

Old Joe (objecting) What the hell do you think I am then? (*for a moment at the centre of everyone's attention, then starts bellowing again:*) For fifteen jugs of whiskey, I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for... (*drops down on the floor*)

Gloria You are the dead body that lieth like vermin in the streets! Avaunt, Satan, from this wasted old man! Look what you have done, you terrible beasts! You have made the old man drunk!

Harry He did it all by himself.

Old Joe (from the floor) For fifteen jugs of whiskey...

Harry Change tune some time, Joe.

Dirty Dick Leave him in peace, Gloria. He has done you no harm, and you can see for yourself that he is blessed.

Gloria Blessed! Unblessed is what he is! Unblessed is what you all are! You are all dead bodies that lieth like vermin in the streets! You are lucky to have a real woman among you like me here in this camp! Or else there would be no one around here who was not totally lost and condemned!

Dirty Dick Would you claim, Gloria, that you are the only person here in this world who is not totally condemned?

Gloria Yes, and for sure!

Dirty Dick Get out of here then and let the rest of us have our hard earned and sacredly guarded unblestness in peace.

Gloria (with her finger pointing to the sky) Truly, truly I say unto you...

Old Joe (has managed to get up) For fifteen jugs of whiskey, I fell for Daisy Mae... But here is Daisy Mae! (*finds Gloria and kisses her*)

Gloria Get out of here, you creep!

Molly Call yourself better names, Gloria. Old Joe is the most honest man in town.

Gloria At least hold your tobacco back in your mouth when you kiss me, you stinking skunk!

Old Joe (gay) For fifteen jugs of whiskey, I fell for Daisy Mae...

Harry Leave the ladies alone, Joe. They are so sensitive.

Old Joe (giggles stupidly while he unintentionally drivels tobacco) He-he-he!

Molly Come here, Old Joe, and I will treat you with a drink! Come here and keep Rednose company!

Old Joe (giggles stupidly) He-he-he! (*wobbles to the bar.*)

Harry Well, what about that fight, Dirty Dick Dumbbell?

Dirty Dick You are mistaken! Are you seeing double? Can't you see that I am Dirty Dick Dunbolster?

Harry (provoking) How was that name again?

Gloria If you don't immediately become human, I will bring forth my hymnal and sing for you!

all (in terror) Whew!

(enter suddenly Edward Scarecrow, a small man with spectacles)

Edward Take cover, guys! Wild Bill Crackpot is in town on his way here, he is in a bad mood and is on a looting spray!

Gloria Heavens above!

Harry (discreetly to Dirty Dick) Rather Wild Bill Crackpot than the holy Gloria Lovelace.

Molly Where is the sheriff?

Edward Up in the mountains with the others chasing gold.

Molly The word gold seems to nullify all law and order.

Rednose (to Molly) That's why the law exists for gold to legally be able to abolish all law and order.

Molly It's the white man's law, Rednose.

Edward Take cover! He is coming! (*dives under a table.*)

(Dirty Dick hesitates whether to escape or not)

Harry Are you afraid, Dirty Dick?

(Wild Bill enters with much noise, bandana over his nose and chin and with shotguns in both hands)

Wild Bill Okay, you droning remnants! Deliver your gold, or I will perforate you all with lead!

Harry There is no gold here for anyone to get, Bill, and you know it. Black Molly runs the bar at its own cost and can only afford to treat pensioners like Old Joe for nothing.

Wild Bill Shut up, fartblathering ape, and put up your paws higher up in the air if you don't want to piss straight out of your bladder! (*All raise their hands even higher, there is a tense silence, and only Old Joe behaves normally:*)

Old Joe For fifteen jugs of whiskey I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae...

Wild Bill (at a loss) What kind of a devilish freak is that with no respect?

Harry Don't bother about him. He is harmless.

Molly He is our only pensioner.

Harry Demented since twenty years when he was dug out of a collapsed mine...

Wild Bill Shut up! I'll do the talking here! Don't you dare try to distract me! So! It pleases him to chant! Shouldn't he dance then as well? (*fires some shots between Old Joe's legs, who naturally starts reacting by awkwardly jumping around.*) Ha-ha-ha! (*laughs rudely.*)

Harry Do you think you are funny now?

Gloria You incorrigible hooligan!

Wild Bill Shut up, you failure of a nun out of a flea market!
(Dirty Dick has seen his chance and carefully prepares an assault on Wild Bill. He has just got his gun in his hand and is going to fire when Wild Bill spots him.)

Wild Bill Oh no! You'll not get away that easily! (*shoots him down on the spot. Dirty Dick goes down mortally wounded. Daisy Mae, Black Molly and Harry rushes up to him.*)

Harry (*after a summary examination*) He is dead.

Rednose (*to himself*) One less.

Molly (*to Bill*) You have murdered him!

Wild Bill Slow down! It was in self-defence! You saw that yourselves!

Daisy Mae He is dead! Bo-hoo-hoo! (*cries*)

Molly (*comforts her*) There, Daisy Mae! It was only Dirty Dick Dunbolster.

Daisy Mae Bo-hoo! (*cries like before*) But I was the one who loved him!

Molly Why didn't you say that before?

Daisy Mae I was hoping he would notice it by himself sometime! Bo-hoo-hoo! (*is inconsolable*)

Molly There! There! (*comforts her.*)(*to Bill*) Look now what you have done! You have made her a widow!

Wild Bill There! Let's not get sentimental now! It's just a corpse! Hundreds are buried here every year!

Daisy Mae Dirty Dick wasn't just anyone! He was a gentleman!

Wild Bill (*removes his hat*) Oh! Was he then? Why then was he called Dirty Dick?

Daisy Mae (*crying*) Because he always kept on his dirty socks! Bo-hoo! (*bellows*)

Harry That was not the only reason. His stench was not just of foot sweat.

Molly What else are you thinking of? His cow shit? His stinking armpits? The fact that he never changed underwear? Or all his other bad habits?

Daisy Mae Don't berate my darling now when he is dead! Show some respect for a fresh widow! Bo-hoo! (*cries desperately*)

Harry What do you mean by all his other bad habits?

Molly (*indicates Daisy Mae's sensitive condition*) Not now.

Wild Bill Oh! Women's blatherskite! I can't stand mawkish scenes! There is nothing to get here anyway! (*turns around to leave.*)

Edward (*wakes up*) After him! Stop thief!

Harry Let him go, Edward Scarey. We don't want another corpse around here.

Edward But justice must be done! The man must hang!

Harry He will probably hang one of these days, and you will hardly be able to do it alone. Wait until the others return.

Molly Take it easy, Eddie, and have a drink in the meantime.

Edward But I am a teetotaller!

Harry Then you have come to the wrong part of the world. What on earth are you doing here?

Edward You can really ask that again. (*has something to hide*) What's that got to do with it anyway?

Gloria Hallelujah! At last a holy man!

Harry You are not holy for having come to the wrong place, Gloria.

Rednose You are rather unholy for having come right.

Gloria Could I have a glass of water?

Molly Here we only deal with refined drinks, Gloria. And Edward was the one who was to have a drink and not you. You never dared to approach the bar anyway. Are you perhaps under some influence?

Gloria No, only shocked by the atrocious turbulence here. And if Mr Teetotaller here could have something to drink I may keep him company – *(with emphasis)* with water.

Edward *(to Molly)* I am sorry, Miss Fortescue, but we will only have water.

Molly You upset the entire order here by your absurd demands! Have your undistilled water then! I hope it will give you dysentery, and in that case we have all sorts of strong medicines against it, on a rising gradient! Be my guests, as long as you then keep quiet! That accounts for you most of all, sister. *(serves them water. Rednose is impressed.)*

Edward Thank you, Miss Fortescue.

Harry What did you say her name was?

Edward Miss Fortescue. All the world knows that Miss Fortescue is Miss Fortescue.

Harry Who is that?

Edward Miss Fortescue. Who else?

Harry Black Molly, the man is already drunk. Give him a sedative.

Old Joe Try a glass of Nitroglysherine.

Edward What did you say, Sir?

Old Joe Try a glass of Nitroglysherine. Drink with me a glass of Nitroglysherine. It shets off all the bombs down in the mines.

Harry *(explaining)* He was the first man in the country struck by gold fever.

Molly *(serves a drink)* This is harmless, Eddie.

Gloria *(panicstricken)* Don't drink it, Edward Scarecrow! You are supposed to be sober!

Molly Shut up, Gloria! You were the one who was to keep your silence! Or else I will reclaim your water! Let me handle my customers, and mind your own salvation business!

Gloria But that's what I am doing!

Molly Not at a bar! Then you will have to learn to drink first!

Gloria *(indignant)* Hrrrrmm!

Molly Drink it now, Eddie.

Edward Thank you ever so much, Miss Fortescue. I suppose I should have something this time. That intrusion by that bandit here in this blessed lounge was most upsetting, wasn't it, Miss Gloria?

Gloria Oh yes! I have never been through anything so shocking!

Molly No, you have kept your eyes shut to most things.

Old Joe It was e ven more exploshive than all my Nitroglysherine parties! Schkol! *(drinks)*

Edward Yes, it was rather too strong, if I may say so. *(tries a small sip)* Mmmm! Tastes like medicine!

Molly That's what it is.

Rednose It tastes best at first. Then the quantity becomes more important than the quality.

Molly Quiet, Rednose. He only takes this as a medicine against the hard shock.

Edward *(takes a sip)* It reminds me of... *(drops down unconscious.)*

Molly At least it cured the shock.

Harry What was it?

Molly *(casually)* Just an ordinary nightcap.

Harry It reminded him of something.

Molly Yes.

Gloria (*terrified*) You have poisoned him!

Daisy Mae (*deserting her corpse*) Is he also dead?

Harry No more hysterical women, if I may ask. Black Molly only gave him water. He has only himself to blame.

Gloria Water! He died of it!

Harry No, can't you see that he is just snoring. (*Edward snores.*)

Molly If he died of it, Gloria, you will also die of it, since you had the same kind of undistilled water.

Old Joe A glash of Nitroglysherine hash to be handled with care. (*empties his glass*)

Daisy Mae You only keep drinking while people die all around you! Have you no respect for life?

Harry That's what we have. That's why we are drinking.
(*Jesse Jenkins, Tom Dolan and Apple-Jack come storming in.*)

Jesse Jenkins Where is that unhung Harry Goldwater! He must be lynched and mauled and hanged!

Harry (*calmly*) Here he is. What's up, my friends?

Apple-Jack You damned swindler! You fooled us into the wrong valley! It was drained by gold diggers from Red Dog already half a year ago!

Harry Take it easy, chum!

Tom Dolan Here is no one taking it easy until we have hanged you and boiled you in tar and flayed you alive and had you feathered!

Jesse Every scrap of gold that Red Dog took away from us half a year before we arrived we will reclaim of you at once!

Apple-Jack And woe betide you if you don't pay! With interest!

Tom Dolan And then we shall broil you with the spit through your bowels for your just reward!

Harry (*calmly*) Take i easy, boys! One at a time! But wherever have you been?

Apple-Jack Where you said there were gold. Where else?

Harry And where was that?

Jesse In the Saint Elmo valley of course! Where else?

Tom Dolan We are very angry!

Harry But it wasn't the Saint Elmo valley you were supposed to visit! It was the San Delano valley!

Tom Dolan (*to Apple-Jack*) It was you who said Saint Elmo and brought us there!

Apple-Jack (*defending himself*) It was Harry who said Saint Elmo! I can swear on it!

Molly He said San Delano, for all the others are there. It's only you three blockheads who have ridden to the wrong valley.

Jesse (*to Apple-Jack*) You damned bungler! You will have tar and feathers for this! And now all the others have reached San Delano before us and claimed the whole district! You fool!

Apple-Jack (*faintly*) I can swear on that Harry said Saint Elmo.

Old Joe I was there twenty years ago. Hick! It was cleared several times over already then. That's where all new mines always cave in and bury people alive. The only thing they found there the last twenty years were fresh bodies. If you couldn't even find any fresh corpses you must be totally incompetent as gold diggers.

Apple-Jack Shut up, old drunken sot!

Jesse Hold it a moment. Isn't that Old Joe, who knows all the old gold fields by heart?

Old Joe And you are Jesse, son of Jimmy Jenkins, whom the Indians let the ants eat up alive in spring '33. Would you treat me for a drink, my old partner's only son?

Jesse What do you know about the San Delano valley?

Old Joe Unexplored but full of ghosts. People never come back from there.

Jesse But Harry has been there.

Old Joe That's what he says.

Harry Don't listen to him. He is just a demented old drunk.

Jesse Quiet! – Do you mean to say that Harry is lying?

Old Joe Everyone is lying here, except poor Rednose over here, and no one will find the way to that valley except me, for I never placed my foot in it. I was the only one sensible enough to stay outside. I was only somewhat affected in my mind by the consequences. Above all I lost my proper sense of drinking. Hick!

Jesse But there was gold?

Old Joe Too much.

Harry You hear yourself. He has never been there. He knows nothing about the place.

Jesse Quiet! What more do you know about San Delano, Old Joe?

Old Joe The only thing I know for sure is that I am the only one who knows how to get there.

Jesse How do you know?

Old Joe I have a map. *(brings forth a map and gets it up just in time before he tumbles from the chair and falls flat on the floor.)*

Molly Give him a drink. That's all he needs.

Jesse *(studies the map)* This fantastic!

Tom Dolan Hallo! What's the matter with that bloke over there? *(indicates Dirty Dick, over whom Daisy Mae still keeps crying.)*

Molly It's nothing the matter with him. Can't you see he is dead?

Harry Shot by Wild Bill Crackpot.

Apple-Jack And what's the matter with her? *(shows Gloria sitting immovable by a table with her glass of water in front of her.)* Does she think she is in church? Is that water in front of her? Does she believe there are flowers to water here? Is she in her right senses?

Harry You know Gloria. She is in mourning.

Tom Dolan Why was Dirty Dick shot dead by Wild Bill?

Harry Wild Bill was in that kind of mood. He has cleared the entire town.

Tom Dolan By golly! Here is one we can lynch and hang and who even deserves it! Come on, boys!

Jesse I stay here. This map is worth ten virgin gold fields.

Apple-Jack He has plundered your shop as well, Jesse Jenkins.

Jesse *(arisen at once)* He'll be damned for that ! You may have the rest, Old Joe. *(empties the rest of a whiskey bottle from his arm's height into the open mouth of Old Joe, who drinks with relish.)*

Rednose At least be careful how you aim. Whiskey is more worth than gold for those who have no gold.

Jesse No drop is wasted on Old Joe.

Old Joe *(when the bottle is empty)* Come back from San Delano, Jesse Jenkins!

Jesse We will hang Wild Bill Crackpot first! *(out with the two others.)*
(The map remains lying on the bar.)

Harry How did you get this map, Old Joe?

Old Joe *(still lying on the floor, muddled:)* For fifteen jugs of whiskey I fell for Daisy Mae...

Molly Let him sleep it off in between, Harry.

Harry This map is not of the San Delano valley! It is Flash Springfield's lost treasure map of the secret road to Thunder-Jack's Eldorado!

Molly Old Joe has had that map for more than twenty years. He brings it out now and then just to make an impression.

Harry But this map is real!

Molly It doesn't matter. It's Old Joe's, and as long as he has it no one can take it seriously.

(Jesse Jenkins, Tom Dolan and Apple-Jack come back rushing in with Wild Bill captured.)

Apple-Jack Here is the villain! Hands up, you swindler! Higher! We need no trial for this! Everybody knows he is guilty! Hang him at once!

(Harry discreetly takes care of the map.)

Tom Dolan Calm down, Apple-Jack! No panic, for hell's sake! We will hang no one without his being enabled to some defence!

Apple-Jack Defence! That bandit! Look around, you blind mole! How many corpses do you see? Three!

Jesse It's only one. You can't count. The other two are just half dead.

Rednose So far.

Tom Dolan Well, Wild Bill, what have you got to say for your defence?

Wild Bill Is this supposed to be some kind of a trial?

Apple-Jack We need no trial here! You have five minutes to make a statement before you are hanged, and that's that!

Wild Bill I fired in self-defence.

Apple-Jack Ha-ha-ha! He shot in self-defence! Was that also your reason for plundering all the shops? Perhaps it was not be robbed yourself?

Wild Bill A man has got to live.

Apple-Jack Ha-ha-ha! That's exactly what you will no longer need! You don't have to!

Tom Dolan The matter seems to be all clear. He can't defend himself.

Rednose (to himself, as usual) And no one can defend him.

Apple-Jack You are finished, you rotten scoundrel! You have fired your last shot! You have plucked your last goose! You have pulled your last leg! You are all washed up! Do you get it?

Tom Dolan You don't have to be so extremely emphatic, Jack. He understands what it is all about all right.

Apple-Jack Don't be too sure! You can never account for such villains!

Jesse Then it's just to string him up and let him hang.

Apple-Jack Ha-ha-ha! Now you shall get your own, you old out-and-out bandit villain! Now you'll get paid for smearing my mother's face with puff pastry, when you dipped her in the cauldron when she called for help when you had stolen her lover Dynamite-Johnny's clothes! Just because she had her eyes clutted with dough Dynamite-Johnny got away without paying her, and for that she was called the Whore Free of Charge as long as she lived, you damned old pie-thrower!

Jesse (has prepared the rope) There. The noose is ready. Is he firmly tied up behind?

Wild Bill Just a moment, gentlemen! I am innocent!

Apple-Jack (constantly more hysterical) Innocent! That blackguard! You ruined my mother's life forever and also me from the moment I was conceived, you sanctimonious monster of villainy! It's only fair that you are punished for all the crimes in the world! Hang him high, or I will do it myself!

Tom Dolan Take it easy, Apple-Jack! Or else we'll have to hang you as well for security before you start twitching and sprawling yourself! We take your word for it, Wild Bill Crackpot, but you can provide better entertainment! If you are so good at lying, you will surely dance even better! (fires around his feet to force him to jump.)

Apple-Jack (further stimulated) Ha-ha-ha! He already dances like a ballet master although he isn't dangling yet! Ha-ha-ha, you blue-farting jumping jack! (fires off abundantly around Wild Bill's feet but wilder, so that the general security is threatened.)

Jesse Check your fire, you maniac! He isn't dead yet! Put him up on the chair!

Harry I am sorry, Molly, but your joint appears to be filled up with dead bodies today.

Molly It's not the first time. I am used to it. (*indicates Rednose*) I do have cleaning assistance. I am happy if I only get out all the corpses before closing time.

Wild Bill (*up on the chair with the noose around his neck, in despair*) My friends! Think of my mother! What will she say?

Tom Dolan You should have thought of that before you arranged to be hanged as the crowning glory of your career!

Apple-Jack Your mother! That slut of shit! She will drink to my mother by her grave in thanks-giving for her son having assisted at your hanging! If she never spanked you it was her own fault!

Jesse You should have thought of your mother before you turned thief and murderer. No matter how loud you now will call on her, it will not help!

Tom Dolan Everything is ready! Kick off the chair! (*enter Tom Jordan with a cigar in his mouth.*)

Tom Jordan Wait a minute! What is going on here? (*throws his cigar.*)

Harry Tom Jordan! Why are you not with the others in the great gold rush?

Tom Jordan My hands got too dirty after a few miles. I prefer to hold my cards clean. But why will you hang Wild Bill Crackpot? And can *you* allow this, Miss Gloria?

Gloria (*stiff at her table*) I am having water.

Apple-Jack Because he shot Dirty Dick Dunbolster, who lies in his own gushing pool of blood over there! (*indicates the body and Daisy Mae, who immediately starts crying again.*) He has turned our best whore quite inconsolable! She will cry out her eyes! Her paint will run off so that she never will be able to putty herself any more!

Wild Bill You arrived at the nick of time, Tom Jordan! I fired in self-defence! Everyone here witnessed it! But they are all possessed by the bolting lynching fever! They just want to hang me for the pleasure of it!

Apple-Jack That bandit is actually trying to talk himself out of it! But you were the one who fired, you gun-crazy buffoon, and he was the one who died! Therefore you must dangle and dance in the rope until we have plugged you with holes, even if it has to be our last great pleasure in life and even if mother herself tries to stop me from beyond the grave!

Wild Bill Your mother fixation, Apple-Jack...

Tom Jordan He says he fired in self-defence. Is it true?

Wild Bill Tom Jordan, you owe me a life, for I once saved your little brother from being scalped by the Wild Hawks Gang. Do you remember?

Tom Jordan It is true. Is there anyone claiming that Wild Bill Crackpot did not shoot Dirty Dick Dunbolster in self-defence? (*Everyone is quiet.*)

Old Joe (*lying down, very muddled*) For fifteen jars of whiskey I fell for Daisy Mae, I fell for Daisy Mae... (*starts snoring loud*)

Wild Bill You all want to see me dead just because I am unpopular! You want to mob me! You all want to lynch me just to get me out of the way! You just want to get rid of me!

Jesse Come with something more impressing than just your old flea-bitten paranoia!

Tom Jordan I have a suggestion founded on fair play. I put my wage of Wild Bill's life since he actually saved my little brother's life from the redskins once. If I win he is free. If I lose you may hang him. Are you on?

Tom Dolan For once it will be a game for ideal reasons. I am on.

Apple-Jack But if you cheat, Tom Jordan, we'll hang you as well!

Tom Jordan (*superior*) I never cheat. (*Black Molly can't quite hold herself for laughter*)

Wild Bill It's not fair play. It's two against one!

Jesse Three! I am on also! Don't worry about the odds, you unprocessed knave! You will hang anyway in the end!

Tom Jordan Keep calm, Wild Bill. I am used to my cards and know them. Shuffle the cards and deal! (*Jesse shuffles.*)

Molly You had better cut, Tom Jordan.

Tom Jordan Of course I will cut. (*Cuts. No one notices what he is doing.*) Deal!
(Jesse deals for Tom Jordan, Tom Dolan, Apple-Jack and himself. Meanwhile Wild Bill has to remain standing on the chair pinioned with the noose around his neck.)

Wild Bill Will you go on like this for long?

Tom Jordan Only until I have won.

Harry (*sees his chance*) See you later, Molly.

Molly When?

Harry When I have found out about Thunder-Jack's Eldorado. (*sneaks out*)

Gloria (*being alone in having observed Harry's actions*) He has Flash Springfield's map of Thunder-Jack's Eldorado!

Molly (*furious*) Traitor!

Jesse (*wakes up*) After him! He has taken Flash Springfield's map of Thunder-Jack's Eldorado! (*Everyone gets into a hurry.*)

Tom Jordan By golly! Thunder-Jack's Eldorado! There is gold in broad daylight to be carved by any pen-knife!
(Everyone hurries out except Gloria, Daisy Mae, Molly, Rednose and the three on the floor.)

Wild Bill (*pinioned on the chair with the noose around his neck*) And what about me? (*No one cares.*)

Edward Scarecrow (*comes to, rises half way, happens to touch the snoring Old Joe with his hand.*) Huh! (*startles appalled*)
(sees Dirty Dick's corpse) Huh! (*startles appalled*)
(catches sight of the half way hanged Bill) Huh! (*faints.*)

Molly You are out now and for good, Gloria! You'll never again place your foot in here! Today you have done nothing but caused scandals! And it is closing time, Daisy Mae! Get lost with Gloria and take your corpse with you!

Daisy Mae What about the others then?

Molly What others?

Daisy Mae (*points at Old Joe and Edward Scarecrow.*)

Molly They can lie as they are until tomorrow. They will not run away. Old Joe is a regular customer anyway and has no place to live. Eddie is in good company. If they wake up while Rednose is cleaning up, he can take care of them. There! Out you go!
(Gloria and Daisy Mae drags the body of Dirty Dick with them out. Molly locks up after them and pulls the curtains.)

Wild Bill What's going on?

Molly Get down, Bill.

Wild Bill If I take a single step I will be strangled!

Molly (*releases the rope, throws it back over the beam in the roof so that Bill can come down and releases Bill's pinioned hands.*)

Wild Bill Can I go now?

Molly No, you are staying here, since you are the only man left. (*embraces him, and they meet in a kiss. Before intimately going out to the left:*) Rednose, you can start cleaning up now. (*leaves with Bill. The Indian sighs and starts working.*)

Second scene.

The morning after. The joint is brushed up and the bodies gone. Only Molly appears busy at the bar and the Indian sitting with his constant drink in the same place as usual. Bottomless, the constantly morose undertaker, appears.)

Bottomless Good morning, Miss.

Molly Good morning, Mr Bottomless.

Bottomless (*takes a seat at the bar*) May I have a small one.

Molly (*serves a very small drink*) Please yourself.

Bottomless (*drinks thoughtfully, as if to prepare himself, looks around and observes that everything is in order.*) Hem, I see no corpses around here.

Molly (*looks around, as if she knew nothing*) No, I don't actually either.

Bottomless But there was a corpse here yesterday, wasn't there?

Molly Don't ask me. It could have been the day before yesterday or the day before that. There is always a corpse turning up now and then.

Bottomless But wasn't there someone being shot here yesterday?

Molly Who would that have been?

Bottomless (*sharply*) Dirty Dick Dunbolster.

Molly Oh yes, he was actually shot here the other day.

Bottomless Where is he now?

Molly In his grave, I suppose.

Bottomless Don't you know?

Molly How should I know?

Bottomless Listen, Miss, this is your saloon!

Molly Yes, the gods know that.

Bottomless You should know then who was shot to death here in front of your nose!

Molly Well, it certainly wasn't me in any case. Can you understand what Mr Bottomless is driving at, Rednose?

Rednose Don't ask me. I am just an Indian. I only keep mouth shut.

Bottomless Listen, Miss. (*enter the sheriff, a very small man.*) good morning, sheriff.

Sheriffen Good morning.

Bottomless She doesn't want to show the body.

Molly What body?

Bottomless Dirty Dick Dunbolster!

Molly Don't shout, mr undertaker. You could wake up the dead.

Sheriff Miss Molly, this won't do. If there is a dead body the undertaker has to bury it. That's his only business.

Molly I am sorry, but the bodies he is interested in he has to look for himself. That's not my job.

Bottomless For the last time, Miss! Where is the body?

Molly I already told you, that since he obviously is dead, he is probably in his grave, and if it can't be located there, he is probably somewhere on the other side.

Sheriff Bottomless, this won't do. You must not yell so to a lady. You must understand, that her job is to stand here at the bar serving drinks. Or else we would not have any, would we? Try to be a little more diplomatic!

Bottomless Very well, sheriff. (*to Molly*) Could you serve me another drink?

Molly (*withholds the bottle*) Only if you behave and don't start yelling for a lot of non-existent bodies.

Bottomless Yes, but where is the body?

Molly Here he goes again.

Sheriff Miss Molly, you have to understand that this just will not do. The man wants corpses to bury, that is his job, and you are withholding a corpse. It just will not do.

Molly (pours a full drink for Bottomless) He can they go and bury himself. *(puts the bottle emphatically on the table.)*

Sheriff By the way, where did Wild Bill Crackpot go yesterday? He appears to have remained here after closing time.

Molly No, Daisy Mae and Gloria carried him out of here.

Sheriff So? And what did they do with him?

Molly What women usually do with men, I suppose. What do I know? Perhaps they buried him, just to relieve Bottomless here of a body.

Sheriff I am sorry, Bottomless, but you don't seem to be very popular here in the saloon, at least not with the ladies.

Bottomless (dons his hat and intends to leave)

Molly Try to be on time next time.

Gloria (meets Bottomless in the door) Mr Bottomless!

Bottomless Pardon me, madam, but you haven't happened to come across dead body here around?

Molly Gloria, you are not welcome here!

Gloria I am a human being like everyone else, am I not?

Molly Not after what happened yesterday! Get lost, and don't you ever come back!

Gloria Where do you keep Wild Bill? And where is Old Joe? And Eddie?

Sheriff Is she running a pension here as well?

Molly Get out, Gloria! You will never get in here any more! *(leaves the bar and drives her out.)*

Gloria But I am a decent human being!

Molly That's why! With your decency you just mess up with people with more than just decency!

Bottomless What happened here yesterday?

Gloria That's none of your business! It was just abhorrent scandals all the time!

Molly Which were caused by our paragon of virtue Gloria here all the way.

Gloria I have legal rights to be where I want.

Molly Don't make trouble, Gloria.

Gloria You are the one making trouble.

Molly It is my joint.

Sheriff (in vain) There, my ladies, this just will not do! *(They ignore him.)*

Gloria Are you ashamed of yourself since you can't stand decent people?

Molly You betrayed Harry Goldwater!

Gloria Don't touch me! Is he your lover like Wild Bill, Eddie and Old Joe?

Sheriff! She runs a brothel here but the contrary!

Sheriff What did you say about Wild Bill, Gloria Lovelace?

Gloria She keeps them all here! All the men! And especially Wild Bill!

Molly Wild Bill is dead. You carried him out yourself yesterday with Daisy Mae!

Gloria Are you balmy? It was Dirty Dick we were carrying out!

Bottomless (has followed the conversation with keen interest) Aha! There is our body!

Gloria What body?

Bottomless Dirty Dick! Where is he?

Gloria He is dead.

Bottomless Yes, I know, but where is his body?

Gloria In his grave, of course!

Bottomless Without a coffin?

Gloria Naturally!

Bottomless Buried without a coffin! That is over the top! Sheriff! They can't do this! It's not fair! I am the only undertaker here! I have to have my honest monopoly on everyone who dies without infringement!

Rednose (to himself) Here no one dies with infringement.

Sheriff Justice can't keep track of everyone who dies, Bottomless. Justice is only for the living, who it has to execute sometimes but never bury. Funerals are your business entirely. If you can't handle them, that's your problem.

Gloria And that's that! The undertaker should be grateful to us for having rid him of a dirty stinking body, so that he didn't have to worry!

Bottomless (in despair) How could you! It was my corpse! And two decent people even! How could you do such a thing!

Gloria We had no choice. We had to dispose of the body in some decent way. We couldn't just leave him here like any litter.

Bottomless So you just dumped him! An invaluable corpse!

Gloria No, we gave him a decent funeral.

Bottomless Without a coffin! Do you call that decent!

Gloria The only decent way to bury him was at once. We found a perfect cess pit that suited him perfectly. All we had to do was to cover him. It was two birds with one stone. He doesn't even stink any more.

Molly It was Wild Bill they carried out yesterday and not Dirty Dick. I can vouch for that.

Sheriff But Miss Lovelace here says it was Dirty Dick.

Gloria Don't call me Lovelace! I am decent!

Sheriff But that is your name, Miss Lovelace. It's not your fault.

Gloria Get lost, man! *(beats him with a bible in his head, which breaks, then starts beating him with hymnals, so that the loose sheets of the holy books start raining around her.)*

Sheriff (defenceless) My ladies, this just will not do! Come, Bottomless! This is no place for honest men!

Gloria (pursues them) You shabby rogues! *(all three out)*

Molly (observes their exit with calm and then returns behind the bar) You can come out now, Bill.

Wild Bill (in his underwear) Thanks, Molly. I need a drink.

Molly You can pay for your bed and breakfast with parts of your loot.

Bill But as you see I have nothing!

Molly Where have you hid it then? If you don't pay for the night I will denounce you! Bottomless longs after you! *(enter Edward from the outside)*

Edward (immediately stops and points excited) There he is! Get him!

(The sheriff and Bottomless with Tom Dolan and Apple-Jack following come rushing in)

Molly Get out! Quickly!

Bill You will owe me a drink. *(retires quickly the same way he came)*

Edward After him! *(the four run after him)*

Molly It's all Gloria's fault. If only she hadn't entered here yesterday everything would have been different.

Rednose It's not just Gloria's fault, madam. It's mainly a question of mentality. Why do you whites always have to stress so desperately for nothing?

Bill (fully dressed, opens the saloon door from the street) Farewell, my lovely!

Molly Bill! *(runs to meet him, they meet in a kiss, but hardly that, for suddenly the four enter again the same way they ran out.)*

Edward After him! *(Bill out, the four others after him in the street)*

Molly Whew! That's that! What did you say about stress, Rednose?

Rednose Yes, it's after people like that I always have to clean up the mess.

Molly You said it! *(starts putting the furniture back in order.)*

Harry (from the left) Tsst!

Molly Harry!

Harry May I hide here?

Molly You are risking my life! The whole town wants you! If they know I protect you they will tear down my old saloon piece by piece!

Harry They can't afford that. They have nothing else.

Molly But how did you get here?

Harry I misled the whole town into the mountains. Then I came back here. All the worst gold diggers are now ravaging the mountains, swearing over my name that they cannot find me.

Tom Jordan (*enters*) Aha!

Molly Tom Jordan! (*defensive*) I haven't protected him!

Tom Jordan Where is the map, Harry?

Harry What map?

Tom Jordan Old Joe's that you pinched yesterday!

Harry I don't know what you are talking about.

Tom Jordan Hands up then! (*pulls his gun, approaches Harry and starts searching him*) Where is Old Joe, Molly?

Molly I don't know.

Tom Jordan (*searches Harry*) Isn't he always here?

Molly Edward the scarecrow brought him out yesterday when he couldn't stay here any more.

Tom Jordan What do you mean? Couldn't stay here any more?

Molly You know what I mean. My bed is just above.

Tom Jordan Aha. You had guests. Who, if I may ask?

Molly That's none of your business.

Tom Jordan Was it maybe this stealthy eel? (*indicates Harry*)

Harry It's none of your business.

Tom Jordan Just keep your hands stretched, please! We'll wait here together, you with your arms in the air and I with my popgun against your heart, until the town barges in and you'll be hanged, unless you tell me where you have hid Old Joe's map.

Harry Let's make a deal, Tom.

Tom Jordan When life is at stake you try to bargain with God. It's not that easy, old boy. I am tougher than God.

Harry Let's share fifty-fifty.

Tom Jordan You have no map to show, so you have nothing to offer. Come back when you have your map ready.

Harry I buried it under the high cactus off the Dead Hand's abandoned mine on the way to Black Valley.

Tom Jordan So you suggest that I ride there alone full of enthusiasm to dig for it while you remain here?

Harry Yes, why not? It's a good idea, isn't it? It's even ingenious, since you were the one who got it.

Tom Jordan No deal, old boy, for what happens if I ride there and discover there is no map? Yes, you will piss off with laughter!

Harry Don't tickle me with that nasty little pipe!

Tom Jordan I do it to tease and scare the lice out of your overpopulated beard! You need a shave, old boy! What about a razor sharp enough? (*pulls a knife and starts moving it across Harry's chin*) I can act a barber as well! You only have to tell me where the map is.

Harry I already told you where it is!

Tom Jordan There is no cactus at the abandoned mine of the Dead Hand, the ground is all rocks – no earth to dig. And that mine is not even on the way to Black Valley.

Harry And then it must have been on the way to the Sterile Valley. I put it under a stone.

Tom Jordan And where is the Sterile Valley? Perhaps on the moon?

Harry The devil knows what that valley was called. It was a valley anyway.

Tom Jordan And the Dead Hand's mine? That mine isn't even abandoned. Twenty men are working there day and night.

Harry (*surprised*) Is it true?

Tom Jordan You mean you are surprised? Aren't you even one of the shareholders?

Harry Was.

Tom Jordan You mean you are the only one who abandoned it?

Harry Almost.

Tom Jordan What do you think about his miserable tall stories, Molly? How can you bear with such a pathetic lover?

Molly He is not my lover.

Tom Jordan What about the bed then, which squeaking gymnastics scared off Eddie and even Old Joe?

Rednose It wasn't the bed that scared them off.

Tom Jordan Look at that! The redskin can testify! What was it then?

Rednose I threw out the two floored wrecks not to have them disturbing Miss Molly, since they snored so outrageously.

Tom Jordan Then it must have been you who squeaked the more in bed?

Molly Don't talk nonsense, Tom Jordan. Rednose is not like that. He is not as vulgar as you. Here are the snorers themselves, by the way. (*enter Edward and Old Joe together.*)

Edward We didn't catch up with him.

Tom Jordan Who?

Edward But there he is! You miserable dog of a bloody cheat! What have you done with Old Joe's own treasure map, which you so meanly stole from him yesterday?

Old Joe (*in his beard, still supported by Edward*) For fifteen jugs of whiskey I fell for Daisy Mae...

Tom Jordan He doesn't want to tell us where he has hid the map.

Old Joe (*louder*) For fifteen jugs of whiskey I fell for – what was her name again?

Harry Give him a drink, Molly.

Molly Who? Eddie?

Harry No, Old Joe, of course.

Old Joe (*louder still*) For fifteen jugs I fell for fifty bugs, no, I fell for bugger mugs, no, fell for fifteen jugs I fell for what was her name, I have forgotten her bloody name.

Edward The map, Harry. Or else the whole town will hang you.

Tom Jordan No one can tolerate what you have done to poor Old Joe.

Edward His life's treasure map!

Tom Jordan It belongs to him and no one else!

Harry Hah! All you want is to exploit it yourselves!

Edward (*more cautiously*) You get half the profits if you tell us where it is.

Tom Jordan (*roars*) A fourth!

Edward Very well, a fourth.

Harry Has Old Joe got his drink, Molly?

Molly Yes, he has already drained it.

Harry Well then, boys, ask him where it is, for he is the only one who knows.

Tom Jordan The map!

Edward Old Joe, old buddy, we are friends, aren't we? I was kind enough to walk you home to the widow Smotherbed to let you sleep there and then nicely back with you here all the way again? Say, do you know anything about the map?

Tom Jordan Produce the map, old boy, or Harry Goldwater is lying!

Edward No, not that way, not like that! You have to treat him gently! Old drunks have to be handled more with care! Old Joe, old colleague...

Old Joe What map?

Edward The fine map you had yesterday that Harry so deceitfully pinched from you.

Old Joe Oh, that one. (*fiddles in his shirt*) Here it is. (*finds a map.*)
(*Edward and Tom triumphantly*)

Harry What did I say? (*Tom and Edward devour the map*)

Tom Jordan The map!

Edward Here is the road across Small Creek to the mine of the Dead Hand and through the Nightmare pass along the Corpselittered river to the widow Krankenhauser's haunted mansion and then across Mount Nevermore to...

Tom Jordan It's not the right map. This is a different map.

Molly Yes, don't you know? Old Joe has dozens of them.

Edward But only one of Thunder Jack's Eldorado! That's the one we want, for that map belonged to Flash Springfield!

Harry (to Old Joe) Why was he called Flash Springfield?

Old Joe Because he was so slow.

Molly Isn't Mad Jack Boneshake's coded map of MacLipstick's buried fortune beyond the Skeleton Mountains just as good?

Edward (amazed) Has he got Mad Jack Boneshake's coded map which no one has seen since MacLipstick's body was found and plundered in the Cave of the Dead Dogs beyond the Valley of Perdition?

Molly Or Phantom-Billy's secret map of the gold fields within the forbidden sacred places of worship of the Hopi-Hopi Indians among McKenna's golden mountains?

Tom Jordan Phantom-Billy's secret map... Phantom-Billy was the only one who ever got to see anything of the golden temple of the Hopi-Hopi Indians! Don't say he has got that map as well?

Molly Or the grinning Bugbear's covered mine beyond Hopalong Dingadong's never located secret nest in the Gorge of the Clattering Cliffs?

Edward (stunned with amazement) Has he got that one as well?

Molly He has them all. Just mention one, and he will show it to you. He has been robbed of dozens but can always put together new ones. Right, Joe?

Old Joe For fifteen mugs I fell flat for Crazy Daisy Mae and her grannie my beloved Black Molly and her grandmother also, for that matter. (*drinks*)

Harry Gentlemen, I suggest that Mr Tom Jordan stops aiming his gun at me and instead puts it down in his holster since we now obviously all realize the value of Old Joe's map and the vanity of all our efforts.

Rednose (to himself) The white man will never reach that insight. (*Tom Jordan puts down his gun.*)

Edward (objects) But Mad Jack Boneshake's coded secret map...

Tom Jordan Shut up, you dunderhead scrapped to the bottom!
(*enter Apple-Jack, Tom Dolan, Morris, Big Ben, Corky and Jesse Jenkins.*)

Corky (sees Harry) There he is!

Apple-Jack Hang him high!

Tom Dolan How the devil did you think you could fool us all astray up in the mountains, Harry Goldwater, and get away with it?

Apple-Jack You will be damned for that!

Big Ben Bring up Old Joe's map now that you stole from him!

Harry Old Joe has it.

Big Ben Do you have your map, Old Joe?

Old Joe I should have some kind of a map. (*puts his hand in his clothes and brings forth a dozen.*)

Tom Dolan (examines one map) This is not the one.

Big Ben (examines another) It's not the right one.

Apple-Jack We want gold! Not paper!

Jesse Jenkins What kind of phoneys have you been putting together, Old Joe? This is not even good for wiping your arse! The ink is still wet!

Big Ben The only crook here is Harry Goldwater, who stole Old Joe's only map of any interest and stowed it away. (*pulls his gun*) Where is it, Harry?

Harry Tom Jordan can tell you where it is. We were just discussing the matter when you passed by.

Tom Jordan Harry has been trying to kid me with tall stories. He hasn't said where the map is.

Harry I have! Black Molly can testify to that!

Apple-Jack (pulls his gun) You played false for the last time, Tom Jordan! We can take no more cheating! Now you tell us where the map is, and then we hang you!

Tom Jordan Apple-Jack, you are as completely without any judgement as you always have been! Aim your misdirected shotgun at that bandit instead and be sure to fire off if he doesn't cough up the map!

(*Now everyone pulls his gun except Harry, who stands unarmed, and the two alcoholics.*)

Jesse Jenkins The game is over, Harry. Now it's serious. Hand over the map.

Harry One moment, gentlemen...

Apple-Jack You had your ten thousand moments already! We can't wait any longer! You unhangd bungler, you can't fool us any more! You have set your last potato! The whole town is tired of your deceptions! Now you say where you have put the map, and then we will tar and feather you and let you ride on the bar out of town! And then you are dead, if you ever show up here again, you arch scoundrel of a bully, heel and the most insidious of all seducers!

Tom Dolan Was your mother also disgraced by him?

Apple-Jack (turning his gun against him directly) Shut your mouth, you miserable sanctimonious toad of a thoroughly idiotic pimp, or do you also wish to be thoroughly perforated?

Tom Dolan Aim at the right man, you silly ass! I only asked you a simple question!

Apple-Jack A simple question, what! You dirty stinker!

(*His gun goes off by mistake and happens to split a bottle in the bar.*)

Harry Put down your fireworks before any more go off by mistake and blow your hands off! Black Molly can't afford to lose more bottles!

Molly Her drinks are free of charge only when drink them up.

Harry The spilling is reserved for Old Joe.

Old Joe What?

Harry Nothing, Old Joe. Just carry on drinking.

Tom Dolan To the point!

Old Joe (tries) For fifteen jugs of whiskey... (*but is drowned by the others:*)

Big Ben The map!

Jesse Jenkins We will count to ten!

Edward We won't let you go!

Morris You had better cooperate, you blasted drunk!

Corky We will have your gold, or else...

Apple-Jack Or else we will stuff you with lead and hang you at the same time!

Wild Bill (enters suddenly with a bandana for his face and a loaded gun in each hand) No one is lynched here until I have plundered all of you and Harry also of the only right treasure map!

Harry Wild Bill! You sure came at the right moment! (*gets a gun*)

Now we are two against the rabble!

Molly No shooting in here!

(The shoot-out breaks out at once. Old Joe and Rednose immediately jump the counter and hide behind it together with Molly. Of the nine shooters only Harry and Wild Bill manage to take cover while the others find themselves in the crossfire.)

Tom Jordan *(hit)* Too late! *(Dies. The shoot-out continues.)*

Morris *(hit)* Ouch! *(Dies. The shoot-out continues.)*

Tom Dolan *(hit)* Damn it! *(Dies. The shoot-out continues.)*

Korkis *(hit)* You damned... *(Dies. The shoot-out continues.)*

Apple-Jack *(hit)* Mother! *(Dies. The shoot-out continues.)*

Jesse Jenkins *(hit)* The map! *(Dies. The shoot-out continues.)*

Big Ben *(hit)* You shall pay for this, Harry Goldwater! *(dies)*

Harry I don't think so. *(Wild Bill shoots down the last one.)*

Edward *(hit)* Help! *(dies.)*

Old Joe *(when silence rises over the gunsmoke)* The shooting in here is getting rather noisy.

Rednose It's the white man's law. *(They resume their positions at the bar.)*

Harry So it's only the two of us left, Bill.

Bill *(pulls down his bandana)* And we have some old business to settle.

Harry Are you willing to pull out?

Bill Ask Black Molly.

Harry What should I ask Black Molly?

Bill Which one she prefers.

Harry Do you think she will hesitate?

Bill Not the way we crushed her bed last night.

Harry Is it true, Molly, that Bill was allowed to sleep with you last night?

Molly Don't mix me up in your business!

Bill She wants us to finish our business, Harry.

Harry We don't seem to have any choice, since we both stand in the other's way and no one wants to give way.

Bill How many bullets have you left?

Harry One.

Bill It's only fair. I also have only one left. There is no advantage for any of us. We only have to fight an honest duel like men.

Harry Molly, throw a bottle in the air, and when it hits the floor, we may both fire. Is that all right?

Bill Perfect. If Molly has no objection.

Molly Aren't you going to reason about it? What if there is some alternative?

Bill There is no alternative to you, Molly.

Harry We have been arguing about it enough since many years. We might as well have the matter settled once and for all.

Molly It's your funeral. Fortunately I still have one empty bottle left.

Harry Throw it.

(Molly throws it. When it is smashed against the floor both fire simultaneously, and both are hit.)

Wild Bill At least I died honestly! Ouch! *(dies)*

Harry At my expense! Ouch! *(dies)*

Molly *(sighs)*

Old Joe *(when silence rises over the gunsmoke)* The shooting in here is getting rather noisy.

Rednose All white men are equal to the white man's law.

(Alternatively the two professional alcoholics could sit unperturbed at the bar with their backs to the entire duel scene.)

Molly Sigh! Why does it always have to be me cleaning up afterwards?
(leaves the bar to start putting the bodies in order. Enter Gloria and Daisy Mae.)
 So it's time for you to come now? Good! You can start carrying out all these bodies!

Gloria (shocked at the sight) Gloria Hallelujah! *(faints)*

Molly It's all her fault, with her mad salvation eagerness!

Daisy Mae But how on earth did you accomplish all this, Molly? How will you now be able to replace all these regular customers?

Molly There will always be new ones.
(enter the Sheriff and Bottomless.)

Sheriff There appears to have been some shooting in here. Oh my! *(makes a halt with his hands on his sides)* This just will not do!

Bottomless (starts acting immediately, taking the measures of each body)
 You have managed this magnificently, Miss Molly!

Old Joe (suddenly catching sight of Daisy Mae) But there is Daisy Mae! *(embraces her)*

Daisy Mae (somewhat reluctant) Yeagh!

Molly Sorry, Daisy, but he is the only one left except the sheriff, who is too small, and the undertaker, who only loves corpses.

Daisy Mae Can he pay?

Molly Every map he has is genuine. But none of the others got that. Therefore they all died.

Daisy Mae Who wants paper when she can have real meat? *(claims him)*

Molly (suddenly turning directly to the audience) That's all, folks! 1849 gold was the great obsession here, but the situation is still rather the same today. 1989 the gold is white and is called cocaine.

Director Shut your mouth, you damned schemer! *(enters with a megaphone and all)*
 Who do you think you are? What do you think this is? Some damned temperance campaign or circus show where anyone may do what he will? Who the devil asked you to preach and fall out like that? *(All fall out of their parts. The corpses start uneasily moving.)* Don't move, you damned corpses! The camera is rolling!

Daisy Mae (getting angry) And you damned bully, what devil's right have you to come here to ruin our finale? I still have my most important repartees left! And you are ruining everything for poor Old Joe! He is the one to conclude the entire farce and not you, damned kill-joy!

Director Why the devil do you think I am here? Do you think I am getting paid for nothing? I am the one who rules here to decide who is to move about and who is to be dead! Don't move, you cursed corpses! You are all dead!

Apple-Jack You bloody hemorrhoider, for fifteen devils, you will be damned for not allowing us real whiskey but just your venomous piss without a taste! Let him have it, guys!

Corky He deserves no better! Give him his due!

Tom Dolan You are the saboteur here! You never allow us to stage our plays in peace! You always come imposing your damned extra ideas with false obsolete sceneries that do not fit the context!

Jesse Jenkins Shoot all accursed directors and set designers down to hell! It's our theatre, for we are acting it! The director never matters but is only in the way! We manage better without him!

Wild Bill For your sake, you devil bastard, I still have one shot left which isn't blind!

Tom Jordan That's right! Let him take it all! He just keeps constantly ruining our performances!

Rednose (to himself) Directors only exist to ruin every show from the beginning.

Big Ben You are all right, by golly. All theatre shows would be sovereign and natural successes if you only strictly kept to the text instead of obeying directors who just alter everything.

Apple-Jack You said it! (*threatens the director with his fist*) You failure of a fake, now you will get paid for forcing us to dress like robots to play Hamlet and to mafia gangsters to play Julius Caesar!

Molly Don't forget that he turned Queen Cleopatra into the mistress of a prostitute night club!

Tom Jordan And that he put Faust on a potty!

Corky He is just a failed impostor like all directors who ruined all our plays for us and the audience! Gun him down!

All (*mad at the director, over each other*) You are the saboteur! Get out of here!

(*the director is forced to retire, cudgelled by Daisy Mae*)

Apple-Jack (*cries*) Shoot him down before he gets out!

Harry For once you said something sensible, Apple-Jack!

(*All fire at the director, who drowns in blood and vanishes. As soon as he is gone all lie down and are dead again.*)

Daisy Mae There! Let's now get back to reality!

Rednose It will not get better anyway. The white man's world is only about money, sex and means of intoxication.

Daisy Mae Yes, Rednose, but we are acting a play!

Molly You have to come up with some sort of moral after so much tragedy!

Daisy Mae Yes, but this is a comedy!

(*kisses Old Joe, who happily eyes the audience*)

Old Joe (*to the audience*) Who is wiser? Those who die for the gold, or those who always left it alone? (*blinks one eye*)

Rednose Who are you, Old Joe?

Old Joe Let people have fun, it doesn't matter if it is with gold or with cocaine or something else, as long as I may please myself in peace.

Rednose That's a moral of immorality.

Daisy Mae Shut up, boys, and have a drink instead! (*kisses Old Joe*)

(*The Sheriff scratches his neck in view of all the bodies, who are eagerly measured by Bottomless, while also Black Molly empties a glass behind the bar with Rednose.*)

The End.

The Regrettable Incident at Black Molly's Old Saloon

characterizations.

Old Joe is an old original with a big broad hat and a bushy beard. You never see much of his face, which disappears in the beard and under the hat. He is rather short and barefoot. He is hardly noticed in the beginning to constantly grow as a character all through to the end.

Black Molly is a hard-boiled woman with dark hair and dress, rather modest, a female factotum, the main institution of the gold diggers' village, reacts coolly and casually to everything and is a stoic with much concealed under the surface.

Harry Goldwater is a generous adventurer who gladly invites everyone for a drink if he may cheat them at the same time. His heart is big, but his brain is only for intrigue. He is hearty and positive and has winning ways but is sly. He is rather big and relatively well dressed.

Wild Bill Crackpot, professional bandit, is even bigger and wilder and much more overwhelming. You suspect some latent madness in him. He is fully equipped as a bandit but shabbily dressed, very unpolished and vibrating the coarse and ruthless charm of total lawlessness. He has big blue eyes that often wander about.

Tom Jordan, professional gambler, the only properly dressed gentleman. He always considers himself too noble for the others' company.

Bottomless, undertaker completely dressed in black, the vulture of the play, preferably in a black high hat. His face never changes but is consistently dead serious, even when he gets angry, when he gives an impression of being dangerous in his constant effort to control himself.

Dirty Dick Dunbolster, an ordinary king size hoodlum, who takes everything for granted and considers the whole world his claim, a bully without considerations, who in his coarseness is completely overshadowed by Wild Bill though, the real desperado.

Apple-Jack, a small crooked choleric, who only lives to get angry and often reacts without then being wholly responsible for his actions. He commonly derails.

Daisy Mae, blonde, slimy, obsequious, fleshy, sentimental, a professional vamp who only lives for being a vamp. She has the full equipment of a wild west courtesan with a considerable outfit, well dressed hair, red and black striking clothes and an irresistible way of getting men.

Gloria Lovelace, a small militant preacher, in a uniform like of the salvation army (although it did not exist yet in 1849), undaunted and unpopular, self-complacent and infallible but means only well in spite of her rather deterrent ways.

Edward Scarecrow, an orderly citizen with small delicate glasses, a ridiculous pedant who is only in the way, small and self-important and indispensable as Gloria's only moral support and sympathizer, a coward humbug.

The Sheriff, the smallest person of the play, as small as possible, good at talking but incapable of action. That's why he became the sheriff.

Big Ben, the biggest person of the play, a calm and safe person who is used to handling conflicts and to act calmly as a en ejector. He has no enemies.

Jesse Jenkins, an energetic gold digger, preferably in a trapper's outfit, frayed dress, Davy Crockett cap and all that, a professional pioneer.

Morris, *Corky* and *Tom Dolan*, only secondary figures but important as such, small and fiery, gold and gambling fanatics, professional drones, parasites and rotten eggs. Morris is the most stable of them, Tom Dolan the most troublesome and Corky the most stupid.

Rednose, philosophical introvert, the only monologist. His most important part is actually as a prompter, (he could have the script in front of him on the bar for reading,) but in all his decadence and decay as the last of the people from whom the whites have robbed the land and deeply alcoholised as well, he still has irresistibly romantic looks with long hair and sharp features.

The Director, an ordinary loudmouth with a ridiculous Taiwan cap and a megaphone.

This is just a flexible suggestion to moulding the characters with reservations for the possible necessity to adapt the roles to available actors.

Copyright © C. Lanciai, 14.9.1990,
translated in February 2022.