

HUNTING CHURCH

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A MAN (40s, weathered, bitter) rides a white horse down a dusty road. Two exhausted creatures, caked in dirt. The horse slows.

The Man lifts his hat. Wipes his forehead. Glances behind. He kicks his spurs into the horse.

MAN

Not much farther, Saul.

The HORSE SNORTS in protest and struggles along. A hoof lands in a crevice.

SNAP. The leg breaks. The animal falls.

The horse crushes the Man's leg. He grunts in pain, and pulls himself free.

MAN

Had to up and go lame on me, didn't you?

The Man rises cautiously on his good leg. He picks up his Bible from the road and dusts it off. Slides it into the back of his belt. He looks at the thick saddlebags, as if to make sure their contents haven't spilled.

MAN

Well, it's the end of the road for us.

The man pulls out his PISTOL, aims at the horse's head, and FIRES. He looks around, and is alone except for a small white church up the road, on the horizon. He puts away his revolver, takes off his hat, and dusts it off. He puts it back on his head as if a new man, with a new name.

CHURCH

So long, partner.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Church limps into town, carrying the saddle and now-empty saddlebags over his shoulder. A few folks walk or ride down the main road. Church heads for the:

INT. STABLES - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The owner, HARPER, lifts his great weight from his seat and puts his cigar aside. He squints at Church, as if finding him familiar.

HARPER

What can I do you for, stranger?

CHURCH

Hoping I could sell this to you.

Church hands over the saddle.

HARPER

Hey, you all right there?

CHURCH

My horse went lame. Fell right on top of me.

HARPER

Go see Doc, he'll fix you up.

CHURCH

Thank you, I will. And the saddle?

HARPER

Fine quality.

Harper reaches into his pocket and pulls out a thin stack of bills. Church takes it and counts.

CHURCH

I hope to buy it back when I get another horse.

HARPER

Course. Pleasure doing business with you, stranger.

Church returns to the main road:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

He limps along, drawing a few stares. He enters the:

INT. SALOON - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Sits at the bar. GRIMES, the bartender, brings coffee.

GRIMES
Coffee?

CHURCH
No, thank you. Water?

Grimes pours him a glass and Church drinks greedily.

GRIMES
Come a long way?

CHURCH
Not for me.

GRIMES
Where you from?

CHURCH
Out of town.

Grimes regards him closely and cleans out a glass.

CHURCH
Whiskey.

Grimes pours him a shot.

CHURCH
Much obliged.

Church throws back the whiskey, digs some coins from his pocket, and leaves them on the table. Grimes and the other drinkers watch Church stagger out.

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Church heads further into town. He enters the:

INT. INFIRMARY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

An old woman smiles at him as she leaves. The ancient DOC washes his hands in a bowl.

CHURCH
You the doctor?

DOC
Of course. Who are you?

CHURCH
Name's Church.

DOC
Nasty limp you got there. Take a seat.

Church rests on the elevated bench. Doc examines the leg.

DOC
It's not broken.

CHURCH
I could've told you that.

DOC
No need to be disrespectful, son.
Just a mighty bad sprain. Let me get a crutch for you.

Doc wraps Church's leg and helps him to the door.

CHURCH
I have money.

DOC
Don't worry about it. You're a stranger. I don't charge your kind.

CHURCH
Much obliged.

DOC
Staying long in Mayfield?

CHURCH
Not planning on it.

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Church steps into the road. Tips his hat at two women walking by. They give him a wary look. A pretty girl (10, energetic) approaches him. This is ALICE.

ALICE
Looking for a place to stay, sir?

CHURCH
What makes you think that?

ALICE
You're not from around here.

CHURCH
What business is it of yours?

ALICE
It's my Pa's business. He owns the inn, if you're interested.

CHURCH
I'm interested in getting out of this town.

Church sits on the steps to the infirmary and lights a cigar.

ALICE
Does your foot hurt real bad?

CHURCH
I've felt worse pain.

Alice sits next to him.

ALICE
Really? Like what? Ever been shot?

CHURCH
(annoyed)
What do you care, girl?

ALICE
I'm just curious. "Inquisitive," my Pa calls me.

CHURCH
You shouldn't talk to people you don't know.

ALICE
I'm Alice Collins.

CHURCH
So?

ALICE
What's your name?

CHURCH
Church.

ALICE
What's your first name?

CHURCH
Whatever you like.

ALICE
You look like a Thomas.

CHURCH
Thomas it is.

ALICE
Do you want to go by Tom?

CHURCH
Don't care.

ALICE
Robyn says it's rude to shorten
names without permission.

CHURCH
Who's Robyn?

ALICE
My older sister.

Church intently smokes his cigar. Ignores her a beat.

ALICE
You'd like her.

CHURCH
Why's that?

ALICE
She's pretty and can sing awful
sweet.

CHURCH
I don't like singing.

ALICE
Why not?

CHURCH
Do you pester innocent folk till
they stay at the inn?

ALICE
No. Pa says to ask people, get an
answer, and then leave them alone.

CHURCH
You're bad at that.

ALICE
It gets me in trouble.

People pass by, turning to stare at Church, then turning
back to whisper amongst themselves.

CHURCH
Town doesn't get many visitors, eh?

ALICE
Oh, we get lots of them! What with
the gold rushes and all. Otherwise,
Pa'd lose his business.

Church peers at the townsfolk.

ALICE
So, you gonna stay at the inn? My
sister's there.

CHURCH
I need my money for a horse.

ALICE
(squeals)
I'm saving for a horse, too!

Church looks away in disgust.

ALICE
I've got two dollars so far. How
much have you saved?

CHURCH
Not enough.

ALICE

You could go dig for gold. Or find work here. Maybe you could be the new deputy. You'd make an awful fine deputy.

CHURCH

Not staying here.

ALICE

How you gonna get away without a horse? Next town is seventy miles away. If you go west, that is. If you go east, it's only fifty miles.

CHURCH

Came from east.

ALICE

You can't walk there. Not on that bad leg.

CHURCH

I know that, girl.

Alice swings her legs back and forth under the porch ledge.

ALICE

So, what you gonna do?

Church thinks for moment. Tips his hat to another woman passing by with store-bought bundles of cloth. The woman shuffles away quickly. Church throws his cigar on the ground and steps on it. Turns to Alice.

CHURCH

Where's this inn of yours?

CUT TO:

INT. INN - DAY

Alice runs up and hugs her pa, COLLINS (40s, lighthearted), behind the front desk.

COLLINS

Hey, sweetheart.

ALICE

I brought you another customer!

COLLINS
So I see.

Collins shakes Church's hand.

COLLINS
Hank Collins.

CHURCH
Church.

Church glances at Alice.

CHURCH
Thomas Church.

COLLINS
How long you staying?

CHURCH
Can't say for sure. Let me pay for
tonight.

Church hands over some money. Collins turns his head.

COLLINS
Robyn, come show Mr. Church to his
room.

ROBYN (O.S.)
Coming!

Robyn (20s, gorgeous, proper) enters. Church can't help but stare. Robyn stops in her tracks a moment, looking him up and down. She likes what she sees.

ROBYN
Right this way, sir.

COLLINS
Help him up, Robyn.

Robyn assists Church upstairs and into the:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Church nods his thanks. Alice follows them up and watches eagerly from the doorway.

ALICE
Glad you decided to come, Mr.
Church.

Church nods, sitting on the bed and taking off his boots.

ALICE
Isn't my sister pretty?

ROBYN
Alice, that's enough.

Church pretends he didn't hear. He stands and puts his gun on the side table. Followed by his Bible.

ROBYN
Are you a religious man, Mr.
Church?

Church thinks a moment.

CHURCH
Wouldn't deserve my name if I
wasn't.

ROBYN
My father has a reading after
supper every night. Perhaps you
would like to join us for both?

Alice smiles wide.

CHURCH
Perhaps.

Robyn nods and shoos Alice out of the room. She closes the door and Church is alone.

He opens the Bible and leafs through the pages. Closes it. He lies on the bed. Closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - NIGHT

Church eats with Alice, Robyn, Collins, and Collins' wife, ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH
What brings you to Mayfield, Mr.
Church?

Church waits to swallow before answering.

CHURCH
I wasn't intending to come here at all.

The family looks at each other, as if collectively insulted.

CHURCH
But I'm not disappointed I did.
It's a pleasant town.

ALICE
Nice save.

ELIZABETH
Alice...

Alice pays close attention to her plate for a beat.

COLLINS
Lovely night for having our reading outside.

ELIZABETH
I'd love that.

ROBYN
Will you join us, Mr. Church?

Church ponders a moment, then nods.

ALICE
Splendid!

A beat. Robyn looks at Church.

ROBYN
What is it you do?

CHURCH
I'm a rancher.

COLLINS
My brother owns a ranch down south.
Hard work. Puts callouses on your hands. Lines on your face.

ALICE
The lines especially.

Robyn rests a hand over Alice's mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - NIGHT

Collins, Elizabeth, Alice, and Robyn sit together on one side of a fire, Church on the other. Collins holds an old Bible.

COLLINS

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

Church watches Robyn through the flames. Robyn notices and watches him. Alice watches Church.

COLLINS

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye will be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

FADE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Church awakes. He rises and steps to the dresser, where a bowl of water waits. He splashes cold water on his face. He dresses, puts his gun on his hip, his Bible in his belt, and limps out of the room on his crutch.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Church stands a few hundred yards outside town, looking longingly down the western road. The sun rises behind him. He looks around cautiously. Refocuses on the road.

A covered wagon heads toward him. Church finds a rock to sit on and lights a cigar. The man on the wagon, WIGGINS, and his wife, JILL, wave to Church.

JILL

Morning, Mr. Cline!

WIGGINS

Bet you didn't think you'd see us
again so soon, right?

Church remains stoic. The wagon passes into town. Alone, a hint of perplexity creeps across Church's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Church moves through town, ignoring the tireless stares. He becomes aware of someone stalking him. He doesn't look behind him.

CHURCH

Don't you have dolls to play with,
girl?

ALICE

I don't play with dolls anymore.
I'm almost eleven years old.

CHURCH

That old, eh?

ALICE

How old are you?

CHURCH

None of your business.

ALICE

You sure don't talk much.

CHURCH

You noticed.

ALICE

I'm a very observant woman. I have
the eyes of an eagle.

CHURCH

Why don't you go play with some
friends?

ALICE

You're a friend.

CHURCH

I don't have any friends.

ALICE

Except me.

Church rolls his eyes.

ALICE

What you gonna do today?

CHURCH

Don't know yet.

ALICE

I just convinced Mr. and Mrs.
Wiggins to stay at the inn.

CHURCH

Your pa will be proud.

ALICE

They let me ride in their wagon to
the inn. That was fun. Did you see
their wagon?

CHURCH

I saw it.

ALICE

Don't you love it?

CHURCH

It's a wagon.

ALICE

But their horses are so beautiful.
I like their shiny black coats.

CHURCH

That's nice.

ALICE

What color was your horse?

CHURCH

White.

ALICE

I'd like a white horse.

Church stops in front of the saloon. He looks at Alice.

CHURCH

You allowed in there?

ALICE
Certainly not!

Church immediately heads inside, leaving Alice with an insulted expression.

INT. SALOON - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Grimes looks up as Church approaches the bar. Folk stare. Church sits.

GRIMES
What'll it be?

CHURCH
Whiskey.

Grimes serves him and Church downs the drink and motions for another. Grimes obliges.

CHURCH
Any way to make a quick buck in
this town?

GRIMES
Few widows around might need some
help. Replacing windows, fixing
furniture, that sort of thing.

CHURCH
They won't pay much.

GRIMES
Right about that.

CHURCH
Any other ideas?

GRIMES
May be too early to start talking
about it, but Sheriff will be
looking for a new deputy.

Church turns to look outside, and sees Alice hopping on one foot. Waiting for him.

CHURCH
That right?

GRIMES
You could talk to him. Sheriff
Quinn, that is.

CHURCH
Too long-term.

GRIMES
Don't know what else to tell you,
stranger.

Church nods and leaves.

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Church walks by Alice, who jumps on one foot after him.

ALICE
Are you drunk?

CHURCH
I was in there five minutes.

ALICE
Can you hop on one foot? Pa says
that's how you can tell if
someone's drunk.

Church ignores her.

ALICE
Well, hop! Prove to me you're not
drunk.

CHURCH
I'm not about to hop, girl. Go find
someone else to bother.

Alice stops, heartbroken. Church regards her, and continues on. Alice drops the devastated look and hops after him. They move through town, both favoring one foot.

ALICE
I think Robyn likes you.

Church says nothing.

ALICE
She doesn't invite many people to
dinner and our reading.

CHURCH
That's nice.

ALICE

It's all cause she saw your Bible.
Robyn doesn't notice men at first.
But if she sees he's got religion,
she goes wild.

CHURCH

An invitation to dinner is your
idea of wild?

ALICE

You know what I mean.

Suddenly, the door of the drug store bursts open and a thin black man rolls out. This is ABRAHAM. A big white man, FORRESTER, charges out of the store and KICKS Abraham in the face. Blood squirts from Abraham's nose.

FORRESTER

What is the matter with you, boy?

Forrester holds up a HORSEWHIP and LASHES Abraham across the back.

FORRESTER

That'll teach you, you horseshit!

He WHIPS Abraham a second time and storms back inside. Abraham groans. Alice runs over and helps him sit up. Church remains where he is. Alice glares at him.

ALICE

Aren't you gonna help him?

Church looks around. Suddenly all eyes have shifted from the scene of the beating to him. Church reluctantly walks over and offers a hand to Abraham.

ABRAHAM

Thank you kindly, sir. But I
wouldn't ask that one injured man
help another.

Abraham rises on his own and slowly reenters the store.
Alice glares at Church.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - DAY

Church drinks whiskey, alone at the bar but not in the room. Grimes pours drinks. The doors swing open and SHERIFF QUINN (40s, amiable, a commanding presence) steps in.

GRIMES
Afternoon, Sheriff.

Church turns to look at Quinn. Quinn stops dead in his tracks. Eyes dart from Quinn to Church. Quinn recovers and sits next to Church.

QUINN
Can I get a coffee, Grimes?

GRIMES
Course.

Quinn looks at Church from the corner of his eye. Church pretends not to notice. Quinn sips his coffee, and offers Church his hand.

QUINN
Jack Quinn.

Church shakes his hand.

CHURCH
Church.

Beat.

QUINN
You're an interesting fellow, Mr.
Church.

CHURCH
Why's that?

QUINN
No one told you?

Church shakes his head.

QUINN
Unbelievable. Well, lucky for you
I'm more direct than these other
folk.

CHURCH
Is that right?

QUINN
Haven't you noticed everybody
staring at you?

CHURCH
I noticed. I ignored 'em.

QUINN
(chuckles)
Understandable. It's mighty rude.

CHURCH
Why are they staring?

Quinn sips his coffee.

QUINN
Four days ago my deputy was killed,
God rest his soul. Happened just
outside of town. On his way to
visit his sister.

Church leans forward, interested.

QUINN
Beaten to a pulp. Every bone in his
body broken. That was before he was
shot a bunch of times in the face.

CHURCH
My condolences.

QUINN
Anyway, the point is, you look just
like him. Sure as shooting, you
could be his twin. You're a little
bigger, and unshaven, but you're
his spitting image.

CHURCH
Deputy... Cline?

QUINN
That was his name. How'd you know?

CHURCH
Someone mistook me for him.
Wiggins.

Quinn nods.

QUINN

Just got into town. I told 'em what
happened myself. They didn't
believe me. Said they say Cline
just outside town.

Church is silent.

QUINN

You've fascinated my folk. And me.
John dies, and two days later
there's a lookalike limping through
Mayfield. Never seen anything like
it.

Church lifts his glass to his lips, but doesn't drink. Sets
the glass down.

CHURCH

How many times?

QUINN

Beg pardon?

CHURCH

How many times was he shot in the
face?

QUINN

Six, if I recall.

Church closes his eyes, as if pained. Downs his drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Quinn and Church patrol through town. Alice walks behind
them, whistling.

QUINN

I see you made a new friend.

CHURCH

Does she always bother strangers
this much?

QUINN

No. Only her favorites.

Quinn stops walking.

QUINN

Take care, Mr. Church. Anything you need, you know where to find me.

They shake hands. Quinn marches away.

ALICE

The sheriff is awful nice, don't you think?

CHURCH

You didn't tell me I looked like your dead deputy.

ALICE

I'm not rude. Pa says it's rude to compare people.

Church shakes his head.

ALICE

You still need work.

CHURCH

I know that.

ALICE

Have you thought about gambling?

Church stares.

ALICE

Don't worry, I won't tell Robyn.

CHURCH

I don't have much to bet with.

ALICE

How'd you spend all your money already?

CHURCH

At that inn of yours.

ALICE

Not to mention on whiskey.

CHURCH

That too.

ALICE

So be deputy. You've wasted enough time as it is.

Church ponders.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Quinn cleaning a rifle at a table. A knock at the door.

 QUINN
Come on in!

Sunlight pours into the room, behind Church.

 QUINN
What can I do you for, Church?

 CHURCH
I'm looking for work, Sheriff.

 QUINN
Don't know if I can help. Not many
extra hands needed in a town like
this.

 CHURCH
You need a deputy.

Quinn bites his lip.

 CHURCH
Don't worry, I'd only be temporary.
Just long enough for me to afford a
horse and for my leg to heal.

Quinn cleans faster.

 CHURCH
I'm all out of options, Sheriff.

Quinn shakes his head.

 QUINN
Afraid not, Mr. Church.

 CHURCH
What?

 QUINN
Just doesn't feel right. I was
planning on waiting at least
another week or two before looking
for someone to replace John. And
someone who looks just like him...

CHURCH
It'd only be for short while.

QUINN
That's another thing. I don't want
to hire a deputy for a month. No,
just isn't right.

Church is silent.

QUINN
Sorry, friend. Can't help you.

Church storms out.

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Church passes by and Alice springs up from her seated position in the grass.

ALICE
How'd it go?

CHURCH
Not so well.

ALICE
What're you gonna do?

CHURCH
Make him listen to reason.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

The saloon is packed. Men drink and gamble. A man named BLOOM plays the PIANO. Quinn sits at the bar with Harper and Doc. Grimes moves at a breakneck pace. Wiggins argues with Forrester at a table.

The doors burst open and Church walks in. He is generally ignored. He sits next to Quinn.

QUINN
Evening.

CHURCH
You need to make me deputy.

QUINN

Already told you, friend. Can't do it.

CHURCH

Stop calling me "friend."

QUINN

(annoyed)

That's another thing. I wouldn't want you as deputy cause you're just so nasty all the time.

Quinn turns back to speaking with Harper and Doc. Church leans in.

CHURCH

Heads or tails, Sheriff?

Church holds up a coin. Harper and Doc peer at him. Grimes stops moving.

QUINN

Beg pardon?

CHURCH

Heads or tails?

QUINN

What is this, a game?

CHURCH

Call it.

QUINN

Why don't you just get something to drink? Grimes, get this man a scotch.

Church looks over at Bloom.

CHURCH

Hey, piano-man! Heads or tails?

BLOOM

Heads!

Church flips the coin into the air.

Church's GUN appears in his hand. He COCKS IT.

BANG!

Hostlers the gun. One fluid, lightening fast motion.

QUINN
 (bellows)
 Get down!

Grimes swings a BOTTLE at Church's head. It SHATTERS against Church's arm and glass and scotch fly in all directions. Quinn throws a punch. Church dodges.

HARPER
 Grab him!

Forrester comes charging at Church from behind. Church KICKS him in the gut and down he goes. Hands grab Church. Doc and Bloom take him by the arms and SLAM HIM onto the bar. More BROKEN GLASS and wasted alcohol.

BAM! Grimes lands a hefty PUNCH against Church's jaw.

QUINN
 Get him out of here!

Doc and Bloom drag Church to the doors and throw him onto the dirt.

EXT. MAYFIELD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Quinn steps through the doors. Church spits dirt and blood from his mouth.

QUINN
 I reckon you've overstayed your welcome, Mr. Church. You got a day to get out of my town. Walking if need be.

Quinn storms back inside. Doc and Bloom follow, shooting Church hateful looks. Church spits again.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - NIGHT - LATER

Quinn sits with Forrester at the bar. The saloon quiet, the MUSIC DOWNBEAT. Grimes sweeps the glass.

QUINN
 How's your stomach?

FORRESTER
 Nothing like another shot won't cure.

Forrester downs a drink and squeezes off his stool. Pats Quinn on the shoulder.

FORRESTER
Night, Sheriff.

QUINN
Take care, Henry.

Grimes sweeps near Quinn's stool.

GRIMES
Can't believe Church.

QUINN
I never took him for a madman.

GRIMES
Can't remember the last fight in
here.

QUINN
It was Smith and Bell, remember?

GRIMES
(laughs)
Oh yeah, over the extra ace.

QUINN
That was the one.

Grimes stops sweeping and bends down.

GRIMES
Sheriff, look at this.

He holds up the coin, with a bullet hole dead-center.

QUINN
Well, I'll be.

Quinn takes and examines it.

GRIMES
Look at that. Shot it through the
heads side.

QUINN
Never seen anything like it.

GRIMES
What're you gonna do?

Quinn shakes his head. Sets the coin on the bar.

QUINN
Nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - NIGHT

Church sits next to the fire, head low. Alice hands him a wet cloth and a chunk of ice. Church applies them to his jaw.

ALICE
You're a fool, you know that?

CHURCH
I lost my crutch.

ALICE
Thank you for proving my point.

Church stretches his leg. Mobility has returned.

CHURCH
Doesn't matter. Leg's feeling better anyway.

Robyn shoos Alice away.

ROBYN
Bedtime.

Alice skips off without complaint. Robyn sits next to Church.

ROBYN
My sister's right.

CHURCH
Isn't she always?

ROBYN
Getting into fights isn't something that happens often around here.

CHURCH
Maybe that's why everyone is so weak.

ROBYN
How do you mean?

CHURCH

Alice could hit harder than Grimes.

Collins appears in the doorway, unnoticed. Listens in.

ROBYN

He left a nice shiner on you.

CHURCH

I kicked Forrester in the gut for
you.

ROBYN

How sweet.

CHURCH

Sheriff says I gotta leave town.

ROBYN

He doesn't tolerate troublemakers.

CHURCH

I've got one day to change his
mind.

ROBYN

By creating more trouble, I assume?

CHURCH

What have I got to lose?

Robyn shakes her head.

ROBYN

I don't understand you.

CHURCH

How's that?

ROBYN

You come across as this...
indifferent pig the day you arrive,
then you want to be deputy so bad
you get in a brawl over it.

CHURCH

I never meant to get into a fight.
I just want to make some honest
money. Then be on my way.

ROBYN

How are you going to convince the
Sheriff to let you stay? Not to
mention hire you?

CHURCH

Not sure.

Robyn sighs. She looks long at him. He meets her gaze.

Robyn smiles. Soft encouragement.

ROBYN

Good luck.

Collins slips away, leaving them alone.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Church relaxes against a tree just outside of town. Smokes a cigar. A voice startles him.

QUINN

That was an impressive little trick
last night.

Quinn walks around the tree and confronts him.

CHURCH

Glad you enjoyed it.

QUINN

You have till tonight.

CHURCH

And what if I stay?

QUINN

I'll escort you out myself. If you
come back, I either shoot you or
hang you. Whichever I feel like at
the time.

CHURCH

Shooting is quick but messy...
hanging is clean but takes time.

QUINN

We certainly understand each other.

Quinn flips the coin at Church, who catches it.

QUINN

You'll need all the money you can
get. Hopefully somebody will take
that.

Quinn steps away. Church pulls the Bible out of his belt and opens it.

CHURCH
Sheriff.

Quinn turns. Church holds up the book.

CHURCH
Read. Left page. Third verse.

Quinn takes the Bible and reads. Expressionless, he closes it, hands it back, and leaves.

CHURCH
(mutters to the Bible)
I hope that helped.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY - LATER

Alice joins Church under the tree. She eyes his cigar.

ALICE
Why do you smoke so much?

Church takes the cigar from his mouth.

CHURCH
To ward off little girls.

ALICE
That's not true!

CHURCH
Think what you want.

Alice plays with a daisy.

ALICE
Can I try it?

Church stares at her.

ALICE
Please?

CHURCH
Your pa wouldn't like it.

ALICE

He never said I couldn't try it.

Alice reaches for the cigar, and Church slowly hands it to her. Alice holds it between her tiny fingers and imitates Church's voice and sour expression.

ALICE

Howdy, partner.

She lifts the cigar up to her lips. Church reaches over and snatches it away. Alice smiles wide. Church continues smoking.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Collins and Quinn lean in at the table.

COLLINS

We all know you'll make the right decision, Sheriff.

Quinn shakes his head.

QUINN

You seriously want Church as deputy?

COLLINS

Yes, I think so. You may not see it, but he's a good man.

QUINN

You're right, I don't see it.

COLLINS

He seems bitter, for sure. Never known a man who never broke a smile for this long. But he needs a chance.

QUINN

I don't know if I can stand him for another day, much less a few weeks.

COLLINS

He'll come around. Alice says he already is.

Quinn smiles.

QUINN
You trust her that much?

COLLINS
Of course. She's my daughter.

Quinn nods, eyes lowered.

QUINN
She's your daughter.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Abraham crashes to the ground outside the drug store once again. Forrester slashes him across the face with the horsewhip.

FORRESTER
You just never learn, do you boy?

Another whip.

FORRESTER
You can tell them something over and over again, but they never listen.

A kick in the gut.

FORRESTER
You gotta beat the message into 'em!

Forrester raises the whip.

BANG!

The whip RIPS IN TWO.

Forrester, shocked, stares at the piece in his hand. He looks around wildly. People stare down the road and point.

Church, at least a hundred meters away, puts away his gun.

FORRESTER
You!

Alice appears behind Church. She gives him a pat on the back. Forrester approaches. Rolls up his sleeves.

Quinn arrives on horseback behind Church and Alice.

QUINN
I'll take it from here, Henry.

Forrester stops, glowering at Church. He reluctantly turns and heads back. Abraham waves his solemn thanks to Church, and follows Forrester into the store.

QUINN
Mr. Church, if you'll come with me?
Alice, run along home.

Alice smiles. She watches Church and Quinn head off.

CUT TO:

INT. STABLES - DAY

Quinn returns his horse to a pen. Harper is napping in his chair. Church watches as Quinn brushes down the horse.

QUINN
Church, I'm going to let you in on
a little secret.

CHURCH
I feel special.

QUINN
I don't like you.

CHURCH
You don't say.

Quinn nods.

QUINN
But there's one man I hate even
more than you. And that's Henry
Forrester.

Church is surprised.

QUINN
Some day I'm going to shoot that
old fool myself.

Quinn sighs.

QUINN
If only you'd aimed a little lower.

CHURCH
Sorry to disappoint.

QUINN
Church... what you did... well, it reminds me of something John Cline would do. Not that he could shoot like that. No one can.

Church nods slightly.

QUINN
You protected someone who couldn't protect himself.

Quinn tosses aside the brush.

QUINN
You weren't firing like a madman last night, after all. And after that verse you showed me, well... I started rethinking things.

Church clears his throat.

QUINN
Not many men in this town would actually want to be deputy. Everybody's happy doing what they're doing. I suppose I can overlook my concerns. The largest being that I don't like you.

CHURCH
Much obliged.

Quinn takes out a badge and tosses it to Church. Church examines it and pins it to his shirt.

Church nods. Quinn nods. He continues brushing his horse.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Church and Alice walk through town. People stare, but this time for a new reason.

ALICE
I new he'd come around.

CHURCH
Did you?

ALICE
Of course. Awful clever thinking
doing that to impress the Sheriff.

CHURCH
I didn't do that to impress him,
girl.

Church pulls out the coin.

CHURCH
I did this to impress him.

Alice takes it.

ALICE
Wow. Dead center.

Church struts on. Alice catches up.

ALICE
So why did you help Abraham?

Church ignores her.

ALICE
Aw, it was cause of me, wasn't it!

Church clenches his teeth.

ALICE
Deputy Church, you're the sweetest
man I know!

CUT TO:

EXT. DRUG STORE - MORNING

Church and Alice sit on the porch. The sun rises
brilliantly. Alice licks a piece of candy.

ALICE
I'll bet Robyn likes you even more
now that you're deputy.

Church rolls his eyes.

ALICE

She liked Deputy Cline a few years ago.

CHURCH

That so?

ALICE

Yeah. And you look just like him.

CHURCH

So why didn't anything happen?

ALICE

Deputy Cline was an atheist.

Church frowns. Shifts his weight.

Alice looks thoughtful.

ALICE

How do you spell atheist?

Church clears his throat. Beat.

ALICE

Don't you know how?

He shakes his head.

CHURCH

(mutter)

Can't read.

Church stands and marches off. Alice's brow furrows in confusion. Then she shrugs it off and prances after him.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - NIGHT

Collins reads a book at the supper table as Elizabeth and Robyn wash dishes. Alice draws next to Collins.

A man with a gun quietly opens the front door and makes his way to the kitchen. This is DELGADO.

He bursts into the room and aims at Collins. Elizabeth shrieks. A PLATE SHATTERS on the floor.

DELGADO
Not another sound, or I kill him.

Elizabeth and Robyn stand together, terrified.

COLLINS
There's... no need for the gun.

DELGADO
Shut up!

Church appears behind Delgado and violently grabs him.
Throws him to the ground.

Alice dives for Robyn and Elizabeth, clinging to their
skirts.

The PISTOL CLATTERS away from Delgado. Church lands on the
intruder and BASHES HIM in the face.

Delgado KICKS Church onto his back, and reaches for the gun.
Church lifts a boot and SLAMS HIS SPUR into Delgado's wrist.
Delgado screams. Church kicks away the gun. Collins scoops
up the revolver.

Church grabs Delgado's neck and SLAMS HIM against the wall.
Church BREAKS DELGADO'S NECK with a violent twist.

Robyn screams. Elizabeth looks away, her hand covering
Alice's eyes.

Church plops down, panting. Delgado's corpse lies across his
lap. Alice steps close to Church, eyes wide, as if she has
never seen death.

ELIZABETH
Alice!

Church carefully rolls Delgado over and closes the
intruder's eyes with his hand. Alice extends a tiny hand and
helps Church rise.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

All the residents of Mayfield are packed into the same tiny
white chapel. Quinn and Church stand at the front, to the
right of PASTOR BANKS. The townsfolk are distraught.

BANKS
Please... please quiet down.
Everyone!

Silence.

BANKS
What happened tonight... was a
terror we rarely experience, thank
God.

Banks motions to Church.

BANKS
But the Collins family is safe and
sound.

Claps for Church. He nods.

BANKS
It's tragic when one of God's
children chooses thievery. Mr.
Church committed no sin. Mayfield
is safe once more.

Church turns to Quinn.

CHURCH
(whispers)
We're not safe once more.

QUINN
What do you mean?

Church glances at the congregation. Locks eyes with Alice.
Turns back to Quinn.

CHURCH
Jimmy Six is coming.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Church and Quinn huddle at the table, each with a glass of
beer.

QUINN
Who the hell is Jimmy Six?

CHURCH
A thief from west Texas. Came here
when gold was first found.

Church gathers his thoughts.

CHURCH
There is no soul in this man.
You've seen proof of that already.

QUINN
I have?

CHURCH
Cline.

QUINN
John?

CHURCH
Six rounds to the face. That's his
signature.

QUINN
Shit.

CHURCH
The man I killed was one of Six's
men.

QUINN
What did he want?

CHURCH
Just doing a thief's work. An inn
would be a valuable hit.

QUINN
How does this mean Jimmy Six will
follow?

CHURCH
I just killed one of his men. Trust
me, he'll come.

QUINN
What will he do?

CHURCH
Find and kill me.

Beat. Church pulls out his pistol. Rests it on the table.

CHURCH
He'll come in guns blazing.
Retaliate against the whole town.

Quinn rubs his forehead.

QUINN
How much time do we got?

CHURCH
Hours.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - NIGHT

Robyn, Church, Collins, and Elizabeth whisper at the table.

CHURCH
You have to get out of here.

COLLINS
And where would we go? Everything
we have is here.

CHURCH
Find relatives.

COLLINS
The only relatives we have are in
Virginia. We go, we never come
back.

CHURCH
Then never come back.

Collins bites his lip.

CHURCH
You stay here, you'll probably die.

Collins and Elizabeth look at each other.

ROBYN
There's an easier solution.

CHURCH
What's that?

ROBYN
If this Jimmy Six is so horrible
he'd kill us all because of you, I
say you give yourself up.

Church stares.

COLLINS

Robyn. You know what was done to Deputy Cline. He was tortured. No man should choose to endure something like that.

Robyn's eyes flash. She points at Church.

ROBYN

You'd put this whole town at risk instead.

COLLINS

Robyn, go upstairs.

Robyn rises.

ROBYN

I don't know if you've ever done the right thing in your entire life. Here's your opportunity.

She storms off. Church stares at her empty chair.

COLLINS

Pay her no mind, Deputy. Mayfield folk don't sacrifice people.

CHURCH

Wouldn't make any difference. Six will burn the town to the ground anyway.

ELIZABETH

Is he that evil?

Church grins mirthlessly.

CHURCH

One of his men once stole from him. Six killed him and traveled a hundred miles to kill his family.

Elizabeth covers her mouth and hurries from the room.

COLLINS

I don't know what to do.

CHURCH

Wiggins is heading back home at daybreak. Go with him.

COLLINS
I'll send my family. But I'll stay.

Church nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - INN - DAYBREAK

Wiggins helps Collins load luggage into the wagon. Church watches from the steps of the inn. Elizabeth climbs into the wagon and helps Robyn up. Alice comes out of the inn and sits next to Church.

ALICE
I'm sorry I have to go on such
short notice.

CHURCH
You'll be safe.

Alice nods, her head lowered.

CHURCH
Besides, you'll get to ride in the
wagon a little longer.

Alice smiles. Church reaches to pat her on the back, but decides against it.

CHURCH
Well...so long, girl.

Alice stands.

ALICE
Thanks for saving our home.

CHURCH
Too early for thanks.

Alice hugs him tight. Church awkwardly pats her on the back.

ALICE
Thanks anyway.

Alice runs to the wagon and Robyn helps her up. Robyn, disappointed, glares at Church. She disappears inside the canvas.

Collins climbs into the wagon to say goodbye. Wiggins joins Jill at the reigns. Collins jumps out.

COLLINS
I'll come for you when it's all over!

The wagon presses forward. Alice peeks out and blows Collins a kiss. She waves to Church. Collins stands next to Church.

COLLINS
I hope I live to see them again.

Church takes out his pistol and makes sure it's fully loaded.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - DAY

Church enters. Standing room only. The crowd of men is armed with rifles, shotguns, and pistols. Among them is Collins, Harper, Doc, Abraham, Forrester, Grimes, Bloom, Banks, BELL, SMITH, and WALKER. Quinn sits on the bar.

QUINN
... Grimes, you and Bell will be up on the second floor of the post office. You give 'em hell as soon as they turn the corner.

GRIMES
You got it, Sheriff.

Church makes his way to the bar.

CHURCH
Pardon the interruption, Sheriff.

QUINN
Of course.

Church grins.

CHURCH
Do you have any explosives?

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

JIMMY SIX (50s, rough, tense) rides his horse down the dusty road. He stops and looks at the ground. A decaying white horse, being devoured by flies and maggots, rests on the side of the road.

Six's gang catches up with him. Six kicks his horse and heads toward the little white church on the horizon. When they arrive, Six dismounts and kicks open the church door, gun raised. Turns to his men.

SIX
Nobody home.

Six mounts his horse and trots off.

The CHURCH EXPLODES.

Six and his men fall off their steeds. The four men closest to the church are INCINERATED. The horses panic. Chaos.

CUT TO:

EXT. INN - DAY

Church and Quinn, on the roof, watch a pillar of smoke rise on the edge of town.

QUINN
We just destroyed a house of God.

CHURCH
Just hope Harper timed it right.

They squint in the sun and see a fast-riding band of outlaws heading into Mayfield.

QUINN
Forgive us, Father.

CHURCH
Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Grimes and Bell watch Six's gang charge closer. They aim their rifles over the top of the roof.

GRIMES

Try for the leaders. Trip somebody up.

BELL

Right.

Grimes steadies himself.

BANG! Miss.

Bell FIRES and one of the RIDERS FALLS from his horse and is TRAMPLED.

GRIMES

Nice shot.

The gang pours into Mayfield, PISTOLS FIRING. The men of Mayfield appear from their hiding places - behind doors and windows, on rooftops, around corners, under wagons - and FIRE into the stampede.

Six's HORSE is SHOT and COLLAPSES. Six leaps from the animal and rolls into a crouch behind a building. His men take cover behind various buildings on the edge of town as townsfolk PIN THEM DOWN.

GRIMES

Give it to 'em, boys!

Doc appears from inside the post office. He rounds the corner, SHOTGUN raised, and BLOWS AWAY an enemy hiding behind the wall. Gang members return FIRE, and Doc backs inside.

DOC

Grimes, they're coming around!

Grimes scoots closer to the edge and sees men heading for the entrance to the post office. Grimes SHOOTS two of them before having to roll back to safety. Bell KILLS a third.

Six and his men send a HAIL OF GUNFIRE into the town as they run down the road and split off, diving into several doorways. Six rolls into the:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

BANG! BANG! BANG!

He is immediately FIRED at by Forrester and Bloom, stationed behind an overturned table. Six ducks behind a large bookshelf and FIRES back.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - DAY

Three of Six's men burst through the door. Collins SHOOTS one in the chest from behind the bar. The other two outlaws duck behind tables and SHATTER GLASSES and BOTTLES as they SHOOT back. Collins FIRES again and drops down to RELOAD. The two men stand.

BANG! BANG!

Abraham KILLS THEM from the other end of the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Six is pinned. Forrester and Bloom FIRE, SHATTERING the edge of the thick BOOKSHELF. One of Six's men crashes into the room, trips over Six, and flies toward the overturned table.

Forrester rises, but Six turns the corner and SHOOTS him. Six's man, on his back, kicks the table and hits Bloom with it. Bloom stretches his hand around the side of the table and SHOOTS the man in the leg.

Six FIRES, but misses Bloom's hand.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY - DAY

An outlaw rolls inside, and comes up BLASTING AWAY with a SHOTGUN. After several rounds, the room is trashed, and the man realizes he's alone. He steps into the room.

The door swings closed, and there's Banks with a SHOTGUN of his own. The outlaw is TORN TO PIECES from behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Grimes SHOOTS at the remaining outlaws outside, who hide behind a wagon. Bell is dead. Grimes stops to reload. The gang SHOOTS back. Suddenly, the men behind the wagon DROP LIKE FLIES.

Harper, with a detonator slung over his shoulder, runs into town behind them, taking cover behind a dead horse. He SHOOTS three outlaws with his rifle, and the forth takes off for the saloon. Grimes PICKS HIM OFF.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - DAY

Five outlaws enter and fan out, searching. They approach the kitchen and see a man sitting at the table. They FIRE several rounds into him. The body slumps onto the floor, and the outlaws stare.

Delgado.

Behind them, the front WINDOW SHATTERS and three of the outlaws are SHOT in the back. Church shoots from the window of the store across the street!

The other two dive into the kitchen, where Quinn promptly DISPOSES OF THEM.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Six reaches out and pulls a nearby chair to him, behind the shelves. Bloom FIRES a few rounds. Six throws the chair. It SMASHES against Bloom's head and knocks him cold. Six approaches, RELOADING his pistol. He SHOOTS Bloom.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - DAY

Three more outlaws burst in and dive behind tables. Abraham SHOOTS at them, but is HIT in the neck and falls.

COLLINS
Abraham!

The outlaws charge. Collins BLOWS ONE AWAY, and is suddenly out of ammunition. He turns and runs out the back entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Doc lies on the floor next to the counter. An outlaw steps in and Doc SHOOTS his foot. The outlaw falls, roaring. The outlaw aims for Doc and they both FIRE. Both collapse in pools of blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Grimes leaps off the roof and charges inside the:

INT. POST OFFICE -- DAY (CONTINUOUS)

He looks at the dead outlaw and the dead Doc. Grimes grinds his teeth and charges back outside, FIRING LIKE A MADMAN.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Church and Quinn FIRE from around the corner of a building. Outlaws BLAST AT THEM from the Sheriff's office. Church SHOOTS one through the head.

Banks gets kicked out of the infirmary and into the road. An outlaw comes out, gun raised, but Church quickly SHOOTS HIM DEAD. Banks frantically heads for cover, but is SHOT DOWN.

QUINN

Shit! No!

Quinn SLAYS two gang members

Outlaws pour onto the roof of the infirmary and BLAST AWAY at the sheriff and deputy. One of them is SHOT in the back of the head and rolls off the roof.

QUINN

Somebody's behind 'em!

CHURCH

Harper and Grimes.

Harper and Grimes FIRE up at the outlaws from the drug store doorway.

CHURCH
We got 'em surrounded.

Six runs toward the drug store with a group of cronies.

CHURCH
There he is.

QUINN
Six?

Church FIRES for Six. One of Six's men collapses. Six reaches the drug store. Harper doesn't turn to see him in time. He's HIT in the gut. Grimes turns and PINS SIX DOWN behind the corner of the store.

QUINN
He's trapped!

Church SHOOTS another of Six's group.

CHURCH
If we can take back the infirmary,
we can take out the men in your
office and Six from the same spot.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Collins runs down an alleyway, pursued by a big outlaw. Collins frantically enters the empty:

INT. INN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

He ducks behind the counter by the door. He tries to steady his breathing as he cocks his gun and readies himself. The door to the inn opens and the big man enters.

Collins SHOOTS HIM, and the outlaw crashes over the counter and lands on top of Collins, pinning him.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Church and Quinn haven't moved. FIRE from the infirmary, saloon, and sheriff's office keep them at bay.

CHURCH

We won't make it in time to save
Grimes.

QUINN

Like hell we won't.

Quinn SHOOTS FURIOUSLY, and runs around the back of his protective building and heads for Grimes.

Church gives him COVERING FIRE. Outlaw after outlaw dies, each one shot perfectly between the eyes.

Walker runs toward Church from behind.

WALKER

They've got us run over, Deputy.
All that's left is the drug store.
Nelson and Waters and a few others
made it back to the inn.

Church continues FIRING.

WALKER

Deputy? We gotta get out of here!

Church ignores him. Walker turns and runs.

CUT TO:

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Behind rows of goods, Grimes SHOOTS at the doorway. Six dives into the room and makes it inside unharmed. The next man isn't so lucky, and is BLOWN OUTSIDE. Six SHOOTS at Grimes, who waits for Six to RELOAD before running for the WINDOW and SMASHING THROUGH IT.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Quinn almost runs into Grimes behind the next building over from the drug store. Quinn reverses direction and runs with him.

GRIMES

We gotta get to the stables!

QUINN
What? What about the inn?!

GRIMES
Trust me!

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Six and his surviving men march through town toward the inn. They are dirty, bloody, and angry.

SIX
He's a fool if he thought these people could protect him.

The men RELOAD and fan out.

CUT TO:

INT. STABLES - DAY

Grimes and Quinn run inside. Grimes ducks into an empty stall.

QUINN
What's going on?

GRIMES
Harper had time to lay one more charge.

Grimes shows him the detonator.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Six raises his gun as he and his gang near the inn. He stops suddenly, and looks at his feet. He kicks aside some dirt, and stares at a thin wire.

Six turns and sprints away.

SIX
Run!

His men look about in confusion.

And die in a MASSIVE FIREBALL.

CUT TO:

INT. STABLES - DAY

Grimes and Quinn watch the INN RATTLE, SMASHED by the SHOCK WAVE. They run toward it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - DAY

Six lies on the ground, shell-shocked. Walker and a few other men pour out of the inn. Quinn and Grimes reach Six first, aiming their guns at his head.

 QUINN
You Jimmy Six?

Six shakes his head.

 GRIMES
Yeah, that's him. He was leading
'em the whole time.

 QUINN
You're gonna be sorry, Mr. Six.
Real sorry.

The other townsfolk gather around.

 GRIMES
Where's Church?

Quinn looks around.

 WALKER
He's not with you?

 QUINN
No, where is he?

 WALKER
I told him to fall back -- he
didn't listen!

Worry creeps across Quinn's forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. INN - NIGHT

Collins serves food and drink to Walker and the other men at their large dining table. Quinn walks in with Grimes. Both have fresh blood on their coats.

COLLINS
Whoa, you all right?

Quinn nods.

WALKER
What's the count?

QUINN
Twenty-four.

The men bow their heads.

QUINN
Williams just bled to death. Not much we could without Doc. But the other seven will be all right. Nelson's taking care of 'em.

A heavy silence.

COLLINS
Did you find Church?

QUINN
No. No one seems to have seen anything.

Quinn sits, exhausted.

GRIMES
Why don't you go ask Jimmy Six? I'll bet he had something to do with it.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Six is behind bars. He sits upright in his cell. Stares at nothing. Solemn, defeated.

Quinn steps inside. The man guarding the cell, Smith, nods.

QUINN

Smith, head on over to the inn, get
yourself something to eat.

SMITH

Thanks, Sheriff.

Smith leaves. Quinn takes his seat. Six ignores Quinn's hateful glare.

QUINN

You killed twenty-four innocent
men.

SIX

And you killed thirty-four.

QUINN

You're hanging at noon tomorrow.
And tonight, you're answering a
couple questions.

SIX

What do you want to know?

QUINN

Where's Church?

SIX

I don't know who that is.

Quinn's jaw sets.

QUINN

He's the man that killed your
friend last night. The reason
you're here.

SIX

The reason I'm here? I'm looking
for a man called Brooks.

QUINN

No man by that name in Mayfield.

A smile spreads across Six's face.

SIX

This Church... he arrived a few
days ago, just lost his horse?

QUINN
That's right.

Six laughs.

SIX
Sheriff, you've been duped.

QUINN
What?

SIX
That man was Charles Brooks.

Quinn stares in confusion.

SIX
He's a thief. I've been chasing him
for over two hundred miles.

QUINN
What are you talking about?

SIX
My name's Jim Burleson. I was hired
by the State of Texas to find
Brooks and bring him to justice.

Quinn slowly sits back.

SIX
He robbed a bank. In Houston. Took
as much gold as his horse could
carry.

Silence.

SIX
This isn't the first town that
started shooting at us when we rode
in. Brooks convinced some other
folks about four weeks ago that we
were a band of bloodthirsty
outlaws.

Quinn swallows.

QUINN
How can you prove what you're
saying?

SIX

Brooks is missing, isn't he? He used you to stop us. Slow us down. Can't believe how successful you were.

QUINN

That... doesn't prove anything.

Six leans forward. Rubs his hands.

SIX

Ask yourself something, Sheriff. How much you know about this Church?

Silence. Quinn shifts his weight.

SIX

Do you know where he comes from? Any family? What his favorite meal is?

Quinn lowers his gaze.

SIX

No. All you know is he's the best shot with a pistol in California, maybe the whole United States, and that he's got a Bible he can't even read. You don't know a thing about him!

Quinn is shocked.

QUINN

Can't even -- let me ask you something. Why didn't you come to me and tell me all this?

SIX

Cause he would've seen me and been long gone.

QUINN

Then why send the man to the inn last night?

SIX

I didn't send any man in. Not one. That would be the stupidest move I could come up with. Whoever visited you, I don't know him.

QUINN
Convenient.

SIX
The truth usually is.

QUINN
I can't believe a man would do
something like this. I won't
believe it.

SIX
Believe it, Sheriff.

QUINN
I suppose you had nothing to do
with killing John Cline, either?

SIX
John Cline...

QUINN
My deputy. His body smashed up, six
bullets in his face!

SIX
Ah, yeah, the lookalike. Yeah,
Sheriff, I hate to tell you, but we
killed him. He looked exactly like
Brooks. You realize that.

Quinn glares.

SIX
Course, we only saw the deputy
badge after we'd killed him. And
since he had no gold on him, we
figured we'd got the wrong guy.

QUINN
Church didn't have any gold on him
when he arrived, either.

Six ponders.

SIX
Then he must have hidden it
somewhere beforehand. After his
horse died.

Quinn rises.

QUINN

I'll delay your hanging until I get word from Texas and figure out who you are.

SIX

By then Brooks will be gone and I won't be able to find him again.

QUINN

I have to know for sure. Can't take the risk.

Quinn steps to the door. Grabs the handle.

SIX

Sheriff, the man just got nearly sixty people killed. In a fight that never should have happened.

Quinn stares.

SIX

Would you risk those deaths going unavenged?

Quinn hesitates, then storms out.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Grimes steps over shattered glass behind the bar. Collins and Quinn sit on stools.

GRIMES

I've got to have something unbroken in here...

Grimes holds up a bottle and looks around for glasses.

QUINN

One of the horses is missing from the stables.

COLLINS

Well that pretty much proves it, doesn't it? That two-faced son of a bitch... and to think he spent most of his time with Alice.

QUINN
We don't know for sure.

Grimes gives up on his search for glasses. He opens the bottle, takes a swig, and passes it to Collins.

COLLINS
I'm not a drinking man.

Grimes opens his mouth to reply, but Collins takes a greedy gulp and hands the bottle to Quinn.

GRIMES
Sheriff, I'm with Collins. He lied to us.

COLLINS
About everything. Alice told me he can't even read. He carries the Bible around just for show.

QUINN
Six said the same thing. But... Church showed me a verse...

COLLINS
He doesn't carry it around for show. He has it to get things he needs.

GRIMES
How do you mean?

COLLINS
I mean things like a free supper.

QUINN
Or to convince me to hire him.

GRIMES
Sheriff, think of it this way. If you let Church get away, and he's guilty... then all those people died for no reason. If he gets away and he's innocent, then he's just a coward. Either way, I say we find him and get the truth out of him.

Grimes and Collins watch with grim expressions as Quinn drinks from the bottle and wipes his mouth with his sleeve. He slams the bottle on the bar.

QUINN
Saddle up, boys. We're going
hunting.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The jail cell opens. Six awakes. Quinn stands in the doorway holding cuffs in one hand and a pistol in the other. Six stands.

QUINN
Come with me.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAYBREAK

Grimes, Collins, Quinn, and Six ride hard and fast into the distance.

FADE TO:

EXT. MAYFIELD - MORNING

The town is still. Only a few men are outside, sleeping or smoking in the shade. Most are bruised and bandaged.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - MORNING

Church rides down the dusty road, toward Mayfield. He reaches his decaying horse and dismounts. Stands before Saul.

Abruptly, he closes his eyes and clenches his teeth.

CHURCH
Morning, Sheriff.

Quinn steps up behind him, covered in sand, gun raised. Church faces him.

QUINN
Didn't think you could get away
that easily, did you?

CHURCH
You're not alone.

Quinn nods.

QUINN
Come on out, boys.

Grimes, Six, and Collins appear from their ditches in the sand, where they had almost completely buried themselves. Collins and Grimes level their guns. Church stares at Six, who is still handcuffed and unarmed.

CHURCH
What's he doing here?

QUINN
He helped us find you... Mr. Brooks.

CHURCH
You have no idea what you're doing.

QUINN
Mr. Burleson here told us everything. Who you really are.

CHURCH
What are you talking about?

QUINN
You're a thief.

Six steps forward.

SIX
Where's the gold, Brooks?

CHURCH
Sheriff, I don't know what he told you, but I'm no thief.

GRIMES
You abandoned us during the fight.

QUINN
Tell us the truth.

SIX
He's obviously lying, Sheriff. He came back here cause this is where he hid the gold.

CHURCH

(points at Six)

This man is a thief and murderer.
He's the one who's lying.

QUINN

Put your pistol on the ground and
turn around.

CHURCH

Sheriff...

QUINN

Just give me an excuse.

Church pulls out his gun, and with unbelievable speed aims it at Quinn. Six, Grimes, and Collins press forward.

GRIMES

Put it down, Church!

COLLINS

Drop it! Drop it now!

SIX

You see, gentlemen? A common thief.

Church glares at Six.

CHURCH

Grimes, Collins... put down your guns.

QUINN

Don't listen to him!

CHURCH

If you trust Six, he will come back with more men and kill everyone else.

QUINN

Don't do it, boys!

Grimes and Collins look at each other nervously.

CHURCH

If I have to save you from your own stupidity, I will. Drop 'em!

Grimes and Collins plop their guns onto the sand.

QUINN
I should have known, you sick...

CHURCH
I think the moral of this story is
that Sheriff Quinn here is a
terrible judge of character.

Quinn furrows his brow, as Six CRACKS his CUFFS against
COLLIN'S NOSE, bends down, and sweeps up the gun. Six aims
for Grimes.

SIX
Sheriff, put down your gun.

Quinn is shocked.

QUINN
You -- you two are in this
together!

CHURCH
Hardly. Jimmy Six here is exactly
who I said he was.

Church takes a step closer. Their pistols nearly touch each
other's noses.

CHURCH
I'm just exactly who he said I was,
too.

Quinn swallows.

GRIMES
You're not partners?

SIX
Of course not. I've been hunting
him to get my gold back.

QUINN
What?

CHURCH
Him and his gang robbed the bank.
Then I robbed them.

QUINN
I don't believe this.

CHURCH

You, Grimes, and Collins can head back to town. Unfortunately, I have to kill Jimmy Six.

SIX

You move, this man dies.

Grimes raises his chin defiantly.

SIX

Now Sheriff, put down your gun. You kill Church, that would give me another reason to kill your friend here.

QUINN

What?!

CHURCH

He needs me to tell him where the gold is.

SIX

Give it to me, and you all go free.

Church smiles.

CHURCH

All except me.

QUINN

You'd get what you deserved.

CHURCH

No need to worry, Sheriff. No one is going to die but Six.

Quinn shakes his head.

QUINN

And you, if I have anything to say about it!

Church smirks.

CHURCH

What you don't realize is the four of you were buried in the ground for hours. Your guns are full of sand.

Quinn stares at his pistol. Six glances at his own.

Church steps to the side.

BANG!

Church HITS Six in the heart and he falls down dead.

Quinn PULLS THE TRIGGER.

CHHK! Jammed.

Quinn takes a swing, but Church ducks and NAILS Quinn in the face. Quinn staggers backward, and Church aims at him once more.

CHURCH

The three of you get back to town.

Quinn joins Grimes and Collins.

QUINN

You really are heartless, aren't you? Do you realize how many people died because of your greed?

CHURCH

When you pray, thank 'em for me. Without 'em, Six would've had me for sure.

Quinn, Grimes, and Collins shoot hateful looks as they turn and shuffle back toward Mayfield. Church waits for them to disappear from sight. He turns to Saul's corpse.

CHURCH

Don't have much time. They'll be back.

Church crouches and pulls out a knife. He CUTS THROUGH the HORSE'S ROTTING FLESH. He covers his nose with one hand. He SLICES into the HORSE'S STOMACH. Gold flows out amongst fluids.

CHURCH

Thanks for holding onto this for me.

Church picks out the chunks of gold and dumps them into his saddlebags.

CUT TO:

INT. WIGGINS FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Elizabeth and Jill sew beside the fire. Robyn and Alice play a board game at the table. Wiggins sleeps in the adjacent room.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Robyn rises, opens the door, and staggers back in fear.

ROBYN
Church!

Elizabeth and Jill leap from their chairs. Alice stares.

ELIZABETH
Robyn, get away from him!

JILL
Mr. Collins told us. You monster!

Robyn takes another step backward. Church enters.

JILL
Wake up, Eugene! Bring the gun!

Wiggins stumbles into the room in his underwear, confused but carrying his rifle. He is startled by Church, and aims his gun.

ROBYN
Why'd you come here, Mr. Church?

Her eyes tear up.

ROBYN
If you think for an instant that any feelings we had for each other would protect --

CHURCH
I'm not here to see you.

Church looks at Alice, and steps forward. Alice looks away. Robyn stands protectively next to her sister, glaring at Church.

CHURCH
I came to say goodbye, girl.

ALICE
You shouldn't have. You're a liar.

A smile tugs at Church's lips.

CHURCH
What did I lie about?

ALICE
You're a thief, too!

CHURCH
That I admit.

ALICE
(screams)
You got people killed, too!

Church is shocked. A heavy, chilling silence.

ALICE
Why... why did you do it? Just for
gold?

Church is silent.

ALICE
You could've just run. You could've
run away, and those outlaws
would've followed you!

Church lowers his gaze.

ALICE
You could've stolen a horse. You
didn't have to stay and try to be
deputy! Jimmy Six would've left us
alone. You used us to protect
yourself!

Church's head bows ever so slightly. A tear falls down
Alice's cheek.

ALICE
I thought you were a good man. I
thought you were changing!

CHURCH
(muttering)
You... should be more careful about
who you trust.

ALICE
(shrieks)
You're a selfish man! A mean, awful
man. And I hate you!

Church is stunned. A silence. Like an eternity.

ALICE
Don't you feel sorry about what you
did at all?

Church looks away.

CHURCH
(whispers)
I didn't.

He turns and steps to the doorway. Opens his mouth to say more... but doesn't. Leaves angrily. Wiggins follows him out the door.

Alice buries her face in her hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. WIGGINS FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Church storms away from the house. Wiggins aims for his back.

WIGGINS
You... stop right there, Church.
I'm taking you to the Sheriff.

Church doesn't turn.

CHURCH
You're not loaded.

Wiggins looks at his gun and scowls. Church walks past his white horse and its thick saddlebags. Wiggins is confused.

WIGGINS
You're not taking the horse?

Church turns.

CHURCH
It's for Alice.

He turns and walks into the night.

FADE OUT.