THE SIXTH GUN

"PILOT"

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Based on the Oni Press Series

The Sixth Gun

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TEASER

EXT. THE SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES - DUSK (1883 A.D.)

An ANCIENT PUEBLO FORTRESS juts out of the open desert. The pale blue light of dusk glows beyond the fortified Western wall. A big bell tones ominously. *DONG.* *DONG.*

EXT. MONASTERY OF SARDIS - COURTYARD - DUSK

DONG. The structure isn't a fortress, it's a monastery. Though it's oddly well-fortified for a center of worship.

ROBED MONKS move through the courtyard on their way to evening prayer, CHANTING in step with the ringing church bell. They pass a TARPED STATUE, which each of them lay hands upon as they go. This is an artifact of some importance. *DONG.*

AT THE MONASTERY ENTRANCE

The TALL, OAKEN DOUBLE DOORS swing open. *DONG.* Two MONKS return from mission carrying a SICKLY MAN between them.

The rescued man wears pants and a gunbelt and nothing else. He looks like he was in the desert for weeks. He's tall and lanky with thick mutton chops and a mess of black hair. His dragging bare feet cut parallel tracks into the sand.

From all radii, the monks flock to his aid. *DONG.* *DONG.*

As the vagrant is carried past a small CEMETERY, he suddenly plants his feet. To the monks' surprise, he stands up under his own strength. And to their horror --

He draws his PISTOL. It's a six-chambered revolver, long-barrelled and with a WHITE BONE GRIP. An etched RED GEMSTONE is inlaid at the center. He cocks the hammer and FIRES.

But not at the monks. Into the earth. The bullet burrows into the cemetery dirt. The soil caves in as --

THE CORPSE long interred within rises from the dead. *DONG.* The dead monk emerges from the grave, caked in dirt over his old tattered robes. The resurrected monk staggers forward. He doesn't speak. He attacks. He wraps skeletal fingers around the throat of one of the living monks.

CHANTING devolves into alarm as the other monks scatter.

The gaunt gunman, **SILAS HEDGEPETH** (40s), fires again and again, raising more UNDEAD MONKS to serve as his golems.

ON THE ABBEY

FATHER ARTURO (60s), the monastery's abbot, runs out of the monastery. He wears purple robes that mark his high office.

FATHER ARTURO
Do not fear this evil, brothers!

DONG. The monks look to him for hope.

FATHER ARTURO (CONT'D)
For Jesus Christ has given us <u>strength</u>...

Father Arturo throws open his abbot's robes to reveal:

FATHER ARTURO (CONT'D)
And Samuel Colt has given us <u>steel</u>!

A veritable ARMORY OF WEAPONS beneath. Father Arturo draws TWO COLT SINGLE-ACTION PISTOLS. *DONG.*

This last tone of the monastery's bell is the first note of METALLICA'S *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a heavy metal ballad written a hundred years after these events.

But that's only the second oddest thing here, because <u>all</u> the monks open their robes to reveal all manner of PISTOLS, SHOTGUNS and RIFLES hidden beneath.

Metallica rocks and the battle is on. Silas advances with an army of dirt-caked UNDEAD MONK GOLEMS in a phalanx ahead of him. He continues FIRING his weapon (which never needs to be reloaded), but now he does so at the <u>living</u> monks.

When the bullets from Silas's gun strike living flesh, they <u>bury their victim instantly</u>, burrowing them under the earth where they stand. When the bullets strike dead flesh, the corpse rises from the dead in service of Silas.

The monks return HEAVY FIRE, but Silas is soon surrounded by a protective cordon of undead golem servants.

Father Arturo brazenly presses toward Silas. He fires both his Colt pistols until they go dry. He stops to stare down Silas, who looks back at him with a dead, unfeeling stare.

BANG! Father Arturo is buried in the earth.

BANG! Father Arturo rises from the dead to serve Silas.

ON THE TARPED STATUE

A few monks drag the cover off the "statue."

Beneath is A POLISHED SILVER GATLING GUN. A most holy artifact in this well-armored house of worship.

Two of the most **ELDERLY MONKS** in the monastery take station on the heavy artillery. One wheels the crank. The other works the MAGAZINES that have to be seated above the action. These ancient monks share less than a dozen teeth between them, but they are deadly on the Gatling gun.

RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT. As one magazine goes dry, the monk yanks it out and replaces it with another. *RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT.* The Gatling gun attack tears apart Silas's golems.

When the old monks look over the Gatling gun's smoking barrel, they find that they've cleared the courtyard. The spotter squints, searching for their enemy...

On the right, they see the remainder of the living monks rounded up and forced into surrender by the undead monks.

CLICK. The elderly monks turn to their left. Silas Hedgepeth is practically on top of them. *BANG!*

INT. MONASTERY OF SARDIS - SUBTERRANEAN CORRIDOR - DUSK

The cavernous stone halls of the monastery's underbelly ECHO with the shallow breathing of abject terror.

Silas, the golem of Father Arturo, and a handful of other undead monks have headed off a **YOUNG ACOLYTE** (18) and his colleagues in a suddenly crowded corridor.

SILAS
Where you keeping the general?

YOUNG ACOLYTE
General?

Silas answers by placing his gun barrel inside the acolyte's mouth. This jogs his memory. He points with wide eyes.

YOUNG ACOLYTE (CONT'D)
Heeg dob gayeh.

He's down there.

INT. MONASTERY OF SARDIS - CATACOMBS - DUSK

Inside a small, rough-hewn stone chamber, the hostage monks struggle to move a GARGANTUAN CIRCULAR STONE.

Silas holds them at gunpoint, flanked by his undead.

The stone finally rolls away, revealing a SMALL CHAMBER behind it. Silas turns to his golems:

SILAS
Kill them all.

The living monks panic as the dead monks move in on them.

INT. MONASTERY OF SARDIS - TOMB - DUSK

The cramped stone tomb is too small for Silas even to stand erect inside. At his feet lies a LONE COFFIN.

Torchlight washes over the coffin, illuminating a bizarre wood grain that looks like snakeskin. Mysteries abound as Silas pores over the coffin in search of a lid or hinge. He finds neither. The thing is a solid, seamless piece of wood. A closer inspection reveals an OPEN KNOTHOLE at the very top. When Silas shines torchlight into the opening...

A BLAZING BLUE EYE stares back at him. And the eye sees.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Remove that fire from my proximity!

The man inside the coffin suddenly COUGHS, firing a PLUME OF DUST out the blowhole. It gets in Silas's eyes and hair. The COUGHING FIT persists. Then, the complaining continues:

GENERAL HUME (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Do not hurry yourself, Silas. Truly. Abandon your beloved general down here for a bleeding eternity to listen to the same godforsaken chants.

The voice belongs to the **GENERAL OLIANDER BEDFORD HUME** (60s). He speaks with the affectation of a Southern gentleman.

SILAS
The yanks had me locked away in solitary, general. Once I reclaimed my gun, I came as fast as I could.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
What year is it?

SILAS
'Eighty three, general.

Something THUMPS from inside the coffin. Presumably, this is the general.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Eight-teen years in this hole!
(beat)
And the current status of my bastard monk tormentors?

Silas peeks behind him. He allows himself a rare grin.

SILAS
Dead and buried.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Good. Now would you kindly liberate me from this infernal box?

Silas draws sheathed BOWIE KNIFE. He slashes at the wood, but the blade BOUNCES OFF without leaving so much as a mark.

Silas then backs away from the coffin. He draws his gun and FIRES. The bullet DEFLECTS off the surface and RICOCHETS off the stone walls. Not a mark is left on the snakewood.

Silas looks at the flaming torch in his hand. He steps toward the coffin, casting FIRELIGHT over the knothole. A THUMP and a protest come from within:

GENERAL HUME (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I said: no bloody fire!

Silas must find another way to liberate the general.

EXT. MONASTERY OF SARDIS - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Under cover of the coming night, Silas loads the snakewood coffin into the back of a simple horse-drawn cart.

The courtyard is empty but for the TEN UNDEAD MONK GOLEMS in Silas's service. The rest of the monks are dead.

Silas saddles into the cart and *CRACKS* the reins. The conveyance GROANS into motion.

Behind Silas, his undead servants trudge after him, slowly following. As Silas -- and specifically, Silas's gun -- move further and further away, the dirt-caked golems slow down.

When Silas moves fully out of range, the undead vanish back into to the earth where they were once buried.

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

EXT. STANTON HOMESTEAD - DAY

The grave marker is made of cheap unfinished pine and marked with black paint: *HERE LIES ARCHIBALD STANTON*.

DRAKE SINCLAIR (late 30s) stands over the grave. He's a deadly gunslinger, incorrigible rogue, and handsome bastard.

A portly, bearded card-sharp and gunslinger named **BILLJOHN O'HENRY** (early 40s) stands beside Drake, hat clutched to heart. Billjohn's mealy-mouthed speech gets lost behind a substantial beard that conceals his facial movements.

BILLJOHN
Kind of a strange place to bury a man, dontcha reckon.

Arch Stanton's grave lies right at the foot of the wooden steps leading up to the porch of the Stanton home.

Billjohn looks to Drake, hopeful. Drake scrunches his brow.

DRAKE
Let's go pay our respects.

INT. STANTON HOME - LIVING AREA - DAY

The Stanton homestead is spartan and modest. Homemaker **MRS. STANTON** (40s) rocks in a chair and crochets furiously. She never really looks up at Drake and Billjohn.

MRS. STANTON
You're the only ones who came. Archie once knew so many folks. But then the war ended and I guess so did the friendships.

Drake and Billjohn stand before her, hats in hand.

DRAKE
The years can put a lot of distance between people. Can I ask why you buried him where you did?

MRS. STANTON
Whoever did him in put him there, not me.

Drake and Billjohn exchange a knowing look. Mrs. Stanton rambles on, never looking up from her needle-work:

MRS. STANTON (CONT'D)
I'll tell you: not a pleasant thing to return from visiting your sister and find your husband of near twenty years -- not a great husband by any means, but a husband nonetheless -- buried under your front walk. But that's sometimes the hand Providence deals you. And as a good god-fearing woman, I know to just leave the dead be to rest. So there he will remain to lay.

DRAKE
I know these are hard times for you, Mrs. Stanton, but, uh, your husband didn't happen to leave behind an old gun, did he?

Billjohn steps forward, finishing the thought:

BILLJOHN
A bone gripped pistol with a little red gem set in the middle.

MRS. STANTON
Oh, Archie loved his guns. He kept all sorts of them in the shed.

This is the lead Drake and Billjohn were looking for.

INT. SHED - DAY

Narrow shafts of sunlight spear between the vertical slats of a poorly constructed wooden shed.

Inside, Drake and Billjohn stare at a hanging peg board that holds a *lot* of guns. Pistols, rifles, shotguns. <u>One of the pistol slots is bare</u>. The rest of the board is stocked full.

DRAKE
Damn.

Billjohn removes his hat and clutches it to his chest, as if mourning a loss.

BILLJOHN
Guessin' that explains Stanton's peculiar burial plot.

DRAKE
Sorry, partner.

Mrs. Stanton's voice startles Drake and Billjohn:

MRS. STANTON (O.S.)
It was so nice of you boys to come pay your respects.

Drake and Billjohn startle at Mrs. Stanton's presence.

She shuffles inside the shed holding a small, plain BOX.

MRS. STANTON (CONT'D)
These were all the mementos Archie kept from his time in the war. He hid them beneath the floorboard in the bedroom, in case the yanks ever came looking for them. You should have them. He would want that.

Mrs. Stanton thrusts the box into Drake's hands.

EXT. STANTON HOMESTEAD - DAY

Outside the Stanton homestead, Billjohn sits ahorse. His face is long.

BILLJOHN
I know the plan's to get those guns to open the vault. But that gun. The one which raises the dead...

Drake climbs into his own saddle.

DRAKE
The Fourth Gun.

BILLJOHN
Yeah.

DRAKE
Bad idea.

While they talk, Drake digs through Stanton's pine box, finding war mementos: medals, news-clippings, arrowheads...

BILLJOHN
My Jenny, Drake. I could use it. Bring her back to me.

DRAKE
You don't want her back the way that gun would bring her back.
(looking up)
Trust me.

BILLJOHN
Aw, you don't know what it's like missin' her. Were you in my boots, you'd think different.

Drake returns to rummaging through the box.

DRAKE
I don't know. I never liked anyone that much.

Billjohn's gaze moves to Arch Stanton's oddly placed grave.

BILLJOHN
I reckon Ms. Stanton would have brought back her man if she could.

Drake finds a FALSE BOTTOM in the memento box. Excited, he pulls it up, revealing an old SQUARE OF FOLDED PARCHMENT.

DRAKE
(absently)
She's better off a widow. Arch was an asshole.

Drake dumps Stanton's box and war mementos on the ground. He unfolds the parchment...

BILLJOHN
What's that?

DRAKE
Just what we've been looking for.

He holds up an ANCIENT MAP to study in the mid-day sun.

SLOW FADE TO:

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - DAY

A plow is stuck in muddy earth. A FARMHAND in a floppy hat and filthy chaps pushes and strains to un-stick it.

INSERT TITLE: SOME WEEKS LATER

The plow comes free only to capsize in a deep rut. The farmhand slips and falls in the mud. The donkey *HONKS*.

BECKY MONTCRIEF, 25 and very much a woman, rises from the mud bath with dirt spattered all over her face and clothes. But beneath the dirt and masculine garb, Becky possesses all the feminine traits desired by the superficial male.

She dusts herself off, absently staring at the distant horizon and considering “what might have been.”

The ass-drawn PLOW is overturned in a field meant to grow sweet peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, and summer squash. Right now, it’s an under-manned operation that badly needs plowing.

Becky’s moment of wistful daydreaming is interrupted.

TALL JUAN (O.S.)
Señorita Montcrief!

Two MEXICAN FARMHANDS, **TALL JUAN** (20s) and **SHORT JUAN** (40s), running her way. Tall Juan is tall, young and handsome. Short Juan is stocky, hairy and wise.

BECKY
I’m all right. Help me with this, would you?

Short Juan and Tall Juan dead-lift the plow while Becky stabilizes the donkey, sweet-talking it and making kisses at it to keep it from doing anything sudden.

BECKY (CONT’D)
Easy, Buttercup... Easy...

After much GRUNTING and STRAINING, the plow is righted.

When it’s done, the Juans recover their breath. Becky ruminates on her plow situation and asks Short Juan:

BECKY (CONT’D)
I need this field plowed. Is there anything I can do to make this work better?

SHORT JUAN
Si.

Short Juan looks off the donkey to Becky.

SHORT JUAN (CONT’D)
Ride Buttercup into town. Buy a strong ox and a better plow.

Short Juan smiles at her, proud of himself.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

EXT. BRIMSTONE - DAY

Brimstone is a bustling border town powered by sin and crime. A place called THE SILVER PALACE is the town's epicenter; a house of gambling and drinking and pleasure.

INSERT TITLE: BRIMSTONE

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S APARTMENTS - DAY

These luxury apartments are done in an Oriental decor. Jade, gold, and hardwood. No expense or luxury has been spared.

FAULKNER (30s, Chinese-American), a Chicago Pinkerton detective stands in the doorway. He is a city-raised and American educated man. He comes in flanked by two armed and tough-looking CHINESE BODYGUARDS.

CHOW (50s, Chinese-Chinese) has appeared from the back of the apartments. The loyal manservant wears a formal tuxedo complete with a bowtie, jacket tails, and a red rose boutonniere. Despite his accent, Chow is rather erudite.

CHOW
Ms. Hume is indisposed ah, at the moment, Mr. Faulkner.

Chow takes pauses between thoughts when he speaks in English as he translates the line in his head before speaking it.

FAULKNER
She's expecting me, Chow.

Faulkner does not mean to be denied.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S BOUDOIR - DAY

A man named **MERCER** (30s, African-American) sits on the edge of the bed as he fits himself into a fine riding suit.

THE WIDOW MISSY HUME (20s) sits at a decadent Oriental-style vanity with a huge circular mirror. Missy is classically beautiful with piercing eyes, jet-black hair, pearl-white skin and flawless features. She's like a porcelain doll made real. She fusses with herself obsessively in the mirror.

The room stinks of sex.

CHOW (THROUGH THE DOOR)
Ms. Hume, Mr. Faulkner requests ah, an audience.

Missy locks eyes with Mercer via her vanity mirror.

MISSY
You said we had time.

MERCER
(shrugging)
He's early.

Like his partner Faulkner, Mercer is also a city-raised and educated man.

MISSY
Just a minute please, Chow. I am not yet decent.

As Missy moves toward Mercer, her revealing silk robe she wears flutters open revealing a SMALL GUNBELT strapped to her thigh. In it, a small pistol presses against her flesh. The pistol has a WHITE BONE grip and a RED JEWEL inlaid at the center. Missy carries this pistol at all times.

Missy rushes over to grab Mercer by the hand. She picks up his boots and stuffs them in his arms.

MERCER
I'm not hiding in the closet.

Missy then escorts Mercer to a GRANDFATHER CLOCK in her boudoir. She opens it, revealing a HIDDEN STAIRCASE inside.

MISSY
We cannot let Mr. Faulkner learn about us, Mr. Mercer. I believe your partner has taken a fancy to me, and he would be positively devastated to learn that you and I were lovers.

MERCER
"Lovers?"

Mercer likes the sound of this word. Missy ignores him.

MISSY
Finish dressing in the alley and please re-enter through the front.

MERCER
Don't let on to what I told you.

Missy nods. *I won't.* Mercer vanishes inside the clock.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S APARTMENTS - DAY

Moments later, the door to Missy's boudoir opens, revealing the delectable Missy Hume in her revealing silk robe.

MISSY
Welcome back to Brimstone, Mr. Faulkner.

Faulkner removes his soft fur bowler hat. He grins at her with puppy dog eyes.

FAULKNER
Ms. Hume.
(to Chow)
Don't wait up for us, Chow.

Faulkner doffs his hat and tosses a grin at Chow.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S BOUDOIR - CONTINUOUS

As soon as Missy Hume shuts the door behind Faulkner, the Pinkerton moves in and kisses her full on the mouth. His hands roam inside her silk robe.

MISSY
There's no time.

FAULKNER
There's always time. Especially when you hear the intelligence that we brought back...

Faulkner goes in to kiss her again. Missy wants to give in to a second flight of passion, but she must hold him back.

MISSY
All in due time. But your partner is to arrive here any moment now.

Missy moves fusses with Faulkner's tie and his pocket square.

MISSY (CONT'D)
And I believe that Mr. Mercer has taken a fancy to me. He must not learn that you and I are lovers --

FAULKNER
"Lovers?"

MISSY
-- As this revelation would positively <u>devastate</u> him.
(MORE)

MISSY (CONT'D)
Now, go outside and wait in my office. Our secret must be kept.

Missy kisses Faulkner in a passionate good-bye.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

EXT. THE GALLOWS TREE - DAY

Drake and Billjohn make their way up a steep, rocky hill in a barren landscape long forgotten by man. Though this is mid-day, the sky here is cold and dead. Light though dark. The men trudge up the final steps of a hard climb. Drake is winded. Billjohn looks ready to die. Reaching the summit --

They come face-to-face with THE GALLOWS TREE. Though the tree is long dead, it draws strength from the tortured souls of its occupants. SEVEN UNDEAD hang from fraying ropes, trapped in their tortured moment of death for eternity.

Drake clears his throat and addresses the tree:

DRAKE
I seek an audience with the spirits of the Tree. I'm --

A **HANGED OLD MAN** speaks back to him. His voice is strangled.

HANGED OLD MAN
-- We know who you are, Drake Sinclair.

The **HANGED CRONE** further up the tree chimes in.

HANGED CRONE
And we know why you are here.

Unsettled by the whole experience, Billjohn takes a step away from Drake. Drake admonishes him with a look.

Other damned souls speak from the tree, all of them different voices of a single consciousness. A **YOUNG PROSTITUTE.** A **RAILROAD BARON.** A **BANKER.** A **LAWYER.** A **MURDERER.**

HANGED BANKER
You seek the general's riches.

HANGED MURDERER
The wealth of dead men.

HANGED YOUNG PROSTITUTE
Dangerous as warlock's blood and rotten as witch's milk.

HANGED RAILROAD BARON
But this one dares to seek it.

DRAKE
I don't think he'll miss it. The general's long dead.

A macabre CHORUS OF LAUGHTER intones from the tree.

HANGED LAWYER
And so are we!

HANGED OLD MAN
There are souls that not even death can find, Drake Sinclair.

BILLJOHN
You sayin' General Hume's alive?

HANGED CRONE
General Hume again walks the Earth.

HANGED LAWYER
In a manner of speaking.

More CHATTERING LAUGHTER from the Gallows Tree prompts Drake and Billjohn to exchange a concerned look. Then, silence.

HANGED OLD MAN
Great evil has awoken.

HANGED CRONE
One that looks to blanket the Earth in darkness.

HANGED OLD MAN
There is only one who can stem the coming dark.

DRAKE
I'll take it under advisement.

This elicits MOCKING LAUGHTER from the tree.

HANGED LAWYER
He thinks it's him!

HANGED MURDERER
What arrogance!

Annoyed, Drake presses on.

DRAKE
I came here about a vault.

HANGED YOUNG PROSTITUTE
He seeks "The Maw."

HANGED RAILROAD BARON
A vault indeed. But not as he thinks.

DRAKE
I'm looking for the key to it.

HANGED MURDERER
Six Guns there are, and so, six keys.

DRAKE
I want the general's gun. The Sixth Gun.

HANGED OLD MAN
The knowledge you seek can be had, but only at a cost.

HANGED YOUNG PROSTITUTE
There once existed one map for every soul lynched upon this tree.

HANGED BANKER
You hold the last of them.

HANGED LAWYER
Destroy it, Drake Sinclair.

HANGED RAILROAD BARON
Destroy the map you carry so that no others may find us and so that we can at long last know peace.

Drake takes out match and STRIKES it on his boot-heel.

DRAKE
Tell me what I want to know, and I'll torch the map right here.

HANGED CRONE
The general's gun rests with a man whose name is not his own.

HANGED OLD MAN
You knew him once as "Von Allen."

Drake steps forward, surprised. *I know that man.* He holds the match close to the map to entice the spirits of the tree.

DRAKE
I did. What's his name now?

HANGED MURDERER
"*Montcrief*." *Now of Española.*

Drake smiles. He pulls the match away from the map.

HANGED RAILROAD BARON
You must destroy the map!

HANGED YOUNG PROSTITUTE
He promised to destroy it!

DRAKE
But what if someday I have more questions for you folks?

Drake snuffs out the match and begins folding up the map.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Being an oracle, I figured you would've seen that coming.

Drake pockets the map and begins his descent down the hill.

HANGED CRONE
Past and future are an unbroken ring, Drake Sinclair!

HANGED OLD MAN
You will learn! Hubris is but the mother of humility!

Billjohn quickly follows after his partner as the spirits of the Gallows Tree WAIL in despair behind them...

REVOLVER CUT TO:

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S OFFICE - DAY

Missy Hume's professional offices are finished in an Oriental style. The Pinkertons sit before a huge oaken desk, both dressed in bespoke suits. Out of gentlemen's courtesy, each man has removed his bowler hat and holds it in his lap.

Missy Hume sits opposite them on the business end of the desk. Her manservant Chow hovers, never far from her side.

FAULKNER
We found your monk, Ms. Hume.

Mercer jumps in, finishing Faulkner's thought.

MERCER
He's going by the name "Montcrief."

As Faulkner jumps back ahead of Mercer, Missy's eyes move from one man to the other as they vie for her affections.

FAULKNER
This man has apparently possessed the gun since it was taken from your late husband.

Missy is quick to correct Faulkner.

MISSY
Stolen.

MERCER
We didn't just get a name. We got a place.

Sitting deep in her button-tufted leather desk chair, Missy takes in the information with an almost sexual delight.

FAULKNER
And all of it not even a days' ride from here.

Missy can't believe it. *So close all this time.*

MISSY
Waste no time. I want you to leave this afternoon. Chow will supply you with whatever men you need.

Faulkner smirks with professional confidence.

FAULKNER
We have it on good authority that its just that sickly old man, his daughter, and a couple of farm hands...

MISSY
Tell me, Mr. Faulkner, what do you know about the Sixth Gun?

FAULKNER
Just what you've told us.

MISSY
Then I assure you, you know nothing about what that pistol is capable of. The Sixth Gun and its siblings are the keys to unimaginable power.

Faulkner looks at Mercer. *What are we walking into?*

MISSY (CONT'D)
If you think you need six men, take a dozen. If you think you need a dozen, take two.

MERCER
Twenty four guns... ?

MISSY
Over the last six months, I have employed you at substantial expense to locate and acquire this gun.
(beat)
It is paramount that you achieve success on the first attempt, as that will be your only attempt.

Missy stands from her desk. The Pinkertons take this as a cue that it's time to go. They stand up, as well, donning their hats as they turn to leave. Missy calls after them:

MISSY (CONT'D)
One last thing -- and I cannot stress this enough -- do not, for any reason, lay hands on that gun. I want you to bring both the weapon and its owner here. Alive.

FAULKNER
Not to worry, Ms. Hume.
(tipping his hat)
We're professionals.

MISSY
Good. Because I very much like you boys. And I'd hate to have to kill one of you.

The Pinkertons eyeball each other, then Missy Hume. She gives them an easing but menacing smile.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

In the bedroom of the two room Montcrief farmhouse, death stalks **THE PREACHER MONTCRIEF** (60s), a man whose weight has been reduced by a third from his healthy days. A COUGHING fit takes hold of him. It's Consumption. And it's bad.

Curtains flap in the gentle daytime breeze, heralding Becky Montcrief's hurried entry. She races to her father's side, holding his head up while she hands him a handkerchief to cover his mouth and catch whatever foulness he brings up.

BECKY
Here. Try and sit back, papa.

Exhausted and with a hint of fresh blood on his lips, the preacher sits back in the bed. Becky removes an ancient, leather-bound HOLY BIBLE from beneath her father's arm and places it on the side table.

Becky opens a jar of salve and rubs it into his chest. As she does so, her hair swings down across her father's face. Montcrief sweeps the hair behind Becky's ear. He stares:

MONTCRIEF
Look at you, Becky...
(wheezing breath)
You were the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen the day God brought you into my life... All the days between haven't changed that a bit.

BECKY
I probably got it from my mother.

Montcrief just smiles back at her.

MONTCRIEF
I'm so sorry to have robbed you of your youth. I want you to go, Becky. Go and live your life.

BECKY
This farm <u>is</u> my life, papa.

MONTCRIEF
And you're no better at making it work than I was.

Becky bristles at the challenge to her competence.

BECKY
It's working fine.

MONTCRIEF
My loving, willful girl. You've given enough days to me and this silly plot of dirt. You don't need to stay just to watch us rot.

This notion takes the air out of Becky. She sits back.

Montcrief falls into another COUGHING FIT. Becky applies more salve, desperate to soothe him.

BECKY
A new doctor's come to town --

MONTCRIEF
-- No more doctors, Becky.

BECKY
I'm taking you in the morning.

Montcrief is far too weak to offer much of an argument.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - LATER THAT DAY

A luxury stagecoach is parked atop a high ridge. VALETS and PORTERS prepare an elaborate meal while tough-looking GUN-THUGS mill about, drinking and or tending to their weapons.

The Pinkerton detectives Faulkner and Mercer stand at the precipice of the ridge overlooking an expanse of flat ground. The fiery afternoon sun is to their backs. This is by design, done to obscure their position. The Pinkertons gaze down into the flatlands through telescoping LOOKING GLASSES made of fine ebony and accented by polished brash rings.

FAULKNER
I count two farmhands...

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

A distorted but magnified look onto the MONTCRIEF FARM.

MERCER (O.S.)
No sign of the monk or the girl.

ON THE PINKERTONS

Who collapse their looking glasses at once.

Mercer and Faulkner turn to the EIGHTEEN HIRED GUNS waiting behind them in a temporary encampment. Horses have been tethered off and packs open and cookfires started. An ARMORED STAGECOACH is parked there, as well.

MERCER (CONT'D)
Surround the farmhouse and set fire to the barn.

The **LEAD GUN-THUG** (40s), a bearded bruiser of a man, asks:

LEAD GUN-THUG
Thought we was lookin' for some old man.

FAULKNER
These people are poor farmers, and so their farm is their life. Set their lives aflame, and they will come to you.

Mercer purses his lips against a pinched thumb and index finger, simulating sucking liquid through a straw:

MERCER
You will draw them out as a surgeon draws sepsis from a wound.

FAULKNER
Kill the farmhands, but <u>not</u> the old man or the girl.

LEAD GUN-THUG
What 'bout you two city boys?

FAULKNER
We are going to have dinner.

A MURMUR OF DISCONTENT ripples through the hired guns.

The lead gun-thug lays a hand on his pistol's grip.

LEAD GUN-THUG
Sounds like a raw deal.

<u>Mercer draws his weapon and SHOOTS the lead gun-thug right between the eyes</u>. Mercer is a quick draw and deadly.

FAULKNER
I suppose that's what makes us management and you fellows labor.

The rest of the hired guns re-calibrate their perceptions.

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - BARN - DAY

Three of the Pinkertons' GUN THUGS ride toward the Montcrief barn. They carry FLAMING TORCHES despite it being mid-day.

<u>END OF ACT 1</u>

ACT 2

INT. ABANDONED BARN - LATE AFTERNOON

This termite and weather-eaten barn saw its last days years ago. Now it just waits for a stiff breeze to finish the job.

A **SIMPLE CARPENTER** (20s) with a canvas bag of tools slung over his shoulder walks through surveying the barn.

SIMPLE CARPENTER
Gee, mister, I don't know this barn's something that can be saved.

Silas Hedgepeth waits for him. Tall and narrow, Silas wears a black suit, white shirt, tie and tall top hat. He looks like an undertaker. He points with a long finger...

Laid out on a table is General Hume's SNAKEWOOD COFFIN.

SILAS
Open it.

The folksy carpenter boggles at the coffin. He goes in for a closer inspection of the strange-looking wood.

SIMPLE CARPENTER
My gosh. I ain't never seen no wood like this.

Silas just looks back at him.

The carpenter shrugs and goes at the coffin with a hand drill. CORKSCREW SHAVINGS emerge from the hole. But they aren't wood shavings -- they're the remnants of the iron hand-drill, which the carpenter has quickly ground down to a nub.

The coffin doesn't bear a mark on it. The carpenter gulps and returns to his bag. He removes a SAW.

With the saw, the carpenter goes to work on the top of the coffin. Back and forth, back and forth. Metal GRINDS on wood. After an honest first effort, the carpenter pulls the saw away to look at the snakewood. Still, not a mark.

He looks at the saw. The teeth that touched the snakewood have been worn down to a smooth, dull edge. Sheepish:

SIMPLE CARPENTER (CONT'D)
I don't reckon I got the right tools for this job, mister.

Unblinking, Silas draws his EVIL PISTOL. *BANG!*

The earth swallows the carpenter whole.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - LIVING AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

Becky Montcrief reviews an ACCOUNTING LEDGER at a small eating table in the farmhouse's equally small living area. The Juans stand over the table, awaiting the outcome.

TALL JUAN
Es bueno or *es malo*?

Every calculation Becky made has resulted in a NEGATIVE NUMBER. Her father's farm is bleeding to death. She forces a pained smile for the Juans' benefits.

Sensing her distress, Short Juan intervenes.

SHORT JUAN
We stay. You pay after harvest.

Becky looks up at a farmhouse window. Her face wilts.

BECKY
The barn!

DARK SMOKE billows upward outside the window.

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - LATE AFTERNOON

PIGS SQUEAL and HORSES SCREAM. <u>The barn is aflame</u>.

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - LIVING AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

Having gathered BUCKETS for water, Becky and Tall Juan run for the farmhouse door. Short Juan observes at the windows. Something doesn't add up for the seasoned old farmhand.

As Becky races for the door, Short Juan grabs her arm.

SHORT JUAN
Wait, *señorita* --

BECKY
The barn, Juan!

SHORT JUAN
Banditos.

The word is barely a whisper.

Becky pulls free from Short Juan. She grabs the double barreled SHOTGUN leaning against the door jamb.

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - DAY

Becky storms outside to find ARMED GUN-THUGS closing in on her farm from all angles. Though wide-eyed, she doesn't panic. Becky shoulders up her shotgun, finds the nearest one and fires BOTH BARRELS in his direction, dropping him.

Rifle and pistol fire *CRACKS* in response. Becky runs back for the cover of the farmhouse. As WOLFMOTHER'S *Joker and the Thief* cranks up to full volume --

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - DAY

Becky runs inside to take cover, SLAMMING the door behind her. There, Tall Juan is pressed up against the wall to the door's left, and Short Juan to the right.

BECKY
We don't have anything to steal!

RIFLE BULLETS answer. They BITE into the farmhouse walls.

A CHUNK of wall blows out just six inches above Short Juan's head. Another CHUNK blows out just six inches below Tall Juan's crotch. Each Juan is saved by his respective height.

Becky springs into action. She wedges a chair beneath the door latch to keep the door jammed shut.

A gunrack holds a RIFLE and a SHOVEL. Becky takes stock. Two guns but three potential shooters. She hands the rifle to Tall Juan and the shovel to Short Juan.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - LATE AFTERNOON

A distant shot reverberates across the heavens, grabbing the attention of Mercer and Faulkner's reinforcements.

Mercer and Faulkner squat over a pan-roasted rabbit, which they eat with cloth napkins and silverware. Faulkner KILLS something that lands on his neck.

FAULKNER
Damned flies out here are the size of sparrows.

MERCER
Status report.

The **SPOTTER** (20s), one of Chow's men, watches the action at the Montcrief farm through a LOOKING GLASS.

SPOTTER
We have a man down.

MERCER
Fools started shooting too early.

Not seeming to give too much of a shit, Mercer eats a forkful of rabbit.

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

CRASH! A window shatters in the farmhouse bedroom. One of the GUN-THUGS tries to enter through the window.

BANG! SHORT JUAN drops him with a blast from the rifle as he and Becky race inside the bedroom.

There, they find the skeletal MONTCRIEF up and out of bed.

BECKY
Men with guns. At least a dozen of them. What could they want, papa?

Montcrief must stabilize himself by hanging onto the bed.

MONTCRIEF
There's a box on the top shelf of the closet --

The winded Montcrief HACKS a cough which forces him to sit back down on the bed. He points weakly to the CLOSET --

MONTCRIEF (CONT'D)
Bring it to me.

IN THE CLOSET

Standing on a wobbling chair, Becky rummages through the contents of the closet's top shelf. Sure enough, she finds --

An OLD PISTOL CASE. <u>The case is constructed of snakewood</u>, the same material as General Hume's coffin. Becky takes it and begins to open it -- but her father startles her with a forceful admonishment:

MONTCRIEF (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't touch it!

The lid falls shut. Becky carefully removes the box from the closet. Her father waves her in and she brings it to him.

MONTCRIEF (CONT'D)
Just bring it to me.

Becky brings the box to Montcrief and lays it down in Montcrief's lap. He opens it, revealing --

THE SIXTH GUN. Black steel etched in the characters of some dead language. Like the guns of both Missy and Silas, this gun's grips are made of WHITE BONE with a RED JEWEL inlaid at the center. The jewel is marked with a Roman numeral. **"VI."**

The pistol WHISPERS the memories of Hell. Quiet with brief, sharp SPIKES in volume. As if the weapon is somehow **alive**.

Montcrief grips the weapon. He cocks the hammer and suddenly pivots with dexterity and alacrity. He FIRES a deep, deafening ROUND through the bedroom wall --

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - SAME

-- Dropping the GUN-THUG lurking outside the farmhouse --

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - SAME

-- Montcrief somehow saw this man through the wall.

He COCKS the hammer. Tracks with the pistol. And FIRES again through another wall. *WHUP!* The Sixth Gun's deep-toned barrel report sounds different than that of any other gun. A SCREAM comes from outside as another gun-thug is hit.

The Sixth Gun has transformed Montcrief from a sickly old man into a lethal weapon. He stands under his own power and walks from his bed for the first time in months.

BECKY
Papa!

Becky is stunned.

EXT. SOUTHERN RISE - LATE AFTERNOON

On horseback, Billjohn and Drake approach a rise to the south of the Montcrief farm.

BILLJOHN
How're we even gonna know this's the place?

But as soon as Drake and Billjohn crest the rise, they see --

THE MONTCRIEF FARM

The BARN BURNS. GUN-THUGS scrabble about like roaches.

BACK ON DRAKE AND BILLJOHN

Who did not expect to find this.

DRAKE
This is the place.

Both men draw their guns.

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - LIVING AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

As Montcrief stalks into the farmhouse living area, WOLFMOTHER'S *Joker and the Thief* fades into silence...

Only the AMBIENT SOUND of the battle remains.

Montcrief levels the Sixth Gun. It leads him.

SIXTH GUN POV

Through a narrow focal point at the center of an otherwise blurred reality, Montcrief sees the impossible... He sees through the walls of the farmhouse to the action outside... Two GUN-THUGS approach the front door... They rip it open...

BACK ON MONTCRIEF

Montcrief moves the gun to the front door, which is still closed. *WHUP!* He fires. Tracks. FIRES again. One shot through the door, and one through the wall.

The door suddenly opens as Montcrief foresaw, but instead of a live gun-thug coming through, a DEAD ONE does. He falls inside face-first, A SMOKING HOLE in his chest.

The Sixth Gun can "see" events just before they happen.

MONTCRIEF
We spend our lives praying that our worst nightmares never come true.

Never taking his eyes off the assault, Montcrief speaks with a strength that makes him seem twenty years younger:

BECKY
What the Hell is going on, papa?
Who are these men?

MONTCRIEF
I need you to listen to me Becky, and listen close.

Becky stares at her father through pained disbelief.

BECKY
Who are you?

Montcrief continues FIRING the Sixth Gun throughout his monologue, not missing a beat of his counter-assault.

MONTCRIEF
We lack the time for the whole yarn, but suffice it to say that this gun is of an unnatural <u>evil</u>.
(FIRES)
I've spent most of your life protecting you from it. But there are stronger forces at work now.
(FIRES)
So I need you to promise me that you will become the gun's caretaker and swear to protect it until you can find a way to destroy the G--

WHUP! The gun's report drowns out the objectionable word.

MONTCRIEF (CONT'D)
-- damned thing. You cannot trust <u>anyone</u> who shows an interest in the gun, and <u>never</u> use it under any circumstances. I damned myself the moment I took it up.
(FIRES)
Every shot you take will chip away at your humanity. Do you understand me?

In growing shock, Becky nods, trying desperately to follow.

MONTCRIEF (CONT'D)
If ever you chose to listen to me, Becky, please -- do it now. You <u>must</u> see the gun destroyed.

Montcrief tears his attention away from the action to stare Becky in the eyes:

MONTCRIEF (CONT'D)
<u>Swear</u> it to me, Becky!

BECKY
I swear!

Four GUN-THUGS suddenly rush inside the farmhouse. TWO come through the front door, ONE through a window, and ANOTHER enters from the bedroom.

Tall Juan SMASHES one in the face with the shovel. Short Juan FIRES his rifle, missing. Becky BLASTS one with her remaining shotgun barrel.

SIXTH GUN POV

One of the gun-thugs SHOOTS Becky in the heart.

BACK ON MONTCRIEF

Montcrief dives in front of Becky, FIRING the Sixth Gun at the same time as the round labeled for Becky FIRES.

The gun-thug drops as Montcrief takes the bullet himself, sacrificing his life for Becky's.

BECKY (CONT'D)
PAPA!

Montcrief sinks to his knees. The Sixth Gun falls from nerveless fingers.

MONTCRIEF
The fate of man now rests with you...

Tears stream from Becky's cheeks as tragedy overcomes her.

SHORT JUAN takes a short-range shotgun blast to the torso.

TALL JUAN wrestles with a gun-thugs for his shovel. The thug kicks him away and BLASTS Tall Juan with his pistol.

FLAMES begin to tear through the farmhouse itself now.

As the light goes out of Montcrief's eyes, they lock on Becky. His dying words come in a whisper:

MONTCRIEF (CONT'D)
Destroy it, Becky...

Becky stares at the **SIXTH GUN** where it lies on the floorboards, WHISPERING its dark secrets to her as the final two gun-thugs close in.

Becky won't be told what to do. She picks up the Sixth Gun.

A THUNDERCLAP is heard.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - SAME

WHUP! Drake and Billjohn hear the muffled but unmistakable report of the Sixth Gun as they furtively infiltrate the farm on foot. A CHUNK of the farmhouse wall blows out.

DRAKE
This is definitely the place.

A frightened Pinkerton HORSE trots past them, fleeing danger.

WHUP! The second gunman falls inside the Montcrief house.

BILLJOHN
Do we jump in, or let it play out?

In answer, Drake moves in on the house. Billjohn sighs.

ON THE FARMHOUSE

The Sixth Gun leads Becky out of the burning farmhouse.

The weapon searches for her family's murderers.

SIXTH GUN POV

Becky sees a chaotic flash... But its meaning is unclear...

BACK ON BECKY

Who reacts, turning and finding nothing there. Then --

CLICK. The gun-thug the Sixth Gun was warning her presses the barrel of his cocked pistol against her skull.

Becky does not have the rapport (yet) that the Sixth Gun had with her father. She's still learning.

GUN-THUG (O.S.)
Drop the iron, bi --

BANG! A nearby gunshot. Becky reacts, jerking her head away. But she is unharmed.

The GUN-THUG beside her drops dead, revealing DRAKE SINCLAIR and his smoking pistol.

BILLJOHN O'HENRY runs onto the scene from her opposite side.

Becky tracks the Sixth Gun from Drake to Billjohn and back. They put their hands up, but they don't drop their guns.

DRAKE
Whoa! I just shot the guy who was gonna shoot you!

BECKY
Who are you?

DRAKE
I'm Drake Sinclair, and that's my partner: Billjohn O'Henry.

With an already up-raised hand, Billjohn lifts his hat.

Becky gestures at the bodies scattered about her farm.

BECKY
And all them?

DRAKE
Looks like a bunch of dead hired guns to me.

BECKY
Who hired them?

Billjohn points with his raised hand.

BILLJOHN
Might be we could ask the spotter up on that there ridge.

Turning, Becky looks up at the high, distant ridge...

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - SAME

The spotter squints, trying to figure out what he's seeing...

SPOTTER
Gunfire's stopped...

As Mercer and Faulkner nibble at the last bits of rabbit meat, the spotter lowers the looking glass, apoplectic.

SPOTTER (CONT'D)
They're all dead.

The Pinkertons clean their hands and faces with napkins as they prepare to move in on the farm.

FAULKNER
Took longer than I hoped.

SPOTTER
Not them. Us. All our men.
They're dead.

FAULKNER
What?

Faulkner and Mercer spring to their feet.

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - SAME

Becky takes aims at the spotter. This an impossible distance for any *natural* pistol.

There's bloodlust in her eyes. Becky fires as if willed to by the Sixth Gun.

BULLET POV

The Sixth Gun's bullet moves faster than the speed of sound, closing the distance between the Sixth Gun and the spotter.

The spotter grows larger. LARGER. The bullet reaches him --

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - SAME

-- And knocks him backward off his feet. He's dead before he hits the ground.

The Pinkertons stand up. Disbelief. Then, the sound of the GUNSHOT finally trails in behind the impact.

The Pinkertons and their remaining men dive for low ground.

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - LATE AFTERNOON

-- Becky lowers the Sixth Gun after picking off the spotter.

Drake and Billjohn both stare at her feat in awe.

BILLJOHN
Holy Hell.

DRAKE
It's usually a good idea to leave
one alive for questioning.

Becky looks at the Sixth Gun. At the bodies around the farm. *This wasn't my doing. It was the Sixth Gun's*.

As if in confirmation, the Sixth Gun WHISPERS to her.

Becky drops the weapon down as if afraid of it. She backs away from the Sixth Gun, from Drake and Billjohn, and from her burning home.

Becky then falls to her knees, overcome with emotion as her life literally and figuratively burns around her.

Drake goes to Becky and crouches beside her.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
That gun's a fearsome thing, isn't it.

Becky stares at the SIXTH GUN where it lies in the dirt.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
We're here to help keep you and the gun safe.

Becky looks up at Drake, trying to process. Still in shock.

BILLJOHN (O.S.)
Cavalry's comin', Drake.

Drake looks up at the high ridge where the Pinkertons are camped. EIGHT MORE RIDERS stand abreast atop the ridge, ready to charge down toward the farm.

BILLJOHN (CONT'D)
We need to leave. *Pronto*-like.

Scooping Becky up by the arm, Drake lifts her to her feet.

DRAKE
I can explain more, but for now you'll just have to trust me.

Becky looks at DRAKE and BILLJOHN.

Then looks up at the HORSED PINKERTON THUGS, who have broken into a charge down the ridge toward them.

Then at the FARMHOUSE, which is now half consumed in flame.

Becky suddenly and unexpectedly <u>runs inside her burning home</u>.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Hey! What are you doing!

Billjohn swears unintelligibly. Drake draws his gun and runs after Becky.

INT. MONTCRIEF FARMHOUSE - SAME

Becky pushes inside the farm house, CHOKING and COUGHING amidst the smoke. The air shimmers with heat. Serpents of black smoke slither up the walls and across the ceilings.

Her father and the Juans lie lifeless just where she left them. The finality of death.

Becky crouches beside her father with tear-filled eyes and kisses his forehead and says her final goodbye.

EXT. THE MONTCRIEF FARM - SAME

Drake's gaze tracks between:

THE BURNING FARMHOUSE, inside which Becky has vanished and from where she is yet to emerge. And --

THE CHARGING PINKERTON ARMY, which draws closer and closer.

Billjohn stares at the SIXTH GUN where it lies in the grass. Temptation draws him toward it.

DRAKE
Don't touch it. It's bound to her now.

Billjohn heeds the warning. And so they wait, time passing like all eternity.

BILLJOHN
We gotta go, Drake. We should've gone already!

Finally, Becky emerges from the house, COUGHING and half-blinded by the smoke. She clutches something under her arm. Drake grabs Becky by that arm to help hold her up.

DRAKE
What did you go back in there for?

She carries her father's ancient LEATHER-BOUND BIBLE under her arm. Drake yanks her arm in a sign to follow him.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
All right, pick up the gun.

Becky looks back at Drake. She doesn't want any part of it.

BECKY
You pick it up.

DRAKE
I can't. Only you can now.

Stalemate. Drake points at the ever-nearing RIDERS.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
They're coming for us, lady!
(beat)
I'm not asking you to use it, I'm just asking you to pick it up!

Fine. Though unhappy about it, Becky scoops up the Sixth Gun and slings it through her belt.

Drake, Becky and Billjohn run for freedom.

AHEAD OF THEM, Drake and Billjohn's horses await. The now-riderless Pinkerton horses have gathered near them.

BEHIND THEM, the Pinkertons follow, rifle fire *CRACKING* --

REVOLVER CUT TO:

INT. TENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Inside a tall, conical tent, Silas Hedgepeth stands beside the SNAKEWOOD COFFIN where it is supported on two sawhorses.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT (30s) tosses aside the tent's flaps and enters with a flourish. The flamboyant mystic wears more silk and jewelry than most women, and a colorful stovepipe hat. His dark mustachio and goatee are perfectly groomed.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT
Thank you for waiting. Is that the ah, "patient," as it were?

Silas nods grimly.

Constantine examines the snakewood coffin. After poring over it with great scrutiny, he looks up at Silas, eyes wide.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT (CONT'D)
This is <u>snakewood</u>.

Constantine gasps the word. Silas doesn't react, so the mystic continues with a most theatrical delivery:

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT (CONT'D)
It's the rarest wood in creation. There are said to only have been seven snakewood trees ever in existence.
(MORE)

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT (CONT'D)
The original one bore the fruit which tempted the first man and woman in Eden. Snakewood is a powerful talisman in warding off great evil...

General Hume suddenly THUMPS inside the coffin, startling Constantine. As the general rants, Constantine withdraws.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
I do not care to know the history behind my accursed interment! I care to know whether you can emancipate me from it!

Constantine looks to Silas. Silas draws his pistol.

SILAS
Can you?

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT
My name <u>is</u> Constantine the Great.

Constantine bows theatrically as he backs up out of the tent.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT (CONT'D)
I just need to retrieve something from my offices...

Constantine exits between the hanging flaps.

EXT. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT'S ROADSIDE STAND - CONTINUOUS

Constantine the Great exits the tent and moves swiftly toward a DECORATED STAGECOACH that serves as his travelling office.

Silas steps out through the tent flaps behind Constantine.

As soon as Constantine the Great reaches his stagecoach, he starts running. Past it. <u>A sprint for freedom</u>. He runs so fast that his stovepipe hat flies off his head.

Ever stoic, Silas simply draws his pistol and FIRES --

-- hitting the traveling mystic and <u>burying him in the earth</u>.

INT. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT'S STAGECOACH - LATE AFTERNOON

Silas struggles to load the SNAKEWOOD COFFIN into the back of Constantine the Great's stagecoach. Finally, he's able to slide it inside. As he does, General Hume THUMPS his coffin.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
I have been a resident of this interminable box for eighteen years, Silas! I want liberty and I want my gun!

SILAS
I'm working on it, general.

Silas climbs into the back of the stagecoach, which is a hoard of books, scrolls and strange artifacts. Constantine the Great was also quite the clotheshorse.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Then inform me where we might be disembarking to.

Silas pauses before answering.

SILAS
Brimstone.

A GASP OF AIR sucks in through the knothole in the coffin.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
I cannot have her see me like this! Half a corpse and half-buried.

The only person Silas has more than four words for is General Hume. The way he addresses his general is almost doting.

SILAS
Mrs. Hume will be relieved just to know that you are alive and --
(thinking better of this)
-- well, alive.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
The woman is very particular.

SILAS
Your widow's also the only person outside New Orleans who's sure to have the resources to free you.

The coffin offers no further argument.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

EXT. CANYON MOUTH - NIGHT

A small campfire burns amidst the scattered stones at a natural canyon mouth. Billjohn fries up some beans.

OUTSIDE THE CAMP

Becky sits in the night. She contemplates both her situation and the SIXTH GUN, which is laid out on a sandstone.

DRAKE (O.S.)
You shouldn't wander too far.

Drake appears from the night behind Becky.

BECKY
You knew my father?

DRAKE
We served together during the war.

BECKY
My father wasn't a soldier. He was a preacher.

DRAKE
Do you still believe that even after what you saw today?

Good point. Becky stands up and pockets the Sixth Gun.

BECKY
I can't stay here. I need to go.

DRAKE
Into the desert. At night. Without provisions.

This is exactly what Becky plans to do.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
So you're survival-trained, and you know all the counter-tracking tricks to keep those riders from finding you?

Becky answers with a stare. She's annoyed by Drake's underestimation of her. Drake takes on a softer touch:

DRAKE (CONT'D)
He might not look like it, but Billjohn's a good cook.

Still annoyed. Still not convinced. So Drake beckons Becky back to the camp.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Come. Have a bite, and I'll tell you a story.

LATER, IN THE CAMP

The trio eats fried beans. Drake unspools his yarn:

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Back at the war's height, six... well, unnatural guns found their way into our world, each of them with their own dark power. A rebel general named Oliander Hume tried to collect them to help him in his terror campaign against the North.

Drake points to the Sixth Gun.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
That one was the general's personal weapon. It's the most dangerous, the most powerful and evil of all them. That one's the Sixth Gun.

This visibly discomforts Becky.

BECKY
My father never told me any of this.

Billjohn speaks up through a mouthful of beans.

BILLJOHN
I wouldn't've either. He probably did it to protect you.

DRAKE
It was your father who led the fight to keep General Hume from finding all the guns. Your pop beat him, put him in the ground, and took his gun to keep it safe.

BECKY
So this general is dead.

DRAKE
He was. But he possessed that gun so long, his death didn't take. Now he's resurfaced, and he's coming for the guns again. Over time, the Sixth Gun gives its owner the power of prophecy. It knows where its brothers are. And the army that wields the Six Guns is said to have all the forces of darkness fall under its command.

BECKY
You're serious.

BILLJOHN
Wishin' he wasn't, darlin'.

BECKY
So what's your interest in all this?

DRAKE
I rode against the general. I've seen what those guns can do. What he's capable of. I vowed I'd never let him get his hands on the Sixth Gun again.

Roguish as Drake is, this sentiment certainly seems sincere. But Becky isn't buying what Drake is selling.

BECKY
So you show up at my farm on the very same day these men attack?

DRAKE
That's why they call it "fate."

Becky looks back at Drake, her alignment yet unclear.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANYON MOUTH - MORNING

The morning sun awakens Drake where he sleeps in his bedroll. He sits up. Scans the campsite. Drake curses to himself.

Billjohn SNORES soundly. Drake kicks his bedroll. No movement. So he kicks it again.

DRAKE
Wake up.

Billjohn finally stirs. Sleepy eyes find Drake.

BILLJOHN
I don't smell no bacon.

DRAKE
The girl's gone.

A wider look at their campsite proves this out.

END OF ACT 3

ACT 4

EXT. CANYON - DAY

On horseback, Drake and Billjohn stare at a set of HOOFPRINTS left in the rusty dirt at an outlet spur off the main drag.

DRAKE
She must've hit a dead end and doubled back. Can't be far now.

BILLJOHN
Reckon our usual diet o' coaches, trains 'n card games looks a bit more appetizin' 'bout now.

Drake is unamused by Billjohn's ribbing.

DEEPER INTO THE CANYON

Becky rides alone into the forbidding canyon. She looks around. She has no idea where she is or where she is going.

DRAKE (O.S.)
When you're being hunted, it's best not to wander into narrow canyons with one way in and one way out.

Becky scowls. *They found me*. She turns to find --

Drake and Billjohn riding up on her rear. They arrive.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Hot day today. Water?

Drake offers Becky his waterskin.

BECKY
I don't need your help

DRAKE
I can see that.

He withdraws the waterskin and takes a drink for himself as they move on, cantering down the canyon together.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
I thought we had reached an understanding. Why did you leave? You hurt Billjohn's feelings.

BECKY
It all seemed too convenient.

DRAKE
So if I came two days ago, it would be different? Or maybe I should've showed up <u>after</u> they shot you.

Becky knows this is a losing argument.

Suddenly, <u>Drake draws his gun</u>. *Danger.*

Then, the Pinkertons Mercer and Faulkner and six riders appear from a nook in the rocks ahead of them, pistols drawn.

MERCER
Drake Sinclair.

Drake regards Mercer's sing-song greeting darkly.

DRAKE
You know me, but I don't know you. That must make me famous.

MERCER
<u>In</u>-famous.

The Pinkertons produce their BADGES, silver stars in fine leather wallets.

MERCER (CONT'D)
Special Agents Mercer and Faulkner, Pinkerton Detective Agency.

Faulkner tips his hat.

FAULKNER
How do you do, Miss?

BECKY
I'd be happier if I knew what this was about.

FAULKNER
It's about your traveling companions. Did you know you were running with wanted men?

Faulkner produces two WANTED POSTERS: Drake Sinclair's at a bounty of $500, and Billjohn O'Henry's at a bounty of $300.

MERCER
Your friends have made quite a living robbing coaches and trains.

FAULKNER
And running cons.

Becky regards the information suspiciously. Furiously.

DRAKE
Don't listen to them, Becky.

On either side of Drake and Billjohn, THREE PINKERTON GUN-THUGS make their way down the canyon walls toward them.

MERCER
Please. Lose the iron.

Drake and Billjohn throw down their pistols.

FAULKNER
And your rifles.

They discard the rifle scabbards from their saddle packs.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
And your boot pistol and Mr. O'Henry's sawed off, please.

Billjohn pulls a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN from his saddlebag and tosses it. Drake does the same with the PISTOL in his boot.

DRAKE
You think they send Pinks all the way from Chicago with this many men for eight hundred bucks?

Becky stops. Considers the point.

MERCER
Drake Sinclair is a professional liar.

Realizing he's losing her, Drake makes a final plea:

DRAKE
They're here for <u>you</u>, Becky!

Becky lingers on the decision. She makes up her mind.

BECKY
There's not much that's worse in this world than liars and murderers, Mr. Sinclair. As you're both, <u>I hope they hang you high</u>.

Becky turns away from them and walks toward the Pinkertons.

The RIDERS on their flanks begin moving in on them.

Drake looks for an out. He mutters to Billjohn:

DRAKE
Up for the old “split up and figure they can’t follow the both of us?”

BILLJOHN
Sure. Your bounty’s higher.

Drake frowns. He quick-draws a PISTOL from inside his coat and shoots the lead gun-thug on his side of the canyon.

Drake kicks his horse into motion up the right canyon wall --

And Billjohn the left. Billjohn draws a second, hidden SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN and BLASTS the first rider on his side.

In the resultant chaos, Drake and Billjohn head back up and out the canyon the way they rode in --

EXT. CANYON OUTLET - DAY

At the Pinkerton camp in the canyon’s outlet, their STAGECOACH awaits. Becky approaches the coach, where Mercer, Faulkner and a valet await. Mercer eyes the SADDLEBAG Becky carries slung over her shoulder.

MERCER
Do you have everything you need to take with you?

Becky nods.

The valet helps Becky up into the passenger compartment of their stagecoach. Mercer and Faulkner follow her inside.

INT. PINKERTON STAGECOACH - CONTINUOUS

Inside the small passenger compartment, Mercer sits beside Becky and Faulkner sits beside her.

The Pinkertons remove their hats. The valet provides hot WASHCLOTHS and CANTEENS of fresh water which they use to clean their hands and faces and refresh themselves.

BECKY
Where are we going?

FAULKNER
We’re operating out of a town called Brimstone. There, you can find transportation to wherever you wish to go.

The valet then provides a washcloth and a canteen to Becky, who accepts them eagerly. She drinks ravenously from the canteen. As she cleans herself up with the washcloth:

BECKY
Why aren't you pursuing them?

MERCER
Don't worry. Our men will handle them.

Becky nods uncertainly as she wipes herself off.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S BOUDOIR - DAY

In the large oval mirror at her Oriental vanity desk, Missy Hume obsesses over her perfectly kept appearance. No line or wrinkle or possible gray hair goes uncataloged.

CHOW (O.S.)
I have come bearing ah, some <u>unusual</u> tidings, Ms. Hume.

Missy locates CHOW'S REFLECTION in her vanity mirror.

CHOW (CONT'D)
Your husband has just ah, arrived in Brimstone.

Missy Hume is not one to be caught off guard, but this news turns her so white that the next shade would be invisibility.

EXT. BRIMSTONE - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - DAY

Missy and Chow cross Brimstone's main thoroughfare toward THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL, the finest in brimstone.

INT. THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Missy and Chow stand outside the door to a luxury suite in the Excelsior hotel.

The door opens, revealing Silas Hedgepeth on the other side.

MISSY
Good morning, Silas.

SILAS
Missy.

Silas opens the door wider, stepping aside.

INT. THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL - SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Missy enters the suite, noting Silas's holstered PISTOL before her eyes move to the bed...

Where GENERAL HUME'S COFFIN is propped up at a forty-five degree angle with some pillows and blankets. The presentation is elegantly inelegant.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Missy? Is that you?

Silas hands Missy an OIL LAMP.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Come here so that I might lay eyes on that angelic face.

Missy approaches with trepidation and the oil lamp.

When she reaches the coffin, firelight spills over the vessel's snakewood grain. The light from the lamp finds the KNOTHOLE and pours inside.

THROUGH THE KNOTHOLE

Missy sees parts of a face: STEELY BLUE EYES, a HOOKED NOSE and a MATTED GRAY BEARD looking back at her.

GENERAL HUME (CONT'D)
Missy!

BACK ON MISSY

She quickly withdraws, her breath snared. *It's him*!

MISSY
Oliander.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Missy, my God, Missy. You're as beautiful as the day I left you.

MISSY
You're alive. How are you alive?

Missy looks to Chow. She looks to Silas. She looks for answers. Shock has stilled any joy that Missy might feel.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Those holier-than-thou bastards tried for certain to put an end to me. But old Oliander Bedford Hume proved difficult to end. So they sealed me up in this God-forsaken box --
(*THUMP*)
-- entombed me in a cellar --
(*THUMP* again)
-- And prayed the world would forget about me!

Silas steps toward Missy, his face half lit by her lamp.

SILAS
We thought you could help.

Still reeling, Missy attempts a recovery.

MISSY
Of course. I will provide whatever resources I can to see you freed.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Well, eighteen years in the ground has left me rather strapped. I will require access to my accounts.

The brazen request chews through Missy's cool demeanor.

MISSY
What is mine is yours, husband.

Silas scowls. *Something isn't right.*

EXT. BRIMSTONE - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - DAY

Missy storms across the busy Brimstone thoroughfare, furious.

Most of the TOWNSFOLK know Missy Hume, and so they also know to stay the Hell out of her way.

MISSY
<u>His</u> accounts? For eighteen years that man was out of my life. But now, after I've built a small empire, he believes he can just waltz back in to stake his claim?

She suddenly turns and jabs a finger at Chow.

MISSY (CONT'D)
His day is past, Chow. The power of the Six Guns will be mine.

CHOW
It occurs to me that in his present condition ah, it would be difficult for General Hume to vacate his room quickly ah, were any kind of emergency to arise.

Missy considers Chow's proposal.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIMSTONE - NIGHT

Night has fallen over the sinful town of Brimstone.

INT. THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL - SUITE - NIGHT

General Hume's coffin lies on the white carpet of the Excelsior Hotel, all of it blanketed in darkness. That is, until an ORANGE GLOW begins to advance on the coffin's face.

GENERAL HUME'S POV

Through the coffin's knothole, the general sees ORANGE LIGHT.

GENERAL HUME
Silas?

BACK ON THE EXCELSIOR SUITE

Which is revealed to be on FIRE.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.) (CONT'D)
SILAS!

A long moment passes before SILAS HEDGEPETH comes around the bed while buckling on his gunbelt. He looks around the room. The best option is to go out the front door. Silas moves forward and opens the door as the general SCREAMS for Silas.

Silas steps in behind the coffin and pushes.

SILAS
There's a fire, general.

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
No sh--

-- *SWISH*. Silas pushes the coffin toward the door.

INT. THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Silas pushes the coffin into the corridor. He pushes the coffin one way, but FIRE spills into that part of the hall. So Silas steps around to the other side of the coffin and pushes it toward the other end of the corridor.

INT. THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Silas pushes the coffin down the Excelsior's stairwell. *THUD*. *THUD*. *THUD*. The coffin hits each step as General Hume's MUFFLED SWEARS filter out through the knothole.

EXT. BRIMSTONE - ALLEY BESIDE THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL - NIGHT

Winded from the rescue effort, Silas stands over General Hume's coffin in the alley beside the burning hotel. He crouches to speak to the general through the knothole.

SILAS
Might be Brimstone was a bad idea after all, general.

GENERAL HUME
Do you think indeed?
(beat)
Enough pussy-footing. Take me to Tesuque.

SILAS
That's Indian country, general.

The coffin knows this already.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHWESTERN FLATS - DAY

Drake and Billjohn cross the parched Southwest on horseback.

BILLJOHN
You reckon I wouldn't notice you takin' us south?

DRAKE
The general wouldn't hire Pinks. It's not his style.
(beat)
(MORE)

DRAKE (CONT'D)
It's Missy Hume. She's after her husband's gun.

Billjohn sags in the saddle.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
All those Chinese guns... it's got to be her. The Pinks are taking the girl to Brimstone.

At the name of the town, Billjohn slows up his horse.

BILLJOHN
I'd rather head back to that canyon.

DRAKE
We're close, Billjohn. We practically had the damned thing right in our hands.

BILLJOHN
"Damned" is right. What're you gonna do when the Montcrief girl figures out what our real game is?

Drake looks back at Billjohn. He doesn't have the answer.

BILLJOHN (CONT'D)
Can't lie to her forever.

Turning away, Drake urges his horse southward. Toward --

REVOLVER CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BRIMSTONE - NIGHT

The PINKERTON STAGECOACH rolls toward Brimstone.

EXT. BRIMSTONE - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

As the coach rides into Brimstone along the town's muddy artery --

-- A rickety HORSE-DRAWN CART rides out. The driver is slumped over the reins so that he might remain unseen. A canvas tarp covers the cargo in the bed of the cart.

BENEATH THE TARP

Is General Hume's coffin, hidden to be smuggled out of town.

GENERAL HUME - **SIXTH GUN POV**

Sensing the presence of its first master, the Sixth Gun suddenly CRIES OUT across the spiritual plane... Hume sees a clear image of BECKY MONTCRIEF carrying the weapon...

INT. PINKERTON STAGECOACH - SAME

Inside the stagecoach, the MEMORIES OF HELL suddenly whisper to Becky. Images of PAIN, MURDER, and DEATH rip through her.

Becky winces. She shifts uncomfortably in her seat.

The Pinkertons take notice. They also notice her stealing a peek inside her saddlebag where the SIXTH GUN is hidden.

EXT. BRIMSTONE - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - SAME

General Hume's coffin ROCKS back and forth as he *THUMPS* inside it, SCREAMING for Silas to stop the cart:

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Halt! Silas!

ON SILAS'S CART

But the general's screams are lost to the AMBIENT SOUND of Brimstone's thoroughfare. CREAKING stagecoach wheels. *CLOPPING* boots. MUSIC filtering out from the saloons.

ON GENERAL HUME

Who pokes nose and mouth up through the knothole, SCREAMING futility into the heavy canvas tarp that covers him --

GENERAL HUME (CONT'D)
That woman has my gun! <u>SILAS</u>!

ON SILAS'S CART

But the completely unaware Silas Hedgepeth <u>passes Becky and the Sixth Gun right by</u>.

INT. PINKERTON STAGECOACH - SAME

The stagecoach turns down an alley, passing THE SILVER PALACE, Missy Hume's place of business and residence.

This is wrong, all wrong. Becky steals a peek inside her saddlebag where she has presumably hidden the Sixth Gun.

The stagecoach ambles on. Becky's danger sense is aflame, and the Pinkertons know this. Mercer grins tauntingly.

MERCER
Is something wrong, Miss Montcrief?

Becky turns white. Her eyes dart around the passenger cab.

BECKY
I don't believe I ever told you my name.

Grabbing her saddlebag with one hand, Becky lunges for the stagecoach door with the other. It swings open as Becky throws herself out of the moving coach.

The Pinkertons look at each other in disbelief.

FAULKNER
Stop the coach!
(louder)
Stop the damn coach!

The driver doesn't hear Faulkner's cries. He GROANS before following Becky out the open door --

EXT. BRIMSTONE - ALLEY BEHIND THE SILVER PALACE - NIGHT

As the stagecoach SQUEAKS to a halt, Faulkner lunges out of the cab after Becky. He tackles her in the mud.

Becky paws inside her saddlebag for the Sixth Gun --

But Faulkner pins down her arm so she can't use the weapon.

Mercer steps down out of the stagecoach. He doesn't seem to be in a hurry, as he is careful to navigate around the mud that his well-kempt partner is currently swimming in.

Becky and Faulkner continue to struggle as Faulkner gains the upper hand on her and disarms her.

Mercer circles around behind Becky. He withdraws a BLACK CLOTH SACK from his jacket pocket. He closes in on Becky from behind...

And hoods her head.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT 4

ACT 5

EXT. BRIMSTONE - OUTSIDE THE SILVER PALACE - NIGHT

Becky thrashes as Faulkner drags her up off the ground.

BECKY
Let me go!

Mercer looks at his mud-caked partner, amused.

MERCER
You got some mud on your suit,
Special Agent Faulkner.

FAULKNER
Just get the damn gun.

THE SIXTH GUN lies in the alley mud.

Mercer reaches down to pick it up with a gloved hand. But as soon as Mercer touches the gun, he HOWLS in pain --

SMOKE rises from the Sixth Gun as **HELLFIRE** burns Mercer, who is not the weapon's rightful owner. He drops the Sixth Gun in the thoroughfare mud. His glove has PARTIALLY MELTED.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
What the Hell... ?

Faulkner stares at his injured partner. Recovering, he draws his pistol and shoves the blindfolded Becky forward.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
All right, lady.

Faulkner positions Becky over the Sixth Gun. He COCKS his pistol and places it against her head.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
The gun. Pick it up by the barrel.
Two fingers only.

Becky bends down awkwardly, feeling around behind herself blindly in the mud for the Sixth Gun...

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

The Silver Palace is alive with LOUD MUSIC that drowns out the sounds of PASSION emanating from its halls.

Faulkner leads Becky through the Silver Palace. Mercer follows, his wounded hand cradled against his body.

Becky's hands are bound behind her back where she carries the Sixth Gun by the barrel.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - S&M SUITE - NIGHT

Faulkner pushes through the door into one of the pleasure suites. Mercer and Becky follow inside.

There is a SUBMISSIVE rigged up in chains and leather and tethered to the far wall. This is an S&M suite. The half-naked patron wears a BALL-GAG. At the sight of the hooded and bound Becky, he perks up, excited.

Faulkner unbinds him from the wall.

FAULKNER
Get lost.

The patron notes Faulkner's pistol and goes without a word. Before Faulkner lets him go, he takes the ball-gag.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

The lounge of the Silver Palace is a Roman fantasy.

Suggestively-clad PROSTITUTES lounge on velvet chairs, chaises and benches where they await their wealthy clients. CHINESE BOUNCERS keep watch over the hen house. Loud LIVE MUSIC leaks through the walls from the attached bar.

Drake Sinclair suddenly staggers inside, "drunk." The usually put-together man has his hat pushed up on his head and his shirt untucked. He drawls like a cowhand.

DRAKE
All righty... Which'n you lucky ladies wants t' get lucky tonight?

The CHINESE BOUNCERS start to move on Drake when he holds up a FISTFUL OF CASH. At this, the girls flock to him instead.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mercer and Faulkner sit at Missy Hume's desk.

Faulkner brushes some of the drying mud off his suit. Satisfied, he snips the tip off a victory cigar.

Mercer peels off his damaged glove, revealing BURNED FLESH.

FAULKNER
She warned us not to touch it.

Faulkner lights a match and puffs on the cigar with a smile.

Angry, Mercer reaches for a bottle of bourbon.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Drake stumbles through the corridor of the Silver Palace with his arm around **MELODY** (30s), a veteran prostitute. Drake leans on her, pretending to need her to hold him up.

Pleasure suites lining both sides of the hall. Some doors are open with a key protruding from the lock. Other doors, about one third of them, are closed and locked.

MELODY
The Silver Palace has a suite for every fancy, darling. There's a "Pony Play" suite, or the "Eager Beaver" suite, or maybe...

Drake leads Melody into the door of one of the open suites. He puts a finger under her chin. Drunkenly seductive:

DRAKE
I want all of it.

Melody's eyes go as wide as silver dollars.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
I need to get some cash. Meantime, I want you to wait for me in here and count to one hundred dollars.

Drake withdraws from the suite's doorway, grinning.

MELODY
Oh, you are a <u>bad</u> cowboy...

Drake quickly shuts the door in Melody's face. He locks it.

DRAKE
Very bad.

Drake pockets the key and straightens up, suddenly "sober" again. He moves on to search for Becky.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - PONY PLAY SUITE - NIGHT

Drake KICKS through a locked suite door.

A prostitute rides an older john around like a horse, complete with a saddle and reins. He even WHINNIES for her.

Drake makes a disgusted face before withdrawing.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - S&M SUITE - NIGHT

Drake Sinclair SPLINTERS through the door to the S&M suite.

Inside, Becky Montcrief is bound up in the leather and iron wall rig with the ball-gag in her mouth. Her baleful eyes look up at Drake. There's relief in them.

Drake smirks at the sight. He approaches Becky, passing the small table holding the SIXTH GUN.

DRAKE
So <u>now</u> you're glad to see me?

Becky's wide-eyed PLEAS to drake are muffled by the ball-gag.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
What was it you said back there?
"I hope they hang you high?"

Drake continues his deliberately slow approach toward Becky.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
The second your father passed and you picked up the Sixth Gun, it bound to you for life. Only way to take it from you now's to kill you.
(off Becky's surprise)
If I wanted the damned thing, I'd have shot you back at your farm. Or in the canyon, for that matter.

Becky <u>demands</u> her release with wider eyes and muffled pleas as Drake reaches her. His face now just inches from hers.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
No, no. Not until you promise: you're going to <u>trust</u> me and do <u>exactly</u> as I say.

BECKY
Gibe! I gommick!

"Fine! I promise!"

Drake frees Becky from the contraption. All except the ball-gag, which Becky must take off herself. As she does, she badgers Drake with muffled insults --

BECKY (CONT'D)
-- [muffled] jackass!

DRAKE
All right. Get your gun. We need to get out of here before --

MISSY (O.S.)
-- I interrupt?

Missy Hume has entered the suite flanked by her CHINESE SECURITY FORCE, who stand in the corridor just behind her.

Drake stands between them and Becky with his back to Missy. He undoes the last of Becky's restraints and steps back.

MISSY (CONT'D)
I thought I'd never see you again, Mr. Sinclair. You don't know how <u>happy</u> I am to be wrong.

Drake uses his eyes to point to the Sixth Gun. *Pick it up!*

DRAKE
You look good, Missy. Better than the last time I saw you.

But Becky doesn't do as told. The bass-line from HOREHOUND'S *So Far from Your Weapon* begins thrumming...

CLICK. Missy raises a small HOLD-OUT PISTOL. It's ornately designed with the same kind of grips as the Sixth Gun.

MISSY
Drop the pistol and back up toward me.

Drake drops his pistol. As he backs up, he wills Becky with his eyes. *<u>Get</u> <u>the</u> <u>gun</u>!* But still, she hesitates.

MISSY (CONT'D)
That's far enough.

Missy's plants her weapon against Drake's head. He smirks.

DRAKE
You wouldn't shoot me, Missy.

MISSY
No. It wouldn't involve enough pain.

Drake moves in a blur, spinning and batting Missy's gun-hand aside. He SHOVES backward. Grabs her gun arm.

Missy's security tries to push inside the room, but Drake backs up, using Missy as a human shield to block their way.

DRAKE
(to Becky)
Shoot her!

MISSY
(to her security)
Shoot him!

But Becky races for Drake, trying to help him fight Missy.

DRAKE
Forget me! Get the gun!

BECKY
The gun is evil.

Still struggling against Missy, Drake KICKS over the table holding the Sixth Gun. The gun SLIDES across the room.

DRAKE
A little evil or a lot dead, Becky. Pick one!

Finally, Becky relents. She picks up the Sixth Gun and fires. *WHUP!* She puts a HOLE IN THE WALL near Drake's head.

Missy's security scatters as a result of the deafening blast.

The blast allows Drake to wrestle Missy's gun from her hand. He shows it to her, <u>then throws it THROUGH THE WINDOW</u>.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Go fetch.

Everyone holds a beat waiting to see what Missy will do...

<u>Suddenly, some of Missy's hairs turn gray</u>. A few wrinkles start to appear on her face.

MISSY
Move, you fools!

Unbelievably, Missy pushes past her security to run out of the room after her gun!

Drake dives after his own pistol. He rolls and pops up as Missy's security team OPENS FIRE. Drake simultaneously whirls and FANS THE HAMMER, rapid-firing back at them.

The salvo drops all three of Missy's men. Drake is a virtuoso gunslinger. He reloads.

EXT. BRIMSTONE - MAIN THOROUGHFARE - NIGHT

Missy Hume runs out of the Silver Palace in a panic to search for her gun while GUNFIRE echoes from inside. The woman has lost all composure. Pedestrians flee from her wrath.

Finally, she spots HER GUN in the hands of one of the Pinkerton gun-thugs from the assault on the Montcrief farm. Missy strides toward him with fierce determination.

The **PORTLY GUN-THUG** (30s) studies the gun in the light of a nearby torch. It's tiny against his big, filthy hands. The RED GEM inlaid on the pistol's grip is marked with a "**V**."

MISSY (O.S.)
I believe you have my gun.

PORTLY GUN-THUG
This gun?

He looks up to see Missy Hume walk into the torchlight...

PORTLY GUN-THUG (CONT'D)
What would an old lady like you
need with a pretty gun like this?

... Missy has AGED years without her gun in her possession. Her once silky black hair has gone wispy and gray. Wrinkles have revealed themselves on her face beneath baggy eyes.

The gun-thug's posse CHORTLES at the insult. Missy studies him a moment before kicking him in the balls. The gun-thug GROANS as his knees buckle beneath him. He collapses.

This allows Missy to snatch her gun from his grasp. As the posse reaches for their own guns in response --

Missy quickly COCKS and FIRES her weapon.

The Portly Gun-Thug begins RAPIDLY AGING... His skin turns to leather as it draws in on itself. His hair and nails lengthen as all the moisture is bled from his body. In mere seconds, the young man ages 100 years and falls to his death.

MISSY
Anybody else?

The posse's hands fly up. They back away from Missy's gun.

Missy has returned to her youthful perfection.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Drake leads Becky through the corridors of the Silver Palace. Eerie quiet as they try to make their escape in secret.

BECKY
So you know that horrible woman?

DRAKE
We had a thing once.

BECKY
Charming.

Drake seems to know where he's headed. Becky resists. She points in the opposite direction.

BECKY (CONT'D)
The exit is that way.

DRAKE
That's why we're heading this way.

Becky pulls up, stopping Drake.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Do I have to remind you that you swore to do exactly as I say?

Drake grabs Becky's hand and yanks her in his direction.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mercer and Faulkner enjoy a glass of whiskey in Missy Hume's office. Behind them, their GUNBELTS hang on the coat rack.

The door to the office opens and DRAKE and BECKY enter, their guns trained on the Pinkertons as they quietly pass through.

DRAKE
Please, gentlemen. Don't get up.

Mercer and Faulkner freeze mid-sip to watch Drake and Becky move past them and toward Missy's boudoir.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Missy Hume storms through the Silver Palace after her prey. She passes a TALL HALLWAY MIRROR that catches her attention.

She stops to examine her reflection; to ensure that the de-aging process has completed. It has, to her relief.

EXT. BRIMSTONE - ALLEY BEHIND THE SILVER PALACE - NIGHT

In the alley behind the Silver Palace, BILLJOHN waits with three horses: his own, Drake's and a fresh one for Becky.

GUNFIRE suddenly rings out just through the Silver Palace walls. Billjohn readies his shotgun for a fight as --

DRAKE and BECKY suddenly race out of the Silver Palace.

BILLJOHN
Thought this was to be one o' them stealthy-like infiltrations.

Drake and Becky leap onto the horses mid-stride. With no further delay, the trio wheels about and takes off.

INT. THE SILVER PALACE - MISSY HUME'S BOUDOIR - NIGHT

Missy Hume storms into her boudoir where she finds Mercer and Faulkner buckling on their gunbelts. Missy growls:

MISSY
Where are they?

Mercer steps aside, revealing the GRANDFATHER CLOCK escape.

REVOLVER CUT TO:

EXT. BEYOND BRIMSTONE - NIGHT

In a clearing beyond the town of Brimstone, Becky, Drake and Billjohn have stopped to regroup. They re-pack their horses and take stock of their supplies. And Drake and Becky argue:

BECKY
I'm fine, by the way.

DRAKE
If you'd just trusted me in the first place, your condition wouldn't even be in question.

BECKY
You lied to me.

DRAKE
Really.

BECKY
You're a wanted outlaw.

DRAKE
Did I ever say I wasn't?

BECKY
Yet I'm supposed to trust you.

DRAKE
I saved your life. Twice! What's it going to take to convince you that I'm on your side?

BECKY
How about the truth?

DRAKE
All right. The truth.

Drake finishes packing his saddle and comes to face Becky.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Your father, his name wasn't "Montcrief." It was "Von Allen." Brother Von Allen of the Order of Sardis, a secret society of monks sworn to protect mankind from the forces of darkness.

Drake allows the truth to land with Becky.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
But with him gone, it's on you to finish what he started. Right now, Billjohn and me are the only ones standing between General Hume, his widow, god knows who else, and you.

BECKY
What do we have to do?

DRAKE
Protect the Sixth Gun while we use it to track down the others. Then, we have to find someplace called "The Maw" and destroy them.

Becky's reaction to all this is indefinable.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
Only question now is whether you're up to all this.

In answer, Becky climbs into her saddle. She faces them.

BECKY
Are you?

Drake shakes his head, strangely charmed by Becky's wiles.

EXT. THE SOUTHWEST - SUNSET

Drake, Billjohn and Becky ride toward a setting sun...

FADE TO BLACK.

...

FADE IN:

EXT. TESUQUE - NIGHT

The moonlit pueblo structures carved out of the red foothills of the Southwest indicate that Tesuque is Indian country.

Far to the outskirts of the pueblo village, a small campfire flickers, throwing light on the tall silhouette of Silas Hedgepeth. Silas waits for someone.

Just then, **DEXTER BIRDSONG** (40s) walks out of the night. This American Indian is dressed in tailored clothing: a wide-brimmed hat, waistcoat, trousers, and boots. But his couture wardrobe is finished with tribal flares and jewelry and earrings adorn his flesh. Dexter Birdsong <u>wears</u> his wealth.

SILAS
Over here.

General Hume's SNAKEWOOD COFFIN lies in the desert soil.

Birdsong kneels beside the coffin and begins his inspection. Feeling it. Listening to it. Smelling it. Even tasting it.

Satisfied, Birdsong opens a SNAKESKIN MEDICINE BAG. He digs around inside the crowded bag until he finds A SMALL PHIAL that is clouded from age and the effects of its contents.

Silas watches with his hand rested on his gun.

Birdsong pops the cork out of the phial and very carefully taps out a few drops of the solution. As soon as the solution contacts the snakewood, it begins to SMOKE.

Birdsong brings forth a LARGE GLASS JAR filled with a white liquid. As he unscrews the lid, the solution inside <u>moves</u>.

The Indian DUMPS the contents of the jar onto the coffin...

Awash in firelight, hundreds of BLIND TERMITES are ravenous for such a rare delicacy as snakewood. They home in on where the catalyzing enzyme has begun to break down the wood. They find them and burrow in. Suckling. Eating. Digesting.

The coffin RUMBLES. General Hume THRASHES inside --

GENERAL HUME (O.S.)
Silas!

Silas draws his pistol to aim it at the Birdsong's head. But the Indian just watches.

The snakewood coffin, impenetrable to everything else that has touched it, begins to vanish around General Hume. Gorged termites grown to the size of sewer rats fall away from the coffin as they slip into a dormant digestive state.

GENERAL OLIANDER BEDFORD HUME (60s, undead) writhes on naked earth. His skin is an inhumanly gray and he has a white beard and whiter hair with eighteen years worth of growth. Hume wears the tattered remnants of his general's uniform, something that is now as moth-eaten and as rotten as him.

He COUGHS violently. Realizing that he is free, the general sits up admiring his suddenly unshackled arms and legs.

Hume spits up a mouthful of sawdust before looking up at his Indian liberator. Though the rest of him is pale and dead, the general's eyes burn bright blue.

GENERAL HUME (CONT'D)
What's your name, sir?

DEXTER BIRDSONG
Dexter Birdsong.

GENERAL HUME
Do you track, Mr. Birdsong?

DEXTER BIRDSONG
Anything, depending on price. What are you looking for?

GENERAL HUME
Just some guns.

Dexter Birdsong replies with a smile of GOLD TEETH.

END OF PILOT