

The Sun and the Stars  
by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. GRASSLANDS IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO, 1880 - DAY

A middle-aged MEXICAN MAN rides a horse, alongside a girl named SOFIA, who is struggling to stay in the saddle. Three seedy-looking white BUSHWACKERS ride up to them.

BUSHWACKER

Howdy...Pray tell, old scratch.  
Where you headed? Speak English?

MEXICAN MAN

Go to Havelock.

BUSHWACKER

What for?

SOFIA

El banco!

The father winces. He's terrified.

BUSHWACKER

Isn't that plucky. This valley can be dangerous. Word went out, every outlaw in the territory coming here. Don't know why. So, going to the bank in Havelock, New Mexico. Your daughter speak English?

Sofia keeps a poker face. The bushwacker goes to the father.

BUSHWACKER (CONT'D)

Don't want to scare the girl. We find folks stranded here. Accidents, rockslides, fall sick, Indian attack. Then you got lost.

They all ride in tense silence.

EXT. GRASSLANDS - DAY

Continuation. Six Kiowa warriors hear the two Mexicans and the three white men nearby, and ride over to look. As they approach, they hear loud VOICES, SHOTS, a SCREAM. The Kiowa gallop toward the travelers. By now the Mexican father is dead and the girl is being held firmly by an arm.

SECOND BUSHWACKER

Damn, it's the Comanche.

BUSHWACKER

Kiowa. A long way from home. They do that, run hundreds of miles looking for horses to steal.

SECOND BUSHWACKER

Got money, the girl. Now Indians.

The girl breaks free and runs to the top of a ridge, toward the Kiowa. She squints and finally realizes who they are. She is jolted. She looks back and forth: rape and murder from the white men, or God knows what with the Kiowa?

BUSHWACKER

Girl, that's the Kiowa. They spit you and roast you. Come on back, I'll introduce you to some friends in the big city.

She spits in his direction, runs to the Kiowa, grabs a warrior's knee.

SOFIA

Ayudame! Te lo ruego! Te suplico!

Both groups of men are stunned. GREY WOLF, one of the Kiowa, WHISTLES and another brings a horse. A third Kiowa aims a rifle at the white men. Grey Wolf grabs her like a sack of grain and puts her on the horse. Grey Wolf pokes the horse and Sofia and the Kiowa ride off, watching the white men.

BUSHWACKER

Girl, you done lost your mind!

SECOND BUSHWACKER

We could shoot em.

BUSHWACKER

Pistols on rifles? Let's go split the pile. I want that fancy watch.

EXT. GRASSLANDS - DAY

Sofia and the Kiowa have gone a short distance when Sofia falls off her horse.

SOFIA

Estoy bien.

Grey Wolf sighs, dismounts, throws her on the horse. She falls again. Grey Wolf sees the bushwackers following.

Grey Wolf has had enough. He yanks her skirt down to her ankles. She screams. He throws her on the horse. Freed of the skirt, her legs grip the horse's sides. She looks daggers at him. She hops down, puts her skirt on, pulls it up to her thighs, glares at him - help me back on again! Which he does.

They begin to trot. The Kiowa are beginning to make some speed when they hear a THUMP again.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Estoy bien.

Grey Wolf sighs and turns around.

EXT. KIOWA CAMP - DAY

Sofia and the Kiowa arrive at their camp. The Kiowa dismount and Sofia falls off her horse. She approaches Grey Wolf and touches his shoulder.

SOFIA

Gracias.

GREY WOLF

Gaa -

She indicates herself.

SOFIA

Soy Sofia.

GREY WOLF

Hacho. Khoiye-goo.  
(Hello. I am Kiowa.)

He looks down and mutters.

GREY WOLF (CONT'D)

Doke kiah.  
(Beautiful.)

He takes her to a warrior, pats him on the shoulder.

SOFIA

He's your brother?

All three smile awkwardly. She takes the brother's hand. A Kiowa woman nods to her and gestures for her to enter a tent. Sofia does so, but a mishap occurs inside and the tent tilts.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Estoy bien.

EXT. A RIVER - DAY

It's summer, and Sofia and Grey Wolf have been swimming. They are huddling under a blanket.

GREY WOLF  
So you're okay now?

SOFIA  
I came here to forget all that.  
Your English is so much better.

GREY WOLF  
How is it so hard to make a baby?  
You may not be a rider, but you  
swim like a fish. All those trips  
down the river to get water.

SOFIA  
I like what comes after swimming.

GREY WOLF  
I think you could swim the ocean.

SOFIA  
So we try again?

He kisses her.

Later, under the blankets again, they hear horses.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
It's the blue coats, the army. Let  
me go -- they'll shoot you.

She watches a cavalry unit through the trees; Grey Wolf comes up behind her.

GREY WOLF  
These are the boys who kill women  
and children. We need to warn the  
old man. Now!

EXT. KIOWA CAMP - DAY

Establishing shot. A nasty snowy winter.

INT. KIOWA TENT - DAY

Sofia, pregnant, hair in braids, curls up with Grey Wolf.

SOFIA  
 Alright, the English. Then Spanish.

GREY WOLF  
 I hate this.

SOFIA  
 The English are coming. If they  
 take our land they can take yours.  
 You learn so you can make a good  
 deal with the white people.

GREY WOLF  
 You want to talk about last night?  
 Grandfather yelled for three hours.  
 But he likes you. You carry water  
 like a mule.

SOFIA  
 I can't do anything else. I knock  
 over tents like a satanta (bear).

GREY WOLF  
 In spring he will let me take you  
 back to the desert, you can take  
 the baby too.

SOFIA  
 And what about you?

GREY WOLF  
 You need your family. I can't go  
 with you. That whole valley is  
 dangerous even for white people.

SOFIA  
 But you will ride with me?

EXT. KIOWA CAMP - DAY

Summer now. Sofia hugs a number of Kiowa, and she mounts  
 alongside Grey Wolf. No baby.

SOFIA  
 Go to the tree first?

They ride to a tree; beneath it is a tiny wooden cross.

GREY WOLF  
 We could try to have another.

SOFIA  
 We tried and tried.

She kneels, crosses herself. He kneels beside her.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
Adios. Mi bebe.

GREY WOLF  
Chico fuerte. Tres meses.

SOFIA  
Tres meses.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING A NEW MEXICO TOWN - DAY

Grey Wolf and Sofia. He holds one of her braids gently. Below them, men watch and begin to pull out weapons.

GREY WOLF  
Mi amor.

Grey Wolf smiles. He sees men looking, mounts, waves and rides off. Sofia is jolted to hear gunshots from the town.

INT. NEW MEXICO JAIL - DAY

Sofia enters the jail. A well-weathered sheriff named JAMES CANFIELD rises. He's cleaning a gun.

CANFIELD  
No darkies or Indians at sundown.  
It's not safe.

SOFIA  
I'm Mexican.

CANFIELD  
Saw you riding in with a Kiowa.

SOFIA  
I lived with them for two years.

Canfield puts down the gun and looks at her.

CANFIELD  
You're alive. Stay off the street,  
town is too dangerous right now.

SOFIA  
You've got my family -

A Mexican woman cries out from a jail cell; other Mexicans are in there with her.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
Mi familia!

MEXICAN WOMAN  
Sofia! Papa muerte!

SOFIA  
Si!...Why is my family in jail?

CANFIELD  
Trespassing.

SOFIA  
But it's our land!

CANFIELD  
Well, the new marshal. I know, they were supposed to let you keep your land, fight your battles in court.

SOFIA  
So our farm -

CANFIELD  
Sorry. I am. Somebody else's farm now. Told your mother a dozen times. She's taking her family down to Mexico, when we got enough guns for a wagon train. Suggest you go with her. What's your name?

SOFIA  
Lallo. Let me see them.

A bit later Sofia is in the jail with her family.

MOTHER  
We're going home. You should stay here. You go all the way down to Mexico, there is nothing for you.

SOFIA  
I had to run -

MOTHER  
You married an Indian. You want to go down there and find a Mexican man to marry you?

SOFIA  
You were going to make my dress -

MOTHER  
Your sister's dress now.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Sofia finds Canfield watching the street. Men watch him.

CANFIELD

You came looking for your farm and  
your family. And now you're just...  
You said your name was Lallo?

SOFIA

My Mexican name is Sofia. Kiowa  
called me Lallo. It means little  
boy. I was always running around  
knocking things over.

CANFIELD

Indians and Mexicans, not popular.  
You stick with me tonight. Too many  
guns around. My office is next to  
the marshal.

SOFIA

At your place?

CANFIELD

I'll bunk out on the porch. Nice  
warm night.

SOFIA

You can't sleep outside!

CANFIELD

Keep an eye on Main Street.

She smiles at him.

EXT. NEW MEXICO TOWN, MAIN STREET - DAY

Embraces as Sofia's family departs. Sofia wipes her eyes, and  
marches to the marshal's office. Armed men everywhere.

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE - DAY

Sofia finds the MARSHAL berating a DEPUTY.

MARSHAL

Dammit, put him in the jail.

BARRETT

For the girl? Biggest liar in town.

MARSHAL  
He's got to be guilty of something!

SOFIA  
Hello? I'm looking for work.

MARSHAL  
You speak English? Miss Molly's  
down the street is all full up.

SOFIA  
I'm not here for that!

MARSHAL  
This is the office of the U.S.  
Marshal. That's me. Don't even  
bother me about that farm.

SOFIA  
Sofia or Lallo, take your pick.

Handshake.

MARSHAL  
Lord, you got quite a grip.

SOFIA  
Hauling water for the Kiowa. I was  
terrible at everything else.

MARSHAL  
The Kiowa? Got back here alive?  
Through this territory? Hey --

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Continuation. She barges into his inner office. Mess. Papers  
everywhere. The marshal follows.

SOFIA  
I fix this. Give me beans tonight.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sofia squints at documents, then sighs and gets up.

EXT. OUTSIDE MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sofia sees an army platoon and gunmen eyeing each other; one  
soldier wears eyeglasses.

SOFIA  
Soldier! Near-sight or far-sight?

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES  
Near-sighted.

SOFIA  
(hefting a large book)  
Bring em over. Revised Statutes.  
This is going to take all night.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

The marshal leads Sofia into his inner office.

MARSHAL  
I'll stake you to some beans either  
way, but -

He enters his office and it's immaculate. Papers piled perfectly. She's wearing the soldier's glasses.

SOFIA  
This stack is for the land office.  
This is the road builders, bunch of  
crooks. This stack, you're running  
that army post by yourself. This is  
for treaties with the tribes, you  
ought to be ashamed.

MARSHAL  
But --

SOFIA  
Here's the mail, army orders,  
letters from soldiers' families,  
stupid miner wants to buy that  
played-out mine. This thing -

MARSHAL  
You found it! I need that stamp to  
put on every document I sign.

SOFIA  
Your lawbooks were missing a few  
volumes -

MARSHAL  
They were holding up a table leg.

SOFIA

Got a lawyer suing you on a habeas corpus and another on posse comitatus. That one took me an hour to figure out. I'm not sure but I think we can keep you out of jail.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

Miss, can I have my -

SOFIA

Last thing, I need another pair of these. Two pair. There you go, soldier. Don't go nowhere!

MARSHAL

Can you start tomorrow? Eight in the morning?

Canfield looks in at the office and is impressed.

CANFIELD

All this - it had to be you.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Gunfire is heard outside. Sofia and the soldier with glasses sit at a table. Sofia leans her head against the wall.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

What's the matter?

SOFIA

My mother told me to stay. No one will marry me.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

I wouldn't be so sure. Come on, girl, the nines.

SOFIA

Nine times two is...Ugh. This road contract, he's a thief. There's a man in my home town, do it cheap, but he's Mexican. I'll ride over.

MARSHAL

(entering)

It's rough country, I'll send -

SOFIA

Don't worry. Got no time to be afraid, I just get on with it.

MARSHAL

Only way I can pay you, legal-like,  
is if I bring you on, swear you  
into the Marshals Service.

SOFIA

With gun and a badge? You really  
don't want me shooting a gun.

MARSHAL

Read them dime novels, a marshal  
spends all day in the saddle  
shooting folks. Really it's like a  
clerk in a law firm. Paperwork  
gonna kill me.

SOFIA

Clearly you hate it.

MARSHAL

I love it. I represent the whole  
government in these parts. Every  
time I do one of these stupid  
files, make sure this guy can get  
water, keep these fellers from  
shooting each other over a fence,  
I'm keeping these farmers alive.

SOFIA

And you're getting buried alive.

MARSHAL

So your timing is perfect. Need to  
do this legal. Here's the badge.  
Assistant marshal. Normally I'd pin  
it on your chest...

Rather than go anywhere near her chest, he hands it to her  
and she smiles and pins it on.

EXT. BEHIND THE LIVERY STABLE - DAY

Canfield is mounted; Sofia stands next to a horse. She wears  
her badge. Gunmen watch.

CANFIELD

Let's try a ride today.

SOFIA

Is it safe?

CANFIELD  
Safer than nighttime. First, take  
off that dress.

SOFIA  
I beg your pardon?

CANFIELD  
Wear pants like the rest of us.

SOFIA  
Everyone will see my - I can't!

EXT. BEHIND THE LIVERY STABLE - DAY

Continuation. Sofia emerges from the store with very stiff  
jeans, totally mortified.

SOFIA  
Mama would kill me. I'm like a  
puta. People can see me!

CANFIELD  
Alright, nice gentle horse. See if  
you can mount up on the first try.  
Wait, that's the wrong side!

SOFIA  
I'm Kiowa, we get on this way.

She mounts from the right, as she does throughout the story,  
and whoops for joy. She kicks.

CANFIELD  
A little harder. Big horse.

SOFIA  
It's working!

CANFIELD  
We'll just take a little trot.

SOFIA  
No, all the way to the river!

EXT. BEHIND THE LIVERY STABLE - DAY

Sofia is suffering the torments of the damned. She falls off  
the horse and leans on a railing, badly chafed. She staggers  
into a store; he dismounts and follows. Gunmen watch her.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Continuation. Canfield picks up a small jar.

SHOPKEEPER

So you're the assistant marshal.  
What you gonna do about Dyson?

SOFIA

Why didn't you warn me? You need to  
break in the pants like boots! The  
pants rubbed me raw in - places  
where you don't even have places!

CANFIELD

Most girls would cash in after the  
first mile. Here, a little goose  
grease to put on your...elsewheres.

SOFIA

What do you know about all that?

CANFIELD

Got a wife. Take my hand, Lallo.

She groans and complies, smiling.

SOFIA

You were very patient. I had fun.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Sofia behind the desk, Marshal reviewing papers.

MARSHAL

Sofe, I got a confession to make. I  
hired you for a particular reason.

She looks alarmed.

MARSHAL (CONT'D)

This year is gonna be a bitch -  
sorry, gonna be rough. I need to do  
the census. A mountain of paper,  
you were born for the job. We ride  
out to every damn farm, count  
folks. They told me to hire  
assistant marshals, I can even hire  
women if they're sensible.

SOFIA

So I really am assistant marshal?

MARSHAL

Let you know what you're in for.  
Dyson, rancher up the hill, wants  
the valley for himself. Sends  
bushwackers out to cause trouble,  
hopes the farmers get scared and  
leave. Man in the shop there, he's  
Dyson's spy, tells Dyson what you  
do in town. The valley road has  
Dyson's gunmen looking for trouble.

SOFIA

Gonna be interesting, this census.

MARSHAL

It's got so some folks are trigger-  
happy. Might be less likely to  
shoot if you're a woman. I'll come  
with you when I can, but I got a  
hundred other things to do. By the  
time the census is done -

SOFIA

If I survive.

MARSHAL

You'll know every inch of this  
area. So, gun and badge.

EXT. DYSON'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Sofia finds ALGER DYSON, a prosperous middle-aged rancher, on  
his porch, wielding a cigar as he does in every scene. Gunman  
are at his side. She approaches slowly and nervously.

DYSON

Alger Dyson. And who might you be?

SOFIA

Assistant marshal. Do the census.  
Saved you for last. Lot of guns.

DYSON

Assistant marshal....It's a  
dangerous place.

SOFIA

Oh no, I like this place. I visit  
those farmers, their children -

DYSON

Waste good grassland on those damn  
fool sod busters.

SOFIA

They were worried you tried to buy  
the bank in Havelock.

DYSON

Bank makes a lot of risky loans.

SOFIA

To farmers?

DYSON

You might want to stay in Havelock,  
in that nice safe office.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Sofia at the desk, marshal looking out the window.

SOFIA

When does the sheriff get back?

MARSHAL

Went to court, could be a week. I  
need to get a letter to the army.  
Dyson got too many gunmen causing  
trouble. Worse than Indians. Sorry.

SOFIA

Be days before the Army can come,  
if they even bother.

MARSHAL

Well, try. And the land claims -

SOFIA

Dyson wants the whole valley.

MARSHAL

See if you find something in the  
lawbooks to stop em. Heard anything  
from your family down south?

SOFIA

No. So you want me to find --

DEPUTY

(entering)

Three more of these boys with the  
guns down the street.

SOFIA

Both of you go, it's dangerous!

The marshal and deputy leave.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
Soldier. Help me move the files -

A barrage of SHOTS.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- DAY

Continuation. The marshal and deputy are dead. Gunmen canter out of town, not bothering to hide their identity. The soldier emerges, and sees Sofia following.

SOLDIER  
Dammit, get back inside, it's not safe! Get the doctor!

SOFIA  
The marshal's dead. Deputy too. You know those four men?

SOLDIER  
It's five. They work for Dyson.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

The soldier follows Sofia inside with two badges.

SOLDIER  
You git. They could come back.

SOFIA  
How long did it take for a marshal to get here?

SOLDIER  
First marshal took two years. This one took six months. Nobody cares.

SOFIA  
I do. Go get Petrie.

She sits and looks at the marshal's badge. He returns with another soldier.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
Until Washington gives us help, we're the only thing stopping Dyson from taking the whole valley.

SOLDIER  
Us?

SOFIA

This is the official stamp of the marshal, and the badge. Mine.

She takes off the assistant marshal badge, and puts on the marshal badge.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You two are my deputies.

SOLDIER

Marshal? This can't be legal.

SOFIA

There's no lawyer here. Anybody has a legal problem, who do they come to?

(points to herself)

SOLDIER

Good Lord.

SOFIA

Marshal got shot, that's our first job. Time to write my first legal document.

SOLDIER

Arrest warrant?

SOFIA

Wanted poster.

She writes and posts a poster. Canfield enters. Looks at her work.

CANFIELD

I thought "dead or alive" only happened in a dime novel.

SOFIA

It was murder.

CANFIELD

Who put it up, the army? They sure got a flair for the dramatic.

SOFIA

I did. I'm taking over as marshal.

CANFIELD

Have you lost your mind?

SOFIA

Could be a year before we get a new marshal. Until then, it's me, unless you want it? If you don't back me up, I - I don't know where I can go.

CANFIELD

(skeptical)

Jesus God, look at all that paperwork....Try it out. I want to see what you're going to do.

SOFIA

You need coffee, you're exhausted. I'm guessing you have at least four children.

CANFIELD

Five.

She smiles and gives him a cup of coffee.

SOFIA

Your turn on the cot. Your cot.

CANFIELD

You're thinking I didn't bother you when you slept here, because I'm married.

SOFIA

No, you did that because you were born in the wrong century. The way you treat women.

CANFIELD

Well, it wasn't always my way. Back when I was younger, well...Claire sorted me out. She did. My wife.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Dyson finds Sofia in her new office. She gets up, afraid, and he closes the door behind him, blocking the exit.

DYSON

Miss -

SOFIA

Marshal.

DYSON

You're going through with this?

SOFIA

I really am the marshal. Got sworn in by the last marshal. Before he was killed.

DYSON

He was rigid. I hope with a new marshal, might be some flexibility, compromise. So we can all watch this territory grow, the right way.

SOFIA

The right way.

DYSON

I am a man of considerable means and ability. I can make your stay here quite comfortable.

SOFIA

What a coincidence. This morning I was working through the Revised Statutes on bribery.

Canfield opens the door which hits Dyson; Dyson slowly moves out of the way.

DYSON

Or perhaps your stay won't be so comfortable. Same goes for you, Sheriff. You're alive right now because you aren't bothering me.

CANFIELD

Time's changing. You start throwing elbows around with the Marshal, time's be changing a whole lot.

DYSON

You mean that girl?

CANFIELD

I mean the Marshal.

Sofia didn't expect him to back her up. Slight smile.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Sofia and the sheriff eat. She's watching him.

SOFIA

Saturday, don't the men come to town, swap stories, get a drink?

CANFIELD

Dyson waits til the men are in town, then sends gunmen out, burn barns, scare the women. So Saturday night is pretty quiet now.

SOFIA

You backed me up, Dyson's going to come after you.

He looks at her but says nothing.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You should know, I haven't told Washington about the old marshal. I'm just carrying on anyway.

CANFIELD

So the Marshal's Office thinks the real marshal -

SOFIA

The old marshal.

CANFIELD

They think he's still on the job?

SOFIA

I am the marshal.

CANFIELD

Acting marshal. How long before you tell em?

SOFIA

Not sure.

CANFIELD

Lord. Suppose I'm covering for you. We both going to jail.

SOFIA

(smiles)

You're the only man in town who believes in me. Tdahn gaw piye.

CANFIELD

Huh?

SOFIA

It means mean old goat. Got coffee.  
Don't worry, that soldier boy made  
it, not me. Ride tonight?

EXT. DESERT TRAIL -- NIGHT

Sofia and Canfield ride slowly. It's getting dark and they  
hear horses.

CANFIELD

You sure about this?

They are ambushed by two gunmen.

GUNMAN

Got that girl with him.

One shoots at Sofia. She dismounts.

SOFIA

Did you really just take a shot a  
me? Come here, give it another try,  
aim for the badge!

An appalled Canfield shoots them both.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

I wanted one alive. Find out what  
they're up to.

CANFIELD

Well, we knew that, didn't we?

SOFIA

These were two of the five, kill  
the marshal, now we get the other  
three.

CANFIELD

Take em alive?

SOFIA

Let's try.

EXT. DESERT CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Sofia and Canfield eat.

CANFIELD

Let's eat up and go. You weren't  
kidding. Your cooking is terrible.

SOFIA

Try my beans and rice, it's like plaster. Good thing I have a job.

Rain. Sofia and Canfield crawl under a wagon. It's cold.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

It's so cold, we're in the desert.

CANFIELD

Nighttime, desert can be colder than a banker's heart.

SOFIA

If we'd have known this storm was gonna blow up.

CANFIELD

The horses are spooked, we stay put, sleep here.

SOFIA

You're not getting all rooster on me?

CANFIELD

Yeah, I picked the perfect spot to take advantage of you, middle of the prairie in a rainstorm. All we need is liquor and music.

SOFIA

Sorry.

CANFIELD

You can sleep under the wagon.

SOFIA

Where will you sleep?

CANFIELD

Not under the wagon.

SOFIA

You'll be okay in the open?

CANFIELD

You're not getting all girly on me? Gimme that blanket.

They "sleep" separately. Finally Sofia crawls to him.

SOFIA

You made your point. Old-fashioned gentleman. I need you under the wagon so I don't freeze to death.

They slide under the wagon, curl up together.

CANFIELD

You're sure this is alright?

SOFIA

I'm freezing, come closer.

CANFIELD

Any closer, you can arrest me for adultery.

SOFIA

(smiling)

It's alright. I'm not a stick of dynamite.

CANFIELD

The hell you ain't.

SOFIA

Tdahn gaw piye.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - DAY

Canfield and Sofia, bedraggled, enter the house. Two of Claire's children peek their heads in.

CLAIRE

You were gone all night.

CANFIELD

Caught in the rain.

CLAIRE

Both of you?

SOFIA

He was a perfect gentleman. It was rather sweet. My name is Sofia.

CLAIRE

Claire. Claire Canfield.

SOFIA

You're a very good sport.

CLAIRE  
You slide in with the girls.

SOFIA  
Thank you very much.

Sofia leaves.

CANFIELD  
We have to go out again tomorrow.

CLAIRE  
Both of you?

CANFIELD  
Those boys shot the marshal, got to bring em in.

CLAIRE  
That's a job for the new marshal.

CANFIELD  
That girl is the new marshal.

CLAIRE  
Seriously now.

CANFIELD  
Got the badge and everything. I already taught her to ride, sorta.

CLAIRE  
She can't even ride a horse?

CANFIELD  
And then there's shooting a gun.

CLAIRE  
So you babysit this child til...when?

CANFIELD  
Last marshal took months to get here, bottom of the barrel. Maybe she'll come to her senses, stay in that office, let me go knock heads together.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CANFIELD  
It's too dangerous.

SOFIA  
You're a sheriff, you have a gun.

CANFIELD  
You want to go too. Too dangerous.

SOFIA  
Fine, I'll just do it myself.

She leaves.

CANFIELD  
God dammit!

EXT. DESERT TRAIL - NIGHT

Sofia and Canfield watch for outlaws near a cabin.

SOFIA  
You don't want me to be marshal,  
I'll hand it over to you in a  
minute. The Marshals Office back  
east is already asking questions.  
Take the job. Got all those land  
office reports waiting for you.

CANFIELD  
I can barely read. All the  
paperwork, I'd lose my mind. You  
want a war with Dyson, I'll protect  
you all I can, ain't gonna be easy.

She looks over at him.

SOFIA  
Most men would run away.

CANFIELD  
How you gonna do this? Can't ride,  
can't shoot.

SOFIA  
Can't do girl stuff either. My  
cooking is awful, I'll never be a  
farm wife. Can't have children. I  
don't belong anywhere.

CANFIELD  
You're Mexican and Kiowa. You feel  
a little like you're in a foreign  
country?

SOFIA

I'm a girl in a country built by men. The whole world is a foreign country... Tell me about your wife.

CANFIELD

Your turn to sleep.

SOFIA

She doesn't like me. Spending the night under a wagon with you got us off on the wrong foot.

CANFIELD

You sleep now.

SOFIA

I can keep an eye out too.

CANFIELD

How many horses you see over there?

SOFIA

(squinting)

Fine, you made your point.

CANFIELD

And by the way, they're sheep.

SOFIA

(squinting again)

They are not!...But you're exhausted. Take the water.

Someone lights a lamp in the cabin.

CANFIELD

I see it, he's not going anywhere. I need to use the necessary.

SOFIA

Take a pee?

CANFIELD

Right back. Don't do anything.

He goes to the bushes. She marches to the house. When he returns, she's almost there. A gunman emerges from the cabin.

GUNMAN

Don't you come no closer.

CANFIELD

Miss, you come on back here!

SOFIA

This boy ain't old enough to be no soldier, bet he never even shot that thing at somebody.

GUNMAN

You stop right there!

He shoots, wings her horse who runs off. She keeps advancing. He fires and hits her in the gut. She walks up to him.

CANFIELD

Get out of my way, I'll plug him!

SOFIA

I am U.S. Marshal in this jurisdiction, and you are under arrest.

GUNMAN

(smiles, rather stunned)  
Good for you, girl.

She grabs his gun.

CANFIELD

Sofie, you been shot!

SOFIA

Canfield, I want this one alive!

CANFIELD

Sofie! You boy, on the ground.

She near-faints as Canfield takes her in his arms.

SOFIA

It went in and out.

CANFIELD

Bleeding like a butcher shop.

He pulls up her shirt, balls up his bandana, secures the wound using his belt. He trusses up the prisoner and puts him on a horse, tying the lead to his own saddle. Then he lifts her on his horse and climbs up with her.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)

Sofo! Do you want to die?

SOFIA

Worrying just wears you out.

She faints dead away.

CANFIELD  
Sofie! Stay with me. Hang on!

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE -- NIGHT

Claire is stitching Sofia up; their prisoner is trussed up in a corner. Canfield watches.

CLAIRE  
Brought a gunman into my kitchen.

CANFIELD  
Is she gonna be okay?

CLAIRE  
Hush!...Drink some more. Here comes the needle.

WILLIE  
Mama, gracious -

CLAIRE  
Go to bed! Look in on the girls.  
...Hope you got another dress.

CANFIELD  
Girl's addled in the head, but  
tough as nails. Scared me to death.

CLAIRE  
This stupid girl is gonna get you  
killed. You got five kids, last  
time I counted.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Canfield checks in on Sofia.

CANFIELD  
You like the danger too much. You  
could live to a ripe old age.

SOFIA  
Your idea is I go to a safe place,  
maybe back east? I live another  
twenty years? Doing what? Chained  
up to somebody's stove? And out  
here, you know how many ways there  
are to die young? Robbery, Apaches,  
snakes, disease, accidents? You can  
try to live safe, get killed quick.

CANFIELD  
So you don't care.

SOFIA  
I don't make plans. I want a brilliant life, not a long one. Old age isn't a place I'm really hankering to go to.

CANFIELD  
You're not afraid?

SOFIA  
I'm like any girl in a wild place. I'm afraid all the time. I ignore it. Close my eyes and jump in.

CANFIELD  
Well I just don't know. Claire would know.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Sofia out for a gentle, slow stroll.

TOWNSMAN  
Miss Marshal? How you feeling?

She takes his arm.

SOFIA  
Fine.

TOWNSMAN  
You got shot by that boy? Well, good Lord. Add you to my praying string come Sunday.

SOFIA  
You're very kind.

A gaggle of townswomen emerge from a store.

TOWNSWOMAN  
Fred? You get over here!

The townsman scampers over to his wife.

TOWNSWOMAN (CONT'D)  
So who is that woman again?

SECOND TOWNSWOMAN  
Why is she out there on the street?

TOWNSWOMAN  
Heard she was married to an Apache.

SECOND TOWNSWOMAN  
Thought she was Mexican.

TOWNSWOMAN  
Sounds like trouble.

CLAIRE  
Keep a civil tongue in your head.  
Girl's trying to help us.

TOWNSWOMAN  
Might be you don't know her as well  
as you think.

At the end of town, gunman watch.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Sofia interrogates the boy who shot her; Canfield watches.

SOFIA  
Why is Dyson rounding up gunmen?

GUNMAN  
He has maps all over his office. He  
wants every inch of the valley.

SOFIA  
Even the parts where people already  
have farms? You're a big help. The  
sheriff wants to hang you -

GUNMAN  
He seems to be awful concerned  
about you.

SOFIA  
Well, I'll get you out of here,  
you'll go on trial in the big  
courthouse in the city.

GUNMAN  
And then...

SOFIA  
You're still going to prison.

GUNMAN  
First time I shot somebody, it's a  
girl. They gonna whup me in prison.

SOFIA  
Tell em you shot a federal marshal.

GUNMAN  
You're not really the marshal...?

SOFIA  
(irritated)  
You want me to give you to the  
sheriff? All your worries be over.

GUNMAN  
I shot a marshal.

SOFIA  
Well, don't be too proud of  
yourself.

CANFIELD  
Got an actual confession. How's  
that leak?

SOFIA  
You worry too much. That's gunman  
number three. He said his pal Fred  
knew everything Dyson was up to.

CANFIELD  
So we can ask Fred?

SOFIA  
The man you killed.

CANFIELD  
Sorry.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL -- DAY

Sofia rides alone. She is lost. She can't find the sun in the  
darkening clouds.

SOFIA  
Let's try east then.

A rider named MACADAM has been watching her. She rides up and  
down, looking frantically for a clue as to where she is.

MACADAM  
Another lost stray to round up.

She sees him; they look at each other. Suddenly a herd of  
cattle come of the ridge, heading toward her. She becomes  
frightened. The rider approaches.

SOFIA  
Don't come any closer!

MACADAM  
Shh. How long you been lost?

SOFIA  
Stop! Who says I'm lost?

MACADAM  
Keep it down, don't spook my stock.

More riders appear on the ridge, one of them a black man named BUCK.

SOFIA  
How do I know I can trust you?

MACADAM  
First smart thing I've seen you do.  
What are you doing out here?

SOFIA  
I'm the new marshal.

MACADAM  
Federal marshal? No, I'm serious.

SOFIA  
Come closer so I can see you.

She points to her badge.

MACADAM  
There's Kiowa out. What they do to  
a white girl...

SOFIA  
I rode with them for two years.

MACADAM  
How much of this are you making up  
as you go?

Sure enough, six KIOWA approach on the ridge.

MACADAM (CONT'D)  
Careful now -

SOFIA  
Hacho.

KIOWA  
Hacho Lallo.

MACADAM  
Jeepers. They gonna go for us?

SOFIA  
Give them a cow and they'll leave.

He rides cautiously to the ridge; below, he sees more Kiowa, including very thin children.

MACADAM  
Those kids hungry?

The Kiowa leader glares at him, uncomprehending.

MACADAM (CONT'D)  
Give em two, we keep our scalps.

He looks at the Kiowa, raises two fingers. The black cowboy brings two steers along.

SOFIA  
You gave em two?

MACADAM  
Those kids look like they been sucking on grass for a week. Besides, the cattle ain't mine. Name's Macadam. That's Buck and Blue Feather.

SOFIA  
Sofia. You're on a drive?

MACADAM  
Low man on the pole, sixteen hour days, brutal, pay is a joke. Most of us only do this a year or so, before we strike out on our own.

SOFIA  
Never seen a black man before.

MACADAM  
Cowpunching, everybody needs to get along, otherwise folks can die. Got Mexicans, had a Chinee cook. Look at those clouds. Rather face the Kiowa any day. Buck, do we settle em down here for the night, or try to get in before the rain?

The wind kicks up.

BUCK  
Settle em down.

MACADAM  
You're gonna be late for supper.  
Got biscuits, and you can chuck  
your blanket under that tree. No  
need to worry about us, we'll be  
busy cooling down those cows so  
they don't trample us to death.

SOFIA  
I'm looking for a deputy marshal.

MACADAM  
You weren't kidding.

SOFIA  
Got to be better than chasing cows  
in the rain. My other deputy got  
glasses too, be nice to have one  
deputy who can see across the room.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL -- NIGHT

The cowpokes spend a nervous night singing the cows to sleep  
in the rain. Sofia is fascinated.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sofia carries a big bucket of water to her office.

CANFIELD  
Those stitches could come out.

SOFIA  
It's only leaking a little. With  
the Kiowa, I was the water girl. I  
think my arms are an inch longer.  
We got three of those shooters, we  
get the other two, and then Dyson.

He follows her into a room in the back and realizes it is her  
bedroom.

CANFIELD  
Sorry, I'll wait outside.

SOFIA  
Thank you.

CANFIELD

You got a candle lit in there.

He looks inside and sees a shrine: a candle, a cross, and a trinket for a baby boy to play with.

SOFIA

First of November. Day of the Innocents. For my baby boy.

She crosses herself, blows out the candle.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

My baby. Liked to laugh and pull my hair. Three months old.

She snaps out of it, and looks at him.

CANFIELD

You alright?

SOFIA

Got a box of the old marshal's stuff, got a spittoon smells like a toilet, and a pile of... pictures of women. You want the pictures?

CANFIELD

No, Maam.

She smiles.

SOFIA

Tdahn gaw piye. Be right out. Been looking forward to this water.

EXT. OUTSIDE MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sofia emerges and sees Canfield playing solitaire on a chair.

CANFIELD

This is Canfield solitaire.

SOFIA

Canfield, like your name?

CANFIELD

My name wasn't always Canfield. Claire made me learn the game, said I need to learn patience. I think you're going to teach me a lot about patience.

SOFIA

Boys don't like me, story of my life.

CANFIELD

I heard Dyson making threats. You're out in the open. You need a gun you can handle.

SOFIA

I can't shoot. You give me a gun, only a matter of time before I shoot someone close to me.

(she looks away from him)

I think this town may need to be taught something different.

CANFIELD

You were taught by the nuns?

SOFIA

Lots about compassion and mercy.

CANFIELD

Nobody tried that here before, I think there's a reason why. Remember. You got the rest of the territory. Here in town, Havelock, I'm the sheriff, the real thing.

SOFIA

You're saying I'm not?

CANFIELD

No, its - you got your badge, I got mine. Have you told Washington that the old marshal's dead?

Silence.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)

Not that I could ever be marshal. Can't hardly read.

SOFIA

Try this. Pride and Prejudice.

CANFIELD

A girl wrote it? It's a dime novel?

SOFIA

A total bloodbath, shootouts, Indian raids.

Men watch her from a shop across the street.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL -- DAY

A stampede, caused by several Dyson men. Macadam and Canfield investigate. A rancher arrives.

MACADAM

Dyson's men, scattering somebody else's herd across the range.

A rancher fires at the Dyson men, running them off, but also spooking the cattle.

RANCHER

Stock all across the valley, be a week finding em.

MACADAM

Why they pick on you?

RANCHER

We have land near the river. Dyson wants the water. You need more guns to take care of this, say the word. The small farms, we've had enough.

Sofia and another rancher arrive.

RANCHER (CONT'D)

Did you see the Dyson boys? They cleaned out the store, food, bullets, getting ready for a war.

SECOND RANCHER

For my money, round folks up with their guns and get on up there. Settle this once and for all.

CANFIELD

He's up there getting ready for you to do that - you people put your rifles back in your saddles, we're not starting a range war tonight.

RANCHER

They ran our stock all over the damn range! You're a town sheriff, either you fix this or we do.

SOFIA

You fool with the sheriff, you fool with me. Go home for tonight, think of something better.

RANCHER

Miss -

SOFIA

Marshal. Go home.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

You heard what she said.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Sofia, the soldier with the glasses, and Macadam at the end of town. A gunman rides in, hollering and shooting. Macadam begins to move toward his horse, but Sofia grabs his arm.

SOFIA

It's a fake. Take some men to the other end of town, you find a half dozen guys raiding the jail.

Macadam and others ride off and they find gunmen with torches. They see Macadam approach, and run off in a panic.

Canfield approaches Sofia at a run.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Can you get him off that horse WITHOUT killing him?

Canfield shoots and nicks the first gunman's horse in the flank. He bucks and throws off the rider.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Let's chat with him about Dyson.

Farmers arrive, including a young FARM HAND.

FARMER

Miss, I know you mean well. We're going up, have it out with Dyson.

SOFIA

It'll be a bloodbath. You hold on, do what I say. Yes, you ride tonight, but you ride where I tell you!

FARM HAND

Saddle up and ride! Get after em!

He unholsters his pistol, performs a fancy twirl, and shoots at the roof of the jail.

SOFIA

Okay, just for that, you stay here and man the telegraph office.

CANFIELD

Lallo...we're gonna need everybody.

SOFIA

(to the farm hand)

Fine. Don't do anything unless I tell you.

Other men wander up with their guns and horses.

CANFIELD

(to the farm hand)

There are women on the street. Holster that thing. You read a lot of dime novels? Shootout on the main street at noon? A real gunman doesn't look for trouble, but if he sees you're doing all that twirly stuff, he'll just kill you. ...Rest of you, how many fought in the war? You get up front. No I don't care which side you were on.

An army platoon rides in, mounted, led by a MAJOR.

ARMY MAJOR

Miss -

SOFIA

Marshal.

ARMY MAJOR

You say so. You got a range war brewing. Got Dyson up there, lot of guns. Your crowd here, looks a lot like vigilantes. If the shooting doesn't stop, I bring the army, all Bethlehem breaks loose. Be a good day to be selling window glass. You want to play marshal, do the job.

SOFIA

I'm not playing -- I'm going to stop all this.

ARMY MAJOR

How?

SOFIA

I'm doing more than the army ever did. You farmers, you're not going to the Dyson place.

FARMER

Says who?

SOFIA

Says me. Go to the farms in the north valley, in pairs. Tomorrow -- Macadam, run a few boys to the south valley. I want to know when the men are off the farm. When the women are alone, I want one of you to go out there and have a look.

MACADAM

Can't get to em all. How do I pick who gets protected and who doesn't?

EXT. OUTSIDE A SMALL FARM HOUSE -- NIGHT

A farm wife herds her children into a house. On the horizon, three bushwackers appear with torches. Macadam emerges from the house and shoots one torch out of a bushwacker's hand.

EXT. CORRAL NEAR LIVERY STABLE -- DAY

The soldier with the glasses assists Sofia. Dozens of prisoners sit in the corral. Canfield and a REVEREND watch. A handful of Dyson men watch from a ridge overlooking the town.

SOFIA

Everybody sit on the ground. Fourth time today, I really am the marshal, you do what I say.

REVEREND

Miss -

SOFIA

Marshal -

REVEREND

We're making Havelock a civilized town. We need to clamp down on the saloons, the gambling, the women --

SOFIA

I only have time to do my job.  
Federal law.

REVEREND

We'll make do until they send the  
real marshal.

CANFIELD

Lately that marshal was real  
scared, so he started arresting  
everybody left and right.

SOFIA

Revised Statutes of the United  
States, 1878. I'm still working my  
way through it. Let's clean house.  
Who's in here for getting drunk?

Hands go up.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You hurt anybody? This bunch here,  
free to go. Wait, the man who broke  
the window - fix it today or go to  
jail. You two colored boys, well, I  
know why the marshal arrested you.  
Did you hurt anybody?

TWO BLACK MEN

(pointing to each other)

Him.

SOFIA

You were liquored up?...Farmers?  
Bring me a chicken next week. Free  
to go. This case here, fraud and -  
I haven't got to that part of the  
lawbook yet. Free to go.

SCARED COWBOY

Got gunmen outside of town trying  
to kill me.

SOFIA

Blacksmith, right? Five dollars and  
a night in jail.

SCARED COWBOY

Can I stay two?

SOFIA

You handy with tools? Go in back,  
fix my stove, cut the sentence in  
half.

Anybody here shoot somebody? In the  
back of the jail.

The man went to the whore house,  
punched that girl? Back in jail.

Selling patent medicines? This is  
turpentine. You're in jail, and I'm  
burning all your stock.

This poster, is this you? Got ten  
aliases. All ten of you, back in  
jail.

And you, Comanche, right?

COMANCHE

And you're Kiowa. I'd rather deal  
with that white sheriff.

SOFIA

You sit there til the end, I want  
to hear your side of all this.

COMANCHE

You do?

PLAINTIFF

This redskin ran off with two of -

SOFIA

Heard it all twice, you belt up!

COMANCHE

This is different from last time.

SOFIA

Next time you vaqueros come here,  
take a bath, river's right there.  
...Okay, you people got arrested by  
the sheriff. Anybody here because  
the sheriff busted down your door?  
Sheriff beat you up? Free to go.

CANFIELD

Marshal -

SOFIA

How many outlaws got shot before  
they got to trial? There are things  
I can't let you do. Cut them loose.  
This will go faster if I don't  
worry about making people like me.

CANFIELD  
You're off to a hell of a start.

SOFIA  
Now, these cowpokes, I don't know -

CANFIELD  
Miss -

SOFIA  
Marshal.

He looks at her, shakes his head. She looks at him hard.  
Nods.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
Back in jail.

PRISONER  
What -

SOFIA  
Back in jail.

Canfield points to two other prisoners and shakes his head.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
And you two. Back in jail.

PRISONER  
Now wait a -

Sofia points to the soldier with the glasses.

SOFIA  
Soldier? Take em back.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sofia pulls Canfield into her office.

SOFIA  
Those last three boys.

CANFIELD  
Those boys who came in and shot the old marshal, they came here to get those three out of jail. You let em out, next week they come after you.

SOFIA  
My guardian angel.

CANFIELD  
You look tired.

SOFIA  
Tonight I learn arson, bankruptcy,  
bribery, counterfeiting,  
embezzlement, mail fraud, perjury.

CANFIELD  
Take a break, you did a nice job  
today. I'll make some coffee, read  
that Prejudice book to you.

SOFIA  
You hate that book.

CANFIELD  
Maybe it gets better. Needs a good  
gunfight with that Darcy feller.

Rock comes through Sofie's window. A shot rings out.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)  
Sofe, look out!

EXT. OUTSIDE MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

They run to the street; Canfield bulldogs the rock-thrower.

SOFIA  
Must have shot my horse, he ran  
off.

Canfield begins to beat the rock thrower.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
Stop it! You broke his nose. You  
stop it or I hide your horse in the  
grasslands. You never find her.

CANFIELD  
Dammit! You got to let these boys  
know they can't fool with you like  
that. You gonna get hurt.

SOFIA  
You broke his nose.

He stops.

CANFIELD

Maam, you're smart, give you that.  
This is my town, I know these boys.  
You're out of place here.

SOFIA

Be in my office. Read to yourself.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Macadam loading a gun, stable owner enters.

STABLE OWNER

Where's the sheriff?

MACADAM

Asleep on a bench.

STABLE OWNER

Where's the marshal?

MACADAM

Stomped off in a huff two days ago.  
Sheriff brassed her off pretty bad.

Sofia arrives.

STABLE OWNER

Bushwacker, south end of town.

EXT. OUTSIDE MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

She dumps water on the sleeping sheriff.

CANFIELD

Who the hell dumped water on me?

SOFIA

I almost dumped the slops on you.  
Got another bushwacker to run down.

ANDREW DYSON, son of the local cattle baron, crosses the street and enters. He is dirty and unshaven. And armed.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Continuation.

ANDREW

I'm Andrew Dyson. Son of the  
rancher up the hill. You better  
come on with me, we're gonna -

SOFIA

Ay, cowpoke!

ANDREW

Cowpoke?

SOFIA

First thing, take off the gun belt.

Slowly he complies.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You just fall off a horse into a  
pig wallow?

ANDREW

Now wait a -

SOFIA

You come in my office, order me  
around? Get to the barbers, get a  
bath and a shave. If you clean up  
for the whores down the street, you  
clean up for a federal marshal.

ANDREW

Goddamn it -

SOFIA

Watch your language! You come back,  
I'm checking behind your ears!

ANDREW

Yes Maam.

SOFIA

Then we talk. No spurs, no gun.

CANFIELD

Marshal, any trouble?

She turns and looks at him. Smiles.

SOFIA

Thank you, no.

CANFIELD

Mister Dyson. Anybody tangles with  
her, tangles with me.

A local enters.

TOWNSWOMAN

Marshal Sofie, got a chicken. You so skinny, you never get a man.

SOFIA

This is yours?

TOWNSWOMAN

My husband sent me. He's afraid of you.

Townswoman leaves.

SOFIA

Did this town ever have its own laws, a mayor, anything?

CANFIELD

I'm the law here, only real law is, don't piss me off.

SOFIA

I'm the worst criminal in town, then. Sorry about the...

She points at his wet shirt.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

I know you pounded that man for me. But you're not like that. It's not just that you're a gentleman. You treat me the way you treat white women. Bastard baby and all. I can't figure you at all.

STABLE OWNER enters.

STABLE OWNER

Miss Sofie - Marshal. Twice now you got one of my horses shot. You want more horses, you gonna pay extra.

INT. BANK - DAY

Sofia shows the BANKER a ring.

BANKER

I ain't no pawnbroker.

SOFIA

Got four families down the valley,  
gonna eat grass this winter. Get  
them some flour and baby clothes.

BANKER

See what I can do.

SOFIA

And I want a fair price. Gonna melt  
your cold, cold heart.

Dyson enters.

DYSON

Does your bank have directors? I  
plan to deposit an lot of money  
here, seems fair I get a chance to  
run for the board. Make sure the  
money is going to the right folks.

BANKER

The right folks?

DYSON

You got risky loans in a lot of  
ratty-looking farms. Hope you're  
not sending my money out there -  
look like foreclosures to me.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Sofia corners the SHOPKEEPER.

SOFIA

Mister, I'm the marshal here now.  
Pull your rifle ammo off the shelf.

SHOPKEEPER

All of it?

SOFIA

I'll buy it all. Don't order any  
more. Next month, I sell it back.  
I'm trying to stop a range war.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- DAY

Dyson's gunmen spread along the street. Women and children  
scurry into shops. Sofia, frightened, takes her chair out  
into the middle of the street.

SOFIA

See, these fellas, Dyson sent em to cause trouble, make us afraid, so we don't come to do our marketing. Look at em - gunmen, don't bother to shave, got fast horses so they get away quick after they bushwack somebody. Yes, I'm talking to you.

She walks over to one. She yanks out his gun.

GUNMAN

Hey you can't do that -

SOFIA

Third time today. I really am the marshal. You behave, you get your gun back tonight. And any man --

SECOND GUNMAN

How long you think you can keep this up?

SOFIA

I was talking! All I have to do is stay. Not leave. Any man --

SECOND GUNMAN

And stay alive.

SOFIA

I was talking! You people won't shoot two marshals in a row. People will say you're not good neighbors.

SECOND GUNMAN

You accusing me of something.

SOFIA

You're murderers.

SECOND GUNMAN

Tough talk for a girl who can't see forty feet.

He turns away.

SOFIA

Oh, I can see well enough. Hey, I'm talking to you!

SECOND GUNMAN

So arrest me. You're a marshal...Is this what you people want? Some blind Kiowa squaw playing lawman?

CANFIELD

Girl's twice as good as the old Marshal. Clear out the jail in an hour. Got room for new customers.

SECOND GUNMAN

You look like a married man with a sweetheart. Come on, muchachos.

Sofia looks at Canfield.

CANFIELD

Claire gonna kill me, sticking my neck out. Must be that damn Prejudice book, you turning me into a romantic. Mouthing off at you, I wanted to shoot him.

SOFIA

Cause he doesn't like me? I had a baby with the tribe. Half the white people think I'm a whore. My own mother. You gonna shoot everybody who doesn't like me? It's sweet.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

Dinner time with Sofia and Claire's family. Kids are ROSE 18, Gertrude 16, WILLIE 14, Minnie 7, and a sickly JIMMY, 5.

SOFIA

Hey, little brave, Mama said sit.

JIMMY

Maw -

SOFIA

See the badge? Marshal. Second in command after Mama.

Claire smiles.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Your Mamma does two jobs, with your Papa chasing outlaws.

JIMMY

You got a bully deal. Spend all day  
with Papa.

ROSE

Mamma, that Clayton boy was talking  
with me at the store Saturday, he  
might ask to come courting.

CLAIRE

And how old are you?

ROSE

Maw. Someday I'm gonna get married.

CLAIRE

That Clayton boy? Can he get out of  
his own way?

ROSE

So what kind of fella do I marry,  
that Dyson boy?

Claire goes a bit pale.

CLAIRE

Maybe somebody else.

ROSE

Miss, you were married? Injun boy?

SOFIA

He went home to Indian country. I  
had to look for my family.

ROSE

You find em?

Silence.

ROSE (CONT'D)

But Miss, if it ain't that Clayton  
boy... You see all the boys come  
through Havelock?

SOFIA

I don't give advice to girls, they  
don't listen. You want to get  
married, look for a fella like your  
Papa. They're hard to find.

Claire looks at her.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Well, they are.

The kids excuse themselves. Rose smiles at Sofia.

CLAIRE

I heard what happened in town.

SOFIA

(offers a small bag)  
For the little boy. Still sick?

CLAIRE

I was up all night.

SOFIA

Here. The candle, and make tea with this. Cinnamon and chamomile. Poor boy. Do you want one of the men from town to watch this place when Canfield is gone? Just to look in?

Claire nods.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

That Canfield. He'd be lost without you. I don't want to get the two of you tangled up.

CLAIRE

We came here so Canfield could be a quiet town sheriff. He's my second go-around. My first husband, Billy, I crossed the country with him. And he was not cut out for this life.

SOFIA

Rough crossing? Indians?

CLAIRE

Indians weren't so bad. Every once in a while they grab a cow. But farming. Summer we had drought, hoppers, hail. Then snow and the floods. Didn't know how to build a cabin, got wet in the rain, place fills with smoke. Twice we gave up, moved to a new place on the river.

SOFIA

So you didn't give up, go east?

CLAIRE

Girls like me, we didn't run, and didn't die.

SOFIA

But your husband?

CLAIRE

Went out into the woods with a shotgun. Me with three kids. Then Canfield, and two more kids.

SOFIA

So, you've had five children.

CLAIRE

Five that lived.

Sofia is jolted by this, and crosses herself.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL - DAY

Sofia and Canfield watch for outlaws.

CANFIELD

Why are you even here?

SOFIA

(smiles)

Where else would I be? I have no people. You and I, we're a tribe of two. I know what you're going to say before you say it.

CANFIELD

I never know what you're going to do. One surprise after another.

She catches him looking at her.

SOFIA

Don't fall in too deep. People get hurt that way. I want to go after those two shooters, but they keep sending more men into town.

CANFIELD

Hunting outlaws isn't like a dime novel. We don't have Indian raids -

SOFIA

I know that.

CANFIELD

Bank robbers usually show up drunk and get shot on the spot. What we do get is gunmen on the trails, picking off folks travelling alone, rustling cattle.

SOFIA

So who are all these outlaws?

CANFIELD

Until recent, they were a sorry bunch. The boys who ran from the war, the boys who lost the war, small-bore crooks. Local folks help em, they all hate the same big ranchers and banks trying to push em off the land.

SOFIA

So what's the problem?

CANFIELD

These new fellas Dyson brought in, they're hired guns, they rob the farms on purpose, run em off the land so Dyson can take over. They're wild like you, they're not afraid of an easy death.

INT. BANK - DAY

Sofia approaches the banker.

SOFIA

When are you sending cash to the big bank?

BANKER

First of the month, everybody knows that.

SOFIA

You don't see the problem there? For this next one, tell everyone it's a big load.

BANKER

Why the hell would I do that?

SOFIA

And then send an empty box.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL - DAY

Sofia and Canfield in their wagon, watching a robbery of a coach in a valley below.

CANFIELD

Why did you make me take a wagon?

SOFIA

We're making arrests. You brought chains and rope?

CANFIELD

Yes.

SOFIA

They couldn't resist. If they shoot the driver, God help them.

CANFIELD

He's doing what he's told, giving em the strongbox. Need a tracker.

SOFIA

Don't need a tracker. I did the census work up here. Now watch.

CANFIELD

Watch for what?

SOFIA

Take the pass around them, up ahead we find their second set of horses. That's how they get away so fast.

CANFIELD

And there they are.

He looks over at her and shakes his head.

SOFIA

Two canyons, like two pockets, one way in, one way out, they watch the entrance and shoot us. Second one.

(squints, frustrated)

Count em as they ride in.

CANFIELD

They got five.

SOFIA

The guy leading the way over there?  
That's the fourth gunman shot the  
marshal, see that stupid hat? Just  
need the fifth one, and then Dyson.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL - NIGHT

Continuation. Gunmen emerge from the canyon. Sheriff fires a  
rifle. The men stop.

CANFIELD

Nobody move.

HIJACKER

You're the town sheriff. Ain't your  
jurisdiction.

Sheriff shoots his hat off his head. All but two of the  
gunmen flee.

CANFIELD

Please, feel free to share your  
legal opinion with me.

SOFIA

No shooting. In the name and by the  
authority of the United States, I  
command you to lay down your arms  
and permit me to proceed...

HIJACKER

Ain't no puta from Juarez gonna put  
me in jail.

SOFIA

Okay, him you can shoot! Wait, no...

INT. DYSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Dyson berates a gunman.

DYSON

He got arrested by that girl?

GUNMAN

Two of em. Sheriff shot two others.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL -- NIGHT

CANFIELD

Hey, you arrested one of those boys, I killed two.

SOFIA

My man told me what Dyson is up to, you got nothing.

CANFIELD

We need more firepower.

SOFIA

You bring more guns, Dyson brings more guns. We can't win that way.

CANFIELD

Dammit, I'm still the sheriff -

SOFIA

And the city limit is five miles behind us. This is my territory.

He sees a glint of light.

CANFIELD

Goddamn it! Quiet!

SOFIA

Just once admit you're wrong -

A SHOT rings out as he tackles her. She sees he's bleeding.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Oh God oh God oh God -

CANFIELD

It's a scratch.

SOFIA

You're bleeding all over the -

CANFIELD

Sofe. Help me up -

SOFIA

Jimmy! Is it your gut?

CANFIELD

My hip.

INT. CANFIELD KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sofia brings Canfield. Claire enters. Canfield passed out.

SOFIA  
Jimmy! Claire, I'm so sorry -

CLAIRE  
Rose, get that bag, with the -

SOFIA  
Here, I'll help -

CLAIRE  
Stay out of my way!...Rose, get me  
a needle. Now shoo. Bullet popped  
right out. Bounced off the bone.

SOFIA  
Jimmy saved my life.

CLAIRE  
He does these crazy things just to  
impress you.

Sofia shakes her head.

SOFIA  
Impress you, I think.

CLAIRE  
No. Somehow it got really important  
to him, that you respect him.

SOFIA  
You're his wife, I never... Oh Lord.

WILLIE  
Maw, is he okay? Marshal Sofe, you  
got the outlaws again?

CLAIRE  
Scat! Even Willie is taking a shine  
to you. Like a puppy. Every time  
James goes on one of these rides,  
the children are afraid. They know  
what happened to the old marshal.

SOFIA  
What about you? I can have Macadam  
watch here when Canfield is gone.

CLAIRE  
You trust that new boy?

SOFIA

Woman shouldn't be out here by herself. Not with Dyson making trouble. What kind of man wants all the women to be afraid?

CLAIRE

Not going to let up, are you?

SOFIA

The man who shot your husband, he's the fifth gunman, went after the old marshal. I want him, I want Dyson. You need anything for Jimmy, you send the boy, I come running.

She leaves. Canfield opens his eyes.

CLAIRE

Girl's gonna get herself killed.

CANFIELD

I've been thinking about that too.

CLAIRE

If you're with her, you get killed too. I know you're fond of her, she's your way of staying young. But she keeps jumping in the fire, you risk your neck getting her out.

CANFIELD

If we give up, Dyson runs the whole territory. He'll own all of us. We're in a fight and we can't run.

CLAIRE

Why can't we just leave?

CANFIELD

There are men like him everywhere. I can't hide.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL -- DAY

RANCH WIFE rounds up kids in a wagon.

RANCH WIFE

Last stop, then we go to town, do our readers and our ciphering.

CHILD

When do we get to play?

RANCH WIFE

Soon as you can tell your g's from  
your q's.

She looks sees gunmen on a ridge, approaching.

RANCH WIFE (CONT'D)

You're joking. These are children!  
Michael. Go tell the sheriff. We  
need someone to ride back to the  
valley with us this afternoon.

INT. DYSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Dyson confers with his son over cigars.

ANDREW

You send the boys out into the  
valley again? Causing trouble?

DYSON

And?

ANDREW

Only two kinds of law in the  
valley, marshal and the sheriff.  
Last couple of weeks, you shot both  
of them. And both of them lived.

DYSON

So far.

ANDREW

And then the wagon taking the  
children to school? Is there  
anything you're not willing to do?  
We're heading down a path.

DYSON

WE? WE ain't doing a thing. When  
you need to know, I'll tell you.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

Sofia and Claire in the kitchen.

SOFIA

I won't do it if you're not happy.

CLAIRE

How long is this trip?

SOFIA

Couple of weeks. There's a town in Texas, Lubbock. Tribes are meeting on the plains, don't want to get too close to the white folks.

CLAIRE

And you need to go together?

SOFIA

Kill two birds with one stone. The tribes want to launch a war on farms like yours. I want to try to head them off.

CLAIRE

And James?

SOFIA

One of the men who shot the marshal is in Lubbock. He's the last one. Knows everything Dyson is up to. The Texas Rangers know where he is, but they won't give him to me.

CLAIRE

Why not?

SOFIA

They hate Mexicans and they hate natives, and I'm both. They might give him to Canfield.

CLAIRE

You're going to get James killed. You're jumping into a band of Indian killers and then hunting a gunman who hates marshals....If you were sleeping with James, this be simple, I could just shoot you. But this...you're a girl, you can't help it, who you love. And the children. Willy misses you when you're gone, Rose wants to be you --

SOFIA

No she really doesn't. My life is happy now but after this it's over. Better a happy life than long.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL - NIGHT

Sofia and Canfield, campfire.

CANFIELD

Bacon, beans, bread, who put dried fruit in here? Flushes me out.

SOFIA

It's good for you. Got light to read. Come on, soldier, give me more Jane Austen.

CANFIELD

That boy proposed marriage, it just got me.

SOFIA

I'll tell the town how sentimental you are...You weren't joking about nights in the desert.

She blows on her hands. He touches her shoulder. She looks at him, curls up under his arm.

CANFIELD

You had a man? Or should I ask?

SOFIA

Baby and a husband. Grey Wolf. He was like you. He liked to go out on rides. And he was gentle. Patient.

CANFIELD

Claire's like that.

SOFIA

You shouldn't push her patience too far. Wipe your boots in the house, take a bath. And maybe you don't go on so many rides with me.

CANFIELD

It's too dangerous, you can't be out there alone.

SOFIA

Tell that to Claire. You need to pay more attention to her.

CANFIELD

Sometimes these rides are alright. Usually the end of the ride is trouble, we get shot at. But the other parts. I've been telling you things I don't even tell Claire.

SOFIA

You need a friend. An old coot to go drinking and fishing with. Instead you have this crazy blind girl who hunts people.

CANFIELD

That old coot is you.

SOFIA

You hate your job, why don't you do what you did before you were a sheriff?

CANFIELD

I was a bushwacker in Kansas. I was young, didn't think so good. And I'm not going to get into it.

SOFIA

The Kansas war? I know. The Kiowa were there too.

CANFIELD

And you're not afraid to ride with me? You know what I did, the raids on those towns? ...So I became a sheriff. Protect the frontier from men like me. Why did I tell you this?

SOFIA

Because you can't forgive yourself. You need to be forgiven, by someone you...

CANFIELD

There are things you can't undo.

SOFIA

You never told Claire?

CANFIELD

Claire is carrying so much, the farm, the kids, me. I don't need her carrying my conscience too.

SOFIA

(her hand on his chest)  
You're trying to make it right. That's all you can do. There are a lot of men worse than you.

He takes her hand in his.

CANFIELD

Your hands are like ice. You really aren't afraid to die? Like a church girl? In a hurry to go to heaven?

SOFIA

I've had my time. When I'm done, I'm done. Anything happens to me, take care of my horse. Good horse.

CANFIELD

He's been patient with you. You think it will be that easy? Who picks up the slack after you, the things you do? Got your whole life ahead of you.

SOFIA

What life? I have no people. My husband is gone, my son is dead, I can't have any more.

CANFIELD

No children?

SOFIA

This is my life, my one chance. I have a short time to clean up the valley. Soon the Marshals figure out what I'm doing and throw me out. And...these rides with you. I'm going to have to give you back.

CANFIELD

You're not trying to change it?

SOFIA

Fight to get a few more years? Like I said, I already had an amazing life. Bought my ticket to the circus, it was a great ride. How many girls do what I do? Any girl with backbone rather have a year like this, than fifty years of...nothing. If this is all I get, I'm happy, I'm proud!

CANFIELD

So is this about the work you do?

SOFIA

It's not the job. Tdahn gaw piye.

EXT. TEXAS FIELD - DAY

Sofia and Canfield find natives of many tribes, some erecting tents. Some growling dogs in a pack.

CANFIELD

Careful.

SOFIA

The Arikaree use dogs to haul things across the plain. Lord, they all came. People from the north. The long hairs, Comanche. Amazing.

CANFIELD

What? All quiet, no fighting.

SOFIA

Exactly. They all hate each other. The Cheyenne pushed the Kiowa off the plains, and then the Lakota pushed everybody off.

CANFIELD

So?

SOFIA

They're all getting together now, because of the white man. They're afraid. If they get together and launch a war on the white settlements, a lot of people will die. And they will still lose.

CANFIELD

That's why there are no women.

SOFIA

It can be hard for women. There are rules for talking to men. Comanche girl, she goes into labor while they're on a march, she has the baby in the bushes, then she just has to catch up. And they don't like girl babies much.

CANFIELD

And the Kiowa?

SOFIA

Still miss them. They let me go on a hunt. Once. They go on these long raids - otherwise they would never have found me, I might be dead.

CANFIELD

Where do you start? How about them?

SOFIA

The Crow, careful with em, they're clever. They were friends with the Nez Perce and then betrayed them. They don't just hunt buffalo - they run buffalo off of cliffs, so they don't risk their hunters. Smart.

CANFIELD

Alright.

SOFIA

The Arapahoe, great traders. You don't get something for nothing.

Sofia is shocked to see Grey Wolf and his father. They see her and approach. She hugs them.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

This is Grey Wolf. And Grandfather.

She pulls Grey Wolf away.

CANFIELD

So you're Sofie's father in law?

GRANDFATHER

Grey Wolf's father. She got him to read, now he loves books from the white city. Taught me too.

CANFIELD

Quite a girl.

GRANDFATHER

Clumsy as a colt. Knocks down more tepees than a blizzard. Sweet girl, though.

CANFIELD

She calls me old goat.

GRANDFATHER

Old goat?

CANFIELD

She calls me tdahn gaw piye, old goat.

Grandpa looks seriously at Canfield.

GRANDFATHER

Tdahn gaw piye. She doesn't think you're an old goat. Tdahn gaw piye, she thinks you're the sun and the stars.

CANFIELD

The sun and the stars?

GRANDFATHER

You impressed her, a lot. Don't tell her you know what it really means, ruin the whole thing.

Canfield is gobsmacked.

CANFIELD

Sun and the stars. Never met anybody like her. She's afraid.

GRANDFATHER

(smiles)  
Never.

CANFIELD

She's afraid. There's gonna be a war. All the tribes, the settlers.

GRANDFATHER

The young bucks want a war. But all that is over now. It's over for us. Congratulations. You fellas won.

Not far away, Sofia reunites with her husband.

GREY WOLF

Lallo.

SOFIA

I can't believe you came!

GREY WOLF

Everybody came. Everybody's afraid.

He sees the badge.

GREY WOLF (CONT'D)

Marshal. Must be a mistake.

SOFIA

I'm a federal marshal.

GREY WOLF

Working for the government?

SOFIA

Yes.

GREY WOLF

(enraged)

The same people who -

SOFIA

But wait, it's not like -

GREY WOLF

(calming himself)

Alright. Listen. I care about you.

SOFIA

But, no -

GREY WOLF

Stay away from the big meeting,  
when the tribes all come. If they  
find out you joined the government,  
things could go wrong, very fast.

SOFIA

I came to stop a war.

GREY WOLF

You stay out of it. There's a lot  
you don't know.

SOFIA

Wait -

Grey Wolf leaves. Sofia returns to Canfield.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

My husband. Father of my baby.

INT. NATIVE TENT - DAY

Grey Wolf, calm and sad through the scene, meets a government  
agent. Grey Wolf's brother is there, in Eastern clothes.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

I want to do what I can to stop a  
war with the tribes.

GREY WOLF

I'm listening.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

I'm glad that your brother agreed to come east, go to school, take a look at our cities, our culture.

GREY WOLF

You persuaded my brother. You didn't persuade me.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

I know you won't believe this, but there is a lot to like about America. White folks trying to create a new nation, real justice. We fought a war to set people free, that's ever happened before.

GREY WOLF

Justice? Your law says lawmen can take our men, call them vagrants, force them to work on farms. Steal our children and sell them. Or just ride in and kill us. You demand we stay on our land but you won't stay in yours. I can go to the white prison for practicing my religion. ...Justice. Maybe you should be selling something else.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

We want to share what we believe, our values.

GREY WOLF

Values. Twenty years ago this country, from the great river to the sea, tribes everywhere. It happened so quickly. Now we're all in your forts, disease, rotten food. We lost half our people, the land is gone, must be the largest theft in history. Values.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

We can change these young boys for the better. We will take him to a school in the east, give him a new name, teach him good English.

GREY WOLF

Our tribes, you already changed us. The shock of losing it all.

(MORE)

GREY WOLF (CONT'D)

Our boys became men by fighting and hunting, but the wars are over and the buffalo are gone. We smoked the pipe, worked together - never been so proud of the tribes. Now the warriors are so angry, the chiefs can't control them. You made them afraid of talking, compromising.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

So you want that war after all.

GREY WOLF

One thing you taught us. A lot of patience. We wanted to be left alone. We didn't want to conquer the east and plant a flag on New York city. We tried to share. You believe in your heart that your nation is a new thing, not like the countries east of the sea, the kings and the wars. Once you came here you became just like any other country. A virgin girl should notice when she's lost her innocence.

GOVERNMENT AGENT

We can bring you our faith, Jesus on the Mount, our sacred book -

GREY WOLF

Sacred book. The Black Hills up north, sacred to all tribes. You promised they could keep it. Then you drove em out, so you could bring in machines to mine silver. For money. You want to paint a picture of the white man, go look at that mine. And I'm sure they all stop on Sunday to pray to Jesus.

EXT. TEXAS FIELD - DAY

Grey Wolf says goodbye to his brother who also gets a hug from Sofia.

GREY WOLF

Sorry about before. It was a shock.

SOFIA

I spent all night arguing with the tribes. There won't be a war with the white settlers this summer.

GREY WOLF

I did my part. I just gave away all our land and my brother. They even got their hands on you.

She takes his hand.

SOFIA

Hey. You found a woman, right?

GREY WOLF

Little Tree. New baby.

She hugs him.

INT. LARGE TENT IN SMALL TOWN -- NIGHT

Sofia and Canfield arrive in Lubbock. She's pensive. They enter a large tent where a dance is underway.

SOFIA

Canfield. Music. Let's go dancing!

CANFIELD

Maybe not.

SOFIA

Dance with me. My favorite thing.

CANFIELD

It won't be, five minutes from now. Claire says I step on her.

SOFIA

Not afraid.

The music is mid-tempo and waltzy, nothing fancy, but they are clumsy; she doesn't care. She squeezes his shoulder.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Tdahn gaw piye.

She smiles, and so does he.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

We buy something nice for Claire and the kids.

CANFIELD  
Peace offering?

SOFIA  
Some of those combs for her hair.

MONTAGE.

Canfield and Sofia having fun at a combined circus/fair;  
Sofia can't stop smiling.  
Sofia performs dreadfully at games requiring hand-eye  
coordination, ring toss and so forth.  
Some freak show exhibits, bearded lady, fat man and so forth.  
Sofia is having a blast; Canfield has a blast watching her.  
Canfield is a fair hand at games of chance. They play poker,  
watching each other's eyes, smiling.

EXT. LARGE CORRAL - NIGHT

They're watching a wild west show.

CANFIELD  
Well, poker is a waste of time.

SOFIA  
We're too good at reading each  
other's faces. You're the one  
person I can never bluff on.

They see a wild west show featuring an Indian attack on a  
wagon filled with white people. The Indians look nothing like  
the real thing. And Sofia begins to cry.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
It's worse than a dime novel.  
Indians stab the white women. You  
know we aren't like that? The  
tribes?

CANFIELD  
I know.

SOFIA  
The Anglos came, kill the buffalo,  
Indians, Mexicans, now you're  
killing the past. The murderers are  
the victims now, the heroes.

CANFIELD  
It's not me.

SOFIA

In a century, the tribes will be gone, their story. No one will remember how a Kiowa mother got her daughter ready to be married, the long hair of a Comanche streaming behind him, nothing. As though they never existed.

INT. BIG TENT - NIGHT

Canfield and Sofia, in a corner, eye a bunch of drunk outlaws.

CANFIELD

You don't look like you belong here, take off your glasses - it's hopeless.

SOFIA

(removing her glasses)

I don't want to look dangerous. I want to put them to sleep.

CANFIELD

Well, you ain't gonna do that either. Three cowpokes in hats, rode in from the west, got to be one of those three. One of em must be from back New Mexico. And --

He stops short and flips a card over.

SOFIA

I'm already bust, what are you -

He catches her eye. Points to his own eye. She puts on her glasses. He draws a circle on the table with his finger. They get up and circle the room, separately, watching. They meet at the tent entrance.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

They lied. These boys aren't gamblers. They're gunmen. We have to throw out our plan or they'll kill us. Is that tequila?

CANFIELD

That or busthead.

SOFIA

I bet you I can smoke em out.

CANFIELD

You think?

SOFIA

Loser fetches wood for the  
campfire.

COWPOKE

Who's the little girl?

SOFIA

(shy and innocent)

My name is Sophie. Fresh off a  
wagon from the east. We're gonna  
build us a farm!

COWPOKE

Come on, have a hoot with us.

SOFIA

My Maw wouldn't approve. You  
churchgoing folks?

COWPOKE

Well, we sure are. This is tequila.

SOFIA

Tequila, you said? Is it like beer?

COWPOKE

Absolutely.

SOFIA

I tried beer once. I choked.

COWPOKE

You'll take to this.

She drinks and chokes.

SOFIA

Ought to have a skull and  
crossbones on it.

Continuation. Later, they're all laughing. Sofia looks to be  
roaring drunk. She leans on a cowpoke.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Woah, I better sit.

COWPOKE

And that's how you hornswoggle an  
Indian out of a horse.

SOFIA

Tell me another. You ever been way out west?

COWPOKE

Texas bred, never left. Too many pretty girls.

GUNMAN

You come out my way sometime. I was in a little house of joy -

COWPOKE

House of what?

GUNMAN

Brothel. Come over Santa Fe, out New Mexico way -

Sofia sits up, locks eyes with Canfield. Smiles.

SOFIA

New Mexico. You lose, Jimmy.

CANFIELD

Goddamn it!

COWPOKE

This feller giving you trouble?

SOFIA

You go chop me some wood.

She is laughing.

GUNMAN

Hey, you can't fool me. You had tequila before.

She is now helpless with laughter.

SOFIA

You're under arrest -

CANFIELD

Stand up, boy, you're going back to New Mexico.

GUNMAN

What the -

CANFIELD

Nobody move. You're under arrest.

GUNMAN

You're that sheriff in the territory. This here's Texas.

CANFIELD

And that girl's a federal marshal.

They all laugh.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)

Can you manage the badge?

She pulls it out. They are all confused.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)

On your feet. Rest of you, you stay put. Man's wanted for murder.

Canfield yanks the cowpoke away from the table.

SOFIA

Hold your horses, Jimmy.

She leans against a tent pole and vomits.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

A proud day for the law.

Canfield drags the gunman into a corner as the tent empties; Sofia staggers after them.

GUNMAN

I seen poker hustlers, ain't never seen a tequila hustler. I ain't gonna tell you a goddamn thing.

CANFIELD

She outsmarted me and you both, you might as well give up now.

SOFIA

You're a hired gunman. All you care about is money, you're no hero.

GUNMAN

Why would I tell you anything?

SOFIA

Washington doesn't know what I'm up to. I can do what I want. Give you to the farmers, they're brassed off about the barns you burned down. You shot the marshal, shot James. I'm a little sore about that.

GUNMAN

I came here til things cooled off.

SOFIA

This is Lubbock Texas. You come here for the wild night life? Nobody comes here. Try again.

GUNMAN

Dyson sent me to hire a tracker. Indian. Smart boy, cut his hair. He was supposed to track you on the plain, slit your throat.

SOFIA

Which tribe?

GUNMAN

He's here in town with the Texans. Not with them Indians out on the mesa. Already gave him his money, he's coming for you.

CANFIELD

You hire an Indian to kill her? Never mind the farmers, you just pray she doesn't give you to me.

SOFIA

Canfield! I'm touched. Tie him up him in the wagon, we take him home.

EXT. BUSY TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Sofia and Canfield watch a crowd of outlaws, prostitutes etc.

CANFIELD

How do we catch this boy? He's a tracker, he'll spot us in a minute.

SOFIA

We're not killing him.

CANFIELD

We need one of your clever ideas.

SOFIA

I'm empty.

CANFIELD

They hired him to kill you. Can I shoot this one?

SOFIA  
You can shoot his horse.

CANFIELD  
The horse ain't trying to kill you.

EXT. BUSY TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Continuation. They're still watching.

CANFIELD  
Been here all night. We fouled this one up.

SOFIA  
There he is. Let's mount up.

CANFIELD  
What the hell is going on?

SOFIA  
Penny gets you a dollar, that man's a native. You haven't seen too many tribes mount up for battle.

CANFIELD  
Not in any hurry to see it, either.

SOFIA  
White folks get on a horse from the left. Tribes get up on the right.

They watch a man mounting a horse from the right side and ride around a large tent.

CANFIELD  
What - I see him --

SOFIA  
Grey mare -

CANFIELD  
Black vest, grey shirt --

SOFIA  
And short hair -

CANFIELD  
Put your glasses away -

SOFIA  
I'll cover the back -

CANFIELD  
Got the front -

SOFIA  
Meet you on the other side.

She smiles at him. They circle around the tent and find the native waiting for him.

NATIVE  
Jesus. You found me.

He gallops off, Sofia and Canfield in pursuit.

SOFIA  
The horse!

Canfield shoots the horse. The native tumbles to the ground and comes up with a knife. Sofia falls off her horse; Canfield dismounts with his rifle. The native slashes at Canfield with his knife and Canfield trips and falls.

The native turns to find Sofia armed with a knife; she is unbelievably quick with it. Sofia and the native slash rapidly, cutting each other several times. With his free hand, the native yanks Sofia's glasses off and spins her around. She's blind and desperate. Canfield smashes the back of his head with his rifle.

CANFIELD  
Sofie! You alright?

SOFIA  
Sprung a couple of leaks...You're hurt worse than me!

NATIVE  
Jesus, you fight like a Kiowa!

SOFIA  
I am a Kiowa.

NATIVE  
They didn't warn me.

SOFIA  
What a shame.

She faints.

CANFIELD  
Sofe!

LOCAL MAN  
What the hell happened?

CANFIELD  
Need a doctor. Native boy here  
tried to cut up this girl.

LOCAL MAN  
Indian right here in town? I'll  
take it from here.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- NIGHT

A doctor is patching up Sofia and Canfield. Both knives are  
on a table, gory.

SOFIA  
I swore I was never going to use  
the knife again.

CANFIELD  
She lost a lot of blood.

DOCTOR  
Two slashes this arm, one on that  
one, one in the chest. Let's see  
yours. This one needs stitches.

SOFIA  
Where's that native?

CANFIELD  
Locals got him. He's about to have  
a bad day. Your glasses got busted.

SOFIA  
I got to ride home with no glasses?

CANFIELD  
Shoot the horse, you said. Next  
time I do it my way.

SOFIA  
What happened to your arm? My God,  
you got stitches, it really is  
worse than mine! Jimmy...  
(gets emotional)  
I'm gonna make Claire a widow.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Claire and her kids see other townswomen.

TOWNSWOMAN

There she is, haven't seen you in ages. Got a whole tent down there for cooking and canning.

CLAIRE

Sounds like fun.

TOWNSWOMAN

There's a dance later. Your husband's not here?

CLAIRE

He's out chasing a man down.

TOWNSWOMAN

With that girl? You haven't shown up in Havelock for a while. Not that I'm surprised.

CLAIRE

(furious)

Round up the little ones, we're going home.

WILLIE

They ain't done the roping yet -

CLAIRE

Do what I tell you.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

Dinnertime, Claire and the kids.

CLAIRE

So what do we do? I can read the newspaper to you.

ROSE

Maw, please -

CLAIRE

Got an advice column, how to catch a man. Or grandma's letter again. You kids want to go to bed, leave me here talking to the dog again?

ROSE

When's Daddy coming? He goes on so many of these rides.

CLAIRE

Don't know. Alright, you can play some cards but then get to bed.

Claire picks up a diary.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Dear diary...and nothing for today.

EXT. MAIN STREET, HAVELOCK -- NIGHT

Sofia walks down the main street, still in her shredded dress with her bandages. Canfield watches, smiling. The whole town stares. She takes a horse from the livery and rides off.

EXT. OUTSIDE DYSON HOUSE -- NIGHT

Sofia dismounts and walks past gunmen and servants. Andrew sits at a table laid with a cloth, awaiting a snack.

ANDREW

Daddy's out on the range.

SOFIA

Came to see you. Your father hired an Indian to hunt me down. Here's the knife he cut me with.

ANDREW

Where is the Indian?

SOFIA

Won't be joining us. Ah, it healed.

She takes the knife, snips out stitches in one of her wounds, and throws the bloody threads onto his immaculate table.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You can keep the knife since your father paid for it. You and your father have my full attention.

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

Sunset. Sofia and Canfield are near a striking stone wall, not far from a cliff overlooking a river.

SOFIA

Comanche used to pray here. Leave messages. They're worn smooth now.

She begins to carve.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

This one's for me. And right next to it, the sun and the stars. The sun and the stars will be with me for as long as the mountain stands.

He smiles as she carves. She smiles back.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

What are you smiling at? Old goat.

CANFIELD

The way the river crashes against those rocks, like it's angry. It keeps banging down the river bed, boxed in by river banks. Only place the river can go, is down that one path, over and over.

SOFIA

Wrong. Look at the rock walls. The river dug this big hole, made her own path. It just took a long time.

CANFIELD

The river's a she?

SOFIA

She is going her own way, only you can't see it.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

Sofia dines with the Canfield clan.

JIMMY

Marshal, show me that scar again!

CLAIRE

Jimmy!

SOFIA

Your Pappa is quite a lawman --

CANFIELD

It was Sofie jumped into all this -

SOFIA

Please, it was nothing -

CANFIELD  
She went after the first guy -

SOFIA  
The white one -

CANFIELD  
Took a bottle of tequila -

SOFIA  
Man couldn't hold his liquor -

CANFIELD  
Neither could you Lallo -

SOFIA  
Old goat -

CANFIELD  
Then the Indian jumped us -

SOFIA  
You didn't even see him -

CANFIELD  
Oh stop -

SOFIA  
Let the blind girl find him -

CANFIELD  
Sofe -

SOFIA  
Boy was awful good with a knife -

CANFIELD  
Sure was -

SOFIA  
But he wasn't a Kiowa.

Sofia smiles at him and he smiles back.

CLAIRE  
Who put the stitches in? Some drunk  
frontier doctor?

CANFIELD  
Pretty much. Her too.

CLAIRE  
At least you brought him back. You  
children, off to bed.

Canfield meets Sofia in her doorway.

CANFIELD  
I'm riding to the Swedish place.  
Father got shot.

SOFIA  
(upset)  
Dyson's boys again? His wife just  
had a baby. Wasn't Macadam there?

CANFIELD  
We can't watch every farm.

INT. SHERIFF'S JAIL -- NIGHT

Sofia interrogates the strongbox hijacker.

SOFIA  
Okay, get him up.

CANFIELD  
Come on, on your feet.

SOFIA  
Get those chains on him.

HIJACKER  
What - third night you woke me up.

SOFIA  
This time we're going to the barn.

HIJACKER  
I can't even talk to the -

SOFIA  
No, you're not gonna match up lies  
with the boy in the other cell.

INT. BARN -- NIGHT

Continuation. The three of them proceed to a barn.

HIJACKER  
Take off these chains. What happens  
when I need to pee?

SOFIA  
One thing at a time.

HIJACKER

When do I get food?

SOFIA

Dyson. We learned a lot from your friend who ran to Texas. We want to know about Dyson's son, who he's got at that house, what he's doing, who he talks to, what he wants, what he's afraid of, where he goes.

HIJACKER

Don't really know him.

SOFIA

And then we talk about that farm you burned out. Little boy almost died. You have family back home?

HIJACKER

Indiana. Miss em something awful. Can't go back.

SOFIA

Why not?

HIJACKER

Told off my Pap. Told em I'd come out here, grab the world by the tail and throw it round my shoulder, build a big old farm.

SOFIA

Didn't work out?

HIJACKER

One damn thing after another, the weather, the bugs... My girl couldn't stand it.

SOFIA

So you were a farmer like those folks in the valley. You might have had a little boy like -

HIJACKER

I know! Just like my Pap, telling me off. Telling me what to do.

SOFIA

Dyson orders you around a lot.

HIJACKER

You don't know what he's like.

SOFIA  
So tell me.

HIJACKER  
Scared.

SOFIA  
Tell me about Dyson.

HIJACKER  
I'm tired.

SOFIA  
I know you've got it all bottled  
up, brassed off at your father,  
brassed off at Dyson.

HIJACKER  
If you only knew. He wants both of  
you dead. And he has people  
watching you day and night.

SOFIA  
Who?

HIJACKER  
Can't say.

Continuation, the prisoner is asleep.

CANFIELD  
Nice work. I should stop being so  
surprised.

SOFIA  
Wait til you see the next one.

INT. SHERIFF'S JAIL - NIGHT

They are dealing with the prisoner they fetched from Texas.

GUNMAN  
What you looking at?

SOFIA  
I am fascinated by this exciting  
story, you sound like a hero.

GUNMAN  
Like I said, that boy you got, he's  
a liar. I wasn't watching you.  
(MORE)

GUNMAN (CONT'D)

Mister Dyson sent me to the capitol to swap the cattle money at the big bank.

SOFIA

So of all the men working for him, he trusted you with all that money?

GUNMAN

Yes Maam.

SOFIA

And he didn't put any of it in the bank right here, the one he visits every week?

GUNMAN

No Maam.

CANFIELD

We're not getting the whole story.

SOFIA

Nooooo, you don't mean the boy is lying? I don't take to people who lie, it's a sin. We got enough to make a jury think you're Jesse James, you go to prison til you're an old man, got you cold on Section sixteen fifty-one of the Code.

GUNMAN

Section -

SOFIA

That's federal law, we take you so far away even Dyson can't help you.

GUNMAN

It's Dyson, he ordered everything.

SOFIA

Write it down. It's you or him.

He does.

GUNMAN

How do you spell assassinate?

SOFIA

Murder will do.

GUNMAN

M-E-R -

SOFIA

So who does he want to assassinate?

He looks at Sofia and then Canfield.

CANFIELD

We sure got Dyson's attention.

Sofia and Canfield go to a corner.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)

Somebody put deer jerky in my bag.

SOFIA

Somebody found me some soap.

CANFIELD

Must be Christmas. Thanks Lallo.

SOFIA

Tdahn gaw piye. You really want to stop taking these rides? I like working with you.

CANFIELD

I know. But I have a dream. You dying of old age.

SOFIA

I dream about finding new dragons to slay. I haven't felt like this since I met Grey Wolf.

CANFIELD

We going to be doing this twenty years from now?

SOFIA

No. What do you and Claire want?

CANFIELD

She wants a nice farm. Wants me to run for mayor. How's it coming?

Prisoner holds up a piece of paper.

SOFIA

Now sign it. Good boy. No need to be afraid.

GUNMAN

Sure I'm afraid. What's Section sixteen fifty - whatever it was?

SOFIA

Sixteen fifty one. That's piracy at sea.

GUNMAN

Piracy at sea? We're in the middle of the damn desert!

SOFIA

I read the Revised Statutes of the United States from cover to cover. There's nothing in here says I can't lie to you.

GUNMAN

I want a do-over!

SOFIA

So does the boy you almost killed.

GUNMAN

Dammit!

SOFIA

Tomorrow, I come back and we talk more about Dyson. Maybe it will be your turn to outsmart me.

GUNMAN

Darn tootin'! Come on back here!

Sofia and Canfield are exiting.

INT. FRONT OFFICE OF THE JAIL -- NIGHT

Continuation. Sofia and Canfield are entering.

CANFIELD

We're off to find Blackbeard's treasure, matey.

Sofia collapses against a wall, laughing. He offers a hand and she takes it.

SOFIA

That was fun, can we do it again?

CANFIELD

That boy sure wants a rematch.

SOFIA

I know!

CANFIELD

You're like a dime novel. Piracy at sea.

They cross to a coffee pot; Canfield brews.

SOFIA

We got a nice load of prisoners for the capital.

CANFIELD

Got confessions. Didn't know you could do that. Won't see those boys up the Dyson place again.

SOFIA

(laughs)

Just realized. All that's left is Dyson. Five boys shot the marshal --

CANFIELD

You got all five!

SOFIA

We got all five, old goat!

She smiles and hugs him, hard.

CANFIELD

What's all this?

SOFIA

You'll be gone for weeks. Gonna miss you, that's all. Be careful.

CANFIELD

Yeah, I know how you hate the whole idea of jumping into danger.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Three cowpokes sit at an outside table drinking; it's a cool, sunny day. They see Sofia walk to her office.

BUSHWACKER

Fine piece of calico right there.

SECOND BUSHWACKER

She's just the pink.

BUSHWACKER

Whose turn on the bug juice? Pray tell, old patch.

Sofia realizes who they are, pulls the bushwacker's hat off.

SOFIA  
My father's watch. I want it back.

BUSHWACKER  
Somebody stole your watch? Marshal?  
Was there a witness?

She takes off her glasses. He realizes where he met her.

SOFIA  
Yes. You have until tomorrow.

ANDREW  
Time to get out of here.

BUSHWACKER  
Next thing we do, go down the  
street for a bath, see the girls --

ANDREW  
And what did I just say?

BUSHWACKER  
So we're working for you now?

ANDREW  
You want to find out? Go saddle up.

And they do.

SOFIA  
A beautiful shave you have.

ANDREW  
You ever going to stop judging me?

SOFIA  
Everybody judges everybody. You're  
the rich boy with no brains, I'm  
the half-breed whore. Want to  
trade?

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Sofia working, Andrew enters.

SOFIA  
Mr. Dyson.

ANDREW  
Evening.

SOFIA

Your father doesn't want to show his face, so he sent you to see how I'm holding up, after you shot the last marshal and sent gunmen all over the valley. Do I look spooked?

ANDREW

My father and I don't see eye to eye on everything, but he has a vision, you know. Build something in this valley, make a real mark -

SOFIA

There were a lot of us living here already. We've been here hundreds of years. He wants to brush us aside because we're in his way.

ANDREW

Manifest destiny. It's God's will people like me prevailed over people like you.

SOFIA

God's will. Fifty years ago Anglos sent a crook to bribe the Mexicans to give away San Francisco. Fremont came to find a house for his mama, house turns into a fort with guns and an American flag. You sent another crook to buy the whole southwest, with armed men on the border if we say "no". And the Americans came with guns and took it all, from here to the ocean.

ANDREW

Now wait --

SOFIA

The grassland, the grazing land for the buffalo, the silver mines. What you call God's will, the rest of us call armed robbery. You ever say manifest destiny in this room again, you get a night in jail and I'll make you scrub my floors.

ANDREW

Are you serious?

SOFIA

I'm getting tired of hearing that, too. Are YOU serious? What part will you play in all this? Does your father pass this vision to you? Using your gunman to chase away all the people to make room for the cattle? I will stop your father, and I will stop you.

ANDREW

If you're still here. Had a lot of marshals out here. Not exactly sure how they came to send you to a place like this. ...My father told me to deliver this.

And wrapped in a rag is Sofia's father's watch.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

CANFIELD

I need to go to Santa Fe.

CLAIRE

It's got to be you?

CANFIELD

Got a wagon-load of Dyson's men confessed, taking them to court.

CLAIRE

Won't it be dangerous?

CANFIELD

Those boys will be trussed up nice and tight.

CLAIRE

Please don't take that girl to Santa Fe with you.

CANFIELD

Sofia?

CLAIRE

People are already talking in town. Got so I do my marketing at dawn before the other women show up.

CANFIELD

She said the same thing. Anyway people might be looking too close at her being marshal. So she deputized me.

CLAIRE

So she's your boss now?

CANFIELD

Please, don't start on that.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Sofia crosses the street when she hears a serious commotion. A crowd is half-dragging a bloodied outlaw into town.

TOWNSMAN

Came to town to get a rope! This feller been chasing our stock all over the valley.

SOFIA

You're going to string him up? In front of a sheriff and a marshal?

TOWNSMAN

Marshal? You? Stringing him up is too easy. Ridley got shot too. These fellas Dyson hires, they're not afraid of a quick death. We're gonna take him into the brush, have some fun with him first. Warning to the rest of em.

SECOND TOWNSMAN

Want to argue with a hemp party, go ahead, see where it gets you.

Sofia grabs a gigantic pistol from a townsman.

CANFIELD

Sofe, that's a horse pistol, blow your arm right off. Gimme that!

SOFIA

You people know I'm a lousy shot. You give me that man or somebody gets shot! James, you went with them?

CANFIELD

I knew you wouldn't approve. I went around you.

SOFIA

So now you're sheriff of the whole valley?

CANFIELD

Went to the canyon, brought him in.

SOFIA

And got Ridley shot.

CANFIELD

This boy been stampeding everyone's cattle. He took a shot at you, Lallo. You could have died.

SOFIA

Lallo -

CANFIELD

(approaching her)

You're taking yourself awful serious. Here in town I'm still the sheriff. Sofe, you're a girl, with a heart as big as all outdoors. You're supposed to be the law, you're waving around that cannon, you can't even see. Every day you want to dance with death, you get shot, you get stabbed. Sometimes I feel like I'm chasing a lost calf.

She's stunned.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

Sofe, what do I do?

SOFIA

You bring that man here, and put him in my office.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

Not the sheriff's jail?

SOFIA

No, my office. You stay with him tonight, I watch him in the morning. Shoot anyone who comes in.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sofia, losing it, enters, followed by Canfield.

SOFIA

Here are the confessions for court.

CANFIELD

Sofo --

SOFIA

Just take them!...Soon I will get caught, have to run, I have nowhere to go. This short time is all I have. There is one person in the world whose respect I wanted. Two, you and your wife.

CANFIELD

Sofie -

SOFIA

In the middle of all this, you just told the whole town that you don't take me seriously. I'm not really a marshal. I'm a fake, a joke. By tomorrow the whole territory will know. Dyson will know.

CANFIELD

I'm sorry --

SOFIA

Lost calf. Is that what you think? Do you even care?

Silence.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You want to be the king of the whole valley, here's the badge. They don't want me here anyway.

She leaves through a back alley.

CANFIELD

Claire -

CLAIRE

People heard what you said. All the things she did for you. For us.

INT. SOFIE'S BACK ROOM -- NIGHT

Sofia crying in her room, where the prisoner is stashed.

SOFIA

So you're the man who doesn't fear  
a quick easy death? You may be the  
only man around who understands me.

GUNMAN

So you gonna save me?

SOFIA

No, you're getting a quick death,  
alright. State capitol. Last time  
you ever shoot at a marshal.

Claire appears.

CLAIRE

Can't believe I'm saying this, but  
I want to help patch things up  
between you and my husband.

SOFIA

I don't deserve it and James  
doesn't deserve you. Believe me,  
the great romance is over.

INT. SANTA FE JAIL -- DAY

Canfield delivers the three assassins to court. He manages  
paperwork with the BAILIFF.

CANFIELD

Final delivery, three defendants,  
and here are their confessions.

BAILIFF

Got to talk to the judge first.

INT. SANTA FE COURT - DAY

An ornery JUDGE processes cases swiftly. Canfield waits.

JUDGE

Right, next. She's Mexican, Indian?

BAILIFF

Both.

JUDGE

Month in prison. Serves her right.  
Then send her to the border and  
boot her out. What you got there,  
Chinee girl? They're not allowed to  
petition the court. No Mexicans, no  
Indians, no colored folks can file.

MEXICAN GIRL

No puedo -

JUDGE

This is America, we speak English.  
If you're Mexican you pay the tax.

CANFIELD

Your Honor, I got three murderers  
with confessions, ready to hang.

JUDGE

Who's the marshal out there? I  
can't read that signature.

CANFIELD

There's the marshal's stamp, clear  
as a bell, the star and the eagle.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Back in Havelock, Sofia is looking for Macadam.

SOFIA

Macadam? I need to -

She goes to the back of his place, sees the butts of two  
skinny cigars. She picks them up and sighs. Macadam emerges.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Macadam. So Dyson's been here?

MACADAM

No Maam.

SOFIA

How long have you been on Dyson's  
payroll?

MACADAM

Maam, I'm not -

SOFIA

Call me Maam one more time! Be glad Jimmy's gone or he'd shoot you right now. Not even I could stop him.

MACADAM

Well, he's not here. Is he? Dyson's gonna win, you're gonna lose.

SOFIA

Oh my God, Claire!

She runs.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

The soldier with the glasses watches the front of the house.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

I heard you folks were Mormons. That marshal, Sofie, she's the sheriff's second wife, right?

CLAIRE

No, she's not.

SOLDIER WITH GLASSES

She worries about him all the time, she cares about him something awful. So she's not his wife?

CLAIRE

No, that's me. Just the one wife.

Sofia has ridden in at a full gallop.

SOFIA

I'm sorry! I told Macadam to come protect you - he turned tail, he's working for Dyson! They're coming!

ROSE

Mama, riders!

CLAIRE

Tell the boys to get their rifles.

Men are outside the house at a distance, with torches. One rider approaches. Claire shoots.

SOFIA

Good Lord, you can shoot!

CLAIRE  
All those nights without my  
husband, damn right I can shoot.

SOFIA  
Want to be the new marshal?

CLAIRE  
Here he comes, see him?

SOFIA  
No! Can you bring him down -

Claire shoots a man. Sofia runs out.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Continuation. Sofia charges into the yard.

CLAIRE  
(at the window)  
Jesus, wait! They have more -

The other gunmen fire; Claire provides cover.

SOFIA  
Got kids in here, you mammyjammers!  
You got to come through me!

Sofia approaches the body, squints at it, and runs back.

INT. INSIDE THE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Continuation. Claire is shocked.

CLAIRE  
They're leaving. Girl, without you,  
Dyson would have taken over  
Havelock. So try not to get shot.

SOFIA  
Thanks for the cover. These  
bushwackers been bothering farmers.  
Tomorrow I go beat the bushes. Just  
to remind them I'm still here.

CLAIRE  
You can't even see! You're gonna  
get killed!

SOFIA

I'd rather be doing something than standing around thinking about...

CLAIRE

It's killing me to admit it, but I'm on your side. Jimmy didn't do you right out there. Sofe, can you see the top of that ridge?

SOFIA

Still blind.

CLAIRE

Watley put in a fence. Railroad coming, homesteaders dig for water, fencing off land. The cattle barons like Dyson had their time but it's over. All the boys except Dyson are learning to hash things out over a bottle of whisky, instead of shooting folks. Where do you think these folks learned that from?

SOFIA

They didn't learn that whisky part from me.

CLAIRE

Yeah, they did. Somebody had to be the first to say "stop".

SOFIA

James was angry when he rode off. I wouldn't have been as patient as you. Not for a man like Canfield. I'll go make some coffee.

CLAIRE

Let me do it. Jimmy says your coffee tastes like slops.

SOFIA

Never said a word.

CLAIRE

He was being nice. That's you doing that. Before you came along, he was a tough nut to crack. Never smiled. Hardly talked to the kids. Then you show up. Last week he was braiding Trudy's hair.

SOFIA

He's always so hard on me.

CLAIRE

If he didn't like you, I'd hear it every night. You know how often he complains about you? Never. Out on that street when everything went to hell that night, you couldn't see. Hundred people out there, every one of them could see he's heels-over-head for you. Everyone could see, but you.

SOFIA

I'm sorry, I never meant -

CLAIRE

I know. He's not in love with you. It's worse, he's in awe of you. Most men think with their peckers, Jimmy wants to be a knight in shining armor, rescuing damsels in distress. But you're in distress every damn week, Jimmy's gonna get hurt. Something happens to you, it'll just kill him.

SOFIA

Claire -

CLAIRE

I see you push James back in my direction, help my marriage along. Just keep your fingers out. All I need to know is, when does he come home, start talking to me again? When does the fighting stop? When do I get him back?

SOFIA

We're trying to stop Dyson.

CLAIRE

So I get Jimmy back when Dyson's gone? I may go up shoot him myself.

Canfield arrives. Sofia flees. Claire gives Canfield a big hug.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Bushwackers were here. That girl ran right out in the middle of all those bullets. She's plum crazy.

CANFIELD

Now you know what it's like,  
keeping her alive.

CLAIRE

It's like she didn't care. Ever  
since you had that scene on Main  
Street, she's been an empty husk.

EXT. FRONT OF CANFIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

Sofia stands in a doorway. Canfield next to her.

CANFIELD

I met a girl, a holy terror. Wanted  
to be my conscience, damn nuisance.  
Got her buzzing in my ear, under my  
skin. She threatened to steal my  
horse, she'd get mad and run off,  
set my prisoners free, wouldn't  
even let me beat em up. She  
couldn't ride, couldn't shoot. And  
her cooking. Claire's mad cause we  
spent all night in the bushes. We  
turned each other into crazy  
people, looking for trouble,  
getting shot, stabbed. Every time I  
had a nightmare, she'd be in the  
middle of it, getting shot at.

SOFIA

You don't care about this stupid  
girl?

CANFIELD

Naah, riding away from this will be  
a breeze.

He throws his arms around her.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)

Lallo, I don't know what I -

SOFIA

Just leave it.

CANFIELD

You don't want to fight it out all  
over again?

SOFIA

No.

CANFIELD  
Town still mad at you?

SOFIA  
Don't care. You think I'm a lost  
calf?

CANFIELD  
The sun and the stars.

SOFIA  
(mortified)  
Sun and - you knew?

CANFIELD  
I've known a long time. Claire said  
you had one of your loco moments  
out there.

SOFIA  
We make each other do crazy things.  
You have a scary habit of getting  
stabbed and shot to protect me. You  
got five kids. And you're not being  
fair to Claire. She's an amazing  
woman. And she adores you. She puts  
up with a lot. She puts up with me.

CANFIELD  
Clever girl. Long couple of weeks,  
being gone. Still got Dyson up  
there. Can we pull that pirate  
trick on him?

Sofia begins laughing.

CANFIELD (CONT'D)  
Timber me shivers. Or is it shiver..

Sofia laughs harder. Claire enters and smiles.

CLAIRE  
So you patched it up then.

A thunderstorm breaks. They go inside.

INT. INSIDE THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Continuation. Sofia holds a letter.

SOFIA  
When you took the gunmen to Santa  
Fe?

(MORE)

SOFIA (CONT'D)

That judge found out I'm a Mexican girl who had a bastard baby with a Kiowa, everything he hates. A new marshal is coming to arrest me. They have a list of all the laws I broke, writing illegal warrants. I have to leave here, I can't come back, ever.

CANFIELD

There must be some way --

SOFIA

It's over. And, if I stay -- if you had been married to anyone else, I would have taken you away from her.

Canfield finds his wife in the kitchen.

CANFIELD

Dyson's got a new posse. I got to get Sofia out of the valley. She's leaving, permanent.

CLAIRE

You be nice to that girl. Then come home to me.

EXT. DESERT TRAIL - NIGHT

Sofia and Canfield are on the trail.

CANFIELD

Where will you go?

SOFIA

The Apaches. They're sending irregulars to kill them, I'm hoping the tribe will agree to go west.

CANFIELD

Apaches kill you the minute you show up.

SOFIA

Only place I have left to go.

CANFIELD

Get arrested or get scalped. We can't just hide?

SOFIA

Nowhere to hide. The west isn't  
like that anymore.

Masked riders appear on a ridge and chase them across the  
countryside. They hide at their old spot near the cliff.

CANFIELD

Dyson sent everybody with a gun.  
They're not coming to talk. We got  
til morning. You're not afraid.

SOFIA

I'm terrified. I know it's your  
dream to die saving me, but it's a  
stupid dream for a man with  
children. I'm saving you from  
yourself. Sometimes it's okay to  
run away. Say goodbye and let me  
go.

CANFIELD

How on earth do I do that?

SOFIA

Twenty years, everyone will forget  
me. Even you'll forget, you'll be  
old. Like I was never born. But it  
would have been alright if I could  
have beat Dyson. All the farms  
would still be here, safe. That  
would have been enough.

She touches the sun-and-stars carving.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

This hour is a gift. Last night  
with the sheriff. I'm ready. I  
don't need to fear, or plot and  
plan. I don't need to run from  
danger anymore.

CANFIELD

Well you never ran anyway.

SOFIA

Time only moves in one direction.  
We can't go back to where we've  
been. We can only go into the  
unknown. The sky lives forever, the  
hills and the grass. The rest of  
us, we're fireflies.

They see riders on a distant ridge.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Okay, a little more time. The point of this is to keep you alive, so don't get killed right here. When they come, surrender.

CANFIELD

We waiting for something?

SOFIA

I need a bit of sunlight. Saying goodbye is the hardest thing. Compared to that, the next part's easy. Just once, you can kiss me.

And he does.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Tdahn gaw piye. All that rain. I can't see water down there, but I hear it. I hope there's enough.

She pulls out a colored stone.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Mal de ojo. It will protect you.

She puts it in his hand, and smiles at him.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

You need to put it in your saddle bag - your horse gets shot at too.

As he does, she runs down a path along the cliff. Confused, he follows, way behind. He reaches a dead end overlooking a cliff which drops down into the river. He looks up, around, and then down. She was right, the river is flooded. And she has disappeared. Dyson's riders arrive and he surrenders.

RIDER

Where is the girl?

He looks over the cliff, and smiles. They all look up the rock face, looking for another place she could have gone. And then they look down again.

EXT. DYSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Dyson, with new gunmen, sees an armed crowd arriving; Claire is there. In the crowd is a serious-looking man named PACKER. Canfield on the porch, hands tied.

TOWNSMAN

Mister Dyson, you know your best  
gunmen got run out of town. You  
best come out of there.

DYSON

Having a brandy, boy. That girl is  
gone for good. Hear that? Now we  
get back to work, bring more men  
in, turn this valley into something  
special. Macadam, you and the new  
boys clear out this crowd, have a  
chat with that sheriff, and -

ANDREW

(to the gunmen)

Now everybody listen. Any man who  
shoots a gun on my father's orders  
gets fired.

DYSON

Boy, you lost your mind?

ANDREW

Any man leaves this house with a  
gun tonight, don't come back.  
That's the first thing. Second  
thing, Macadam. You're fired now.

MACADAM

But I sold out the marshal for you!

ANDREW

A man takes money two ways will  
take it three ways.

TOWNSMAN

We want Dyson or his hide.

ANDREW

You just hold your water.

DYSON

What you think you're doing?

ANDREW

Time for a change. All of this is  
still yours, but for how long?

DYSON

It's only because of me that we got  
anything!

(MORE)

DYSON (CONT'D)

Finally got rid of that girl - if she hadn't got herself killed, I would have shot her down, like I did the other marshal.

PACKER

So you were telling the truth.

DYSON

Who the hell are you?

PACKER

George Packer. U.S. Marshal's Office.

DYSON

Well, about time. You come to arrest that girl?

PACKER

Secret Service and the Pinkerton Detectives hunting for her.

DYSON

To arrest her?

PACKER

Are you joking? They want to sign her up, make her an agent. She was like a dime novel come to life. I've got a warrant for her arrest. Long as she steers clear of this territory I'm not gonna go looking for her. I'm sure not going to go run the rapids looking for her body. I'll be too busy with you.

DYSON

Me?

PACKER

After that girl arrested the boys who shot the old marshal for you, she sent a letter to the Marshal's Office, telling em what you did. Then she got those confessions. So I have you on murder. You were a big help, admitting the whole thing in front of a hundred witnesses.

DYSON

Now just a damn minute -

PACKER

It was bad enough you hired half the outlaws in the territory to bother the farmers round here. When you sent to Texas to hire that Indian, soon as that boy crossed the state line, federal crime.

DYSON

You're arresting me?

PACKER

Had a chat with your son. Monday you hand your estate to your son, you're on a train out of my new territory. And in return, this lynch mob is done for the night.

TOWNSMAN

Says you?

PACKER

Says me. I'm the new marshal, and I hope I'm almost as good as that Mexican girl.

(to Macadam)

And you. You sold out that marshal? Don't wait for the train. You start riding now.

DYSON

Turn my own son against me. Well who came up with all these damn fool ideas?

ANDREW

Who do you think? You never had a chance against that girl.

Claire smiles. Packer cuts Canfield free.

CANFIELD

Well, so how much trouble am I in?

PACKER

Go forth and sin no more. I decided to go easy, bout the time I went into the Marshal's office.

CANFIELD

The office?

PACKER

That crazy girl ran the smoothest running marshal's office in the west. Saved me a month worth of paperwork. She did all that, and chased those bushwackers out, how did she do it all?

CANFIELD

Don't know. She'd go talk to folks, she'd have one of her brainstorm, then she'd do something completely loco and one of us would get shot. Then somehow by the time she ran off, all the outlaws were in jail or gone.

PACKER

What was she? Ranch girl, rider, shooter?

CANFIELD

Oh no, she was blind, she was a menace with a gun.

PACKER

She shoot anybody?

Shows a hole in his boot.

CANFIELD

Just me. Saw a coil of rope, thought it was a snake.

EXT. BY A RIVER - DAY

Canfield and Packer search the river.

PACKER

Did she jump upstream of the rapids, or down?

CANFIELD

Upstream.

PACKER

So, all those rocks.

CANFIELD

Lot of rain, the water was deep.

PACKER

And running fast.

CANFIELD

If she got killed, we'd find a body, or clothes, or something.

PACKER

Maybe. If she's alive, she's gone.

CANFIELD

If she survived, she tried to get the Apaches to cross the river. I think she was hoping the Indians let her stay. She has no home.

PACKER

You know they'd kill her. Sorry, Sheriff.

They climb back up to where she apparently jumped from. Near the carving are bunches of flowers.

PACKER (CONT'D)

Folks in town heard about the girl.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE - DAY

Claire finds Canfield sitting in the kitchen.

CANFIELD

Berries. She said you liked em.

CLAIRE

How long you gonna sit there? You gonna take a bath? You got a job. She's not coming back.

CANFIELD

Least if I found the body, I'd know. Never got pole-axed like this. Not Kansas, not the war --

CLAIRE

Not even me?...She saw something she cared about, she threw herself right in. You caught the disease too.

CANFIELD

And now I need to let go of her.

CLAIRE

That girl. She lost her man and kept marching.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

She couldn't see or ride or shoot,  
but she looked a range war head on  
and stopped it. She treated me  
right - she could have stolen you  
from me any time. And she sure  
changed you.

CANFIELD

So you forgave her?

CLAIRE

Come look at the side of the house.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CANFIELD HOUSE -- DAY

Continuation. They find a rose plant.

CLAIRE

I told her I liked roses, last  
thing she did was this. God knows  
how. If you could drink some magic  
snake oil and forget it all, make  
that hole heal over, would you do  
it? Would you rather feel nothing?

CANFIELD

Once I forget her, I'd be the last  
one, like she was never here. Be a  
terrible thing to do, erasing her  
forever, just to feel nothing.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Canfield sees his wife sitting in front of the marshal's  
office with a rifle across her lap.

CANFIELD

Claire?

CLAIRE

Marshal had to run to the capital.  
Asked me to help keep an eye.  
Outlaws gone, town's quiet.

INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Canfield finds Rose reading papers, wearing Sofia's glasses.

CANFIELD

You helping out the marshal?

ROSE

Halfway through that lawbook. Heard about the Kileys? Shoot up with the Thibodeaus? Want me to get the marshal out to bang heads around?

CANFIELD

No. Kileys riled up cause the critters ate their crops. We'll get em some food for winter.

ROSE

You know who you sound like?...You heard about the black rider?

CANFIELD

He stopped the range war up north?

ROSE

She. She got the Nez Perce over to Canada, safe and sound. And she stopped that Apache war too. Said it was an Indian girl did it.

CANFIELD

What else did they say?

Rose sees Andrew Dyson outside and goes outside with two coffee cups.

EXT. OUTSIDE MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Rose and Andrew sit on a bench. She hands him his coffee.

ROSE

I filed the Kiley deed. Nice price.

ANDREW

I went easy. He had a rough year.

ROSE

I saw you go into Molly's place. Off to see the ladies?

ANDREW

Bathtub. Sofie said take a shave and a bath before coming here.

They turn to each other and she touches his face. She smiles.

ROSE

Well, you're almost civilized.

They hear a galloping horse and see a flash of black.

EXT. SANTA FE COURTYARD - DAY

Again the galloping sound. A hanging. The three men Sofia hunted down are in chains.

BAILIFF

Today, on the charge of murdering a marshal in Havelock New Mexico, you have been sentenced to hang by the neck until you are dead -

PRISONER

Look up there! It's her!

One of the prisoners points across the street at an empty-looking hotel. Inside the hotel, a figure in black sits in a large ornate chair. We can't see who it is.

BAILIFF

That hotel's not even open. Owner got arrested. Let's get on with it.

INT. THE HOTEL -- DAY

A waiter brings the figure a drink in a chilled glass. The figure picks it up: it is so cold that a finger draws a line in the condensation. This is a cold, cold drink.

WAITER

Coldest damn drink in town, like you wanted, Maam.

EXT. NATIVE AMERICAN RESERVATION -- DAY

Grey Wolf goes down to a river. He thinks he sees someone. He hears splashing in the water.

EXT. SMALL MEXICAN TOWN -- DAY

Sofia's mother emerges from a small Mexican house, holding a dress. She thinks she heard a horse.

INT. POSH HOTEL ROOM -- DAY

Dyson lies in bed, dying of a heart attack. He points to a door and expires. The door slams shut.

INT. HAVELOCK MARSHAL'S OFFICE -- DAY

Packer hears a noise in Sofia's old room. A candle has just been blown out. Galloping sound.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE -- NIGHT

In the Canfield house, little Jimmy turns restlessly in bed, kicking off the covers. An unseen hand puts his blanket on him. In a moment, his eyes open. There is no one there.

EXT. DYSON'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Rose, robed, with coffee at dawn, hears a horse neighing.

EXT. SANTA FE COURTYARD - DAY

The hanging is over, the bodies laid out in cheap coffins.

BAILIFF

Serve em right, took a shot at a marshal.

The bailiff looks down the street at someone we can't see.

BAILIFF (CONT'D)

Miss! Senorita, that's no way to get on a horse. You get up on the left side, not the right! Silly Mexican girls don't know nothing.

INT. CANFIELD HOUSE -- NIGHT

Canfield stands on in the front doorway, holding the stone Sofia gave him. Claire joins him. She smiles.

Sound of a horse galloping.

**FADE OUT.**

**THE END.**