

Laid to Waste

By

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EXT. MONTANA COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Crickets chirp. Two men lay atop a hill some distance away from the Bender Family General Store.

WILL

Cooled down quick, didn't it?

ELLIOT

The colds good for ya, Will. Let's you know you're still alive.

WILL

So, Elliot, what exactly are we doin' out here so far from camp?

ELLIOT

I've been tracking down all the leads I can on this missing persons case and everyone of 'em points to this general store just down the way there.

WILL

The Butcherson case?

ELLIOT

Right. Now, I've been 'round a long time and have learned to trust my gut. Right now my gut tells me there's more to this store than we're seein'...Here. Take this. Tell me what you see.

ELLIOT (mid 40s) hands WILL (early-mid 20s), his apprentice, a spyglass.

WILL

What's this?

ELLIOT

It's a spyglass. It let's you see things that are far away.

WILL

Huh. I've never seen one in person.

ELLIOT

Now you get to use one. What do you see?

Elliot peers through the instrument and finds the window at

the front of the Bender Family General Store.

WILL

I see...the general store...or is that a house? They must be hanging a bed sheet to dry. I see the silhouette of woman but the woman herself is on the other side of that sheet.

ELLIOT

Catherine Bender...and it's canvas.

WILL

Canvas?

ELLIOT

From their wagon. They use it to divide the cabin. The front of the house is the Bender Family General Store, the back is their living space. Keep lookin'.

WILL

Okay...The wagon cover is filthy. Only where the table is at, though. Which is odd.

ELLIOT

Keep watchin'.

WILL

What exactly am I looking for, Elliot?

ELLIOT

Just keep watchin'.

Will continues to look into the cabin using the spyglass when something catches his attention to the left side of the cabin.

WILL

There's someone else. A man. He just lit a cigarette and is mucking with the horses out back.

ELLIOT

John Bender...and those aren't his horses.

WILL

They're not?

ELLIOT

He owns two, and they're in the barn
just to the right of the cabin.

WILL

He hooked one up to a cart that's got
a bunch of potato bags on it. Why
would ya be messin' 'round with chores
at this hour? Most sane people are
already sleepin' by now.

ELLIOT

I think he's moving more than just
potatoes in those sacks. Watch what he
does with 'em.

Will carefully watches the mysterious man as the horse takes
him and his cart to a row of apple trees far behind the
cabin.

WILL

Well he's a goin' somewhere with 'em.

ELLIOT

He's headed to that row of apple
trees.

WILL

You're right, he just stopped. It's
too dark though, he's too far away.
Here, see if you can tell what he's
doin'.

Will hands the spyglass to Elliot. Elliot casually takes it
and looks out at the man in the field.

ELLIOT

I can already tell you what he's doin.
He's diggin'.

WILL

Plantin' potatoes by moonlight?

ELLIOT

Awfully big hole for some potatoes.

WILL

Maybe they're big potatoes.

ELLIOT

He won't come back with any sacks, so

whatever he's burying out
there...stays out there...and we need
to find out what that is.

WILL

You think these two have something to
do with Mrs. Butcherson's husband
comin' up missing?

ELLIOT

I do. And she hired us to find him
because she knows we're good at what
we do.

WILL

Well, what you do. I'm still figuring
it out.

ELLIOT

You'll learn.

WILL

And what is it exactly that we do?
Sometimes I feel like we actually are
private investigators... or are we
just bounty hunters with a fancier
title.

ELLIOT

Little of both I guess. In our line of
work you'll find more often than not
the world is a lot crueller a place
than you'd like to believe. I'm not
above puttin' a round of bullets in a
man who deserves it. Lord knows they
made their bed... Far as I'm
concerned...everyone has a price...a
cost of doin' business...the cost is
just a little steeper for some of us.
That being said...I prefer to hand 'em
over alive if I can.

WILL

I guess you're right. Seems like every
other case points us to a bounty
anyhow.

ELLIOT

And it's the bounties which really
keep us afloat.

WILL

Is a bounty the price of someone's life...their worth in the eyes of the law? Or is it the dollar bill an honest god-fearing man's willing to kill for? The higher the bounty, the more men would consider such an idea?

ELLIOT

Either way...like I said...every man has a price.

Elliot reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a handbill. He unfolds it.

ELLIOT

Take a look at this.

He hands Will the handbill.

WILL (READING)

Wanted - dead or alive. John Flickinger. Elvira Meek. Kate Meek. For the murder of 7 men and one child. Three thousand dollar reward each.

ELLIOT

I don't think the Benders are who they say they are.

WILL

I have to say, even in the dark there is a considerable likeness between that man down there and the man on this handbill. Here you go.

Will gives the handbill back to Elliot.

ELLIOT

Those horses belong to a man who showed up yesterday. The store offers a hot meal and single cot in the front corner just below the window. Pretty enticing for anyone who's been traveling this old trail for a number of days.

WILL

Better than a bedroll and their ain't anything around for another day's ride or two.

ELLIOT

Right, so when the man didn't come out after an hour I figured he must be planning on stayin' the night.

WILL

If they are who you think they are then he might be staying a whole lot longer than just one night.

ELLIOT

Exactly.

WILL

What about the younger girl...Kate? I didn't see anyone else down there.

ELLIOT

Well...that's where my idea falls apart.

WILL

Maybe she ran off or somethin'.

ELLIOT

Maybe...But one thing's for sure. We need to get a closer look at what's going on down by those apple trees.

Will takes a look through the spyglass.

WILL

Looks like our friend is headed back to the house.

ELLIOT

Good. We've got some diggin' of our own to do. We'll follow this ridgeline and drop down from behind the trees so they don't see or hear us. Sound good?

WILL

Yeah, let's do it.

FADE OUT

Elliot and Will go back to camp to grab supplies and make their way to the row of apple trees.

EXT. MONTANA COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

FADE IN

Elliot and Will arrive at the apple trees and the freshly disturbed ground which lie beneath them.

WILL

I say, it looks like they've been busy out here. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven. There are eleven of these mounds stretching from here to the end of the row down there. They all look relatively fresh, too.

ELLIOT

How many did the sheriff in Depaw say went missing from there?

WILL

Four, I think.

ELLIOT

And from St. Almos?

WILL

Six. All men. All traveling alone.

ELLIOT

And Mrs. Butcherson's husband...

WILL

...Eleven.

ELLIOT

Look. Each mound has a symbol scratched into the dirt.

WILL

Oh, you're right. I've seen these before. They're zodiac symbols.

ELLIOT

You're right...You remember Kate? From the handbill?

WILL

Yeah

ELLIOT

Some said she was a self-proclaimed witch but I never thought anything of it, figured that was just the town folk being themselves.

WILL

A witch...you believe in such a thing?

ELLIOT

I'm startin' to. Let's get diggin'.
See what we find.

The two men use their camp shovels and begin to unearth what John Bender had buried. After some time, they reach a potato sack.

WILL

Got somethin' over here.

ELLIOT

Pull it out.

Will tugs on the bag. The bag gives and he falls backward, dropping the bag and spilling its contents.

ELLIOT

Woah!

WILL

Good god! Oh!

ELLIOT

That's the rider from yesterday. The one I told you about. Well...his head anyway.

WILL

Christ! And one of his hands and whatever that is - God, I don't wanna know!

ELLIOT

Let's check the next mound.

WILL

This isn't enough?

ELLIOT

Start diggin'.

They begin digging into the next mound. Elliot hits another potato sack.

ELLIOT

Got a sack. Let's get 'er up.

The sack tears.

WILL

God! Another one!

ELLIOT

Shew...and he's ripe.

WILL

Wait...that's Butcherson. Sam Butcherson!

ELLIOT

You're right.

WILL

Look at this. Both the rider from yesterday and Sam have the same wound on the back of their head...almost looks like it's from a -

ELLIOT

A hammer. John and Elvira, from the handbill? - That's how they murdered all their victims...a hammer to the back of the head.

WILL

Good God...so now what do we do?

ELLIOT

Tomorrow, you're goin' in there.

WILL

I'm goin' in there?

ELLIOT

I'll be close, just across the way there in the brush in front of the cabin. There's a clear view into the cabin's doorway and front window from there.

WILL

So what, I just walk in and ask if

they're in the murderin' business?

ELLIOT

You'll ask for a meal and a place to stay for the evening. If what my gut is tellin' me is right, Catherine will sit you at the table with your back to the canvas. John will take a swing at you from the other side. If he tries, I'll put 'em down.

WILL

Easy for you to say, you won't be the one at the table. What if you're too late? What if you can't see him and he sinks a hammer into the back of my skull?

ELLIOT

Look.

Elliot points to the sky.

ELLIOT

A storms rollin' in. When it's cloudy or after sunset, their fireplace casts their shadows on that wagon cover. I can see everything goin' on behind it. The rain will give you a good excuse to stay the night and me a clear shot of anyone behind that canvas.

WILL

We don't have enough evidence to go in there right now and take them out?

ELLIOT

I don't want risk them splitting town before we get back. All our footprints and diggin' up of these mounds would be enough to send 'em on the run. Plus, we don't know for sure if that's them on the handbill. If they ain't got a bounty on 'em and we fill 'em full of holes...well...that won't pan out too good for us, let's just say that.

WILL

What makes you think they'll even try to kill me?

ELLIOT

I can't say they will for sure. I'm guessin' from the looks of things, with this zodiac stuff and all...they may be plannin' for one more. There are 12 zodiac signs, right?

WILL

Yeah...

ELLIOT

Might help if you egg 'em on a bit.

WILL

Oh, encourage some murderous couple to smack me in the back of my head with a hammer?

ELLIOT

More or less. Make 'em sweat a little. See ya as a threat. Tell 'em exactly what you're doin' out here. You're lookin' for some missin' folks who might of wound up dead. Say you know they came through this area. That kind of thing.

WILL

If you see a hammer headed my way you better give me a sign. You miss, I'm done for.

ELLIOT

I'll yell as soon as I see it.

WILL

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't real sure about your plan, Elliot.

ELLIOT

Each of those two are worth three thousand a piece. That's three for you and three for me.

WILL

If they're the ones from your handbill.

ELLIOT

If they're the ones from the handbill. If today, three thousand ain't your

price for the risk...that's okay. You can take off right now toward town and tell the sheriff when you get there in two days.

WILL

Then what about you?

ELLIOT

That price sits just fine with me. I'll go in instead of you. But if I'm doin' it alone...and it is them...I'm not splitting the bounty...

Thunder rolls in the distance while Will contemplates his decision.

ELLIOT

What'll it be, Will?

WILL

...I'll do it.

ELLIOT

Okay then. C'mon...let's get back to camp and get some shut eye. Gottta big day tomorrow.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MONTANA COUNTRYSIDE - DAY - RAIN

FADE IN.

The rain hits the dirt and dry leaves in the brush. Elliot and Will are back at their steak out post and are about to put Elliot's plan into motion.

ELLIOT

You ready to get this a movin'?

WILL

As ready as I'm gonna get. Still not thrilled about the idea if I'm bein' honest.

ELLIOT

You'll be fine...fight today, get paid tomorrow. Remember, if you hear me yell you hit the dirt. Got your pistols?

WILL

Yeah. I got the one on my hip but I put the other in my boot. Thought it might come in handy if things get hairy.

ELLIOT

You're learnin' faster than you think, boy. I reckon you'll be takin' my place here before too much longer. Saddle up, let's get you down there.

Will climbs atop his horse.

WILL

This seems crazy, Elliot.

ELLIOT

You trust me?

WILL

...yeah...

ELLIOT

Then you ain't got nothin' to worry 'bout. Go on, now. I'll be watchin' ya.

Will gives the horse a kick and makes his way down into the bottom of the valley. He approaches the building, dismounts, and ties his horse to the railing on the front porch. His boots clunk up the wooden steps and onto the porch where he then enters the general store through a heavy door.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY - RAIN

Will steps into the shop area of the structure and is quickly greeted by Catherine as she appears from behind the canvas sheet.

CATHERINE

Hi there! How can I help you?

WILL

Am I glad I stumbled across your place here. It's rainin' somethin' fierce out there.

CATHERINE

Oh, I know! I was wondering if we might see a traveler today, the rain

usually brings someone our way...
Please take off your coat and hat,
I'll hang them near the fire place in
the back to dry.

WILL

That's mighty nice of ya, ma'am.

Will takes off his coat and hat and hands them to Catherine.
Catherine takes his things behind the canvas. They continue
conversation while she moves about.

CATHERINE

Will you be wanting a meal, then?

WILL

And a place to sleep for the night if
that's okay. I'm not much for ridin'
in the rain.

CATHERINE

We'd be happy to have you.

Catherine comes back into the store front.

CATHERINE

I'm Catherine Bender, by the way. My
husband John and I own this general
store.

WILL

Pleasure to meet you. My name's
Will...Will Talford.

CATHERINE

Well, Mr. Talford, why don't you
follow me over here and have a seat at
the table.

WILL

Alright.

The two of them step over to the table.

CATHERINE

I'm afraid most of these chairs are in
need of some repair. Have a seat in
that one. It's the most sturdy.

WILL

Okay...

Will sits in the creaky chair. It's a tight fit between the table and the canvas divider.

CATHERINE

Would you like some coffee to go with you stew?

WILL

Yes, please.

CATHERINE

I hope stew is okay, that's what I've prepared for this evening.

WILL

Stew sounds wonderful.

Catherine prepares a cup of coffee for Will at the hutch near the table. Will shifts in his seat as he tries to get comfortable in the tight space.

CATHERINE

Everything okay, Mr. Talford?

WILL

Little tight here with the canvas so close to the back of my chair. You care if I push the table and chairs forward a bit?

CATHERINE

Best leave them where they are. My husband, John, is very particular about the furniture...You ridin' to see some family, Mr. Talford, or for business?

WILL

Business. Ain't got much for family any more. Just me...ain't even ever been married, before.

Catherine sets the coffee on the table.

CATHERINE

Here's your coffee. What business brings you all the way out here, if you don't mind me askin'?

WILL

Well, ya see Mrs. Bender...I'm a

private investigator and I'm on a missing person's case. Seems that case goes cold somewhere 'round these parts. You have anyone pass through here in the last 2 days? Maybe a lone rider? Taller guy, dark hair?

CATHERINE

I can't say we've had much for customers in the better part of 2 weeks...a part from yourself that is... Any idea what might've happened to this missing person?

WILL

I've got my money on the idea of a murder having taken place.

CATHERINE

Murder?

WILL

Somethin' just tells me. Pretty sure I'm closin' in on the ones who did 'em in though.

CATHERINE

Ones? As in, more than one...murderer?

WILL

Could be. Hard tellin' yet.

CATHERINE

Hmmmm...Well, that's the last of the coffee I had made. I'll fetch some more coffee beans from the cellar and put another pot on while we wait for the stew warm. I'll be back with you in just a short while.

WILL

Sounds wonderful, thank ya, ma'am.

Catherine starts to step away but she stops to ask Will for his pistol.

CATHERINE

Oh, Mr. Talford...I'm afraid I need to ask you to turn in your pistol for the evening.

WILL
My pistol?

CATHERINE
We ask that any guest staying the night turn in their pistol...for safety sake. After all, you are a stranger we've welcomed into our home.

Will reluctantly removes his pistol belt and hands it over.

WILL
Here. When do I get it back?

CATHERINE
You'll pay before you leave tomorrow morning, you can have it then.

Catherine walks away with Will's pistol belt and disappears behind the canvas divider. JOHN BENDER walks through the front door and quickly notices Will.

JOHN
Who are you?

WILL
I'm Wi-

CATHERINE
John, my love, we have a guest for the evening.

Catherine steps back into the store front.

CATHERINE
This is Mr. Talford. He's a private investigator... says he's on the trail of a couple of murderers 'round these parts. I thought it mighty brave of him to do such a thing, especially all by his lonesome.

WILL
You can call me Will. Just passin' through.

CATHERINE
Can you believe he has no family? Not even a wife to miss him back home.

She turns back to Will.

CATHERINE

I'm sure our company will be a nice change of pace for a day. You must get dreadfully lonely.

WILL

It's been a pleasure already...and I just sat down.

John gives a husky grunt - almost in disgust. He hates people.

CATHERINE

Oh how nice! John, I was just about to make our guest a bowl of stew and put some more coffee over the fire, would you mind giving me a hand in the back?

John gives another guttural grunt before quickly replying.

JOHN

Yeah.

John stomps his way to the back of the cabin. He's a mountain of a man.

CATHERINE

A man of few words...I'll be right back with your stew and some fresh coffee, Mr. Talford.

Catherine slips to the back of the cabin. Footsteps, drawers, and incoherent whispering between John and Catherine are heard. Creaking hinges fill the gaps between breaths as the cellar door is opened and someone descends a stair case.

The cellar door is closed without anyone ever returning back from the underbelly of the cabin.

A heavy object slides across the bottom of a wooden drawer as it's pulled from its storage place. The whispering stops. John's heavy footsteps approach Will from behind from the backside of the canvas.

The footsteps stop. There is hesitation.

ELLIOT

NOW!!

Will throws himself to the floor. John falls through the canvas, landing a heavy hammer on the table.

BANG! Elliot fires at John.

JOHN

What the -

CATHERINE

They found us!

Catherine pulls a kitchen knife from its block and charges at Will with a wild scream.

CATHERINE

Grahhhhhhh!

Will clamors for his boot gun.

WILL

Not today!

BANG! BANG! He lands two shots into Catherine's gut.

CATHERINE

Ah!

She falls to the ground dead. BANG! Another shot from Elliot misses John and shatters glass inside the cabin. John's heavy feet run out the back of the cabin. Elliot sprints for the cabin door.

ELLIOT

Will! Talk to me!

WILL

I'm alive! I'm alive! He's runnin' out the back!

John mounts a horse and takes off. Elliot rushes into the front of the cabin.

ELLIOT

She dead?

WILL

Yes! He took off, take my horse!

Elliot rushes out the door.

EXT. MONTANA COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK - RAIN

Elliot is quick across the porch and atop Will's horse.

ELLIOT

Yah!

He chases after John in the rain. He closes the gap. John fires a round at Elliot.

ELLIOT

Woah!

John fires another round.

ELLIOT

Ya missed!

John pulls the trigger again but he's empty.

JOHN

Damn it!

Elliot pull his pistols and fires at John twice. The first one misses. The second hits John's horse. It wails in pain before it goes down into the mud. Elliot stops his horse, dismounts, and cautiously walks toward the fallen horse and John. The horse is breathing heavy its final breaths.

ELLIOT

Let me see your hands, Flickinger!

John moans in pain.

ELLIOT

Don't you move!

JOHN

My legs pinned under this damned beast
you fool!

ELLIOT

As I see it you got two choices...the
get dead real quick way...or the live
to see another day way. What'll it be,
Flickinger?

JOHN

You a bounty hunter?

ELLIOT

Somethin' like that.

JOHN

Damn...

ELLIOT

I ought to put a bullet between your eyes right now...

JOHN

No! I'll go with you, I'll go. Just get this damned horse off me. I think my legs broke.

ELLIOT

Toss your gun here.

JOHN

Here!

John grunts and heaves the empty pistol toward Elliot. It hits the ground.

Elliot holsters his gun and picks up John's gun.

ELLIOT

I'm gonna have to pull it off ya with my horse. I've got some rope in the saddle bag.

Elliot walks over to his horse and rifles through the saddle bag for rope.

ELLIOT

To be honest, I think a lot of folks in town would love to see you hang for what you've done. Can't say I blame 'em.

He mutters to himself as he searches the bags. Footsteps approach him from behind, he's unaware.

ELLIOT (TO HIMSELF)

Where is that rope?

ELLIOT

But I believe every man has the right to a trial to defend himself...given he makes it that far.

John screams as he begins to bring down a hatchet onto Elliot's skull.

JOHN

Rahhh!-

BANG!! John falls to the ground dead. Will stands, pistol in hand, 20 feet from John.

WILL

You 'bout got a hatchet to the skull.

ELLIOT

I'm glad you saw it comin'. Let's get him to the cabin. We'll wrap 'em both in sheets before they start to stink.

WILL

What's the rest of the plan?

ELLIOT

We'll stay here tonight - take 'em into the next town in the morning.

WILL

What about Mrs. Butcherson?

ELLIOT

We'll send her a letter after we talk with the sheriff...give me a hand with this body.

WILL

There's some rope in one of these saddle bags.

ELLIOT

That's what I was lookin' for. Get his feet tied and hook it to the saddle for now. I need to put his horse out of it's misery.

Elliot walks over to John's horse. The horse is whimpering and grunting in pain. BANG! Elliot puts a bullet through the horse's temple.

The rain continues to fall.

FADE OUT

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

FADE IN

It's the next day. Elliot and Will have the bodies wrapped in sheets. Catherine's body is already swung over the back of a horse. John is too heavy for one person to lift.

WILL

Why do we wrap them up in sheets?

ELLIOT

Mostly to keep them from bleedin' all over our horses and to keep the smell down a bit, but you'll find most folks can't stomach the sight or the stench of a corpse on the back of your horse as you're strollin' into town. Call it...a courtesy.

WILL

Is the smell bad?

ELLIOT

Well, Will...it ain't good. C'mon help me get this other one on the back of the horse.

Will and Elliot grunt and groan as they lift John's towering body onto the back of a horse.

WILL

Lord...he's heavy!

ELLIOT

Lift up! Little higher!

The body is slumped over the horse. They both sigh and catch their breath.

WILL

I know that face. What are you thinkin'?

ELLIOT

Somethin's just not right here.

WILL

What do you mean?

ELLIOT

Well...this is Flickering...and that's Elvira Meek...I know that.

WILL

Yeah.

ELLIOT

So if this is Elvira and

John...Where's the girl?

WILL

What girl? Oh, the uh...the witch girl?

ELLIOT

Kate. Yeah.

WILL

Maybe shes run off. Or maybe she's buried out in that field by them apple trees.

ELLIOT

Nah. Goes against your nature to kill your own.

WILL

These folks weren't exactly...normal, Elliot.

ELLIOT

Hmmm...Still don't like it...I'm gonna grab a few more supplies from the cabin then we'll ride on out of here.

WILL

Alright. Oh, they've got a cellar below the cabin, that's where the keep the coffee.

ELLIOT

That's exactly what I'm lookin' for.

Elliot walks up the stairs and into the cabin while Will stays with the horses.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Elliot walks into the general store and thinks aloud.

ELLIOT (TO HIMSELF)

Alright, lookin' fooodoor...ah. The cellar door.

He pulls open the trap door to the cellar and hinges creak and moan. It's dark and still.

ELLIOT

Hmmm. Awful dark... This'll do it.

Elliot grabs a lantern hanging on a hook near the fireplace and lights it with a match. He looks into the abyss that is the cellar and gives a deep sigh.

ELLIOT

The things I do for coffee.

He begins the descent into the darkness but does so with caution.

ELLIOT

Anybody down here?

The lantern handle creaks as he raises the lantern in hopes of seeing that much farther.

ELLIOT

Make yourself known if there is.

He's nearly to the bottom. A few more steps down the stairs and - SHHHHHHHK! Elliot's foot slips on awkward stair and he falls to the cellar floor.

KSHHHHHHHHH! The lamp shatters. SKKKKKKKK! His gun falls out of his holster and slides into the blackness beyond his sight.

He gets up.

ELLIOT

Ohhhh, ahhh. Too old for this shi-

CLICK CLICK! KATE (18) has Elliot's pistol aimed at him. The chrome barrel and pale hand wrapped around the butt of the gun creeps out from the shadows.

KATE

Don't move. Keep your hands up where I can see 'em.

ELLIOT

Alright. Take it easy now.

KATE

Turn around. SLOWLY.

ELLIOT

Okay, I'm turnin'.

KATE

Up the stairs. Slow.

ELLIOT

You don't need to do this, Kate. It is
Kate, right?

KATE

Up. The. Stairs.

The two climb the stairs. Kate has the pistol in Elliot's
back. They reach the top.

KATE

Stop. Now, out the front. You do any
different and I'll blow your brains
all over this cabin.

Elliot leads the way out of the cabin. Kate is hidden behind
Elliot due to her small size as they exit.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Elliot steps out onto the porch and stops. Will looks at
Elliot but is oblivious to his stiff movement.

WILL

Find what you needed?

ELLIOT

Maybe a little more than I'd intended.

KATE

Don't move!

Will instinctively pulls out his pistol and aims it toward
Kate and Elliot's direction.

WILL

Jesus!

Kate wraps her free arm around Elliot and pulls her body
against his - using him as a shield. She presses the gun to
head, just behind his ear.

KATE

You put that pistol down or he gets
it!

ELLIOT

Shoot 'er, Will!

WILL
I'll hit ya!

KATE
I'll do it, I swear!

ELLIOT
Shoot 'er, damn it!

WILL
I can't! You're too close! It's down!
It's down!...it's down.

Will drops his pistol.

KATE
Which one of you did this?! Who killed
my mother and my father?!

No one answers.

KATE (TO HERSELF)
We were so close. Damn it!

KATE
We just needed one more!

WILL
Take it easy. What are you talkin'
about?

KATE
The ritual! Our afterlife. MY
afterlife! 12... That's what we
needed. One for each of the zodiac!
One more and it would've been
complete. Then they'd all be our
slaves on the other side. But you
screwed it up! Didn't you!?

ELLIOT
Miss, put the gun down. Let's talk
about this.

KATE
Shut up!

Kate has a realization. In her fit she begins to think aloud.

KATE (TO HERSELF)
I can still do it. Maybe...maybe it'll

still work.

WILL
Kate, put down the pistol.

KATE
Which of you killed my mother?!

WILL
She came at me with a knife now I -

KATE
You!

WILL
Look, she was goin to kill-

KATE
Shut up! And my father? Was that you too?!

ELLIOT
I killed your father.

Kate shoves the gun harder against his head.

KATE
You bastard! You think you're better than us?! You're no different!

WILL
Kate -

KATE
Stop talkin'!

Kate is huffing and puffing in a fit of rage.

KATE (TO HERSELF)
I can still do it.

She shoots Will a wide-eyed stare in realization.

KATE
I just need one of you! Then I can be with them, too.

ELLIOT
Kate, think about what you're saying.

KATE

I've always been a momma's girl.

BANG! Kate shoots Will in the chest. Will falls to the ground and is bleeding out quickly.

ELLIOT

Willllll!

Elliot breaks away from Kate, rushes over to Will, and cradles him in his arms.

ELLIOT

Will...Will...say somethin'.

WILL

I'm sorry...

ELLIOT

Don't be sorry.

WILL

I should've...taken the shot.

ELLIOT

You did fine, you did just fine, boy.
It's not your fault, it's mine.

WILL

My price...my...price...Elliot...

ELLIOT

What?

WILL

Three thousand...all this
for...three...for three thousand...

ELLIOT

Today...my price was you...had I known
that...things woulda been different.

Will exhales his last breath. A moment passes.

KATE

Death follows you bounty hunter...
You've taken the lives of my mother
and father...and how many others?

ELLIOT

Your mother and father are devils!
Wolves! Preying on the lives of
everyone around 'em! I may be far from
an angel...but I...am no devil.

KATE

Remember those words as you hand these
corpses over for money and lower your
friend into the dirt...

ELLIOT

Kate, put the gun down.

KATE

My life is not yours to take...

ELLIOT

Kate!

BANG! Kate puts the gun under her chin and pulls the trigger.
Blood splatters the ceiling of the awning. Her body hits the
hard wood of the porch.

Elliot lets out a deep and heavy sigh.

ELLIOT

God have mercy.

END.