PRODUCER: BY MOUTH

I WOKE UP WICKED

BY

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CHARACTERS

MARION aka the “Duke”, aka “Rawhide”, USA, 22, slight Texas drawl. Honest Cowpoke turned reluctant Desperado

CUTHBERT aka Buck Sanderson, USA, 25, medium Texas drawl, Second-cousin to Marion. Deputy Sheriff of Durkee, Montana Territory, among less savory occupations.

DUKE aka The REAL Duke, USA, 45, medium Texas drawl, Head Honcho of the Rough Bunch Outlaws. Mean hombre.

MIZ PICKETT, USA or UK/AUS, 24, prim lady and Eagle Nest schoolteacher, among other things.

TROUT, USA, 40’s but looking much older, heavy hillybilly accent. Short, grizzled storekeeper of the Eagle Nest Store who resembles a fish--and laughs like one. Honest as he needs to be.

SHERIFF, 50’s, Chief Lawman of Durkee, Montana Territory

CARMEN, Mexican, heavy accent, 35, Duke’s Moll in Eagle Nest.

WAGON BOSS/CONDUCTOR/DESPERADO 3, USA, 40’s, slight Texas drawl.

COWBOY 1/DESPERADO 1, USA, 20-30, medium to heavy Texas drawl. Cowboy’s an honest cowpoke. Desperado’s a hard case.

COWBOY 2/DESPERADO 2, USA, 20-30, medium to heavy Texas drawl. Cowboy’s an honest cowpoke. Desperado’s a hard case.

MARION VO: In the end, I reckon I gotta' lay the blame on those dime novels I used to read behind the haystack back on the farm in Indiana.

For a young fella with a thirst for adventure in exotic places, the exploits of Deadwood Dick, Buffalo Bill and Calamity Jane made life on the farm with its endless chores look awful dull.

So the first chance I got, I set out to Texas for the romantic life of a cowboy on the open plains.

Two seasons of followin' the bony backsides of a couple hundred knothead steers up to Montana Territory succeeded in knockin' some of that nonsense outta me. But it wasn't till that last drive up to the railhead at Durkee that my education became complete.

(SOUNDS OF CATTLE BEING DRIVEN, HORSE AND CATTLE HOOVES, YIPS AND WHISTLES FROM COWPUNCHERS)

WAGON BOSS: Meet me at the bank in an hour, boys--I'll pay ya off there.

COWBOY 1 [making fun of his girly name]: Hey Marion! Whatcha gonna do with all the pay ya' got comin'--send it home to yer Ma? Buy some purty curly ribbons?

MARION: Nonna' yer business what I do with it. An' stop callin' me Marion. The name's DUKE.

COWBOY 2: Oh, watch out fellas--the "Duke's" likely to drink the town dry of Sasparilla--he's a meeean hombre, that Duke!

(Cowboys laugh)

MARION [good humoredly]: Go on an' laugh fellas. See ya' at the bank.

MARION (VO) We scattered and started struttin' the streets--all ragged and dusty.

We was too broke to do anything BUT strut.

Anyhow, after awhile, I see this fella behind a lawman's badge, leanin' against the wall and lookin' at me all squinty-eyed.

MARION (Defiantly): See anythin' MISTER? (suddenly recognizing him) Wait a second! Cuthbert? Cousin Cuthbert?

CUTHBERT (Hard and menacing): The name's Buck Sanderson, stranger. I'm deputy sheriff of this here county.

MARION: Cuthbert--ya shouldn't a' run off! Your Ma's been real upset ever since ya--

CUTHBERT (Quietly snarky): How ya' doin', Mary Ann?

MARION (Huffing): The name's DUKE. I guess I made a MISTAKE.

CUTHBERT: Likely. Very likely.

MARION (VO): I know NOW that when he heard me say "mistake", he figgered I was on the run. But I wasn't. Not THEN anyhow.

CUTHBERT: Got any plans, cowboy?

MARION: They're gonna pay us off at the bank right quick. After that, I don't know what I'm gonna do.

CUTHBERT: Come have a drink first.

MARION: I don't have any coin till I'm paid.

CUTHBERT: Drink's on me!

MARION (VO) I shoulda' known better than drink with Cuthbert. He always was a mean, sly fella for as long as I'd known him. He bought me a beer--and slugged down a shot of Red Eye.

(Saloon noises.)

CUTHBERT: Guess I'll mosey along with you to the bank.

MARION (Suspicious): I can find it.

CUTHBERT: Don't worry--part o' my rounds.

(Exit Saloon; street noise. Bootsteps stop)

Now what's the Sheriff's horse doin' HERE? It was supposed to be took to the livery stable--but I guess the boy fergot. (Pause) Here, YOU lead him--I gotta keep my gun hand free--this is a tough town.

MARION (VO): Rather than argue with him, I grabbed the reins of the horse--and led him. There was some fellas standin' around in front of the bank--but none of 'em was from my crew. There were also some horses standin' around.

CUTHBERT: I'll go see if they're payin' off yet. You stay here and hold the horse.

MARION: I'M the one who's getting paid off--YOU hold the horse.

CUTHBERT (Hard): HOLD THE HORSE.

MARION (VO): So I held the horse--as he walked into the bank.

I was getting' madder by the minute when--

(SOUNDS OF FOUR GUNSHOTS)

Suddenly men came tearin' outta the bank like mad hornets--and jumped on their horses!

(SOUNDS OF GALLOPING HORSES).

Cuthbert followed them out--gave 'em a few seconds start--and then started shooting--

(THREE SHOTS)

--UP IN THE AIR.

I knew then that Cuthbert hadn't changed a bit.

So I did the obvious thing--I jumped on the Sheriff's horse and galloped out of town in the other direction.

(ONE HORSE GALLOPING, TOWN NOISE, GUNSHOTS FADING. HOOFBEATS SLOW TO A WALK)

After about ten miles I stopped to see if any bullets 'ad hit me. They hadn't.

So here I was--a fugitive from justice. I'd stolen the Sheriff's horse --and the bank had been robbed with me standin' there like I was part of the gang--and I was witness to the fact that Cuthbert was in on it.

So I sat there wishin' I had a smoke--and thinkin' what a trecherous villain Cuthbert was.

So I decided to go back and tell the Sheriff all about it--but just not then. Some other YEAR would have to do. Cuz if I went ridin' back into town on the Sheriff's horse, some trigger-happy posse might get the wrong idea.

(SINGLE HOOFBEATS)

So I rode on a couple of miles till it started getting' dark. I unsaddled --and went to bed in the brush--wishin' I could eat grass like the Sheriff's horse.

(Nighttime sounds: crickets, distant coyote howling) FADE

(SAME NIGHT, SAME SPOT Sounds of a fire crackling, clink of tin utensils, faint voices in middle distance)

MARION VO: I woke up in the dark--only it wasn't so dark as it shoulda' been. Somebody close by had a fire going--and I could hear voices.

DESPERADO 1: That you Larry?

MARION (blearily): Who's Larry?

(Sounds of men stirring, levering and cocking weapons)

MARION VO: Just goes to show what a pure heart I had--and how little brains. All of a sudden I remembered I was a wanted man.

DESPERADO 2: Got a rifle on you, mister.

Come into the light--with your hands up.

DESPERADO 3: How long you been there?

DUKE (dismissive): How long don't matter. Either he's on our side--or he's dead.

MARION: I'm on your side.

(then anxiously) Which side is that?

DUKE: Ya ever drive cattle on shares?

MARION: Just for wages. I'm a hard-workin' cowpoke lookin' for an opportunity.

DUKE: Well, it just found you. What name do ya go by?

MARION: Duke.

DUKE: No you don't--I'M Duke.

You're Rawhide.

MARION (disappointed): Rawhide! I've got ordinary skin like everybody else!

MARION VO: It then dawned on me just who I was talkin' to. EVERYBODY 'ad heard o' Duke--he was one of the head hombres of the Rough Bunch.

Fact was, I'd taken the name o' Duke--not long before--'cause a reputation went with it.

MARION (swallowing): If you say so Duke. I'm Rawhide.

DUKE (chuckling) Go bring Rawhide his boots. (Pause) Get Rawhide a cup of coffee.

MARION VO: So that's how I got my bandit name.

And became an outlaw--one of the Rough Bunch.

I'd gone to bed honest and broke--but I'd woke up--WICKED.

(Sounds of a cattle drive; lowing steers, yips and whistles of cowboys, clatter of hoofbeats)

DUKE: Round up those knotheads, Rawhide!

MARION VO: You MIGHT think driving stolen cattle was exciting--but it ain't. They didn't look any different than they had when I pushed them along as a law-abiding citizen. Why should they look any different? Fact is, some of them was the same cattle. After they was rustled, they become a lot easier to move, that's all. When they were an honest herd, we were forever runnin' into lawmen and nesters alike sayin' "You can't bring that herd through HERE," or "You can't cross this LINE." But when the Rough Bunch moved a herd, the lawmen were always somewhere else on urgent business--and the nesters--they greeted the Rough Bunch with open arms--so as they could purchase stock with no questions asked.

So I began to think: this is the LIFE! It's safer and quieter than being an honest cowboy. Nobody ever gets close enough to point a gun at you. I could have enjoyed it--if hanging around all them outlaws hadn't made me so nervous.

(Sound of a campfire, coffee being poured, etc.)

Duke and the others--they looked like cowboys anywhere--but just KNOWIN' that they was the Rough Bunch gave me the shivers. I'd tried bein' real polite--but they just glared at me.

So I glared back--and started showin' my teeth. And after that, we got along pretty good.

But bein' an outlaw is awful tiring on your face muscles.

(Cattle drive noises)

Finally, one day we drove 'em up to the top of a rimrock ridge.

DUKE: Well there it IS. Eagle Nest.

DESPERADOES 1,2,3: YIPPEE!! (horses galloping)

DUKE: They got gals waitin' for 'em down there. THERE's a settlement no lawman has ever laid eyes on. Not that they don't know where it IS. We got a nice layout here. Families. Kids. Even had a school till the teacher got married. Gotta scoot. YIPPEE!!! (galloping away).

MARION VO: And down he went--into the prettiest green valley I ever saw. Steers snortin' down at the water--and good green grass all around.

I thought: Oh what the hell.

MARION (YELLING): I'm RawHIDE! One of the Rough Bunch! I'm a real BAD hombre! YIPPEE!!!

(galloping)

I flung outta the saddle in front of a log building with a hitch for my horse--and started to swagger in.

CARMEN: You are Raw-HIGH-ED.

MARION VO: A dark-skinned gal with long earrings stood grinning at me. I swept off my hat.

MARION: Yes ma'am, I sure am. And what might YOUR name be?

CARMEN: My name ees Carmen.

MARION VO: She woulda' been kind of pretty had she not had a front tooth missing. It suddenly dawned on me that the womenfolk of the Rough Bunch might be even more dangerous than the outlaws themselves. Just then Duke stepped out and glared at me. So I did what you should always do with strange women--dangerous or not.

MARION: Pleased to meet you ma'am. Boss, where do we bunk? Cause it's been a long, long time since I got a solid night's sleep.

DUKE: The big cabin's for the single men. The little shacks is for those that's got their own "housekeeping arrangements". (Pause) Carmen, you git along home--and don't dally.

CARMEN (sulkily): Si, Duke. (seductively) Adios, Raw-HIGH-ED.

MARION VO: She dallied long enough to wave her eyelashes at me--and that raised a chill along the back of my neck. But Duke gave me a frown that kept it chilly.

DUKE: Your credit's good in the store here. (spurs jingle off)

MARION VO: Well THAT was a relief. Bein' an outlaw 'ad put less money in my pocket than when I was honest.

(door swings open)

TROUT (hillbilly accent): I reckon you're Rawhide. [nervous laugh like a fish] What'll you have?

MARION: Soap to wash the dust off the outside--a can of peaches to sweeten up the inside--and some tobacco to relax before I go to sleep for three or four days.

TROUT: Sure ting! (nervous fish-laugh) Comin' right up!

MARION VO: As I drank the peach juice, my eyes got used to the dim light --and I saw that there was a--woman--sittin' about ten feet away.

MIZ PICKETT (soft, cultured voice): Trout--would you please introduce us?

TROUT: Oh gosh--'xcuse me. Miz Pickett--this is Rawhide (nervous fish-laugh) the new man!

MARION: How do you do, Ma'am.

MARION VO: She was a pretty lady--real young--had all her teeth too. But she looked prim--and wore a black dress. If there was one thing I didn't expect to find in Eagle Nest, it was a real lady.

MIZ PICKETT (opening door): I hope we shall become better acquainted--Mr. "Rawhide".

MARION (flustered) Yessir--I mean yes ma'am--I do too.

(door closes as Miz Pickett leaves)

TROUT: The Widda there--she come to teach school--then married Ed Pickett. (nervous fish-laugh) He got shot a while back. (nervous fish-laugh) The other gals think she's a snob 'cause she keeps her marriage certificate up on the wall--but they's just jealous.

MARION: A very nice lady.

TROUT: Oh she is--she is. (confidentially) If ya ever find out whether she DID ride with the Bunch when they took that 'xpress car at Middle Fork, I sure wish you'd tell me.

MARION VO: I could see it all--poor orphan girl with no folks--lured into a nest of thieves to teach school--falls in love with the bandit Pickett --then he's shot dead. Poor girl.

I put down the empty peach can and threw back my shoulders.

MARION (gruffly): If you want trouble with Rawhide, mister--just let me hear you say one more bad word about that little lady.

TROUT (cringing) Oh, I won't, Rawhide--I sure won't! (Pause) Anyway, it's all a vicious rumor, about her ridin' with—

MARION (menacing): THAT's what I meant!

TROUT (even more grovelling): Just a rumor--a VICIOUS rumor! And to show ya my heart's in the right place, I won't even charge ya for the things ya just bought.

MARION: I'll let it pass--THIS time.

(Spurs jingle out the door)

MARION VO: I found the bunkhouse--growled at the boys--then laid down and slept--for thirty-six hours. I would have stretched it out longer except I had a bad dream.

MARION (waking up in terror): Ahhhhhhh!

MARION VO: In that moment, I'd didn't know if I was Marion--or Rawhide--or even the Duke.

When I got my bearings, I realized what a jam I was in. I wasn't the best shot in the world--and my hide sure felt every bit as raw as my moniker. What was I gonna do about this poor little widow lady marooned with these bandits? Surely the law would be after her if she left--on account of her association with the Bunch. And if she COULD escape, what money would she have to live on?

MARION: And them sayin' she held up a train!

MARION VO: A towering RAGE suddenly come over me. I got up and marched right outta there--clean forgettin' to put on my gun belt.

Outside, I run into several of the Bunch--and glared 'em down.

DESPERADO 1: Didja' SEE that? No gun belt!

DESPERADO 2: That Rawhide's the sorta' cold-blooded killer who don't even NEED a gun!

DESPERADO 3: Rawhide's the type who'd strangle an innocent grizzly bear with his BARE HANDS!!!

MARION VO: (laughs at the memory): Lemme tell ya: I never did so much loafing in my life as I did in that valley. There was nothing to do except sit around and gossip--play cards--and get drunk. And since I didn't want to drink in this company--and I was scared to win at cards --and also not willing to lose, even if I HAD any money--that only left TALK.

Which, after Trout spread the tale of me getting riled up over Miz Pickett, all I heard was the same thing--over and over:

DESPERADO 1: (together): Them rumors about Miz Pickett and the 'xpress car--they're totally untrue!!!

DESPERADO 2: That's right!!

DESPERADO 3: You better believe it!!

MARION VO: Everyone except Duke seemed to walk on eggshells around me. So it came as a relief when Duke himself came up late one day to tell me I was on guard duty.

DUKE: Take your rifle--and ride up to the rim. And be ready. Nobody's tried to bust into Eagle Nest yet--but some lawman out to make a reputation might try it. One shot from up there and we'll with ya in a heartbeat. But don't get jumpy and rout us out of a nice quiet sleep to shoot up some friendly juniper. Last fella who did that ain't been heard from since. The password's "Twenty dollars."

MARION: Yes Boss.

MARION VO: As I started riding up near sundown, Miz Pickett was luggin' a couple o' buckets of water to her cabin--so I stopped to help her.

MIZ PICKETT: Thank you Mr. "Rawhide". I'd ask you in for supper, but you know how people talk.

MARION: I'd gladly go hungry to protect your good name, Ma'am.

MARION VO: She gave me an approving look--but I noticed somethin' funny.

This prim little lady was lookin' at me like my aunt used to--over her glasses. Only Miz Pickett didn't HAVE any glasses on.

MIZ PICKETT: Mr. "Rawhide"--have you ever given any thought to leaving this life of ours?

MARION (guardedly): A fella thinks about a LOT of things, Miz Pickett.

MIZ PICKETT: Crime does no body any good. Look at my poor husband--shot down in a bank robbery. Are you any better off since you joined the Bunch?

MARION: Well I got credit at Trout's store.

MIZ PICKETT: But no real money. Not until those steers you brought in get fattened up and sold. (Brief pause) But what if the nesters who usually buy them get cold feet? The price on stolen beef can get pretty low.

MARION: Were you thinkin' of gettin' outta here, ma'am? Don't mean to pry into your private business.

MIZ PICKETT (resigned sigh): I COULD go back to teaching. But would the Bunch let me leave?

MARION VO: Just then Duke stepped out onto the porch of the large cabin and glared at us suspiciously.

MARION (in a loud voice): Any time at all, ma'am--any time at all.

MIZ PICKETT (understanding--also loud): Thank you Mr. "Rawhide"--thank you for carrying the water.

MARION VO: The Duke watched me as I mounted my horse and trotted on.

The widow had given me something to chew on as I rode to the top of the look-out. There, I unsaddled--and tried to keep warm without a fire.

(night sounds—crickets, coyote yelps)

Night-herding rimrock and juniper is even duller than ridin' round bedded-down cattle--but my thoughts wouldn't give me any rest.

MARION: What's stopping me from gettin' on my horse and ridin' down to where the rest of the world is?

MARION VO: I said to myself.

MARION: Duke and the Bunch for one!

MARION VO: They wouldn't like it--for sure. The LAW might not like it either--'cause I was still sittin' on the Sheriff's horse. And who would look out for poor Miz Pickett? No I wasn't exactly hobbled--but I sure was hog-tied.

MARION: Aaaah!

MARION VO: Here I was, a young fella--with no real bad habits--I didn't drink much, I'd quit gambling--and here I was stuck with outlaws --and helpless to protect a pretty little lady.

Movin' cattle was movin' cattle--but darn it, I was more scared of the gals in Eagle Nest--they all had KNIVES in their garters.

All in all, I was a MUCH nicer fella since turning badman. But I was scared to pull out.

(sound of hooves and a horse nickering)

I grabbed my rifle (lever action working) before I realized that the sound was coming up from the Eagle Nest side behind me.

MARION (menacingly): WHO'S THERE? Come out--and lemme look at you--or I'll shoot!!!

MARION VO: I sounded so mean, I even scared myself.

MIZ PICKETT: Oh, please don't!!! Mr. Rawhide, please help me. Can you change twenty dollars?

MARION VO: For her, no password was necessary. Miz Pickett had a saddle horse--and a packhorse--with one of its hooves caught between two logs. I yanked him out--and felt big and strong. Hell, I coulda' picked him up and lifted him out if necessary.

MIZ PICKETT: This is the night I'm leaving. The Bunch is having a big meeting in the saloon--planning something--

MARION (gallantly): Then let's ride, ma'am. (horses trotting)

MARION VO: And that's how I left Eagle Nest--and the Rough Bunch.

It was easy enough--once somebody gave me a push. We could'a gone faster if Miz Pickett hadn't brought so much stuff on the pack horse. She'd brought everything--grub and blankets--and a couple of wood boxes roped on. A neater job of horse packing I never did see.

MIZ PICKETT: Those are my books--in there.

MARION VO: We rode for enough hours to put plenty of distance between us and Eagle Nest.

MARION: Whoa. I think it's safe to camp now. Lemme unload your pack horse for you, ma'am.

MIZ PICKETT: Never mind the pack horse--get the fire going.

MARION: Sure--but I wouldn't want you to lift that heavy stuff off the pack saddle.

MIZ PICKETT (a completely different tone): Rawhide. (sound of revolver hammer cocking) GET THE FIRE GOING.

MARION VO: I turned around and though she still looked prim--in that black dress with a divided skirt for riding--in her little, gloved hands she held a small, nickel-plated Otis-Smith 32 caliber revolver--with its tiny barrel pointed in the direction of my innards.

Two thoughts hit me at the same time: that there were sure to be mighty few books in those boxes.

And that all those vicious rumors about the Express car robbery at Middle Fork weren't vicious rumors at all.

But I kept those thoughts to myself.

MARION (brightly): Ma'am there's some good firewood over there--to the left.

MARION VO: Officially, we took turns sleepin'--with one awake and one standin' guard. But Miz Pickett never seemed to sleep at all.

We camped four nights--and every night I stood guard, I could feel her eyes watchin' me every time I moved a muscle.

I didn't dare sleep either--not bein' certain I'd wake up if I let myself drift off.

I was feeling pretty bleary by that fourth morning when we had breakfast.

MIZ PICKETT: Another twenty miles to the railroad.

MARION: Fine.

MARION VO: As we rode, I wondered if she'd dry-gulch me before we got there.

MIZ PICKETT: You ever been in the cattle business on your own?

MARION: Never have.

MIZ PICKETT: I think I'll give up school teaching--and raise beef instead. I'll need a foreman.

MARION: Expect you will, ma'am.

MARION VO: She didn't need no foreman--but I was in no position to argue.

MIZ PICKETT: That's settled, then. I'm going to take the train. You will come along a week later. I'm your sister, Mary Smith.

MARION: Pleased to meet you, Sis. And where should I meet you later?

MARION VO: Not that I was goin' to--but it seemed wise to act interested.

MIZ PICKETT (writing) Here's the address. (Sweetly) We're going to get along all right in the cattle business, "Rawhide".

MARION VO: I hoped we were--with about a thousand miles between us, if I could help it.

MIZ PICKETT: In the meantime, you'd better hide out. The Bunch must be getting pretty close by now.

MARION: Reckon so.

MARION VO: She didn't recommend anyplace I could hide--what with the Law ahead and the Bunch behind--and bein' wanted for bank robbery, cattle rustlin'--and stealin' the Sheriff's horse--what was a poor cowboy to do?

MARION: By the way--where do you figure on catchin' the train?

MIZ PICKETT: Durkee.

MARION: DURKEE!?!? HELL!--Excuse me, Ma'am--but I can't go to Durkee! That's where the bank was held up while I was holdin' this horse right in front of it!

MARION VO: Miz Pickett looked annoyed. And I sure hated to annoy Miz Pickett.

MIZ PICKETT: My goodness--you think you're so outstanding anybody's going to recognize you?

MARION VO: She had a sound argument. Ever since I'd stopped scowlin' at the Bunch--and let my face hang loose--I looked like an ordinary fella.

And if Cuthbert WAS around, was HE going to identify me? I'd identify him right BACK.

MIZ PICKETT (with cool anger): There IS a man in Durkee I'd like to meet though. I don't know who he is, but he engineered a bank robbery that the Bunch got the blame for. I have a score to settle with that man. We--I mean the Bunch--didn't rob that bank.

MARION: No Ma'am we--I mean they--didn't--they was rustlin' cattle.

(train depot noises)

MARION VO: We made it to the depot just ahead of the train. Lookin' around at the loafers in the yard, I got a chill seein' Cuthbert as usual leanin' against the wall behind his tin star. Though I preferred his company to Miz Pickett's, the Bunch might show up any second--and she was leavin' me no protection except my own wits.

I hoisted her boxes onto the platform. (heavy coins clinking)

They sure was some heavy books.

MIZ PICKETT (sweetly) Goodbye, dear brother Harry--take care of yourself. Conductor--could you please take my books to my compartment?

CONDUCTER (straining to lift): Oh, lordy, what you got in here, ma'am.

MIZ PICKETT: Books, I said. (Thinking what she's getting away with). Just books.

(train whistle, steam rising)

CUTHBERT: Hello, Mary Ann.

MARION: Hello, Cuthbert.

CUTHBERT: Who's the girl?

MARION: My sister.

CUTHBERT: I know your sisters--and she ain't one of 'em. You always was a liar, Mary Ann.

(sound of Marion punching Cuthbert)

MARION VO: I didn't hit him hard. Just enough to make it look good,

CUTHBERT: Resistin' an officer, eh? Come with me, Mary Ann--and if you tell anyone we're related, I'm gonna shoot you!

MARION: I'd rather BE shot than admit that.

MARION VO: I marched along so fast, he had to trot to keep up with me. I'd never been so glad to get thrown in jail.

(jail door opens)

CUTHBERT: Now let's see whatcha' got in your pockets. Hm.. BROKE of course.

What's this piece of paper in your shirt pocket?

I bet it's the address of that girl you just put on the train.

MARION: DON'T take that! I'll never remember where I'm supposed to meet her.

CUTHBERT: Aaaand WHY should she want YOU to meet her?

MARION (setting the bait): Don't know that she does. But she's my Golden Goose. She's not only pretty, but she's also loaded--and wants me to be foreman of her ranch.

CUTHBERT (nibbling the bait): Shouldn't be hard to find her a good man.

MARION (twitching the bait): She said she'd sure like to meet YOU. But if you was to climb on that train, it would be just plain DIRTY of you, 'cause I saw her first!

(long train whistle announcing departure)

CUTHBERT (hooked): Stay here, Mary Ann!!!

(office door slams as he runs out to the train)

MARION: YOU FORGOT TO LOCK ME IN!!!

MARION VO: Locked in or not, I wasn't about to go steppin' outside. I just sat on the bunk in the cell till a nice old gent with a badge strolled in ten minutes later.

(office door opens)

SHERIFF: What're you doing in there?

MARION: Was put here by a fella with a star on.

SHERIFF (rustling paper): Don't see nothin' written in the book. What you in for?

MARION: Hitting him, I guess.

SHERIFF: I've often wanted to do that myself. You can go, for all I care.

MARION VO: Was there no refuge for Rawhide, the reformed outlaw?

MARION: I'm also wanted in nine states--and some territories! Bank robbery, rustlin' cattle, forgery, arson--and stealin' horses--why, I got your own horse right outside!

SHERIFF (delighted): You HAVE! Why boy I'm so delighted to have that horse back, I tell you what I'm gonna do--I'm gonna make YOU my Deputy! Somebody just said they'd seen Buck getting on the train, so I'm gonna' need a new one. We got some BIG GAME comin' in here--eight members of the Rough Bunch, that's who! Just got a telegram about how they ran into a posse that was out lookin' for somebody else. Wanna work for me?

MARION (panicky): My health ain't good!!! An' I got case o' the fleapin' litters--I mean leapin' flitters!!! (runs for the door)

SHERIFF: Hey! You forgot your gun--and your hat!

(He comes back in)

MARION VO: I couldn't go without my hat.

SHERIFF: Yessir--they got just about ALL of the Rough Bunch except that little lady who was the boss of the whole shebang. Five thousand dollar reward for her--but nobody except the outlaws knows what she looks like.

MARION: Five foot two--black hair--blue eyes--and she looks like the president of the Ladies Aid. (Pause) And she just took the same train as your deputy.

SHERIFF: WHAAAT!?!?!?

(throws open door and runs out)

MARION VO: I was right behind him--but I passed him when he swung into the telegraph office.

His horse was ten yards further on. (galloping hooves)

It was a year before they stopped lookin' for me--the unidentified cowboy who stole the Sheriff's horse--and set the law on Miz Pickett and the greedy Cuthbert.

If I'd turned myself in to be a witness, I coulda' been a hero.

But I always felt kinda' guilty about my cousin Cuthbert--and I never knew which one of the Bunch would break outta' the penitentiary next.

Miz Pickett broke out--and got away to South America.

I was sure relieved to read about that in the newspaper--though I never had nothin' against South Americans.

But they did save ME from havin' to run off to some heathen place like China to steer clear of Miz Pickett!!!

THE END