

The Irishman

An original screenplay
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EXT. STAKED PLAINS - NIGHT

A full moon portends violence. It rises over the high plains, washing everything in a bluish light and casts night shadows on the dusty ground.

The air is still. Nothing moves, all is silent night until...

There is heard the thundering of hundreds of hooves pounding the earth. Then dark shapes pass in a line.

They are silhouettes on horseback, floating over the land, combining man and horse in to a timeless figure of motion, power, speed, determination, and menace.

EXT. RAMSHACKLE FARM - AFTERNOON

Sweat drips from the forehead of 15-year-old MATILDA LOCKHART as she pulls weeds in an unruly vegetable garden. Matilda is tall and bony, on the cusp of womanhood.

She looks up when she hears her little sister, 5-year-old SARAH LOCKHART, laughing. Sarah is playing with a raccoon beside their split log home.

MATILDA

Come help me.

Their mother, MARGARET LOCKHART, glances over. She is hanging wash on a rope line nearby. Sarah ignores Matilda and tries to get the raccoon to chase her, so Matilda pushes her long blonde hair back and returns to her weeding.

But then... She hears a low rumble.

She looks the other way and her stomach falls. Her Dad, ANDREW LOCKHART and her older brother, ELIAS, are running out of the rows of withered corn and towards the house as fast as they can. Running behind them is HANY, a gray haired black man.

And behind Hany, she sees men on horseback: COMANCHE WARRIORS.

MARGARET

In the house! In the house!

Matilda turns and runs.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Matilda enters the one room house just as her mother is pulling two long rifles off the wall. Sarah sits on the floor crying. A confused, very slightly built slave girl, CUFFY, stands beside her.

CUFFY
What is it?

MARGARET
(to Cuffy)
Close the shutters all the way
round!

Matilda and Cuffy run around the house pulling shut the wooden shutters in the pane-less windows.

As Cuffy pulls a shutter closed, she sees Comanche on horseback. They are close enough for her to see their brown skin and painted faces and the streamers they have braided in to the manes and tails of their horses. The appearance is meant to cause terror and it does.

CUFFY
Sweet Jesus, no! Sweet Jesus, no!

Matilda, standing at the door, sees that her Dad, brother and Hany will not beat the Comanche to the house. So does her Mother.

MARGARET
Shut the door and bolt it.

Matilda slams the front door shut and slides the primitive wooden bolt in place.

EXT. CORN ROWS - DAY

Out in the rows of corn, Comanche fly past on their horses. Lying on the ground is another boy, 8 year old WILL LOCKHART. Will hides his face in the grass as the Comanche pass.

When they have passed, he lifts up enough to see the warriors bearing down on his Dad and older brother.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - DAY

Andrew, Elias and Hany are just a few yards from the house but they have run out of time. Comanche ride in front of them and the three men are quickly encircled.

Andrew is defiant, but only briefly. A Comanche, the leader of the war party named QUANNAH, raises a bow and lets the

first arrow fly: it hits Elias in the back of the neck and pokes out the front. Elias grabs his neck and falls; blood seeps around his fingers.

Andrew throws himself on the boy, shielding him from the next arrow. Hany reflexively stands over Andrew, his eyes also burning with defiance. Comanche with long pikes ride closer and lower the tips.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

The window beside the front door remains open. Margaret has rested the barrel of a long rifle on the window sill.

BOOM! She fires the long rifle. Cuffy lets out a scream. Matilda flinches from the blast and Sarah covers her ears. The shot hits the nearest Comanche square in the back. He tumbles off his horse and rolls on the ground in agony.

The remaining Comanche scatter.

Margaret pulls the long rifle back in and passes it to Matilda who hands her the other. Matilda frantically reloads the hot rifle she's been handed.

EXT. CORN ROWS - DAY

Will lifts his head at the sound of the shot. The rifle fire has drawn all attention of the Comanche to the house. This is his chance and he takes it.

He raises just enough to run crouched over in the corn and flees towards a line of trees nearby.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Margaret's shots have given the men a brief respite from attack. Hany foolishly stands and rages.

HANY
Savages! Burn in hell!

As his last words depart his lips, a Comanche arrow hits him square in the chest and sinks in to the feathers.

Just then, a warrior clutching a long blade runs to Andrew and starts sawing back and forth at Andrew's hair line. Blood streams down Andrew's forehead as he screams out in agony.

BOOM! Margaret lets the second shot go. It hits Andrew in the head. The Comanche recoils backward, covered in splatter. Andrew suffers no more.

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Margaret does not mourn. She and her husband knew this day might come and were prepared for it.

MARGARET
Savages, burn in hell...

She impassively hands Matilda the rifle she just fired and takes the first back.

Suddenly there is a Comanche right in the window frame. Margaret barely aims and fires, BOOM!, but he ducks out of the way and she misses.

Another warrior appears in the window with his bow raised and he lets an arrow fly that hits Margaret in the abdomen. Matilda sees her mother hit the floor and roll. An arrowhead pokes out her back.

Matilda stands, but suddenly several Comanche hop through the window. The first Comanche grabs the rifle she holds from her and then punches her on the side of the head. She falls.

Another enters and then another. From her perspective, the room fills with brown feet. She sees Cuffy hugging Sarah protectively, but three men forcibly separate them. An arm reaches down and picks Sarah up by the hair. The girl shrieks.

The front door is unbolted and the men drag them all from the house by their hair.

EXT. CORN ROWS - DAY

Will has reached the tree line. He looks back one more time and sees his mother and sisters dragged from the house. He wants to run to their aid, but he knows he would simply join his father and brother in death.

He turns and disappears in to the forest.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Matilda, Cuffy, her sister, and her mother are thrown to the ground. Matilda does not resist; she is numb.

Through the horse legs and dust and men, Matilda sees a Comanche sawing on the scalp of her brother. Her Dad is pinned to the ground by several pikes and his head is exploded. She hears Sarah screaming and Cuffy babbling through tears but can't see either so she closes her eyes.

Suddenly, she is grabbed by the hair and in an instant, finds herself on horseback. Quannah clutches her around the

waist as the horse begins to run like the wind away from her home.

She looks back just long enough to see a warrior sawing on her mother's head and the first wisp of smoke coming from the tiny home.

EXT. ANOTHER FARM HOUSE - DAY

Will reaches another tiny log cabin just as the FARMER there has exited the home. When he sees the terrified boy running towards him, he knows the worst has happened.

FARMER
Get the guns!

The boy reaches him and falls to the ground. The words burst forth through his gasps for air.

WILL
They come. Comanche. Lots of them.

EXT. - TRAIL - DAY

Matilda is riding with Quannah clutching her around the waist. She sees Sarah on another horse. Sarah's face is a mask of terror. Further back, she sees Cuffy stomach down on a small horse. She has been tied on with a rope that connects her arms and feet around the animal.

Just then, the warriors veer off a path and in to a line of trees. They have come across another FAMILY who is fleeing through the woods from other Comanche.

Quannah stops to watch, and then he calls out some commands.

The family is run down and driven out of the woods and in to the open where the scene at the Lockhart farmhouse is replayed.

A MAN gets off a shot with a long rifle even though he has arrows in him. Then he falls under more arrows and then lances. Finally, he is set upon by warriors and his scalp sawed off.

The other MAN suffers the same fate.

Two YOUNG BOYS dodge the warriors and head back in to the forest.

But the two WOMEN still standing are surrounded. The warriors come off their horses and grab at them and rip at their clothes and laugh.

When one has been rendered topless, she scratches a warrior's face. He punches her and then stabs her.

Matilda and can only watch in numb shock. It is barely real. She looks around for Sarah but doesn't see her.

The other woman, MRS. WEBSTER, doesn't fight and after some abuse, she is thrown over a horse and tied on with leather straps that tightly link her ankles. Unlike Cuffy, she is sitting up. Her legs are forcibly hugging the horse so she grabs the horse's mane as the warriors start moving again.

Matilda shuts her eyes and hangs on to the mane of Quannah's horse.

EXT. ANOTHER FARM HOUSE - DAY

Within an hour, SEVERAL FARMERS and their SONS have assembled at the farmer's house. They hurry off towards the column of smoke seen over the trees.

WILL stays back and is held by the FARMER'S WIFE. He is broken, and sobs as he slides to the ground.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

When the brigade of farmers reach the Lockhart farm, the house is burned down and the fire already starting to burn out.

The men creep forward, firearms at the ready, heads on a swivel. They come across the bodies of the Andrew, Elias, Hany, and Margaret Lockhart.

FARMER
Matilda! Sarah!

There is no answer. Carrion eating birds land on the nearby trees; their wings make a gentle flutter. The fire in the house crackles.

But otherwise, it is quiet.

EXT. SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS - DAY

A man rides alone across the dry swamp tundra of South Texas. It is a sea of scrub, low cactus, withered live oaks, mesquite and other assorted weeds. This is THE IRISHMAN, and he is a rangy man with long dark hair, pale skin covered in scars, and light eyes.

He walks his horse slowly, appearing to conserve energy as he moves.

He sees smoke on the horizon and keeps going.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The Irishman arrives at a farm house similar but even smaller than the Lockhart place. It is burned to the ground and only a low stone chimney still stands.

He rides over to the corpse of a man who has been tied to a tree. The man's scalp is missing, and he has been shot through with arrows.

The Irishman rides around the house, then over to some tree stumps that the now dead farmer must have cleared. Near them, he sees mushrooms growing.

He gets off his horse and looks closer, then takes several mushrooms and tucks them in his bag.

He also wanders in to the first row of vegetables the dead farmer planted and picks a few beets and turnips.

EXT. SOUTH TEXAS PRAIRIE - LATE AFTERNOON

The Irishman continues West, in to the sunset.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The Irishman reads several letters by the light of a small fire.

Just then, he sees firelight reflected in two eyes at the tree line. He snatches a shiny revolver out of his bag and shoots.

LATER:

A coyote is roasting on a spit.

From inside his bag, the Irishman removes a long opium pipe. He pulls out another leather sack and carefully opens it. Inside, a large quantity of pure opium balls.

He takes some opium from the bag, places it in the pipe and then pulls a stick from the fire and puts the glowing hot end under the bowl of the pipe.

After a moment, smoke rises from the pipe and he breaths deeply.

LATER:

The Irishman has removed his clothes and is dancing naked around the fire. His torso is covered in strange tattoos.

He flails his arms about and mumbles.

IRISHMAN

I'm so sorry... I'm so sorry...
Never again... No...

Tears run down his face, which is transfixed by the opium.
He is transported...

LATER:

The fire has burned down. In the fading firelight, the naked Irishman slings a length of rope over a tree limb. A noose is tied in the end. He slips the noose around his neck and pulls it tight.

He steps up on a pile of rocks he has assembled. After a few deep breaths and sobs, he binds his own hands as best he can.

With a final breath, he leaps off the rocks and swings away from the tree.

He is choking, but the rope is just a tiny bit too long and his tip toes can touch the ground. His eyes bulge, and his breath is stopped, but his toes on the ground offers just enough respite.

After swinging back and forth for a while, he surrenders to the impulse to live, yanks his hands free, lifts himself so he can loosen the noose and falls to the ground.

Great wails pour forth. He has failed again. There is a deep penetrating sadness within him.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

The Irishman sees a wagon headed his way on a sandy trail. As he gets closer, he sees it is piloted by a BOY and sitting beside him is a MAN who has his head wrapped. This man was scalped and has survived it.

They stop when they reach Irishman. Two traumatized WOMEN are in the back.

IRISHMAN

Did you come from San Antonio?

In his inflection is the sing-song rhythm of the Irish.

BOY

We come through there.

IRISHMAN

How much further?

BOY

We been out four days.

The Irishman surveys the misery of the adults.

IRISHMAN
Where are you going?

The boy looks to the adults, but none will answer. They don't know.

BOY
Do you have any food or medicine
for us?

The Irishman reaches in to his bag and hands the boy four apples, some beets, and a piece of dried meat.

BOY (CONT'D)
Thanks.

The boy rattles the reins and the horses start moving.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR - DAY

The Irishman rides past a mission house and in to the town beyond it. This ragged collection of huts, homes, shacks, posts, stone halls, hoof beaten paths littered with dung, and plenty of fine dust, is San Antonio.

A very few PEOPLE are walking around. Those people are a mix of bean-pole thin Anglos, ragged Mexicans, and some black slaves. Each stops what they are doing and watch as the Irishman rides by.

He passes the scarred Presidio known as the Alamo, just a few years earlier the scene of incredible carnage. The walls are crumbling and people are using the inner plaza as a garbage dump.

He passes the massive San Fernando Cathedral and glances up at the towers. Just as in Europe, the Church dominates.

Just as he passes, ELOISE CARDOZA exits the Cathedral and sees him passing. She is high born Spanish with dark brown hair and a long Roman nose. She is lavishly dressed, unlike the Anglo women around her. She carries herself with dignity and the disdain of the upper classes.

She catches his eye and he gazes upon her for a long moment. She takes note of him as well and they match glances...

But then he is gone in the dusty glare of morning sun and she lifts the hem line of her dress to enter the dung-strewn street.

EXT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - DAY

Eloise is still holding up her dress as she approaches a dark, tall wooden house. It is as close to a mansion as can be seen in the town and shaded by oaks.

She stops in front of it and takes a deep breath, bracing herself, and then she mounts the stairs and enters.

INT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - DAY

She hears her father yelling for her as she enters.

JUAN (O.C.)
(in Spanish)
Where you have been? The damn church again? Damn you, women, you're fucking the priest. Whore!

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
I was only gone for a short time, Papa. What do you need?

She heads to the room where the angry voice emanates.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

She enters the room when suddenly, BAM! A metal cup hits her on the forehead. She clutches her head.

Her father, JUAN, is propped up on a bed. He is clearly ill, fat, in agony, and angry. He is propped up with many satin pillows.

She recovers and picks up the cup.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
I want more pulque. Get it.

She curls her lips in anger.

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
Pulque? Pulque, Papa? This is what you've come to? Drinking pulque all day like a common Mexican? This is what the Spanish have come to? This is what we are? No, this is what YOU are!

He crosses his arms and turns his nose up. He is old and drunk.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
*Get me my pulque, woman. What do
you know of Spain? I was born
there, and you've never been.
You're as Mexican as any dirt
farmer.*

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
*You'll never see Spain again. This
is where you die, you sad, mean,
pathetic, old bastard.*

She exits to get him is pulque.

INT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - DAY

Eloise enters the front room again and crosses to a wooden chest. She opens it and finds the metal tin of pulque. A drop of blood falls from her forehead and in to the cup.

As she pours the pulque, she begins to weep.

She spits in the cup after she has topped it off with the viscous pulque. Another drop of blood lands in the cup, making tiny island of red in a sea of white.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The Irishman comes off his horse. He glances around furtively then pulls out a metal flask from his saddle bag and drinks.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The Irishman enters one of the few solid structures in the dusty town. It's a low one story affair with adobe walls and ceiling made of heavy wooden beams.

Inside are several MEN in various irregular uniforms. All are bearded, lean, scruffy and armed.

Talk ceases when the Irishman enters the room.

IRISHMAN
I'm looking for a man named Karnes.

The heaviest and meanest looking of them all steps forward. This HUGH MCLEOD, the original Texas Ranger, militiaman and killer.

MCLEOD
Who in hell are you?

The Irishman looks around the room. All defer to McLeod.

IRISHMAN
I've come to aid in the release of
prisoners held by the Comanche
Indians.

The Irishman produces a letter and holds it out. McLeod takes it and reads. The Royal seal of the British Empire is on top.

McLeod scans the letter, snorts, and drops it on the floor at the feet of the Irishman.

MCLEOD
We don't need help negotiating with
the Comanche. And we don't need any
damned English help for anything.

All the men in the room are waiting to see what the Irishman's reaction will be. The suicidal Irishman grows cold.

IRISHMAN
I'm Irish. And I'll be thanking you
for handing me the letter.

McLeod doesn't move.

Finally, the Irishman retrieves the letter and tucks it away.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
I passed many a farm on my way here
that was smoking ruins. I saw the
unburied bodies of those
unfortunate souls under your
protection. It's my understanding
that the Comanche kill your men and
steal your women and children with
impunity. If you think you don't
need help, you're a po-faced
buggering buffoon.

The Irishman touches his hat and turns to leave.

MCLEOD
Them's words you have to stand by.

He turns back, a tiny smile creeps across his face.

IRISHMAN
I stand by them.

McLeod reaches for a belt with a pistol in the holster and puts it on.

MCLEOD
Caldwell will be your second.

Another of the men, young CALDWELL, steps forward.

IRISHMAN
Where I come from, the challenged
chooses the weapons.

This stops McLeod. Everything is settled via the pistol in his world. What on earth weapon could this man want to use?

MCLEOD
We ain't got sabers.

The Irishman produces a pistol from his coat. It is specially made, heavy and unique. He hands it to Caldwell.

IRISHMAN
You've got two hands. That will be
enough.

So, it's to be a fist fight. The Irishman turns and walks outside. The men in the room are now excited and ready for a brawl.

McLeod, who is the bigger man and senses advantage, exits with the others.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR - DAY

The Irishman removes his smartly tailored jacket and hands it to Caldwell.

McLeod removes his leather jacket and also hands it to Caldwell.

As the men gather around, other TOWNSPEOPLE have noticed and are starting to gather as well. Word of a fight spreads quickly down the street and soon, people are running.

A red-haired man walks up and starts to watch as well. This is HENRY KARNES.

The Irishman rolls up his sleeves.

IRISHMAN
(to Caldwell)
As my second, perhaps you could
explain the rules to me.

CALDWELL
I don't know. I ain't seen a duel
with hands before.

He looks to McLeod.

MCLEOD
When one man is standing, and one
man ain't, it's settled.

This is good enough for the Irishman. He raises his hands in the classic boxing stance and advances.

McLeod walks forward and throws a huge haymaker but it misses. The Irishman steps back.

The Irishman moves forward and McLeod tries another haymaker, but this time, the Irishman ducks and counters with a fist right to the spleen. McLeod steps backwards; it hurt.

McLeod raises his hands to defend himself. Irishman circles and throws a couple of jabs the reach McLeod and tap his nose.

McLeod grabs the Irishman's arm and yanks him forward and he is able to hit the Irishman a glancing blow to the head, which causes Irishman to stagger but not fall.

The Irishman circles again and throws more jabs. He is moving faster, starting to loosen up and get a rhythm, and is a hard target for McLeod's huge swings. The Irishman is trained as a fighter while McLeod is just big and strong.

Finally, McLeod charges the Irishman and size wins out. He lifts the Irishman and drops him to the ground.

On the ground, McLeod is able to land some huge punches but the Irishman slides from under him and counters. When they are rolling around in the dirt, Karnes steps in to break it up.

KARNES
That's enough. You're both not
standing.

McLeod stands. The Irishman jumps up quickly.

MCLEOD
This ain't passed.

IRISHMAN
No, it ain't as you're still an
incompetent ass.

Karnes steps between them before they can fight further.

MCLEOD
(to Karnes)
He's looking for you.

IRISHMAN
(to Karnes)
You're Henry Karnes?

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

The Irishman's face is swollen, but he is ebullient. He is eating a plate of beans and rice while Karnes scans the letter.

KARNES
Why do the British want to help
with the Comanche? It doesn't say.

The Irishman responds as he eats.

IRISHMAN
Her Majesty's government is
interested in the viability of
Texas. If your people can't hold,
and can't reach a peace, the
natives will run you out.

KARNES
Like hell they will.

IRISHMAN
They're decimating your frontier.
Your families are defenseless. They
murder whole communities.

KARNES
That's the nature of savages.
That's why we never negotiate with
them.

Irishman finishes his food and pushes back.

IRISHMAN
Her Majesty's government has pushed
deep in to Africa, deep in to
India, far in to Arabia. We've come
in contact people at least as
primitive and uncivilized as your
Comanche. The African bushmen are
cannibals. The Hindus have more
Gods than you can count and all are
offended. The Mohammedans have one
God and they demand that all bow to
him. They all take hostages. Yet
all these peoples know the same
concepts. They bargain. They
negotiate. They all want something.

They don't kill the captives
because they know it gives them
power.

KARNES

What do we do?

IRISHMAN

First, we negotiate to get your
people back. You make a new
frontier with a treaty. Buy some
time. And then one day, who knows?

KARNES

The Comanche don't respect any
frontiers. You make peace with one
band, and another breaks it.

IRISHMAN

Then you negotiate a new agreement
with whomever you must. We don't
respect frontiers either, but as
longs as the Comanche hold the
hostages, time is on their side.
When you get your people back, and
you get even a few of them to keep
to their grounds, time comes to
your side.

Karnes is unconvinced.

KARNES

No one wants to negotiate with
them; their vermin. Red vermin.

IRISHMAN

Vermin who kill your men and
enslave your women and children. If
I can talk to them, find out what
they want, I can secure the release
of all prisoners.

Karnes reads the letter again. He sighs.

KARNES

I'll talk it over with the Captain.

IRISHMAN

Please do. He's the one sort I
can't negotiate with.

LATER:

Karnes has left and the Irishman sits at a fire just outside
the stable. He lovingly lays out his pipe and his opium
stash.

He looks around, convinced he is alone, and takes a stick, pre-placed in the fire at the right angle, and puts it against the bowl of his pipe.

He breaths deeply, taking in the sweet opium smoke, then turns his eyes to the stars.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

Matilda is flat on her back beside a roaring fire with a sweating, grunting Comanche MAN on top of her. Other COMANCHE MEN squat and watch.

All for her is dreamlike and surreal. The day has been filled with death, many horrors, and strange sights.

She turns her head and sees Mrs. Webster being pumped by another MAN. The woman is limp, but her head lolls over and for the brief moment, they lock eyes. Matilda averts her gaze; she wants to feel nothing.

She turns the other way and sees Sarah sitting on the ground, covering her head. Several Comanche KIDS are taking turns delivering blows to her back and yanking her hair. Matilda opens her mouth to speak, but nothing comes out.

She closes her eyes, but screaming cuts through the fog of her mind. She opens her eyes again and looks to where the screaming is coming from.

She sees several younger women have pinned Cuffy to the ground. They have hot sticks and are poking her. Cuffy screams and kicks and fights which delights the Comanche women.

They back away after a moment, but Cuffy jumps up and lands square on the back of one of the women. The woman falls to the ground and the others seize Cuffy and laugh. This is a game they enjoy.

Cuffy is poked again with a hot stick and she pushes it away and stands again, and again, is knocked to the ground. Defiance is in Cuffy's eyes.

LATER:

Matilda has been rolled on to her stomach. Another MAN is on top of her now. Several more MEN watch.

She sees Mrs. Webster naked and curled in to a ball but several women have gathered around her and are poking her with burning sticks as they did with Cuffy. Mrs. Webster

cries out and tries to curl in to a tighter ball but the women laugh and kick her.

Suddenly, the man on top of her is off, and she hears a gruff male voice. The man is angry. There is scuffling and dirt is kicked around, some in her face. She closes her eyes again.

But then, she yanked by her hair and stood up. A much older Comanche WOMAN pulls her dress down and then grabs her by the arm. A man grabs her other arm and for a moment, there is a brief tug of war and more yelling.

But then there is the same deep male voice. She tries to focus and see where the sound is coming from. She sees Quannah watching the action but can't focus on anything else.

The Comanche women that were burning Mrs. Webster scatter. Another older Comanche woman throws a buffalo robe over Mrs. Webster and gathers her up. This is DOBA.

The man that has her arm suddenly lets go and she falls to the ground. She sees big brown feet in front of her, and turns her head up.

Looming over her is a Comanche chief. This is MUKWOORU.

His face is weathered and lined and his thinning hair is long and dirty. But his fierce continence doesn't project the murderous intent of the other Comanche men. He is older and a glimmer of compassion is seen in his scowling face.

He stares at her briefly and then yells at the younger men. They are deferential, even Quannah lowers his gaze. She looks around and can tell from their body language that the older man is shaming them.

Finally, she is led away by the older women.

INT. TEEPEE - MORNING

Matilda wakes inside a traditional teepee. She sees Cuffy sleeping beside her. Cuffy's face is a swollen mess, but she is slumbering.

There are several older Comanche WOMEN inside, including Doba. One of the women passes her a Comanche smock. She gestures that Matilda is to put it on.

Matilda painfully takes her dress off. She tries to hide herself as much as she can. Then she pulls the smock over her head.

MATILDA
My sister?

She gestures a small person.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
Where is my sister?

Doba leaves. Another woman passes her a piece of flat bread and starts to talk to her.

Matilda understands nothing so she just eats the bread and watches.

After a moment, the teepee flap opens and Sarah is pushed inside. She is dirty, bruised and still wearing her same clothes. But, she is unhurt. When she sees Matilda, she starts to cry.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
You're OK?

The girl stands stock still and nods.

SARAH
They killed Cuffy.

Matilda pulls the blankets away from Cuffy so Sarah can see her.

MATILDA
No, they didn't. She's right here.

Sarah sees Cuffy's battered face and sniffles.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
Don't cry. Do what they want. They aren't going to kill us. They would have done so already. Just do what you're told and we'll be OK. Do you understand?

Sarah nods through her tears. Doba pulls her back through the flap and she is gone.

Matilda eats her bread as the old women chatter at her.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - AFTERNOON

Matilda and Mrs. Webster are gathered with the other women at a cooking fire, trying to squat like the Comanche women do, but it is uncomfortable.

The Comanche women chatter and prepare food, and both Anglo women try to help, but they don't know what they are doing. A Comanche woman smacks Mrs. Webster on the side of the head and yells at her.

Matilda sees Cuffy led from a teepee by a Comanche woman. Cuffy's eyes are swollen shut. The woman leads the girl to a

bucket of water and starts to clean her face. The girl winces but doesn't cry out.

LATER:

The women are all out collecting sticks for firewood. Matilda wanders over to Mrs. Webster, hoping she will speak. Mrs. Webster glances around furtively and then speaks in a low tone.

MRS. WEBSTER
What's your name?

MATILDA
Matilda.

MRS. WEBSTER
I'm Annalee Webster.

They collect wood but stay close to one another.

MRS. WEBSTER (CONT'D)
Our men will come for us. We have to stay strong and wait for them. And then they'll give these savages what God has in store for them.

But Matilda doesn't want to go there. She collects wood and keeps her eyes towards the ground.

She looks up when she hears childish laughter. She sees Sarah running back and forth with several Comanche children. They are playing. Matilda smiles ever so slightly at the sight.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - DAY

The Comanche hoard is on the move. A hundred person Comanche train is a colorful ménage of people, horses, dogs, robes, and motion. They form a long line that stretches 1000 yards across the waterless plains.

Matilda rides behind LOCO, a Comanche warrior, clinging to him desperately. Beside her she sees Cuffy clinging to Quannah. Cuffy is thrilled; she had never ridden on a horse before. All around, Matilda sees the Comanche riding skillfully with little wasted motion.

She sees Mukwooru up ahead. He rides with a fluid sense of purpose. Behind her she sees a long train of horses and people riding through a dry, limitless space.

She sees Sarah being held by Doba who seems to have taken an interest in the girl. Sarah's long blond hair bounces up and down in the wind. Doba is also the master of the small horses the Comanche favor.

She cannot deny the sight is beautiful. So unlike her former home of hewn logs and weed pulling...

EXT. SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR - DAY

The Irishman walks the main street of the dusty, depopulated city. PEOPLE eye him suspiciously. The wind blows dirt and dust so thick he can't see far in either direction.

From somewhere, he hears a massive church bell. For such a dirt-filled outpost to have a massive church adds to the dreamy nightmare quality of the place.

INT. SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL - DAY

The Irishman enters the massive Cathedral. The San Fernando is a Gothic colossal sanctuary built by the departed Spanish to be a quiet place of contemplation. It is.

As his eyes adjust to the dark, he scans the pews and determines he is alone.

He walks down the aisle and passes the altar to where the communion chalice is perched on a table.

He looks under the table where the chalice sits and finds a bucket of wine. He takes his flask from his pack and dunks it in the bucket, allowing his flask to fill with communion wine.

He walks to the pews, sits and take a hit from the flask just as the motion of someone moving catches his eye. It is Eloise Cardoza, who was sitting in a side vestibule where she could not be seen.

She stands and walks the long distance to him and sits very close.

On her forehead is the wound from the cup her father threw at her.

ELOISE
Shall I tell the holy father?

IRISHMAN
The Holiest already knows. What happened to your head?

ELOISE
You're English.

IRISHMAN
Irish. You are Mexican?

ELOISE
(with disdain)
I am Spanish.

She is quiet for a moment.

ELOISE (CONT'D)
Will you confess it?

IRISHMAN
You've witnessed it, so I'll
confess it to you.

He smiles and holds up the flask, then takes a drink.

ELOISE
You've done this before?

IRISHMAN
I've come to the House of the Lord
for what a man needs before, yes.

They are quiet. She touches her forehead.

ELOISE
My father hit me with his empty
cup. Like you, he likes his drink.

She looks straight ahead, feeling his eyes on her throat,
then stands and leaves.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

Eloise exits and moments later, the Irishman follows.

EXT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - DAY

She is deeply aware of his presence as he follows her
through the dusty streets. She glances over her shoulder to
see that he is still there. His gaze makes her sway her hips
as she walks, calling him like a beacon.

She arrives at the two story house she shares with her
father. It was formerly the most grand in the area, but now
is covered in vines, dirt and dust. Shutters are over the
windows and the home looks abandoned.

She glances at him one last time, enters, and closes the
door.

The Irishman comes on to the porch and listens. He hears her
father yell at her and her yelling back.

Then, he turns the glass knob and enters the home.

INT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - DAY

The Irishman enters and takes in the ornate room. Clearly, the Cardoza family was once important and powerful.

After a moment, she enters and is shocked to see the Irishman standing in her parlor.

ELOISE
What are you doing here? Get out at once!

IRISHMAN
(in Spanish)
What is your father's name?

She pauses. The strange Irishman is full of surprises. Even the little she heard indicates he speaks perfect Spanish with an inflection of a true Spaniard.

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
Juan.

The Irishman passes her and enters the bedroom where her father lays.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Juan's eyes bulge when he sees a stranger enter. He is instantly fearful.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Who are you? I owe nothing!

The Irishman smiles.

IRISHMAN
(in Spanish)
*I'm not here to collect a debt.
Like you, I'm European born. I come
to your house to speak gentleman to
gentleman.*

Juan is still suspicious and fearful.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
You are a British spy.

IRISHMAN
(in Spanish)
*I'm Irish, and I'm not a spy, but I
am here on Her Majesty's business.
I'm here to make a treaty with the
Comanche, who not only hold many*

*Anglos, but also many Mexicans.
Your daughter has provided
invaluable information about the
Comanche and their movements in
Mexico, and Her Majesty is most
grateful. We owe you a debt of
gratitude as well.*

Juan is transfixed. The idea that his daughter is doing good business with other Europeans, and helping the Queen of England, the great Victoria, is marvelous.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
*She is a very good girl, and the
pride of her family.*

The Irishman smiles, assured that with just a tiny amount of flattery he has bought Eloise a short reprieve.

EXT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - DAY

Eloise sits on a bench on the front porch of the home. Both she and the Irishman are hidden from the street by the vines growing up the columns of the home.

He drains a cup of pulque.

ELOISE
Is it true? You are here to
negotiate with the Comanche?

IRISHMAN
I will attempt it. Their reputation
precedes them.

ELOISE
I wish I could make what you told
my father true. But all I know of
them is that they steal children
and turn them in to Comanche. The
Anglos brought a Mexican child to
us once. He was taken deep in
Mexico and had only been with them
a few months. He had burn marks all
over his body, but still, he spoke
little Spanish anymore, and he only
wanted to return to them. One day,
he disappeared; we thought to find
his way back to them.

IRISHMAN
The native way of life appeals to
children. Here and everywhere else.

ELOISE
I don't want you to be killed.

She suddenly leans over and kisses him deeply; a kiss full of deep hunger. He kisses her back gently. She pulls away and turns her head to the wall.

ELOISE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm becoming what my father says of me. Before the revolution, there was society here. We had friends, and there were Spanish officers that called on my father. They courted me... All of them did. They were so handsome. But now they are gone. Other than him, I am alone. The traders that come from Veracruz are the only Spanish we meet. And they are mostly poor Mexicans.

The Irishman stands and hands her the cup.

IRISHMAN

You will be courted again, I'm certain of it. Great beauty always finds an audience. Now, I must go. Thank you.

He leans down and kisses her tenderly on the cheek and then departs.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR - DAY

The Irishman is walking through the town pulling off his full flask when two MEN on horseback come out of the dust and fly past. Then there are two more MEN and then three. Something is up.

INT. STABLE - DAY

The Irishman arrives and sees Karnes saddling up.

KARNES

We're headed out. Comanche raided up and down line, not far away. You want to see them, now is your chance.

The Irishman begins gathering his gear. Now he will see the dreaded savages himself.

Just then, the Stableman approaches and hands the Irishman the charred stick used to light his pipe.

STABLEMAN

(knowingly)
You going to need this here stick?

The Irishman quickly takes it and stuffs it in his bag. He glances at Karnes, fearful that Karnes has seen this interaction.

The Stableman holds his gaze for a moment longer than needed. The Irishman reaches in to his bag and pulls out a dollar bill.

IRISHMAN
You're the best stableman in Texas!

The stableman pockets the bill and leaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF TOWN - DAY

Karnes and the Irishman ride out of town and see a gathering of MEN up ahead.

KARNES
Let me talk.

EXT. RANGER GATHERING - DAY

They reach a group of hard, tough, skinny, hairy men who are weighted down with packs and guns and prepping for a long ride through hard country to be followed by a deadly fight.

Waiting patiently are THREE APACHE, including the oldest one, POCAROCO.

Karnes and the Irishman arrive. McLeod steps forward, obviously not happy to see the Irishman.

MCLEOD
(to the Irishman)
We ain't riding to negotiate, so
you can turn yourself around.

KARNES
He's coming at my invitation.

MCLEOD
The hell he is.

KARNES
I'm an officer in this battalion,
and I say he's coming. Now hear me.
We're going to fight, but we might
need to negotiate at some point to
get our people back. He can help us
there. And, he's willing. We don't
know how many we'll face.

McLeod is still not convinced.

MCLEOD
Can he shoot?

KARNES
(to the Irishman)
Can you shoot?

Irishman pulls his coat back revealing the pistol he carries.

McLeod calls to Caldwell.

MCLEOD
Matty...

Caldwell, who's been watching, knows what to do. He walks out a few feet, then takes a wide brimmed hat and throws it in the air.

The Irishman slips the silver pistol out of its cover and fires at the hat right at the peak of its arc.

The hat hits the ground and Caldwell crosses to it. He picks it up and sticks his finger through the hole in it.

CALDWELL
God damn! I didn't think he'd hit it.

So, Irishman can shoot. McLeod knows he's going but still isn't happy about it.

MCLEOD
We ain't going to negotiate.

The Irishman sees the Apache waiting. Pocaroco watches all, face impassive and unknowable. The Apache are visual ciphers.

KARNES
Them's Lipan Apache. They're trackers. They'll find the Comanche; always can.

The Irishman nods at Pocaroco. Pocaroco turns away.

EXT. RANGE - EVENING

The Irishman rides along the increasingly featureless landscape with the rest of the bearded scraggly RANGERS. They number 30 tough men, and they ride quietly in a line.

Pocaroco and the other two Apache are at the head of the line, eyes watching the ground.

Karnes `turns now and again to see that the Irishman is keeping up. He is; the Irishman is a master horseman as well.

It is darkening and with it, their mood... They are in the Comancheria, the domain of the Comanche, and each mans knows it.

EXT. RANGER COLD CAMP - NIGHT

Rangers don't light fires or string their horses nearby or even talk in camp. Too much noise, too much light, too risky.

The men are sleeping on the ground with their horses made to lie beside them. The Apache are nowhere to be seen.

The Irishman can't smoke his pipe and this makes him restless. He reaches in to his pack and drains his flask of communion wine.

LATER:

It is still black when the men are up and riding again.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - DAY

The Llano Estacado is a high mesa of immense proportions that rises in Northwest Texas. It is bone sucking dry and featureless except for the occasional escarpments that break the horizon. The sun drains everything of color.

For centuries, travelers would drive stakes in to the ground to guide others where landmarks are scarce, thus the name Staked Plains.

The men are following along a barely discernible trail of hoof prints that go further North and West.

Karnes drops back and comes beside the now miserable Irishman.

KARNES

Tracks are getting fresher.

IRISHMAN

Won't they see us coming?

KARNES

That's why we're going to camp soon, rest the horses and ride at night, try to come up on them when they have fires. Comanche never posts a watch. Won't nobody talk when we're this close so just watch what I do.

IRISHMAN
We won't light a fire?

No fire, no opium.

KARNES
Of course not.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - NIGHT

The men have rested and now are preparing to fight. Everyone, including Karnes and the Irishman, checks their weapons by the sliver of moon light. Everything is tied on their horses good and tight.

The Irishman dips his hand in the bag and discreetly snorts up some opium. This burns his lungs, but it is the only way...

McLeod swings his massive frame on to his horse and the others follow. There is a pause where nothing is said, but all is contemplated.

Then, all ride away at a gallop.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - TWILIGHT

In the eastern sky is the very tiniest bit of glowing pink and blue light.

The Irishman is in the line with the other Rangers. To the West, he sees the pin prick of a fire light. This is it: the Comanche camp.

In that camp, he knows, is likely Matilda and Sarah Lockhart. He sees the fire through the haze of the opium in his system which makes him giddy.

KARNES
(softly)
We don't know how many men they have. They may rout or they may fight.

But the Irishman is transfixed by the light, adrenaline and opium.

LATER:

It is now light enough to see the outlines of teepees. The fires still burn and the Comanche camp is still in slumber mode. Out here, the fearsome Comanche feel safe.

McLeod has stopped the Rangers, giving them a chance to array in a long line.

Then, with a logic all his own, McLeod urges his horse forward and the others follow. What starts as a walk quickly turns to a gallop and then a full run as the determined Rangers descend on the Comanche stronghold.

The Irishman's eyes burn with excitement.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - MORNING

All is quiet in the camp. There are rows of traditional teepees erected in the classic Indian style, but also, many Comanche men that sleep in the open wrapped in their warm, cocooning buffalo-hide blankets.

A dog lifts his head and looks to the East. He hears something. He issues a low growl.

Quannah sleeps nearest the dog and he hears this, so opens one eye and sees the dog looking to the East. This is not good.

He sits up. Cuffy is wrapped in the blanket with him and she does not stir.

At first, he can see nothing; just the glow of the sun that is still below the horizon.

But then his eye, long trained to detect subtle differences on the Staked Plains, sees motion. Something is out there.

Then he sees it: men on horseback. He struggles out of his cocoon and yells a warning as loud as he can. Cuffy opens her eyes and looks around, trying to figure out what's happening.

The other MEN slumbering around him begin to move. The dogs in the camp all jump up and begin to bark. An older woman pokes her head out of a teepee. The camp begins to come to life.

All look to the East as they scramble, and see the Rangers starting to fan out.

INT. TEEPEE - MORNING

Matilda's eyes open when she hears the yelling. The Comanche are not early risers so noise this early is not good.

She sits up. Beside her is Loco, the man she's now been married off to and his other WIVES. They have not yet stirred.

EXT. CAMP - MORNING

The Rangers spread out from each other and are executing their tasks.

A few, when they reach the edge of the camp, slow and jump off their horses and pull the long rifles from their backs and kneel to aim and fire.

Others split and ride around the camp, planning to enter from the back and catch those who flee.

But the main thrust, which includes McLeod, Karnes, the Apache, and the Irishman, drive forward, right to the heart of the encampment.

The Irishman rides right over the closest Comanche man and fires a shot to the man's chest. The man falls. Karnes and McLeod fire at everyone they see as well.

The Irishman turns when he hears the long rifles let go a tremendous volley. Comanche fall and howl. The hot lead balls don't always kill; the just horribly maim.

The Irishman turns in to the area of the teepees where woman and children are emerging.

IRISHMAN
(yelling)
Matilda Lockhart! Sarah Lockhart!

Through the Comanche running back and forth, he spots Sarah Lockhart at the entrance to a teepee.

He rides over to her and leans his arm down.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
Come now, darling. We're going home.

Sarah instinctively reaches out to him, but Doba appears at the tent flap behind Sarah and tries to pull her back. The Irishman raises his pistol and fires. The bullet grazes Doba's ear, and she falls back. Sarah shrieks.

He pulls Sarah up to his saddle by her arm and sets her in front of him.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
Where's your sister?

Just as the words leave his mouth, he sees Matilda running towards him. She is breaking for freedom.

As she nears, the Irishman holds his hand out, hoping to swing her on to the saddle behind him and flee, but Loco has seen what's happening and sprinted after her.

The Irishman drawn and fires at Loco but misses. Loco catches Matilda her by the hair and yanks her backwards. She flails her arms, inadvertently hits him in the nose, and then breaks free.

She reaches the Irishman, and he fires at Loco again but Loco is able to weave and avoid harm.

The Irishman extends an arm to her and she grabs it. She lands on the horse just behind him. He now has both girls and he wheels the mount East, ready to flee.

But in front of him is Quannah, bow raised, arrow ready. Cuffy is at his side, and she holds a long pike.

The Irishman instinctively drapes his arm around Sarah to shield her, but Quannah is aiming at the horse. His arrow pierces the horse at the base of the neck.

The horse jumps and stands. Matilda clings to the Irishman, trying not to fall. As the horse spins, the Irishman tries to level a shot at Quannah, but he and Cuffy have disappeared.

After a torturous effort to hang on, Matilda falls. She scrambles to avoid being trampled by the Irishman's now wounded horse.

The Irishman regains control of the bucking horse. Matilda runs to him again, arms extended. He reaches for her, but the horse is hit by yet another arrow in the neck. Matilda is pushed back as the horse wheels up.

As he struggles with the horse, Sarah is suddenly ripped from his grasp. In a blur of chaotic motion, he sees Cuffy's brown arms grab the girl by the leg and she is yanked from his grasp.

When Irishman is able to get control of the horse again, he is separated from Sarah and Matilda by a rising sea of Comanche men and woman pouring forth. Cuffy has Sarah by the arm.

Matilda locks eyes with the Irishman, but there is nothing he can do now. Doba rushes forward and grabs Sarah away from Cuffy. Blood pours down Doba's neck and she is angry. She slaps Sarah just as Loco grabs Matilda by the neck and pushes her to the ground.

The Irishman turns his injured horse and rides out while he can.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - MORNING

Outside the camp, the Irishman passes Rangers firing at Comanche who are gathered around their long string of

horses. The enraged Comanche, the greatest horseman on the plains, will soon be fighting from horseback.

Which means it is time to run!

The Irishman rides around the side of the camp and sees Karnes, McLeod, Caldwell and others are retreating.

Smoke lies over the camp in the growing light.

The men with the long rifles have packed up and are ready to flee. The Apache have gathered behind them.

The Irishman reaches the gathering point just as McLeod makes a quick count.

MCLEOD
We're missing two.

KARNES
Wilbarger and Eldridge.

CALDWELL
I saw Wilbarger. He's dead.

MCLEOD
Eldridge!

They look back at the camp. All they see are swarms of Comanche coming towards them or climbing on to horses. No Eldridge.

McLeod calls it: they are leaving. He spurs his horse forward and the others follow in to the morning sun.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - MORNING

The sun is higher now and the men ride furiously towards the East. As they cross a few rises, they can look back and see a Comanche band following.

But for Irishman, there is a problem. His horse has two arrows embedded in it and blood is pouring out of the wounds. It slings from the legs of the tiring horse.

They ride on as fast as they can. The Ranger line starts to spread out as the stronger, bigger horses take the lead.

EXT. RAVINES - DAY

The exhausted Ranger horses press on.

They've reached a part of the plains bisected by empty river beds. The Rangers ride up and down the sandy ravines

The Irishman has now fallen much further behind. Over his shoulder, he sees the Comanche.

Suddenly, his horse stops running and starts walking. The Irishman spurs the horse.

IRISHMAN
Go, God damn you. Bloody get
moving!

But this horse has bled out and is not going further. It slows further and then stops. Then, it goes down on its front knees.

Up ahead, the Irishman sees the last Ranger, McLeod, pass over a ravine and disappear. Behind him, he sees the Comanche hoard getting closer.

He jumps off the horse just as it rolls on to its side, grabs his packs and starts running toward the lip of the ravine.

As he runs, he pulls bullets out of his pack and tries to reload his pistol. He drops several precious rounds and steps back to retrieve them.

The Comanche are now close enough that he can hear hoof beats behind him.

He looks to the lip of the ravine and back at the Comanche. He will not make it... This is it. He stands straight, loads a final round in his pistol, draws himself up straight, raises the pistol, and faces the Comanche, determined to kill until his is killed...

But then he hears a fusillade of firing behind.

EXT. TOP OF THE RAVINE - MORNING

The Rangers have assembled on the ridge line and started to fire everything they have left. McLeod is front and center, calling out to the men.

EXT. RAVINES - MORNING

The Irishman turns and runs with his eyes closed as fast as he can towards the Ranger firing line. The Comanche wave reaches him, but the Ranger fire can also reach this far and the Comanche blink. They stop and turn.

As he reaches the base of the ridge and starts up, he glances over his shoulder and sees the Comanche retreat. They've lost enough people and won't press the fight today.

EXT. TOP OF THE RAVINE - MORNING

The Irishman tops the ridge as the Rangers are headed down the other side and starting to mount back up.

He tumbles down the slope and grabs an extra mount, slings his bag over the saddle and climbs up.

McLeod passes.

IRISHMAN
Good God, man, thank you.

But McLeod doesn't turn or respond, and all start riding hard away from the Comanche domain.

EXT. RANGER CAMP - NIGHT

The exhausted men have allowed a limited camp fire. The Irishman pulls a small stick from the fire, lifts his pack and stands.

KARNES
Where you going with that?

IRISHMAN
I'm going to the toilet. You fancy joining?

KARNES
You're making a fire for your toilet?

IRISHMAN
This is just so I don't shit on a rattlesnake.

Karnes laughs.

EXT. SCRUB BRUSH - NIGHT

The Irishman squats with his pants around his ankles and takes a deep pull from the opium pipe. He exhales and lets the drug wash through him.

EXT. RANGER CAMP - NIGHT

The Irishman is relaxed and humming an Irish tune.

KARNES
I never met an Irishman that wasn't full of music.

IRISHMAN

I've not heard a lick of music from you.

KARNES

I ain't Irish.

The Irishman laughs.

IRISHMAN

Your name is Karnes, lad. I was born in Karnes County. You're as Irish as Paddy's pig.

Several of the other men have heard this and laugh. Karnes doesn't think it's too funny.

KARNES

I ain't Irish. Karnes is English.

CALDWELL

Wait a minute. I think he's right. Karnes does sound Irish. Caldwell is English, but Karnes is Irish.

IRISHMAN

Caldwell is Scots, you tit.

The other men laugh. The Irishman is high and enjoying himself.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

McLeod is Scots. Eldridge was English, Wilbarger German... Bloody hell, none of you knows what you are?

MCLEOD

We know what we ain't, and it's Irish. Except Karnes.

IRISHMAN

The lot of ya has Irish beating through your veins. I can look at you all and see it. You're all American mongrels. You're Irish in culture as well. The English, the Spanish, they take their culture wherever they go. The English will take tea in the middle of a bloody desert. The Spanish build massive cathedrals wherever they go. But the Irish, we adapt. Your Irish is the only reason you're still bloody alive out here. Everywhere the Irish go, they're warriors and fighters. You should thank your mothers for being Irish.

The Irishman looks around.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
Where are the bloody Apache?

Karnes points in to the dark. Irishman grabs his pack and walks away.

EXT. APACHE CAMP - NIGHT

The Irishman sees the tiny Apache camp fire and walks to it. The Apache are squatting around the fire but they don't move or speak.

The Irishman squats and opens his bag. He lifts out the mushrooms he collected earlier and shows them to Pocaroco.

IRISHMAN
What will happen if I eat these?
Will I die?

Pocaroco looks at the mushrooms and back at the Irishman.

POCAROCO
No.

The Irishman divides the mushrooms and hands a portion to each Apache. The Irishman slowly chews his, and the Apache follow suit.

The Irishman takes out the opium pipe, fires it up and hands it to Pocaroco. It passes around to the others. They are in for the experience together.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - NIGHT

The Irishman staggers through the desert, but he doesn't see darkness. Through his eyes, the desert is alive with light. He sees creatures on the ground, birds in the air, and everything around him alive with motion and color.

The sky is alive with light and motion as well. He sees stars fly by, and the moon pulsates with life.

Then he sees mounted Comanche, but they are not moving. They are watching him. He walks to them, in the eerie night light, and sticks his hand out. They don't move or speak, but are glowing with fire.

Behind them, he sees Matilda, and then Sarah, and walking towards him, bare naked, Eloise. Her skin glows and shimmers.

When he looks back to the Ranger fire light, and then back, the Comanche are all gone. The girls fade as well and are gone.

IRISHMAN

Wait!

He walks towards where they were but they are replaced by all manner of strange PEOPLE, people who speak in a deep Irish accent and wear the clothes of his homeland. Their voices are muffled...

Finally, he sits and then lays back. Pocaroco sits beside him.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

The Irishman pats Pocaroco on the back.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter. Everything is a big circle.

Then he notes Pocaroco has a standard issue six shooter at his side. The Irishman takes it and holds it with both hands. It glows a freakish silver. He opens the chamber and takes out all the rounds but one.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

I shall cast my fate upon the Gods, but still give myself a fighting chance...

Then he spins the chamber, snaps it closed with a flick of the wrist and puts the barrel to his head. Pocaroco is impassive.

Click. Nothing. He smiles.

Then he pulls the trigger again.

Click.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

The Gods favor things in triplets...

But before he can pull the trigger again, Pocaroco snatches the pistol away, puts in back in place and walks away.

The Irishman just leans back in the sand and watches the stars hurl across the sky.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

The entire COMANCHE BAND is enraged at what has happened to them and poor Eldridge is going to bear the brunt of their anger. All (less Mukwooru) has assembled at a giant bonfire.

Matilda has been forced to sit right beside the fire to witness. Her bloodied face indicates the beating she has received. Beside her, Mrs. Webster silently weeps.

Eldridge has already been beaten, burned, cut and bled, but now he has been tied to a long pike. Several men hoist the pike on to a log that runs parallel to the roaring fire.

Eldridge is now facing down over the sand beside the fire, but the pike can be pushed so that his face will be right over the flames.

There is hooting and jeering to push the white man over the fire.

Loco grabs her by the arm and yanks her to her feet. He gestures at the pike, telling her she must do it; she must push Eldridge in to the fire.

She pulls away. It is monstrous. Surely they will not make her do it.

Loco reaches in to the crowd and yanks Sarah away from Doba. Sarah begins to shriek. Doba, her head crusted with dried blood, rushes forward to protect the girl.

But Loco pushes Doba back and lifts Sarah over his head. He will throw Sarah in to the fire if Matilda does not push Eldridge in.

Matilda is momentarily frozen by the site of her sister held in the air. She must act, but face and limbs are paralyzed with terror.

But Cuffy is not. She rushes forward and pushes the long pike with both hands, which slides along the beam and stops with Eldridge's face just inches from the flames.

Eldridge begins to scream, and after a moment, his hair catches on fire. Loco passes Sarah back to Doba. The Comanche begin to cheer and howl. Cuffy disappears back in to the crowd. Matilda is knocked back to the ground.

Mrs. Webster puts her hands over her ears. Matilda just closes her eyes and looks down. Numbness overtakes her.

EXT. RANGER CAMP - MORNING

The men are packing up. The Irishman wakes. He is stiff and for a moment, disoriented. It takes a moment for him to clear his head and remember where he is.

But after he sits up and looks around, he remembers.

He rises, and brushes himself off. Then, where all can hear, he addresses McLeod.

IRISHMAN

I'm going back to find them.

McLeod is surprised, but doesn't show anything. Karnes is near and listening.

MCLEOD

Suit yourself, Irish.

IRISHMAN

Those pitiful captives they hold,
they'll all die if we don't get
them back.

McLeod doesn't respond.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

And the Comanche will be back
anyway and more of your people will
die. Your raid settles nothing,
solves nothing. They've likely
punished the prisoners for it.

KARNES

You'll never find them.

IRISHMAN

(to Karnes)

The Apache is going with me.

(to McLeod)

If I could get them to bring in
those they hold, would you agree to
negotiate, see what they want, see
if we can stop this, at least for a
time?

MCLEOD

They won't parley.

IRISHMAN

But if they would. If they come to
town to negotiate, and they bring
the captives, can you assure their
safety for the talks?

McLeod doesn't want to be in this position, but he can't well refuse anything that brings back the captives.

MCLEOD

It matters little what I say,
Irish, because they won't bring in
the captives, but sayin' they do,
yes, we'll talk. They bring back
our people; they can talk as much
as they want.

KARNES
But they have to reach agreement
with us. You aren't to make
agreements for us.

IRISHMAN
(to Karnes)
I was hoping you'd go with me.
They'll know I'm a foreigner. But
your word would carry weight.

McLeod laughs.

MCLEOD
Two brothers, chasin' the wind.

This angers Karnes, assuring he will go.

KARNES
(to McLeod)
We need fresh horses. And rations.

McLeod doesn't object.

LATER:

Pocaroco, Karnes, and Irishman all head northwest as the
rest of the Rangers watch on.

McLeod glances up, shows nothing.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - MID-DAY

The trio of men rides across the blasted, level, and endless
plains of land. Wind blows dust across the landscape, and
they see low rises in the distance, but mostly, the
landscape is featureless and uniform.

The men focus on the distance, each lost in thought.

Finally, Karnes reveals what he's been thinking about.

KARNES
My mother never said anything about
being Irish.

IRISHMAN
Maybe she didn't know.

KARNES
Are all Irish Catholic?

The Irishman laughs.

IRISHMAN
Most of us.

KARNES
Maybe that's why she never said
anything.

IRISHMAN
What were you, then?

KARNES
We were Baptists. Still Christian,
I guess. No one really went to
church much.

IRISHMAN
Oh, mine did. My mother, she was
there day and night.
(to Pocaroco)
What do your people believe?

Pocaroco is confused by the question.

POCAROCO
We believe many things.

IRISHMAN
What do you believe about the
nature of life? About creation? Who
created all of this? What is its
purpose?

The Irishman gestures at the blasted landscape. Pocaroco
waits again.

POCAROCO
We don't know.

KARNES
What about the Comanche? What do
they believe?

POCAROCO
They don't know too.

The answer is definitive. The men ride along in silence.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The men have stopped and built a small fire between some
rocks. It is quiet and still.

The Irishman takes out his pipe and the opium. Karnes is
curious.

KARNES
What's that?

The Irishman glances at Karnes, sizing up what his response
is likely to be.

IRISHMAN

This is an opium pipe, and in this bag is opium.

KARNES

That won't make you go mad?

The Irishman takes an opium ball and puts it in the pipe.

IRISHMAN

Well, it depends on your definition of madness.

The Irishman takes a stick from the fire and heats the pipe and breaths in. He exhales a long plume of smoke.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

But if you ask me, it lifts some of the load from this heavy burdensome life. And, it helps me see clearly. I'm able to let go of my worries, at least for a time. That's what it does for me. If that's madness, then I'm barking mad.

He holds it out for Karnes.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

Would you like to find out what it does for you?

Karnes is hesitant. He doesn't know much about it, but he has heard nothing good.

The Irishman hands the pipe to Pocaroco. Pocaroco does not hesitate; he breaths deeply and hands the pipe back to the Irishman.

KARNES

Give it to me.

Karnes takes the pipe, and the Irishman heats the bowl. Karnes breaths in deep.

After a moment, Karnes stands. He is overwhelmed.

KARNES (CONT'D)

Wha... Whaaaa...

IRISHMAN

It's OK. Sit back down.

But Karnes starts to walk. His experience is intense. The Irishman smiles and takes another hit from the pipe and passes it to Pocaroco.

Karnes looks at the stars. In his linear mind, a little squiggle has just appeared. Maybe things are not all as they appear to be.

The Irishman watches Karnes, observing to see if Karnes can hold and process his new feelings.

Finally, Karnes comes back to the fire and reaches for the pipe. He wants more.

The Irishman smiles and then starts to sing.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - DAY

The trio has moved further north and the Llano Estacado is Not welcoming. It is wind-swept and overcast, and a rare rain storm is passing through. They can see the curtain of rain coming their way from the west. Lightning flashes in the clouds on the horizon.

KARNES
(to Pocaroco)
The rain will wash away their tracks.

POCAROCO
Maybe.

LATER:

The rain washes over them. The rumble of thunder makes their horses jumpy but they walk on.

But then the rumble gets louder and louder and suddenly, the wind starts to pick up.

Pocaroco stops.

POCAROCO (CONT'D)
We lie down now.

Pocaroco moves as fast as he ever has. He swings off his horse and coaxes the beast to kneel and then lay down and then lies on the ground by the horse.

The Irishman and Karnes observe and then do the same with their bigger horses.

And they do so just in time. In an instant, a tornado reaches down from the sky. The men watch as it appears the very finger of God has come down to churn the earth around them just 100 yards away.

KARNES
Mother of God!

It is a magnificent sight; the black funnel twists back and forth, spewing dirt and grass in to the air. It makes a God awful roar and pulls in all the air around it.

After a moment, it lifts and clouds take it back in. Dirt and grass rain down.

KARNES (CONT'D)
I've never seen such a thing. This
is a cursed place.

Pocaroco rises; the Irishman and Karnes follow, and continue.

EXT. ROCKS - NIGHT

The men have made camp amongst some protective rocks. Karnes and Irishman are hunched over the fire. The pipe is close by.

Just then, Pocaroco returns. He sits and reaches in to his pocket, then takes out some small dried cactus bulbs and drops them in to a cooking pot. He indicates to the Irishman that he is to pour in some water. The Irishman does so and then he slides the cooking pot over a fire.

Karnes and the Irishman peer into the cook pot.

IRISHMAN
What is it?

Pocaroco is silent.

LATER:

Pocaroco pours the water from the cooking pot in to metal cups. He holds one out for Karnes, and then hands one to the Irishman.

KARNES
Well, what is it?

POCAROCO
You know soon.

Pocaroco drinks from his cup in large gulps. Karnes and Irishman do the same thing.

Karnes reacts to the bitter taste.

KARNES
Lord God Almighty!

After drinking the liquid, Pocaroco reaches in to the cooking pot and grabs the now-boiled cactus caps and holds them out for Karnes and the Irishman. Then he pops a few in his mouth and starts to chew.

The Irishman and Karnes do the same and again, Karnes reacts strongly to the horrible, bitter, violently bad taste.

LATER:

Karnes and the Irishman are both experiencing bad cramps and stomach issues. If Pocaroco is as unwell, he is hiding it. Karnes rolls over on his side.

POCAROCO
Keep inside. This doesn't last.

Karnes and the Irishman struggle not to eject the drugs they've ingested

EXT. ROCKY PRECIPICE - NIGHT

It has worked. Karnes, Irishman and Pocaroco have left their campfire and are standing on an outcropping of rock and looking at the night sky and desert floor.

But it is in no way dark. The sky blazes with light and the desert is alive with life and energy. They peyote gives them eyes to see what they cannot see by themselves.

For the Irishman, this experience is far beyond mushrooms.

IRISHMAN
Henry, can you see it? Can you see the lights?

KARNES
I see it... I see it all.

They head down the rocks to the desert floor.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The men are seeing visions of crazy, wonderful things. Light is everywhere, in beams, swirls, glowing and ever-present.

Stars move in crazy patterns. Clouds form images that can be seen against the brilliant sky.

Pocaroco is silent as always, the Irishman stares at the sky, and Karnes seems to be looping through pieces of his memories as he dances along.

KARNES
We hold these truths to be self evident... Yay, though I walk in the shadow of the valley of death, I shall fear no evil! To be or not to be...

With no particular destination, the crew walks on, seeing the heavens alive and moving above and around them.

The Irishman kneels and becomes unaware of others around him. He leans his head back, soaking in the experience of the great vast universe, marveling in the size and scope and indifference of it.

He gets up and walks again, alone now. He hears only his own breathing, but then talking. Up ahead, he sees a collection of rocks slanting up from the desert floor, making straight lines in an otherwise un-straight environment.

He walks towards the rocks, and sees kids playing on them. He hears the voices of little girls.

As he gets closer, he hears horses and men's voices. It is the sound of British soldiers drilling.

Then he passes an adult woman, standing stock still and watching him. She's Irish to the bone, and holding a knife.

He passes a man in a turban, holding a scimitar

He passes a Hindu boy, who has had his throat cut.

He passes a British soldier who has a noose hanging around his neck.

He passes a French soldier who has been horribly shot.

He passes a beautiful Hindu woman who smiles. She is holding a baby.

Finally, he reaches Matilda and Sarah, who are standing calmly at the base of the rocks. Both girls are banged up, but Matilda shows the worst of it. She has burns on her body, and there is blood running down her legs.

He stops and touches Matilda's arm.

IRISHMAN

I'm coming for you.

But she just looks at the ground. She doesn't believe it.

Just then, he hears a horse snorting. He looks up and sees three Comanche at the top of the rocky outcropping. They are watching him. They are not glowing and not dreamy looking. They look very real.

But Irishman is non-reactive. He just watches. The girls turn and climb the rocks towards the warriors and then the warriors turn their horses and are gone.

Irishman turns, and looks back the way he came. He is alone.

LATER:

The Irishman hears Karnes wailing up ahead.

He gets closer, and can see Pocaroco sitting calmly, and Karnes writhing on the ground. Karnes has removed most of his clothes and is panicked.

KARNES

I don't want it! I don't want to see it!

The Irishman arrives and sits by Karnes.

IRISHMAN

What's wrong, Henry?

Karnes is panting.

KARNES

I don't want any of this! I don't want it but I can't go back now! I can't get back!

The Irishman speaks in a calm voice.

IRISHMAN

You can go back if you want. Not tonight, but tomorrow.

Karnes weeps.

KARNES

I don't want to know about any of this. There are demons. And magic. But I don't want to know.

IRISHMAN

Tomorrow you can believe whatever you want.

KARNES

We're going to die out here. This is Comanche territory. They're going to cut our eye lids off and stake us on an ant hill. I seen what they do. They're devils!

IRISHMAN

I don't think they will do that. We're just going to talk to them.

KARNES

They live in this god-forsaken place and see crazed things. We need to let them be.

The Irishman pats Karnes on the back and lies down and looks up at the sky. He looks over to Pocaroco who sits stock still, gazing off in to the distance.

Karnes has covered his eyes and weeps quietly.

EXT. ROCKS - MORNING

The men are packing up. Karnes is extra careful not to catch the Irishman's eye.

Pocaroco arrives and finally, Karnes speaks.

KARNES

I'm turning back. We ain't going to find them. Not with all the rain. McLeod is right anyway. They won't parley.

The Irishman is quiet. He starts to speak but doesn't. But Pocaroco does.

POCAROCO

Tracks are there.

He indicates towards another set of rocks. Irishman looks and sees the slanted rocks. It's where he envisioned Comanche the night before.

IRISHMAN

Comanche? Comanche tracks there?

Pocaroco nods.

Karnes stops packing. He doesn't want to go any further on this trip, but if he turns back, he does so alone, which is also very dangerous.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

Since the rain?

Pocaroco nods.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

We're close.

Karnes nods. He can't turn back.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The men walk along. The tracks are faint, but Pocaroco sees them.

IRISHMAN

How many?

POCAROCO

Three.

They continue.

EXT. LOW RISES - AFTERNOON

It is getting late and the men are approaching a set of low hills. The sun is starting to glow more orange, and the rocks are silhouetted against the sky.

The Irishman sees movement against the orange sky. There is something or someone passing over the tops of the rocks.

He glances at Pocaroco and Karnes; they did not see it.

EXT. FLATS - LATE AFTERNOON

They have stopped at the body of a man who has been staked out in the sun. His face is hideously burned, but the white skin on his arms and legs indicates this was a white man. His hands and feet are tied to four stakes. He appears to have been dead for some time and animals have gnawed at him.

KARNES

Eldridge.

After a long moment, Pocaroco moves on, as do the others. The ride towards the canyons up ahead.

EXT. CANYON - SUNDOWN

The day light is nearly gone and the men are walking their horses in the deep shadows of a shallow canyon. It is freakishly quiet and the air crackles with anticipation.

Then it starts: Comanche swarm over the rim of the canyon on both sides and come up from behind. Karnes starts to spur his horse forward but the Irishman yells at him.

IRISHMAN

No! No! Don't run.

Karnes wisely heeds the advice and turns his horse and returns to the Irishman and Pocaroco just as the Comanche reach them and start to circle. The warriors yelp and cry and many have their bows loaded and ready to launch.

The Irishman raises his hands as does Karnes. Pocaroco knows no such signal.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
(to Pocaroco)
Tell them we come to talk peace to
their chief.

One of the warriors comes up beside Karnes and yanks his revolver out of its holster. He holds it up in the air for the others to see.

But Pocaroco doesn't speak.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
(to Pocaroco, with rising
panic)
Tell them, please.

But Pocaroco doesn't tell them.

POCAROCO
They will take us to him.

The Comanche sweep in and grab the reins to the horses and start them running further down the canyon. They are taking the men with them.

EXT. PLAINS - NIGHT

The men hold on to their horse manes as the Comanche hoard runs them under a glowing moon. None speak or look at each other. The Comanche are quiet now, and only the pounding of hooves is heard as they power further north and west.

The Irishman looks up and in the distance, he sees a pin prick of light.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

The men are violently yanked off their horses and dragged in to the excited Comanche encampment. OTHER COMANCHES, children, women, older men, all rush forward to participate in the victory of taking captives.

The warriors and people are particularly hard on Pocaroco. He is punched, kicked, spit on and finally, urinated on. The Irishman sees this but stays turned inward and simply takes the punishment meted out.

Karnes, in contrast, tries to fight, but this makes the Comanche warriors laugh. They like it and form a circle around him, taking turns delivering blows.

IRISHMAN
(calm)
Don't fight them. They'll stop
soon.

This advice to Karnes earns the Irishman a few extra hits, but Karnes finally turtles over, and the hits and laughter slow.

Irishman looks over at the pack on his horse. The warriors grab it, look in, and then throw it down on the ground.

LATER:

The men have been placed beside a fire. Their feet are bound but they can sit up. Each bears the wounds from the beatings.

There is still a great buzz in the Comanche camp. Women and children get close, point, laugh and then run in to the darkness.

Pocaroco keeps his swollen eyes shut and Karnes also looks at the ground, but the Irishman is covertly searching faces.

Then, at the edge of the camp fire light, he sees a flash of yellow hair: Matilda walks past a row of teepees and enters one.

She is still with them, he now knows.

He looks at the row of Comanche children who are smiling and laughing and occasionally throwing pebbles at them. Then his eyes settle on the one that is not smiling. It is Sarah.

She a little taller than the other kids and in the firelight, he can see her bony Anglo features. They lock eyes. She is fearful. She knows he is there for her, which means trouble. Her last encounter with the strange white man earned her a beating.

She turns and walks away.

LATER:

The Irishman has fallen asleep when suddenly he is yanked up by several warriors. They do the same to Pocaroco and Karnes. The men are dragged away to another location.

EXT. COMANCHE ASSEMBLY - NIGHT

The men are dragged to another part of the Comanche camp where a far larger fire has been set. The Comanche are gathered around in a circle. Pocaroco, the Irishman, and Karnes are forced to sit by the fire. Quannah is standing nearby, and the Irishman recognizes him as the man who put an arrow in his horse the last time they met. Beside Quannah is Cuffy, who is now dressed in better clothes and has her face painted. She is one of them.

The Comanche are vocal and excited. Something is about to happen.

An older COMANCHE MEDICINE WOMAN steps forward. She wears an array of feathers and face paint and her long hair is woven with strips of red fabric. Her presence hushes the crowd.

She walks to the fire and retrieves a primitive metal blade with a hide handle. The end of the blade is smoking.

Suddenly, Pocaroco is grabbed by warriors, his arms pinned to his sides. His head is forced back.

The old woman grabs Pocaroco's hair and lowers the hot blade tip to his face.

But, he does not cry out. The old woman bears down harder and still, through eyes shut tight and lips compressed, Pocaroco will not cry out.

Finally, she lets go, the warriors release him and Pocaroco slumps to the ground.

The woman returns to the fire and retrieves another blade with a smoking hot end.

The warriors grab the Irishman and thrust one of his hands forward. His fist is forced open and the woman grabs his hand and looks in to his eyes.

Then she drills the hot blade in to his palm. Irishman clenches his teeth, but he does not cry or avert her gaze.

After a moment, she takes the hot poker away.

Karnes, of course, knows he's next. He starts to laugh and sing.

KARNES

Bloody savages! Bring your heat,
monkeys! This is Texas!

(singing)

Rock of Ages, cleft for me! Let me
hide myself in Thee!

The woman pulls a third blade from the fire and, as was the case with the others, Karnes is set upon by the warriors, who arc his head back and expose his throat.

KARNES (CONT'D)

(singing)

Let the water and the blood, from
Thee wounded side which flowed!

She brings the hot blade tip to his neck, and bears down hard.

KARNES (CONT'D)

(singing)

Be of sin the double cure! Save
from wrath and make me pure!

Then he laughs and tries to spit at her. She lifts the poker and backs away.

The crowd murmurs; the men did not break.

The Irishman has been scanning the faces as this was happening.

Just beyond the firelight, he sees Matilda watching. She has scars on her face she did not have the last time he saw her.

She sees the Irishman watching her and slightly, unperceptive to those around her, shakes her head no. She does not want him to bring attention to her.

A seat is brought out and placed by the fire. All settle.

Finally, Mukwooru comes out of the largest teepee. He is dressed in full buckskin clothes and high moccasins. His hair is long, thinning, but pulled back from his broad forehead. He looks every inch of a leader.

He walks slowly, eye-balling the new captives, accessing them.

Finally, he sits and Quannah takes a position behind him, Cuffy also moves to stand behind Mukwooru. Then Mukwooru speaks.

The warriors seize Pocaroco and stand him up and bring him close to Mukwooru.

Mukwooru spits at Pocaroco and says something else. Comanche and Apache hatred runs deep. Then he says something to the Irishman.

POCAROCO
(to Irishman)
He says what kind of white man are
you.

The Irishman thinks carefully now, knowing his fate and the fate of his friends and the girls hang on his every word.

IRISHMAN
I'm Irish.

Pocaroco translates, Mukwooru responds.

POCAROCO
He does not know Irish.

IRISHMAN
Tell him the Irish are like the
English. We speak the same
language.

Pocaroco translates. Mukwooru nods. He thinks on this for a moment, and then responds.

POCAROCO

He says why you are with the Texan.

Again, the Irishman thinks carefully, and tries to speak as respectfully as he can.

IRISHMAN

We've come to make peace, and to ask if he will free the whites here.

Pocaroco translates, and Mukwooru laughs. He calls out and in a moment, and Mrs. Webster is pulled forward.

She is now dressed like a Comanche, wearing a thin smock top that barely contains her breasts, and she clearly does not want to be singled out. Like Matilda, she has collected many burn scars.

Mukwooru says something to her and then indicates to the Irishman. She looks down, and then shakes her head. Then, she glances at the Irishman and walks away.

Mukwooru speaks.

POCAROCO

He says everyone is free.

IRISHMAN

They have their own people, who love them and want to see them again. Mukwooru is a great chief, and if he says they should go back to their own people, they will go.

Pocaroco translates.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

If we can make a peace, then the whites and the Comanche never see each other. All live in peace.

Pocaroco translates, and the Irishman studies Mukwooru, trying to determine just how interested the man is in peace. Mukwooru, like McLeod, gives away little. But still, the Irishman thinks he can see it. Mukwooru, perhaps, wants a peace.

Finally, he speaks, Pocaroco translates.

POCAROCO

He says he does not need peace with the Texans. He can come and go, but the white man cannot.

Again, the Irishman thinks before he speaks.

IRISHMAN

Tell him that I respect him, but I must disagree.

Pocaroco translates.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

There are not many Texans now, but behind them, to the East, are more whites than he can imagine. And they will come, thousands of them, and they will bring guns, many guns, and they will find the Comanche as we have, and the Comanche will not be able to stop them. The time to make peace is now. Tell him the day will come when he needs to Texans to protect the Comanche from the other whites that are coming.

He pauses, Pocaroco translates. There is a stirring of outrage amongst the warriors. Quannah shifts his weight back and forth in agitation.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

It is true! But, I bring a gift. I bring the chance to live as Comanche forever. Away from the Texans, away from the Spanish. I bring him his own life.

Pocaroco pauses, not sure how or even if to translates this. The Irishman nods, hoping that the concepts can be turned in to words Mukwooru can understand.

Pocaroco translates and suddenly, the Irishman sees a flash of anger, or perhaps fear, in Mukwooru's eyes. But it quickly passes.

Finally, he speaks.

POCAROCO

He says your gift is big, what do you want for it?

The Irishman looks at Matilda.

IRISHMAN

I want him to release Matilda and Sarah Lockhart now, and then to bring the rest of the whites in.

Matilda's eyes widen. This is the attention she does not want. It surely means another beating.

But, Pocaroco translates, and to her horror, the great chief turns and stares at her. Somehow, this white man knows her name.

Karnes also looks at the Irishman. This is an agenda he had no knowledge of.

Mukwooru nods at her and the women around her push her forward. She comes up beside the big chief, who now eyes her with suspicion.

He speaks harshly to her, and she shakes her head no. Then he speaks again and points at the Irishman.

MATILDA
(to Irishman)
I don't want to go.

IRISHMAN
(gently, calming)
You have family looking for you.
We'll get you back to them safely.

She looks over to Pocaroco and then to Cuffy, hoping neither will hear nor translate what she is about to say. She speaks to the Irishman in an angry hiss.

MATILDA
You're going to get us all killed.
Tell my family I'm dead and leave
me be.

She speaks a few reassuring Comanche words to Mukwooru, then walks away. Cuffy has to get a taunting word in to Matilda, her former master.

CUFFY
They can't help you now!

Mukwooru then speaks at length, and the Irishman sees Quannah react. Whatever Mukwooru has just said, Quannah is against. But he dare not interrupt or argue with Mukwooru.

Pocaroco translates.

POCAROCO
He says he will not make people go.
He says if the Texans want to talk,
he will talk. In 2 days, he will
come to talk, and then, there will
be peace, or there will be war.

IRISHMAN
Tell him the Texans want peace, but
he must bring the whites and let
them tell the Texans they want to
stay. He must bring Matilda and
Sarah, and let them meet their

families. Only then, will the
Texans make peace.

Pocaroco translates. Mukwooru has returned to his poker
face.

Finally, he stands, says a final word, and then leaves,
returning to his big teepee. Quannah is still there,
however, glaring at the Irishman. He smells extreme danger
and would kill them all if he could.

POCAROCO

He says he will bring them. Now, we
must go and never come back.

Karnes exhales; suddenly hopeful they might live.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - DAY

It is raining. The Irishman, Pocaroco and Karnes are headed
back to the Southeast, the way they came. Karnes lags
behind, clearly not wanting to be too close to the Irishman
anymore.

EXT. STAKED PLAINS - NIGHT

They have built a bigger fire. The Irishman takes a hit from
the pipe and offers it to Karnes, but Karnes shakes his
head. The Irishman passes it to Pocaroco.

KARNES

What's your interest in the
Lockhart girls?

The Irishman exhales.

IRISHMAN

Their family wants their return.

KARNES

Everyone's family wants their
return. What's your interest?

The Irishman leans back, allowing the high to blunt the
unpleasantness of Karnes' interrogation.

IRISHMAN

Does it matter?

KARNES

Of course it matters! Hundreds of
our people have been killed.
Hundreds more have been taken. We
have to account for the whole
frontier, not just two people in
it.

IRISHMAN

Did you see her face? Imagine the vile and filthy things they do to her. But we can't take those girls in to account?

KARNES

Of course we can. But...

IRISHMAN

In two days, they are coming to talk peace. Did your Rangers accomplish that? A treaty is how you secure your frontier. And they are bringing the captives in. My interest in the Lockhart girls has served this frontier well. When we return, you have to make sure McLeod doesn't crab the entire affair.

Karnes sighs. McLeod will look to him for a report and there are many things he can't reveal.

KARNES

Are they paying you?

IRISHMAN

No. I serve at Her Majesty's pleasure.

The Irishman takes the pipe back from Pocaroco and puts it in his sack.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

You're a fine man, Henry. When we return, you'll keep quiet about the pipe, about the Lockhart girls, and convince the others to make a short peace. They'll bring the whites in and if we can get even a single year of respite from the Comanche, we'll have achieved something. I've set the table and now you must bring the others to the feast.

The Irishman rolls over and goes to sleep.

EXT. OUTSIDE SAN ANTONIO - DAY

It is still raining as they approach the dusty settlement at San Antonio. Only the Cathedral is visible in the distance.

Pocaroco suddenly veers off to the south without a word. The Irishman and Karnes watch him go.

After a moment, Karnes speaks.

KARNES

That stuff you smoke is evil. Why do you do it?

IRISHMAN

I told you. It lightens the burden of this tedious life and helps me to see things clearly.

KARNES

I don't think you see things clearly.

IRISHMAN

Then we disagree.

They ride along in silence for a moment.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

Mukwooru may be a savage, but he'll show as he said he would. His honor will require it. Will you be able to secure a negotiation?

KARNES

If they bring the captives in, McLeod will talk.

Karnes spurs his horse forward, and then turns.

KARNES (CONT'D)

I don't see where we have any further reason to speak, Irish or no.

The Irishman says nothing, and Karnes wheels his horse away and gallops towards the town.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - NIGHT

Matilda, Mrs. Webster and several other Comanche women are sitting near a fire grinding corn in gourds. Cuffy is nowhere to be seen.

Nearby, several men, including Mukwooru and Quannah, are talking. Matilda is pretending to be focused on her work, but she is listening.

The men suddenly look over at her, point, and then go back to their discussion.

Mrs. Webster has seen this. She whispers.

MRS. WEBSTER

They won't let us go. They will never let us go.

MATILDA

We're going with them. They're going to try to sell us back.

MRS. WEBSTER

Our men won't pay ransom.

Suddenly, one of the Comanche women throws an ear of corn at Mrs. Webster, which strikes her on the forehead. She quiets for a moment.

MRS. WEBSTER (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I died a long time ago. Now, I'm seeing the sweet mercy of the Lord.

Very quietly, so that Matilda can barely hear it, Mrs. Webster hums 'Amazing Grace'. If the others hear it, they do nothing.

After another moment, Matilda gets up and walks away.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

The Irishman silently enters the giant cathedral. There are a few PARISHIONERS inside, all quietly praying with their heads bowed. No one takes notice of him.

Up front, he sees Eloise. Her hair is up and a delicate knot and her earrings reflect the candle light.

He makes his way down the aisle and sits in the row behind her. He watches as she prays and counts off the beads of her rosary.

But after a moment, she turns and looks at him, and quickly smiles. Then she pats the seat beside her, indicating that he should come forward and sit by her.

The Irishman slides in beside her and they talk in a low whisper.

ELOISE

Papa did not think you would return. He said the Comanche would kill you. I am happy he was wrong.

IRISHMAN

I as well.

ELOISE

Did you find them?

IRISHMAN

Oh, yes. We had a lively conversation.

ELOISE
You are very brave.

She reaches over and squeezes his hand. He flinches; she has squeezed the hand with the burn on the palm, but she doesn't notice.

She lowers her head and starts to pray again.

IRISHMAN
Is your father feeling well?

ELOISE
He's been horrid. We've little to eat but all he asks about is when the traders will bring more pulque.

IRISHMAN
They come from Veracruz?

She lifts her head from praying.

ELOISE
Yes, they come every week. Sabado.

IRISHMAN
Where do they meet?

ELOISE
They come to the house. Papa has the concession. It is the only privilege we still have.

The Irishman thinks for a moment.

IRISHMAN
I'm going south to meet them. I'll need an introduction.

She looks over at him, mulling over exactly what he is asking.

ELOISE
Why?

IRISHMAN
I wish to trade privately with them. Will you go?

She thinks only for a moment.

ELOISE
Of course.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - NIGHT

It is night and McLeod is writing letters and reports at a desk lit by several candles.

Karnes enters. McLeod glances up but then goes back to his writing.

MCLEOD

The men had a wager regarding your return.

KARNES

Which way did you bet?

MCLEOD

I don't place wagers. Wagers are based on hope. I have none. Hope is a dangerous thing out here. You know that.

KARNES

Lots of things are dangerous out here.

(pause)

I've seen them. I've been to their camp. I've met their chief.

McLeod sets down his quill. This is truly unique. Most men who meet the Comanche aren't around to discuss it afterwards.

KARNES (CONT'D)

They're savages. Primitive. They tortured Eldridge to death; I saw his body. But... they have a certain logic to them. And they are coming here. They're coming in two days, maybe tomorrow, to talk peace.

McLeod lets this sink in.

MCLEOD

You told them we'd parley?

KARNES

The Irishman did. He said if they brought in all the prisoners, we'd talk treaty. They want a treaty. I saw their chief. He's tired.

MCLEOD

Good. That's good solid work. They're coming to us.

KARNES

Yes, they're coming to negotiate a treaty.

MCLEOD

What sort of treaty? One they sign? They can't write. One they'll respect? They don't respect the treaties they make with the other Indians. You're talking like the Irishman!

Now, McLeod is angry. Talk to treaties agitates him.

MCLEOD (CONT'D)

Is that actually what you thought would happen? We make what peace we can, but the end result will be the same. The Comanche will be expelled.

Karnes is shamed in to silence.

KARNES

Of course.

MCLEOD

If we're about to be visited by a band of Comanche, we need to call up the militia. I'll write the orders. You will select the men to deliver them. Tonight.

Karnes stands. He knows that bringing the Comanche in was never going to work.

KARNES

Of course.

MCLEOD

Anything else? Anything else about the Irishman you discovered.

KARNES

No, nothing. He means well.

MCLEOD

Don't we all... Come back in an hour.

Karnes turns and leaves.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

The Irishman sits at a fire in the stables where he will sleep. He has his pipe, of course, and the last opium ball.

He lights the pipe, inhales, and exhales. He sees Karnes ride past.

He opens his hand and looks at the burn left by the Comanche. After a moment of thought, he takes his thumb from his other hand and digs it in to the burn. His face tightens in pain.

He digs harder, and then stops, lifts the pipe, and inhales deeply again.

EXT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - EARLY MORNING

The Irishman arrives in a carriage, pulled by a single horse. After a moment, Eloise exits the house. She is dressed for riding and wears a head cover. Her carefully tailored clothes emphasize her gorgeous figure.

IRISHMAN
You're a vision.

She climbs in to the carriage, a big smile on her face, and they leave.

EXT. SOUTH TEXAS PRAIRIE - DAY

Clouds are low as Irishman directs the carriage south. Here is another face of the land, not as arid and quiet as the Staked Plains, but equally as severe.

A gentle drizzle starts, with promises of much harder rain to follow.

But Eloise is game; nothing will diminish her joy at being out with a man who adores her. She has dressed correctly and has the right hat. Her wet sticks to her face. He watches her closely and she is deeply aware of his gaze.

She glances at him, smiles and looks away.

EXT. SOUTH TEXAS FLATLANDS - DAY

The rain has gone from a drizzle to a downpour. The Irishman has placed the carriage under a few low trees and he and Eloise are lying on a blanket he has placed under the carriage.

Eloise glances over the Irishman and smiles. He smiles back, and reaches over and touches her face.

After a moment, she leans over and kisses him gently on the lips.

When he starts to kiss her more aggressively, she puts her hand to his chin.

ELOISE
Not here.

He smiles and backs off.

EXT. SOUTH TEXAS FLATLANDS - DAY

They carry on in the now lovely post storm light.

ELOISE
You have had a family before?

IRISHMAN
What makes you think that?

ELOISE
I think you are a man who has known love. You aren't, hmm, what is the English word... Anxious, nervous, around a woman. That man has known love.

IRISHMAN
I have. I was married and we had a son. But she died. In India.

Eloise is quiet for a moment.

ELOISE
Where is your son?

IRISHMAN
He's in Her Majesty's Navy.

ELOISE
How did she die?

The Irishman doesn't answer.

ELOISE (CONT'D)
Pardon. It is not my place to ask.

IRISHMAN
It's quite OK. But, that is a part of life that has perished.

They ride on in silence.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

The Irishman has a small spy glass to his eye. Through it, he sees a wagon train headed their way.

IRISHMAN
These men will know you?

ELOISE
If they are the same men.

IRISHMAN
How many?

ELOISE
Maybe five or six.

IRISHMAN
There are eleven. I want you to
talk to them. Let them think I
don't understand.

He takes out his pistol and quickly checks it for readiness.
She sees his and her face grows more serious.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Eloise and the Irishman are positioned in the trail when the
wagon train reaches them. There are three horse-drawn carts
and two men on horseback. It is a rough looking crew of 11
MEN led by ANTON.

They have seen the Irishman and Eloise in the path and are
suspicious. They stop a few yards away and are quiet.

Finally, Eloise stands and speaks in high Castilian Spanish.

ELOISE
(Spanish)
*Good afternoon, gentlemen. My name
is Eloise Cardoza and you regularly
trade with my father Juan Cardoza.
This man here is a family friend
and we can vouch for his honesty.
He wishes to trade with you
privately, before you reach town.*

Anton looks at the others, and then nods. This is odd, but
they are open to the opportunity.

IRISHMAN
Tell him I wish to buy whatever
quantity of opium he has.

Eloise hesitates, suddenly understanding why they are out in
the wilds, but she is intrigued and moves forward.

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
*He would like to buy your opium,
however much you have.*

This alarms the men. They know he is not a normal customer. But here he is, with a woman, asking about opium.

ANTON
(in Spanish)
We don't have it. Tell him he must go all the way to Veracruz for that.

ELOISE
He says he doesn't have it. You have to go to Veracruz.

IRISHMAN
Tell him that, with all due respect, I know he has it. He takes it to San Jacinto and trades with the Frenchman there. Tell him I am not an officer or official. The opium is for me.

Eloise pauses again, both scared and excited. Her life has been a terrific bore, and now, it is not.

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
He says the opium is for him. He is not an officer or official. And, he knows you have it... and that you take it to the Frenchman in San Jacinto.

Anton is poker-faced.

ANTON
(in Spanish)
Opium is forbidden, and expensive.

This part the Irishman understands. He reaches slowly in to his bag and takes out another bag, which he opens. Inside, many US dollars.

He takes out a pile of bills and holds them up.

IRISHMAN
Tell him that I know what the Frenchman pays and that this is more.

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
This is what the Frenchman pays, plus a little more.

Anton sees the money and nods to one of his men to go get it. The MAN rides to the Irishman; the Irishman pulls the money back.

IRISHMAN
Tell him that we are both
experienced traders.

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
*He says we are both experienced
traders.*

Anton nods to another of his men who pulls out a bag from the wagon and walks it over to the Irishman.

The Irishman takes the bag and opens it. Inside, the opium. He dips his finger in and puts a tiny bit in his mouth.

It is pure. He hands the money over.

The man retreats and now, everyone has what they want.

ANTON
(in Spanish)
*Who should we tell the Frenchman
bought his opium?*

ELOISE
What does he tell the Frenchman?

The Irishman prompts the horses and moves the buckboard out of the way.

IRISHMAN
The Frenchman will know.

ELOISE
(in Spanish)
The Frenchman will know.

Anton scoffs, and then smirks at Eloise.

ANTON
(Spanish)
You are his whore?

Eloise stiffens. The Irishman must stay nonreactive, but his hand moves closer to the pistol. His fate hangs on what she does next.

She lifts her chin and draws herself up with full dignity.

ELOISE
(Spanish)
*I am his wife. Shall I tell him
what you said?*

Anton and the others again exchange glances, and then they prompt their beasts and move on. Eloise and the Irishman watch them move out of site.

EXT. GOLIAD - TWILIGHT

The Irishman and Eloise ride in to the tiny town of Goliad. The Irishman stops the wagon in front of the only public building. It is a two story brick structure.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSE - TWILIGHT

The Irishman enters and approaches an ELDERLY MAN at a counter. The man is suspicious and surly.

IRISHMAN
I need a private room for my wife
and myself.

The man looks out at Eloise.

ELDERLY MAN
She Mexican?

IRISHMAN
She is Spanish. I am British.

The Irishman takes a bit of cash and places it on the desk. The old man looks back and forth, and then gives in.

ELDERLY MAN
I'll send a man for the wagon.

INT. ROOM - TWILIGHT

The Irishman is sitting by on the floor in front of a fire built in the brick fireplace. Eloise sits on the bed. The pipe and opium is ready.

ELOISE
What will this do to me?

IRISHMAN
It will bring you a peace you have
never known.

He lovingly puts an opium ball in the pipe, and then hands it to her.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
Draw it in, hold it for a moment,
and then let it out.

She follows his instructions. He lifts a stick from the fire and puts it to the pipe and she breathes in.

She lets a huge plume of smoke exit her mouth and coughs gently. He follows her.

LATER:

The Irishman is on top of Eloise, savagely penetrating her.

She moans with a pleasure that runs bone deep.

He is transported, layered in ecstasy.

Both are out of body with rapture and experiencing it together.

LATER:

The Irishman is sleeping next to her, but she is awake. It has started to rain outside.

After a moment, she gets up and pulls the covers over herself. She is thinking dark and upsetting thoughts.

LATER:

He wakes from a bad dream, and sees her sitting in the dark. Lightning illuminates her silhouette through the window.

ELOISE

You will take me home and leave me,
like all men do after they have had
a woman.

The Irishman sits up, trying to shake off his dream and recapture the good feelings he had.

IRISHMAN

No, I won't do that.

She switches directions suddenly.

ELOISE

I want you to tell me what happened
to your wife.

IRISHMAN

Why?

ELOISE

Because I know it is the thing you
hide the most. And I gave you what
I keep dear, and now, you can do
the same.

The Irishman takes a deep breath.

IRISHMAN

She committed suttee. She was a
Hindu and it is their tradition
that when a woman's husband dies,
she kills herself to be with him.

ELOISE
But you did not die.

IRISHMAN
I was asleep. From the opium. I had only recently discovered it, and I smoked too much. She could not wake me, and thought I was dead. People came from the village, and they all thought I was dead.

He knows what she is thinking.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
She hung herself. When I woke, she was hanging there. Our son arrived later that day, and the people thought I was a ghost and they ran me out. I have not seen him since.

He can just barely see her with each lightning flash.

ELOISE
The pipe... I enjoyed it. But, for you, it has cost you so much. Why do you keep doing it?

IRISHMAN
It makes life more interesting. Most of life... It is a terrific bore or layered in misery. With this, I see visions. Sometimes good, sometimes awful... But I am taken to another world. It is where I prefer.

After a moment, she drops the covers and comes back to him. In the next lightning flash, he sees her naked body.

ELOISE
I can make you see visions...

She crawls on top of him.

EXT. LIVERY - MORNING

The Irishman buys a bag of food from the LIVERY MAN. As he turns to walk back to the public house, four TEXAS MILITIA MEN ride past in uniform.

INT. ROOM - MORNING

He enters the room as she finishes dressing. She kisses him warmly.

They sit on the bed and share the food. It is just hard biscuits and strips of pork. She eats it heartily and he smiles, perhaps for the first time in a long time. She laughs as well. They delight in each other.

Then his face grows serious.

IRISHMAN

I saw four men in gray uniforms
ride past.

She swallows.

ELOISE

The Texans. They only wear the
uniform to fight.

He is quiet for a moment.

IRISHMAN

If you could do anything with your
life, right now, what do you want
to do?

ELOISE

I want to leave my father's house.
I want to go to Spain. I want to be
a wife, and a mother, like all
women. But mostly, I want to leave
my father's house, where I wait
only to die.

IRISHMAN

Do you know what a bounty hunter
is?

ELOISE

Cazador de recompensas. They
capture people, for money.

IRISHMAN

Yes, or they find people who have
been captured. Did you know the
Lockhart family?

ELOISE

No.

IRISHMAN

There were two girls, taken by the
Comanche. The Lockhart family in
Virginia is wealthy, and they have
royal connections. My masters in
the Queen's Guard contacted me
about the girls. If I can retrieve
them from the Comanche, it will
mean a great deal of money. Enough
to go anywhere in the world.

ELOISE

So you are cazador de recompensas?

He takes a deep breath, thinking through how he came to be where he is in his life.

IRISHMAN

I serve in that capacity now. I was a Commander. For many years, I served in Her Majesty's Navy. When I was a wee lad, I joined and worked my way up. I served on deck, in the galleys, in the rigging... I served on every kind of vessel the Navy possesses. I was in the Peninsular Wars, which is where I learned to speak Spanish. That's where I earned my commission. I went to the Orient, and then India. Oh, the things I saw there. In India, I fell in love. But... there were difficulties. In time, the Admiralty put me to the task of finding people.

ELOISE

I want to see what you've seen. I want you to love me and take me to the places you've seen! I've seen nothing of the world.

IRISHMAN

I could love you. But for now, the Comanche are coming to negotiate with the Texans, and they will bring the girls. The girls will be fearful of me, but of you, less so. If you'll help me get these girls to their family, I'll take you to Spain, or anywhere else you want to go.

Her eyes light up. This is the ticket out she has longed for, but then her face clouds.

ELOISE

The Comanche come to fight. And the Texans want to kill them all.

IRISHMAN

The Comanche will negotiate, but poorly. Primitive people miss the details. The Texans want their people back. All I need are the girls.

ELOISE

I help you, and you take me away...
But you will never love me. The
pipe is your love.

The Irishman starts to put things away and prepare to leave.

IRISHMAN

Perhaps. And you may grow weary of
me when you are away from your
father long enough. But... When I
look inside, I see everything. The
pipe takes me there. But out here,
I feel nothing. I'm weary of this
life.

She stands and kisses him.

ELOISE

Out here, I feel everything.
Inside, I feel nothing. Until now.
You are my opium.

IRISHMAN

Maybe we can find a way between the
two places and make that our home.

She smiles and they kiss.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR - AFTERNOON

The Irishman stops the wagon near her house.

IRISHMAN

When they arrive, come to the
Council House. I'll want you to
bring the girls back here, and
wait.

Eloise looks towards the house.

ELOISE

My father will be very angry.

IRISHMAN

Tell your father that I have
proposed marriage and that you have
accepted. He can address me with
any concerns he may have.

She smiles.

ELOISE

He will be very angry.

IRISHMAN
Prepare what you want to take.
We'll be leaving soon.

She kisses him gently and goes inside.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The Irishman approaches the low council house. It is now surrounded by uniformed TEXAS MILITIA MEN who eye him suspiciously.

The Irishman walks past them and enters the building.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

When the Irishman enters, the room goes quiet. Inside, he sees McLeod, Karnes and others in uniform he does not recognize.

Pocaroco stands quietly in the corner. His face bears the scab from the hot sticking he received at the Comanche camp.

IRISHMAN
Mr. Karnes, might I have a word
with you?

But Karnes doesn't like being singled out any more than Matilda Lockhart did.

KARNES
You can speak your peace here.

The Irishman has no choice, so addresses McLeod.

IRISHMAN
The Comanche are coming to
negotiate. You said they wouldn't
do it, but they are coming. And you
have stated that you would assure
their safety if they came to
parley. Will you?

McLeod doesn't want to even address the Irishman, and he does so reluctantly.

MCLEOD
If they bring in the captives,
we'll talk.

IRISHMAN
It might not be as simple as that.
They will try to negotiate from a
position of strength. They won't
just walk in and give you what you
want and hope for the best. That is

a surrender, not a negotiation. Let me talk for you. You'll get what you want.

MCLEOD

You ain't talking for us. It's good that you got them to come, but we'll handle things from here. And we negotiation from a position of strength as well.

Caldwell bursts in to the room.

CALDWELL

They're here. They're setting up their camp near the river.

KARNES

Their camp? How many are there?

CALDWELL

The whole band of them come.

McLeod and the others exchange glances. This is a fantastical opportunity for them.

MCLEOD

(to Karnes)

Pull our men back out of sight.

(to Caldwell)

Go get Mrs. Maverick so she can tend to the ladies when they come in.

IRISHMAN

I need to be here. The chief trusts me.

Karnes laughs.

KARNES

He don't trust you, Irish. You think you can have one talk with the Comanche and they trust you? Talk doesn't go far here.

IRISHMAN

Captain McLeod, listen to me. I've done this before. I know what I'm doing. You do realize that in the British military, I would substantially outrank you. Use my experience. Don't be a fool, man!

Karnes crosses to him and tries to muscle him out of the room.

This pushes the Irishman over the edge. He draws his weapon and points it at Karnes but addresses everyone.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

Now you listen, all you ill clad rabble! I will leave this room and ride out and tell the Comanche they are riding in to a trap! Shall I do that, or shall you all shoot me down here and now, or shall I stay and help you get your people back? Which shall it be!?!?? Captain McLeod, you claim the mantle of leadership. Choose!

McLeod has not really reacted to this outburst.

MCLEOD

You can stay. Just don't talk.

The Irishman realizes this is as good as he will get so he puts his weapon away. Karnes smirks and leaves.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR - DAY

Word has spread of the Comanche delegation and so the ENTIRE TOWN has come out, but they are lingering in the recesses and shadows of the buildings. The air crackles with anticipation as all wait for the dreaded enemy, the savages all have heard of but few have seen and lived to tell of it, to arrive.

An OLD MAN arrives on a mule. He's gray and addled and trembling.

OLD MAN

They come! Comanche! A whole band of them! They coming to the town!

But most know this already so they stay in place and quietly wait.

Karnes, McLeod, Caldwell, a few OTHER OFFICERS, and the Irishman are watching from the door of the Council House.

MARY MAVERICK arrives at the Council House. She is a trim, Victorian lady with a stern look and long bony hands. She also walks close to the walls, her eyes cast to the West.

Then they see the band of COMANCHE drawing closer. It grows even quieter in town. Everyone freezes in place.

Even from a distance, all can see the warriors are dressed in full finery. But also, they see others. The Comanche are not just sending a couple of negotiators; they are sending an entire delegation.

As the Comanche horde reaches the town, each person in the town steps back involuntarily. CHILDREN break and run, MEN hug closer to walls, WOMEN step away from the windows where they watch as a large Comanche party led by 12 warriors parades right to the center of town.

The Irishman sees Eloise walking towards the Council House on the other side of the dusty street. She also stops at the sight of the Comanche and watches.

McLeod whispers to Caldwell, who walks away. Karnes is transfixed at seeing the Mukwooru again, and his hand involuntarily goes to his neck and touches the burn mark left from their last encounter.

The Comanche draw to a stop at the Council House. The twelve warriors, led by Mukwooru, form in a line. Quannah is beside Mukwooru, Loco beside Quannah. Quannah's eyes darting back and forth. The sight of so many white men with guns triggers all his alarms.

The Irishman sees Matilda at the back of the pack. She is wearing her old filthy clothes again. Her eyes are cast downward in shame. Behind her are several MEXICAN CHILDREN packed on to horses and tied together. They are stoned faced, unsure what happens next. The Irishman searches the faces of the Comanche children, hoping to find Sarah amongst them.

Mukwooru and McLeod exchange stone glances. They have never met, but their respective peoples have killed each other for a long time. Somehow, without photos or introductions, they know who each other is. Now, they are just feet apart.

Mukwooru finally speaks. Pocaroco steps forward to translate.

POCAROCO

He says he comes to talk peace with the whites. He was asked, and he comes.

MCLEOD

Tell him to come inside.

Mukwooru speaks to his group. They come down off their mounts and begin to spread out around the building.

Seeing the Comanche dismount, like any other visitors, the townspeople start to creep forward from their hiding places. Curiosity can be seen on the faces of each side. None of the Comanche have seen whites that were not terrified captives.

Mary Maverick pushes right past the Irishman and the Comanche and walks up to Matilda just as she steps down from her mount.

MARY
(gently, kindly)
Are you one of Lockhart girls?

Matilda doesn't raise her eyes or speak, but she nods her head.

MARY (CONT'D)
Come with me, dear.

Matilda looks up enough to see the Comanche warriors enter the Council House. No one is watching her, and her captivity is over. Mary leads her away from the Comanche and to a low adobe building beside the larger Council House.

Eloise comes forward and begins to speak to the Mexican children. See eyes the Comanche in wonder as well. A Comanche teen unties the Mexican kids.

INT. ADJACENT ROOM - DAY

Mary sits Matilda down at a table and retrieves a basin of water. She places a cloth in the water and then begins to gently wipe the dirt from the girl's face. She does so gently and lovingly.

The Irishman enters.

IRISHMAN
Matilda, where is your sister?

Matilda looks up and recognizes the Irishman. This is the man that has twice tried to retrieve her, once by force and once by negotiation, and in both instances, failed. And she is angry.

MATILDA
Who are you?

IRISHMAN
I'm a family friend. Where is your sister?

MARY
Sir, let us be. She's been through untold horrors.

IRISHMAN
(to Mary)
Quiet, women.
(to Matilda)
Where is your sister? Is she still with you?

Matilda lowers her head again and begins to weep.

MATILDA

She's with the others at the camp.
They're going to sell us back one
by one. They think they can get the
highest price that way.

MARGARET

(hissing)
Mister, you will let us be now! Or
I will get fetch the Captain.

The Irishman exits.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR - DAY

Irishman makes his way back to the big doors of the Council House.

The townspeople, including many men with side arms, are creeping forward. Curiosity and fear mingle. It's a combustible mix and the Irishman can sense disaster coming.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Chief Mukwooru, Quannah, Loco, and the other warriors are squatting, as is their fashion, on one side of the room. McLeod, Karnes and OTHERS have taken seats at a table that sets on a low platform on the other side of the room.

The jarring contrast of men squatting on the floor and other men at a table on a platform add to the vast gulf between the two parties.

Pocaroco stands at the end of the Texan table, stone faced and wary. All the Texans watch as the Comanche fidget and talk to each other. Their weapons are still clutched in their brown hands.

Mukwooru, for his part, is still and has locked eyes with McLeod. They take some time to fully feel and absorb the pain, anger and hatred that exists between them. They are the manifestation of the will of their respective peoples and neither intends to blink.

The Irishman enters the room quietly and takes up a position behind McLeod.

Finally, the room goes silent and Mukwooru speaks at length. He gestures at the Irishman, at the room and beyond. His words rise and fall with a poetry and finality.

Then, he is silent. All Anglo eyes turn to Pocaroco.

POCAROCO

He says he was asked to come here
and has done it. He has brought all

his people to show he is serious about a treaty. Peace talks are very sacred to his people. They make war, but they will talk peace, and if peace is made, then he tells his people to make peace. He says his people have been here for many years, when the rains come and then the cold. He remembers when there were no whites. Now, all over the hunting area, there are white men. He says there should be a place where the white men do not come, and that his people do not come. And then, there can be peace.

McLeod waits a long time before he speaks. Then, he is brief:

MCLEOD

We agreed to talk peace only if all the prisoners were returned. Where are the rest of the whites that were taken by the Comanche?

Pocaroco translates and then Mukwooru starts to talk again in his florid style.

INT. ADJACENT ROOM - DAY

Mary Maverick has cleaned Matilda's face and she begins to tend to the burn marks and bruises on the girl. Matilda flinches and still has her eyes cast at the floor.

MARY

Look at what they've done to you. Savages... Do they treat everyone this way?

MATILDA

Yes.

Anger brews across her Mary Maverick's brow.

MARY

How many more are out there?

MATILDA

There are 10 counting the Mexicans. Mrs. Webster... A girl from up North somewhere. There's three kids that been with them so long they don't speak English any more. A woman who won't say her name.

MARY

None of the men?

Now Matilda looks up.

MATILDA

The men? They kill the men as soon as they get them. They killed them right in front of us. They put them on big sticks and then put them over the fires and cook them like a deer. The men scream...

Matilda looks back down. The things she's seen, that she's been silent about, well up.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

And then they start on us.

Mary thinks she knows what Matilda means, but asks anyway.

MARY

They... dishonor you?

MATILDA

Of course. They take turns. All of them. And then the women are angry, so they get the hot sticks. You go back and forth between the two. They did that to me, to Mrs. Webster. Then they gave me to one of them as his wife, but he had two already. Sarah was too little so they just beat her.

Mary has heard enough. She stands.

MARY

Excuse me, dear. I'll be right back.

Mary stands and exits the room.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

From his position behind McLeod, the Irishman can see Mary Maverick coming towards the door and he can tell by the look on her face that the news is not good.

He discreetly exits.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The scene outside an odd mix of tension and curiosity as MEN have begun to throw coins in the air and the YOUNG COMANCHE hit them with arrows.

The Irishman stops Mary.

MARY
I must speak to the Captain.

IRISHMAN
What did she say?

MARY
She said they murdered all the men
and they raped all the women! All
of them! They beat and tortured the
children! Now, please, excuse me, I
must speak to the Captain!

IRISHMAN
Don't tell him now. What good would
it do?

Mary is incensed.

MARY
Sir, what good would it do? It's
the truth! Damned Europeans, you'll
hardly better than those savages!
Captain McLeod!

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Mukwooru stops his monologue. He can see Mary Maverick through a window and the look on her face is the first inkling he has that something is wrong and that bringing the girl in was a bad idea.

His hand discreetly tightens on his bow and his other touches the blade under his tunic. Quannah takes note.

McLeod has heard his name, so he rises and exits.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

McLeod steps out of the Council House.

MCLEOD
Women, what on earth?

MARY
Captain, the girl says they have
the other prisoners in their camp,
and they plan to sell them back one
after the other. They think they
can fetch a better price for them
that way.

IRISHMAN
(to McLeod)
This is wonderful news. They've
brought them here, now we just have

to complete the negotiation.
They...

McLeod cuts the Irishman off with a wave of his hand.

MARY

She said she's seen our men roasted
alive. She's seen our children
beaten and tortured. And she's been
raped by every one of them. All the
women have.

With this, Mary turns her head and looks directly at
Mukwooru.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Mukwooru sees her glare, and has an inkling of what she is
saying. He shifts his posture. The other warriors sense this
as well and they cling tighter to their weapons.

The Texan soldiers can see the Comanche demeanor changing.
They tighten their grip on their rifles.

The temperature in the room is rising...

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

McLeod is poker faced.

IRISHMAN

We know how the Comanche treat
captives. This is not relevant.

McLeod nods at Caldwell, who the Irishman now notices is at
the corner of the building. Caldwell retreats.

MCLEOD

(to Mary)

Take the girl back to your house
quickly, Mrs. Maverick, and thank
you.

The Irishman can sense his opportunity slipping away...

IRISHMAN

Captain, listen to me! Let me speak
to them.

But McLeod is back in the Council House and all the Irishman
can do is follow.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

McLeod sits, the Irishman takes up his position behind him, Mukwooru waits to see what the Texans are doing. He refuses to believe he is in an ambush.

Quannah, however, sees it well enough, and he whispers to Mukwooru. But, Mukwooru does not respond.

MCLEOD

Ask him where the other prisoners
are, and what he wants to bring
them in.

Pocaroco, who can also sense which direction things are headed, speaks. It takes a moment for him to summarize the question. Mukwooru is listening but his eyes are darting back and forth.

Then, Mukwooru starts to speak. As before, he carries on in a formal, official tone which takes a while.

As he is in mid-speech, the side door to the room opens and eight more TEXANS file in to the room. They are wearing their formal gray uniforms and clutching long rifles.

The men take up positions along the wall opposite the Comanche. Mukwooru sees this, but does not stop his speech.

By the time he finishes, he is looking at a table of angry Texan officials, and along two walls, lines of uniformed young men with rifles in hand.

He adjusts his posture. He is now like a cat about to spring. Quannah has accepted the battle is coming and discreetly adjusted his stance as well. All the Comanche are clutching weapons or about to.

But the Texans can't get ready like the Comanche arrayed before them. They would have to raise and point their rifles, and that moment has not yet come. Each man clutches his rifle tightly; hands turn white from the strain. Sweat forms on foreheads, lips press, jaws clench...

McLeod never relents in his glare at Mukwooru.

Pocaroco looks back and forth, and then starts to translate.

POCAROCO

He says the whites are not all in
his camp, just a few. Other
Comanche have them, and he does not
control them. The whites with him
are safe, and they can leave any
time they want. But, since he has
brought them to the town, he will
accept the gifts that come to a
friend. He says the Comanche have

many enemies, and need guns. They also want blankets, and salt, butter, and for the women, vermillion.

There is a long pause. After a moment, Mukwooru speaks.

POCAROCO (CONT'D)

He asks how you like that answer.

There is another long pause.

IRISHMAN

Captain, give him what he wants. You are a few old guns, some food and cloth away from freedom for your people. Think about what they've been through!

But... McLeod has spent his adult life fighting Comanche, and accommodation and gift giving is simply not in his behavioral tool kit. His path is committed and always has been.

MCLEOD

Tell him we agreed to talk only if he brought all the prisoners in. He has not done that. So, we're done talking. We're going to hold him and all his people here in the jail until they bring in the whites they hold.

IRISHMAN

Karnes, you know what will happen to those people! Speak up!

But Karnes is with McLeod, and he says nothing. Under the table, he grips his revolver.

POCAROCO

If I tell him, they will fight. Right now.

MCLEOD

Tell him.

IRISHMAN

(to Pocaroco, whispering, pleading)

Don't do it. Don't tell them!

Now, everyone in the room knows what is coming except the Comanche. Really, nothing has changed. It's like a raid out on the Staked Plains, but contained to one small stone-walled room.

Pocaroco steps back towards the door, takes a shallow breath, and starts to speak. He is Apache, the ancient enemy of the Comanche, and he will gladly light the fuse...

When he finishes, he steps out the door and is gone.

Time slows. The Comanche have heard what they've heard and know instantly what they will do. The Texans have been warned, but in the sheer spectacle of what is happening, they have not raised their weapons and prepared to use them. For a few, this was a fatal mistake.

Mukwooru stands, chambers an arrow, pulls the bow back and let's an arrow fly in one smooth, perfect motion that he's practiced all his life. That arrow is headed directly for McLeod's neck and would have hit its mark if Karnes did not stick his hand in the path and take the arrow through his palm, where it comes out the other side and grazes McLeod on the cheek.

The Comanche all stand and begin to fire arrows, and they also begin to let out a high pitched screaming that is as startling as it is penetrating. It carries through the walls of the building and out to the street.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The Comanche women and children have heard the war whoop and it changes them from curiosities to combatants. A young Comanche who was shooting at coins tossed in the air suddenly lowers his bow and shoots an OLDER MAN through the eye.

The scene in the street quickly deteriorates in to chaos. Several ANGLO MEN on the edges of the street emerge and they are armed. They fire on the Comanche, and the Comanche seek cover and scatter.

Eloise tries to herd the children she is shepparding back towards her house but only the youngest are interested. The older ones break for their Comanche brethren.

INT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The warriors have let many arrows fly in the moments after the verdict, and several Texans have fallen. Several warriors have advanced and started to slash with their knives as they fight towards the door.

But the Texans with enough presence of mind to raise their rifles have now done so.

MCLEOD
Fire! Fire!

The first volley flies. Many shots are fired at once, in a rattle that shakes the windows. Several Comanche clutch at their hot wounds. Quannah and Loco fall.

Irishman has not moved from his position along the wall since the melee started, but he has drawn his weapon. Karnes has fallen to the floor and is trying to get his revolver under control with his good hand. McLeod has stood up and is shouting commands at his confused men. The room has devolved in to hand-to-hand combat as the Texans and Comanche get close enough to one another to tangle.

Suddenly, standing right in front of McLeod, bow drawn, and arrow leveled, is Mukwooru. He has crawled across the room and risen in front of the table. The tip of his arrow is inches from McLeod's neck.

McLeod is armed but he has not even drawn his revolver. He sees Mukwooru but all that can happen are his pupils dilating in anticipation of the shaft about to penetrate his neck.

BANG! A hole opens in Mukwooru's forehead and his bow falls. Smoke curls from the gleaming barrel of the Irishman's pistol. McLeod is saved again.

The fighting continues as the Irishman slips out the door to find Matilda.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

The scene outside the Council House has devolved in to further chaos. The Comanche are fighting and will not flee in anticipation of their leaders emerging from the Council House, but the citizens of San Antonio have heard the firing and are descending on the area with every manner of weapon they can find. Gunshots and screams fill the air.

The Irishman suddenly sees two things at once.

On one side of the street, he sees a Comanche teen with a huge knife raised and bearing down on Eloise. She is backed up to a building.

On the other side, he sees Mary Maverick and Matilda fleeing.

He begins to run towards Eloise.

IRISHMAN

Get down!

She kneels and covers her head and Irishman fires. The Comanche falls.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)

Get back to your house.

He runs on in the direction Mary and Matilda went.

EXT. MARY MAVERICK'S HOUSE - DAY

The Irishman reaches the house just as Mary and Matilda are entering. Mary sees him and tries to shut the door before he can enter, but he passes through with them.

INT. MARY MAVERICK'S HOUSE - DAY

The Irishman enters and shuts the door.

MARY
Get out of my house this instant!

IRISHMAN
(to Matilda)
Who's in charge with the chief
gone?

Matilda stares at this stranger who she knows is behind the mayhem around her.

MATILDA
Who... What? No one is in charge.
He's barely in charge when he's
there.

IRISHMAN
(to Mary)
Stay here. Don't leave this house.

MATILDA
You're going out to them?

IRISHMAN
Yes. To get Sarah.

Matilda thinks for a moment.

MATILDA
I'll go with you.

Mary is horrified. The Irishman shakes his head.

MARY
No, you shall not! You were just
returned! They're fighting now.

MATILDA
You won't be able to find them, and
you won't be able to speak to them
without me. Sarah wouldn't come
with you anyway.

The Irishman thinks. Then he grabs her by the arm and they exit.

MARY
Leave it to the Captain!

EXT. STABLE - DAY

The Irishman and Matilda reach the stables. Around them, people are running towards the Council House, all armed and ready for battle. Some are armed with nothing but shovels.

The Irishman leads his horse from the stall and swings Matilda on with him. As they leave, two COMANCHE KIDS run past and then three MEN and three WOMEN pursue.

Every Comanche in town is being tracked down and killed.

EXT. WEST OF TOWN - DAY

The Irishman spurs the horse and Matilda hugs him to keep from falling. They can hear the firing from the fight in town.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - AFTERNOON

Up ahead, Matilda points out the row of teepees and people. The COMANCHE in the camp see them and are grabbing weapons.

As they reach the camp, Matilda jumps down and starts to speak to the assembling Comanche in their language. The Irishman notes that there are few men, just some older warriors, and many women and children. Mukwooru took his best and strongest right in to the Council House from which they will never return.

But the reminder is still deadly. The Irishman comes down from his mount and raises one hand while he holds the reins to his mount with the other. He smiles and nods but the Comanche men and teens eye him warily.

MATILDA
Sarah!

Several Comanche surround Matilda and are peppering her with questions. She smiles and nods and speaks, but is searching for Sarah at the same time.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
Sarah!

She paces back and forth as the Comanche watch. They are confused about what is happening and what she is saying.

IRISHMAN
What are you telling them?

MATILDA
They're asking about what's
happening with the Texans... Sarah!

IRISHMAN
What did you tell them?

MATILDA
That they're making a peace that
will last forever.

Finally, she spots Doba with a bunch of kids, including Sarah. Sarah is dressed exactly as the other Comanche children now. But for her lighter hair and long nose, the Irishman would not have recognized her.

Cuffy has heard the talking and commotion and come out of her teepee just as Matilda reaches Sarah. She stretches, and then walks to Matilda.

The Irishman sees crisis coming and edges closer.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
(to Sarah)
Come with me. We're going now.

But Sarah shakes her head no.

CUFFY
What you doing here? You wanted to
go back to your people.

MATILDA
(to Cuffy)
I came back for my sister.
(to Sarah)
Sarah, we don't have much time, now
come with me.

Doba glares at the Irishman. He sees the scar at her ear where he tried to kill her before.

Doba speaks rapidly to Matilda. Clearly, she does not want Sarah to go. They begin to argue.

CUFFY
She don't want to go, can't you see
that?

Cuffy looks back and forth between Matilda and the Irishman and starts to get the barest inkling of something being drastically wrong.

The Irishman sees a couple of younger men emerge from their teepees. Like Cuffy, they have heard arguing. They ask

Matilda questions and she smiles and talks back with excitement. She is telling them how well things are going in town.

Then Matilda reaches forward and grabs Sarah by the arm. On Sarah's face, deep conflict. She doesn't know what she should do; go with her sister, or stay with her 'mother' and the other kids.

Cuffy has seen enough; she steps forward and slaps Matilda hard.

CUFFY (CONT'D)
You wanted to be free; now you
free. She wants to stay. Now,
what's going on down there in the
town? Something ain't right.

MATILDA
(losing hope)
Everything is fine. I can't leave
my sister...

CUFFY
(skeptical)
Things is fine, but you out here
with this man trying to get your
sister back? Cuffy ain't no slave
girl no more so don't you lie to
me!

MATILDA
I just want my sister and we'll go!

The Irishman watches, waiting for the moment to draw his weapon and take the girl by force.

Then he sees some of the Comanche pointing so he turns to look. To his horror, he sees a Comanche child on a horse, returning from town.

Matilda turns and sees the same thing. She knows; when the Comanche find out what has happened, they will turn.

The Irishman realizes this is the moment. It's now or never. He draws his revolver, levels the barrel at the Doba and pulls the trigger.

BANG!

Doba falls.

Matilda seizes Sarah by the arm. Cuffy grabs Sarah by the other arm. The both tug at her.

The Irishman levels his pistol at Cuffy, squints his eyes, and pulls the trigger.

Click...

Nothing. The last chance has passed.

Cuffy yanks Sarah away from Matilda. But now she knows, even before she is told, that something horrible has happened in the town and to Quannah.

CUFFY
What did ya'll do? What on earth
did ya'll do?!

She starts to yell instructions to the other Comanche as she pulls Sarah back. Comanche men rush forward.

The Comanche boy arrives and starts to speak and gesture towards the town. The men near him begin to clutch their hair and scream.

The Irishman draws a dagger from his waist. This briefly stops the rush of young Comanche men towards him.

He grabs Matilda forcefully by the arm and pulls her towards the horse.

But suddenly, Cuffy is on his back. He releases Matilda and she jumps on the horse which is backing away.

IRISHMAN
Tell the Captain to gather his men
and attack. And give my things to
Eloise Cardoza!

Matilda is backing away on the horse and the Comanche are now swarming on the Irishman. She needs to run but doesn't.

He smiles and nods, his eyes fill with kindness.

IRISHMAN (CONT'D)
It's OK. Go.

Matilda turns the horse and spurs it forward. She looks over her shoulder and sees Sarah being pulled away by Cuffy as the rest descend on the Irishman. He suddenly begins to sing a bright Irish jig. The Comanche envelope him.

Before she passes out of sight, she sees Mrs. Webster running after her.

MRS. WEBSTER
Wait! Wait!

But it is too late. She is not turning back now.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - NIGHT

Matilda arrives at the Council House to a scene of fresh horrors, lit by torch light.

The dead Comanche have been dragged to the street in front of the Council House and arrayed in a long line for all to see. There are 35 men, women and children, all shot through or beaten. The stretch all the way to the Cathedral.

These are the people she has lived with for the past year. She knows them.

In an opposing line across from the Comanche dead, the dead Texans from inside the Council House and the deceased townspeople are arrayed. Most still have arrows protruding from their bodies.

People walk around and between them.

Peeking from around a dark corner is Eloise. She is looking for the Irishman but doesn't want to come out amongst the Anglos.

Matilda rides to the door of the Council House and everyone stops to hear fresh news.

She speaks to McLeod, who is standing at the Council House door. Karnes is beside him, clutching his pierced palm.

MATILDA

They got the Irishman. We went to get my sister, but one of them made it back. They know what happened. He says to attack them now.

McLeod barely gives away his surprise, but it's there. The Irishman never ceases to amaze.

Still, he doesn't move.

MATILDA (CONT'D)

He says to attack them! They'll kill everyone they still have if you don't go now!

MCLEOD

We give them to noon tomorrow to bring everyone in.

Matilda knows this is not how the Comanche operate and she neither knows nor cares who McLeod is.

MATILDA

They're not coming back in to town! They'll kill everyone they hold tonight and go! They don't have a leader right now, but they're angry!

Karnes finally turns.

KARNES

She's right. They can't even pack up fast enough. We can get all our people back if we attack now.

But McLeod never changes direction once a path is chosen.

MCLEOD

We told the boy to tell them they had until noon. If they don't bring the people in, we'll go get them.

Matilda lets her rage and hurt flow over. She comes down off the horse as she speaks.

MATILDA

They'll be dead tomorrow, along with my sister. And they'll die in the worst ways! Go! Go get them!

Mary Maverick appears from the crowd and she restrains Matilda.

MARY

Come, love. Let's go back to my home.

Matilda pushes her away.

MATILDA

Go get them! Go now! While our people are still alive!

Karnes is rallying. He's seen how McLeod's plans turn out and his hand hurts.

KARNES

(to McLeod)

Did you hear that? They'll kill them all tonight! The Irishman said to negotiate but we didn't. Now look what's happened. Now the Irishman says attack, but you won't do that either? This is madness!

MCLEOD

Trying to rescue your countryman?

Karnes slugs McLeod with his good hand.

KARNES

I'm as Texan as you or anyone else! But the Irishman is right! We need to attack now.

The people assembled have been observing and their murmurs and support for attack have been aroused. McLeod must now justify his choices.

MCLEOD

(to all)

We've always kept our promises to the Comanche, even when they don't keep theirs. That's what makes us civilized men. They were supposed to bring in our people but they didn't do it. We've given them one more chance. If they don't take it, we'll go out there and get our people back by force.

MATILDA

(also to all)

You put your faith in these men and look what happened! I was with the Comanche, so let me tell you how it will be! You won't make peace with them. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever. They don't want peace! And neither do we. Someone is going to have this land and someone is going to die. So, you stay here and wait. Do what civilized men do. But they'll torture the Irishman until his voice gives out from screaming and then they'll roast him alive. But you do what civilized men do, and wait. For your precious honor. For a peace that will never come. To hell with you! To hell with every last one of you.

Matilda turns and walks away in to the dark. Mary Maverick follows. Then Karnes.

Then, in shock and choking back sobs, Eloise walks away as well.

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - AFTERNOON

The deadline came and went and, as Matilda predicted, no Comanche return of prisoners, so the entire Ranger battalion as has come out to the camp.

But, all they see is smoldering camp fires from a distance.

As they get closer, they see the trash and debris left behind by the grieving Comanche. Over half of their band did not return from town so they left behind much of their gear.

The men walk their horses through the camp, revolvers drawn, none sure if they have not ridden in to a trap.

Karnes spots a wooden structure still in place over a smoking fire and rides over to it.

It is the charred remains of a man tied to a pole and set over a fire.

McLeod arrives beside Karnes. Both know it's the Irishman. They can see the strange tattoos on the white skin of the man's back.

MCLEOD
Is it him?

Karnes nods. McLeod comes down off his horse.

MCLEOD (CONT'D)
We're going to bury this man and then we're moving on after them.

KARNES
The girl ain't here.

The others look up at Karnes, not sure what he means.

KARNES (CONT'D)
The Lockhart girl. They didn't kill her or any of the others. Just the Irishman.

Karnes turns to ride away.

MCLEOD
You keep your god-damned mouth shut!

But Karnes is riding back to town.

EXT. OUTSIDE SAN ANTONIO - DAY

Karnes rides back towards town.

Along his way, he passes a clump of PEOPLE digging graves. Piled up are the bodies of the dead Comanche.

He rides over and watches. In the pile, he sees Mukwooru. The old Comanche has open eye open. Even in death, the chief casts a fierce countenance. As he watches, Quannah is thrown in to a grave.

EXT. COUNCIL HOUSE - DAY

Eloise stands outside the Council House, hoping against hope to find the Irishman.

She is dressed formally, as she always is, but now she not on the narrow path from her home to the Cathedral so she stands out amongst the other townspeople. But her want to know about the Irishman has driven her forward.

When she sees Karnes approaching, she steps forward to speak.

ELOISE
Pardon, sir. You were with the
Irishman.

Karnes is suspicious, wondering what she knows.

KARNES
Yes.

But after a moment, he figures out what she wants to know.

KARNES (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but he's dead. The
Comanche took him.

She looks down then turns. Her worst fears are confirmed.

ELOISE
Gracias.

EXT. MARY MAVERICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Karnes arrives and jumps off his mount. Mary Maverick sees him and comes to the door.

KARNES
I need to speak with Miss Lockhart.

MARY
She's had enough. She's sleeping.
Leave her be for a few days.

But like the Irishman, Karnes brushes past and enters.

MARY (CONT'D)
Leave this house at once!

He goes to the next room where Matilda is lying on a pile of blankets on the floor.

KARNES
Miss Lockhart!

Matilda's eyes open. She is emotionally emptied.

KARNES (CONT'D)
We went to the camp, and none of
the prisoners was there. Not your
sister or any of the rest.

Matilda lets the thought process.

MATILDA
The Irishman?

Karnes looks down.

KARNES
He's there.

She sits up. The news rouses her.

MATILDA
What happened to my brother?

KARNES
Your brother?

MATILDA
I had a younger brother. That day,
I didn't see him. He was in the
fields. Did he escape? His name is
Will.

KARNES
I don't know. I'll try to find out.

Matilda stands. She's not a child anymore; she's an adult
and she's moving on with her life.

MATILDA
Please do. Can you tell me where to
find Eloise Cardoza?

EXT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - AFTERNOON

Matilda arrives with two bags; they are the worn belongs of
the Irishman.

As she approaches the house, she hears an old man inside
bellowing, and then she hears wracking sobs.

Closer still, she sees Eloise in the hidden part of the
porch, doubled over in tears.

Eloise Cardoza sits up when Matilda steps on to the porch.
Matilda notes that Eloise's face is swollen. She has been
crying, and she is bruised.

MATILDA
Are you Eloise Cardoza?

Eloise says nothing.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
These are for you. They belonged to
the Irishman.

Matilda brings the bags over to Eloise and drops them.

ELOISE
Where is your sister?

MATILDA
With the Comanche. She's one of
them now. May I sit?

Eloise moves over and Matilda sits.

MATILDA (CONT'D)
There is a letter in the bag for
you, from the Irishman. Don't fret;
I didn't read it. It's in Spanish.

ELOISE
Thank you.

MATILDA
What was he to you?

ELOISE
No one, really. No, that isn't
true: he was my lover. I only just
met him. But we had love and plans
for the future. He was to take me
to Spain.

Matilda takes a deep breath and they sit quietly for a
moment.

MATILDA
I heard about men like him.

Eloise smiles.

ELOISE
I heard about the same men. I
thought for a long time my father
was one.

MATILDA
There are a lot of letters in
there, and some money. It says in
one of these letters that if he
brought me and my sister to
Virginia, he'd receive a reward.
I've got family in England. I never
knew.

ELOISE
He told me the same thing.

MATILDA
I never met my kin in Virginia
either. They don't know what I look
like. They never met Sarah either.

Eloise looks up at her. Is she suggesting what Eloise hopes?

ELOISE
They won't believe us. We don't
look like sisters.

MATILDA
My brother will vouch for us. I
want to see Spain. And Ireland.

Eloise looks down. Her mind races.

EXT. HOME OF JUAN CARDOZA - NIGHT

The house is seen at night. Then, there is a light.
Something odd is happening with this light, which suddenly
gets brighter and starts to spread.

IRISHMAN (V.O.)
(in Spanish)
*Dearest Eloise... My passing is not
a tragedy. I lived richly, fully
and completely. You can do the
same. Don't stay another minute in
a house that makes you miserable.
Don't allow those who don't make
you laugh or make you rich have
even the smallest piece of you.
Darling, grab life, cling to it,
suck the marrow from the bones of
it. Live richly, fully, give of
yourself, take what you need...
When you are there, be there. When
you are gone, be gone forever. Cura
ut valeas... With much love,
Patrick.*

The front door opens and Eloise steps out. She leaves the
front door open so the fire she's started inside can get
plenty of fuel...

The fire spreads rapidly as she walks away. A man begins
screaming, but she does not look back.

EXT. SOUTH TEXAS FLATLANDS - SUNRISE

A FRONTIER FAMILY heads west with a wagon load of
possessions, including a noisy, heavy piano. The MOTHER and

FATHER sit up front ahead of SEVERAL KIDS who ride or follow on horseback.

They stop when they see a man on a tall horse leading a wagon coming the opposite way. The family is warily, and already on their guard.

But as the man and wagon get near, they see the badge of a Texas Ranger. It's Karnes. He tips his hat at them as he passes.

A moment later, Matilda and Eloise pass as well. Young Will, now a year older and stronger, holds the reins on the two horses. These are the survivors of their encounter with the Comanche and the Irishman.

They nod to the new comers, and give nothing away about what potential horrors await them.

Matilda holds the Irishman's pistol. His bags, as well as their belongings, are piled in the back.

Eloise is dressed as an Anglo; her brocade and gold gowns exchanged for a simple cotton dress. She wears her hair simply now, and looks like any other dark haired Anglo woman. But even dressed down, her beauty shines through.

They head east, in to the sun.