

THE DISTINCTIVE CRACK OF BURNING WOOD SOUNDS OUT, AND A FLURRY OF EMBERS DANCE INTO FRAME AS CAMERA LOOKS UP INTO A DEEP VIOLET SKY. MUSIC BUILDS TO A VIOLENT CRESCENDO THEN CEASES AS THE FRAME GOES BLACK.

EXT. SIERRA FOOTHILL CAMP. DUSK. 1854

CAMERA looks up through a fire at FRANKLIN as he sits, hands clutching a cross necklace, reciting prayer.

We pull back to reveal FRANCIS staring into the fire. He holds a small twig, breaking pieces off and tossing them in. A pair of legs walk into frame.

EDWIN
(O.S.)
Franklin. Pitch the tents.

CAMERA still holds as Franklin nods and puts away his necklace before getting up to pitch the tents. EDWIN places a hand on Francis' shoulder.

EDWIN
(O.S.)
Little brother.

Francis looks up at Edwin. He stares at him for a moment before going to help Franklin with the tents. Edwin walks closer to camera and sits down into the frame. He reaches into a PACK he's slung onto the ground and pulls out a LEATHER BOUND JOURNAL.

He turns the pages of the journal until he reaches one with a crude map drawn on it. The edge of the page is stained with what may be blood.

The wind whips through the foothills.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. SALOON. NIGHT.

The saloon is crowded and loud. The clambering of footsteps and echo of countless conversations are dampened by the

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bodies of the saloon's patrons.

CAMERA peers through the flame of an oil lamp at EDWIN. He stares at the shimmering gold reflections that slowly dance across the surface of his WHISKEY.

An uproar of laughter draws his attention to the table next to him where SUTTER sits with two PROSTITUTES gathered around him and one upon his lap.

Empty glasses and bottles litter the table. A cigar hangs out of Sutter's mouth, and he is visibly drunk.

SUTTER

...And the look in that rancher's eyes, ha heh, when I handed him those thousand dollars... It were as if Christ had delivered him his salvation.

The prostitutes giggle.

SUTTER

One thousand dollars...I pulled twenty thousand dollars worth of gold off of his ranch the very next day! HA HA!

Edwin finishes his glass of whiskey while the other table laughs away. He picks up two glasses and a mostly full bottle then saunters over to Sutter's table.

He sets the glasses down as the cheery party looks up at him.

EDWIN

Why don't you ladies run along. I've got some private matters to attend to with Mr. Sutter here.

Sutter is uninterested in Edwin's presence. The girl sitting on Sutter's lap begins to get up, but he pulls her back down.

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SUTTER

Woah easy now, this fella is
mistaken,

Sutter turns to face Edwin.

SUTTER

(Cont'd.)

-he's got no business here.

A giant man gets up from the table behind Sutter's and
stands at Sutter's side. He rests his hands on his hips to
reveal a REVOLVER.

SUTTER

(smirking)

Why don't you take that bottle and
find some sty to pass the night in,
hmm?

The girls laugh nervously while Sutter and Edwin keep their
eyes locked on one another. Edwin takes a seat across from
Sutter.

EDWIN

I've got business with you sir.
Something for that little black
book of yours.

Sutter leans back and plucks something from between his
canines with his tongue, eyes still locked with Edwin. He
spits whatever he's dug out on the floor.

SUTTER

Do you?

While the rest of the saloon is caught in the nights
revelries, the air around the table has grown quiet and
tense.

A confused look covers the faces of the three women as they
look between each other.

Sutter grunts as he pushes the girl from his lap.

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SUTTER

Up! Up! Up!

PROSTITUTE 1

But darlin'...

SUTTER

Shut it whore. Go on.

He waves the women on as they defeatedly walk away from the table. Sutter holds his hand out at the now empty chair next to him and motions for Edwin to come over.

Edwin takes a seat beside Sutter and pours a glass of whiskey for each man. The bodyguard hands Sutter a MAP and a BLACK LEATHER JOURNAL. Sutter unfurls the map on the table.

SUTTER

(Tapping the map)

Well. Go on man, tell me what you have.

Edwin leans in over the map and traces a path with his fingers as he speaks.

EDWIN

It's Indian territory. A tributary, northwest of Mariposa.

SUTTER

How sure are you that it's yielding?

Edwin reaches into his coat pocket then removes a small, dirty CLOTH that has been wrapped around itself. He sets the cloth on the table and unfurls it revealing a clump of minuscule GOLD PELLETS.

Sutter looks at Edwin and gestures to the pile.

SUTTER

May I?

Edwin nods and Sutter picks up one of the pellets to inspect it. He rolls it over in between his thumb and index finger close to his face before setting it down with the others.

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