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Little Big Man

By Calder Willingham

I am, beyond a doubt,
the last of the old-timers.
My name is Jack Crabb.
And I am the sole white survivor
of the Battle
of Little Big Horn...
uh... uh...
popularly known
as Custer's Last Stand.
Well...
Mr. Crabb, I'm more interested
in the primitive lifestyle
of the Plains Indian
than I am in the...
tall tales about Custer.
Tall tales?!
Are you calling me a liar?
- No, no...
- Huh?
No, it's just that...
I'm interested
in the way of life
of the Indian rather than,
shall we say, adventure.
You think the Battle of Little
Big Horn was... was a...
...was an adventure?
Oh, shit.
Little Big Horn was not
representative of...
encounters between Whites
and Indians, Mr. Crabb.
You see the...
near genocide of the Indian...
The... the... the near what?!
Near genocide.

It means:

the killing off
of an entire people. "
That's practically
what we did to the Indian.
But of course, I wouldn't expect
an old Indian fighter like you

to agree with me.
Turn that thing on.
I beg your pardon?
I said, turn that thing on
and shut up.
Now you just set there,
and you'll learn something.
I knowed General
George Armstrong Custer
for what he was.
And I also knowed the Indians...
for what they was.
when I was ten years old,
my family...
in crossin' the Great Plains...
was wiped out
by a band of wild Indians.
Everybody was killed or drug off
by them murderin' varmints,
except me
and my sister Caroline.
Good-bye, Jack.
I'll see you in heaven.
Good-bye, Caroline.
We didn't know
the difference then,
but it was a band of Pawnee
what attacked us before.
I ain't had no use for Pawnee
ever since.
But this one wasn't a Pawnee.
He was a Cheyenne brave.
I later got to know him well.
His name was
Shadow That Comes In Sight.
At first sight
of an Indian camp,
what you think is, "I see
their dump, where's the camp?"
He brought us to their chief.
His name was Old Lodge Skins,
who later become my granddaddy.
What do they want, Caroline?
It's as plain as day

what they want, Jack.

What?

Me.

To show good manners,
Old Lodge Skins smoked
with our oldest male survivor.
They didn't know I was a woman.
That explains why
they didn't rape me right off.
I don't think they're gonna
bother you, Caroline.
No such luck, Jack.
They'll get me tonight,
for sure.
Poor Caroline never did
have no luck with men.
I reckoned she figured
we both couldn't get away,
and she'd send help back
to rescue me.
Next morning, I found myself
in that Indian camp all alone.
But the Cheyenne, who call
themselves the "Human Beings,"
had no idea to hurt me.
I was an honored guest,
and they gave me a real treat

for breakfast:

Dog ain't bad, neither.
Now dog is greasy, I'll admit,
but you'd be surprised
how downright delicate
the flavor is,
especially when you're starving.
You see, the Human Beings
adopted me as one of their own.
Shadow That Comes In Sight
taught me the bow and arrow
and how to stalk game.
Burns Red In The Sun
showed me how to protect
my pale skin from sunburn.
It's a little known fact that

some Indians, like Burns Red,
will sunburn their own selves.
But my real teacher
was my adopted grandpa,
Old Lodge Skins.
He taught me to read a trail,
the Cheyenne language,
and lots of other things.
For a boy,
it was a kind of paradise.
I wasn't just playing Indian,
I was living Indian.
Only one thing bothered me.
I was small for my years.
In fact, a durn near runt.
The Pawnee stole
seven of our ponies.
There's gonna be a war party.
But you can't go.
You're too little
and weak like a girl.
Run away now or I'll kick you.
The Indians had never heard
of fistfightin',
and it plum amazed 'em.
How did you do that?
I'm sorry, Younger Bear.
I didn't mean to hurt you.
The Indian way...
you should never feel sorry
about beating an enemy unless
having conquered his body,
you want his spirit as well.
I had made the first
real enemy of my life.
There once was a Human Being,
and he was very small,
but he won a name:
Little Man.
You've heard of him.
No, Grandfather.
He went on a war party
against the Pawnees.
But the Pawnees were many.

One by one, the Human
Beings were rubbed out.
Little Man was very brave.
The Pawnees called out to him,
"If you will quit fighting,
we will let you go. "
But Little Man answered,
"It's a good day to die. "
Finally, they cut off his head.
But he kept fighting
without his head.
He rode among the Pawnees
like a whirlwind.
And his head...
it was stuck on a spear...
started to shout the war cry.
The Pawnees could take no more,
and they ran away.
When they looked back,
they saw the body of Little Man
lie down among his friends.
Little Man was small,
but his bravery was big.
The Human Beings don't require
a boy to be a warrior
if he ain't got
the temperament for it,
and Little Horse didn't.
If he wanted to stay behind
with the women
that was all right
with the Human Beings.
We will leave the ponies here.
You two will hold them.
No! I don't want to stay here.
I want to go to the Pawnee camp.
You!
You aren't even a Human Being!
You're white.
He didn't believe it himself.
Younger Bear was just trying
to hand me
the worst possible insult.
Little white man.

Fool poor Pawnee.
Big fooling.
You want to eat?
Shit, Pawnees was always
sucking up to whites.
Little white man not mad, huh?
See? Pawnee friend.
See?!

Fixes bad Injun
for little white man.
I always felt kind of bad
about that poor Pawnee.
I didn't mean to kill him.
I just meant to distract him.
I had made a real enemy
of Younger Bear.
I give you these ponies...
but... I owe you a life.
Saving his life
was the final insult.
This boy is no longer a boy.
He's a brave.
He is little in body,
but his heart is big.
His name shall be
"Little Big Man. "
I don't understand it,
Grandfather.
Why would they kill
women and children?
Because they are strange.
They do not seem to know
where the center
of the Earth is.
We must have
a war on these cowards
and teach them a lesson.
This will be the first time,
my son,
I face the whites as an enemy.
I don't know
whether you remember
before you became a Human Being,
and as dear a son to me as those

I made with Buffalo Wallow
Woman and the others...
But I won't speak of
that unfortunate time.
I just want to say,
if you believe
riding against these
white creatures is bad,
you can stay out of the fight.
No one will think the worse.
Grandfather,
I think it's a good day to die.
My heart soars like a hawk.
I'm sorry to say
that Old Lodge Skins' war
against the whites
was kind of pitiful.
Not that the Human Being
wasn't brave.
No warrior ever
walked the earth
more brave than a Human Being.
Old Lodge Skins' idea of war
and the whites' idea of war
were kind of different.
Half our party
didn't even use weapons.
What they done was "take coup,"
hit the enemy
with a little stick.
Humiliate them.
That was how the Human Beings
taught a coward a lesson
and won a war.
Shadow!
Look at 'em go!
We got 'em runnin', boys!
Go get that black bastard!
Shooting rifles
against bow and arrow.
I never could understand
how the white world
could be so proud of winning
with them kind of odds.

God bless George Washington!
Before I knowed it, them words
just popped out of my mouth.
God bless my mother!
You murdering fool!
Got to cut your throat to get it
through your head
I'm a white man.
White?
Sure I'm white.
Didn't you hear me say
"God bless George Washington"?
"God bless my mother"?
I mean, now, what kind
of Indian would say
a fool thing like that?
Lend me that
to get off this paint.
Yeah.
The troopers took me
under their wing
and turned me over
to the Reverend Silas Pendrake
for moral guidance
and a Christian upbringing.
Can you drive a buggy, boy?
Oh, yes, sir.
I can do it.
You're a liar, boy.
If you was reared by the Indians
how could you learn
to drive a buggy?
We shall have to beat
the lying out of you.
Oh, dear Jack.
Welcome to your new home.
Your travail is over,
enfolded now as you are
in Christian love.
Well, boy,
are you unable to converse?
Huh?
No, I'm glad to meet
your daughter, sir.

You are addressing my wife, boy.

Poor boy.

Poor darling.

Think of the years
of suffering,
deprivation and hardship
among those awful savages.

The boy's deprivation, my dear,
has been more spiritual
than physical.

The Indians know nothing of God
and moral right.

They eat human flesh,
fornicate,
adulterize,
misogynize and

commune constantly
with minions of the devil.

It must be our task,
nay, our Christian duty,
to beat the misery out...

Beat the poor boy?

Not while there's
a breath left in my body.

I could have kissed her.

Well, I didn't mean
beat him literally, my dear.

I meant to beat him
symbolically.

Poor boy.

He hasn't even had
a proper bath.

His darling neck is so...
I detect the odor of food.

I shall wash this poor,
dirty boy.

It's suppertime!

Silas,
it is my Christian duty
to give this boy an immediate
thorough bath.

Take off your clothes, dear.

Take my clothes off?

Yes.

All of them?
E- Every stitch.
But I shall avert my eyes
at the necessary moment.
Bringing in
The sheaves
Bringing in the sheaves
We shall come rejoicing
Bringing in the sheaves.
Greatest bath
I ever had in my life.
Shall we gather at the river,
The beautiful,
the beautiful river?
You do realize,
don't you, dear Jack,
that the Reverend Pendrake
is not altogether wrong.
What?
What, ma'am?
Well, Jesus is your savior.
You do realize that,
don't you dear Jack?
Oh, Lordy, yes, Mrs. Pendrake.
Are you thinking of Jesus, Jack?
Yes'm. Yes, ma'am.
Yes, ma'am.
But you musn't fib to me,
you know.
Oh, no, I love Jesus and Moses
and all of them...
There's quite a difference.
Moses was a Hebrew,
but Jesus was a gentile,
like you and me.
Aren't you done
washing that boy yet?
I'm giving the child important
religious instruction, Silas.
I want to eat!
Looks like a pretty well-growed
child, if you ask me.
All right now, dear,
please stand up

and let me dry you off.
I shall avert my eyes,
of course.
Fine... now step
out of the tub...
and...
Actually, you are
rather well grown, Jack.
You're small but...
nice-looking.
Did you know that?
No, ma'am.
Well, you are.
All the more reason
for you to receive
complete religious
instruction.
The girls, I'm sure,
will all be after you.
And Jack...
Ma'am?
That way lies madness.
What way, ma'am?
You, you'll understand these
things better when you're older.
The point is, my dear boy
that we all
must resist temptation.
Purity is its own reward.
Dear Jack.
Welcome to your new home.
Now dress...
and come in to supper.
I went to school
and learned all over
how to read and write
and cipher.
It was strange at first,
but Mrs. Pendrake tutored me,
and I learned fast.
But there was one thing I didn't
know nothing about,
and that was a thing called sin.
Aha! I caught you

at the gates of hell!
Boy!
The hand of God
must smite the carcass of man!
It's worth it, dear, Jack.
It's worth it a million times
over to be pure and good.
To walk in the paths
of righteousness.
There's no happiness like it.
Do you believe me, Jack?
Do you believe me?
Yes, ma'am.
I sure do.
Amazing grace, how sweet...
So it was I entered
my religion period.
I was a great
little hymn singer.
And I wasn't fooling, neither.
I'd been saved!
I baptize you in the name
of the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit!
Oh, Lord, look down upon
this poor boy who lived
among the heathen,
and cleanse him
of the corruption
of their foul and pagan ways.
And make him white
again as the snow.
Let him be reborn
and repurified
in Thy name.
I baptize you
in the name of the Father
and the Son
and the Holy Spirit!
Amen.
Mrs. Pendrake was right
about temptation.
Jack...
I wasn't having nothing

to do with them Jezebels.
I told her all about my triumph
over temptation,
and we read the Bible
for about an hour, to celebrate.
As the weeks went by,
I fell more and more
in love with Mrs. Pendrake.
Spiritually, of course.
Well...
I shall be off on
my Wednesday shopping.
The boy's doing so poor
these days,
why don't you
take him along and air him?
He'd be bored with shopping.
No, I wouldn't, ma'am.
All right, then,
you come with me, Jack.
Good morning, Mr. Kane.
Ma'am.
This is Jack,
my adopted son.
What's your pleasure, ma'am?
Well, let's see...
I think I shall have
a sassafras flip.
How about you, buster?
Huh?
Oh, yeah, I'll have the same.
Never mind for me, Mr. Kane.
I must be off
with my shopping.
It would bore you terribly,
Jack, dear.
You stay here
and have some cake.
I'll take care of him,
Mrs. Pendrake.
Thank you very much,
I'm sure, Mr. Kane.
That soda shop was something.
Especially that

elephant-head spigot.
I was playing with it,
and enjoying myself,
then, all of a sudden,
an awful feeling
run through me.
Where had that fellow gone to?
Don't...
No, don't...
Oh, yeah...
No, don't!
You beast...
Do-Don't...
Pagan beast! Oh!
Help!
Oh, oh, you devil!
You filthy, dirty devil!
Heathen!
Yes! No!
Ye... Ye... Ye...
Oh! Yeah, yeah...
Yeah, yeah...
No... Help!
Help! Help! I'm dying...
She was calling him a devil
and moaning for help,
but I didn't get no idea
she wanted to be rescued.
That was the end
of my religion period.
I ain't sung a hymn
in 104 years.
After starving awhile,
I took up with a swindler.
Name of
Allardyce T. Meriweather.
After Mrs. Pendrake,
his honesty was
downright refreshing.
At no cost to you,
it is my mission
to pass on to you
Dead Man's Potion...
Meriweather was one of the

smartest men I ever knowed.
But he tended
to lose parts of himself.
When I joined him,
his left hand and his left ear
were already gone.
...might be able
to see a miracle,
one I have witnessed
many times before.
The power of this
elixir has been proven
to reverse men's ills...
It'll cure your sores and...
During my years with
Meriweather,
he lost an eye as a result
of a fifth ace
dropping out of his sleeve
in a poker game.
It didn't faze him, though.
Deception was his life's blood,
even if it caused him
to get whittled down
kind of gradual-like.
Thank you.
You're improving, Jack.
You just can't seem to get rid
of that streak of honesty
in you.
The one that ruined you was
that damned Indian, old Tepee.
You mean Old Lodge Skins.
He gave you a vision
of moral order in the universe,
and there isn't any.
Those stars twinkle
in a void, there, boy,
and the two-legged creature
schemes and dreams beneath them,
all in vain.
All in vain, Jack.
You hear anything?
Listen to me!

Two-legged creature
will believe anything,
and the more preposterous,
the better.
Whales speak French
at the bottom of the sea.
The horses of Arabia
have silver wings.
Pygmies mate with elephants
in darkest Africa.
I have sold
all those propositions.
Or maybe we're all fools,
and none of it matters.
Ah.
You stay
with Allardyce Meriweather,
and you'll wear silk.
But I don't know as
I want to wear silk.
My dear boy, what else
can a man of parts wear
than silk?
Tar and feathers,
I reckon!
All right.
Sit right there.
Don't make no moves
unless you want a little
daylight in your liver.
What, may I ask, brings you out
into the wilds
at this hour, sir?
- Is them the ones?
- That's them.
I see'd this young 'un
somewhere before.
I never been in this country.
You look mighty familiar, bub.
Oh! Sir!
What's you got in there?
Lye?
Well, sir, now you can hardly
expect me

to reveal its constituents.
Sir, please, you're... you know
you're-you're wasting
precious medicine.
Seven folks are half dead
because of this
precious medicine.
What's in it?
Why, nothing harmful,
I assure you.
What?!
Mostly water.
Whiskey, a little pepper,
oil of cloves, um, um...
...ginger root...
Whew!
Ugh, what's that?
What's what?
Oh, that.
It's a dozen snake heads
to give it strength.
All right, boys!
Let's burn them feathers.
Yee-ha!
Got caught, Jack, that's all.
Life contains a particle
of risk.
Mr. Meriweather, you don't know
when you're licked.
Licked?
I'm not licked.
I'm tarred and feathered,
that's all.
All right, boys.
I reckon
they've been run enough.
I know I see'd you somewhere.
What's your name, son?
Jack Crabb.
Lord above!
I've tarred
and feathered my own brother!
It's wonderful, Jack.
I can give you something

you never had before.
And something
I never had before neither.
A real...
family life.
Yeah.
You are back in the bosom
of your family, Jack.
Okay,
now you.
Caroline, I mean, I don't...
I don't know anything
about guns.
I mean,
I never even carried none.
Oh,
Lord, what kind of upbringing
did them Injuns give you?
Never carried no gun?
Why, a man ain't complete
without a gun.
Go snake-eyed.
Do what?
Like this...
Like this!
All right.
Now, draw and shoot
that bottle,
before you touch the gun.
But Caroline, how can
I draw and shoot the gun
before I touch it?
Concentrate. Try it.
Oh!
Hot damn!
Yeah.
Caroline was right.
It is possible to shoot a gun
before you touch it.
Of course,
it takes lightning reflexes,
and considerable
snake-eyed concentration.
Throw up three.

Why, Hickok hisself
can't hit three.
Throw up three.
Natural born gunfighter.
So it was
I entered my gunfighter period.
You're crowding me.
Oh, Kid... I didn't
s- see you; I'm sorry.
It's stupid of me
to take up all the room.
I was just talking here.
Set me up with a sody-pop.
Yes, sir.
Right away, Kid.
The Soda Pop Kid,
that's what they called me.
Sody-pop, he wants.
Anything wrong with that,
stranger?
Oh, not a thing, friend.
In fact, I admire
the style of it.
Might I ask
who I are addressing?
I'm Wild Bill Hickok.
Well, I'm...
I'm pleased to meet you,
I'm sure.
The pleasure's mutual, friend.
Bring your soda pop over here
and sit for a while.
I can break three bottles
threwed in the air.
That's shootin'.
How many men have you...
gunned down?
I don't rightly recollect.
How many have you?
Oh, about...
two dozen.
Is that a fact?
No, it wasn't a fact at all.
During my gunfighter period,

I was an awful liar.
I wouldn't have estimated
your total that high.
No offense intended, old Hoss,
but you don't have the look
of murder in your eye.
Like, for example,
that buzzard over there.
Him?
Well, he's just a common drunk.
What you so nervous about?
Gettin' shot.
I got a full house!
I got a...
I got a full house.
Now you got me doing it.
Sorry.
Hold the fort a while,
old horse,
while I get another bottle.
Did you know the man, Bill?
Never saw the gent before.
Mr. Hickok,
that man is really dead.
Got him through the lungs
and heart both.
Selling your gunfighter outfit.
Turning in
your gun.
Well, I'm sorry, Caroline...
There ain't nothin'
in this world more useless
than a gunfighter
who can't shoot people.
Men!
Hyah-ha!
There went the bosom
of my family.
Having tried religion,
the snake oil business,
and gunfightin', without
no great amount of success,
I took me a partner,
become a respectable

storekeeper,
and married Olga,
a Swedish girl who couldn't
hardly speak no English.
Preserve the moment.
Yes.
Olga, shall I carry you
over the threshold?
Ja.
It-it... it's a custom.
Ja.
Well, it ain't much now, Olga,
but me and my partner,
we got... we got big plans.
Free enterprise
and honest sweat.
Ja. Ja.
I don't understand
this bill of lading.
It looks like
I'm being charged twice
for the same goods.
Ja, the bills of the store.
It must be
a bookkeeping error.
Honest Jack Applebaum
wouldn't do that to me.
Ja, enough the bills.
Come and get some rest.
I must be making the mistake.
Ja!
The rest. The body.
You needs it.
Yeah.
Maybe I do.
Rest!
Olga... Olga, come on.
We'll get out of this
somehow.
One little thing about
my new business partner...
he was a thief.
...25 cents for this
musical instrument.

This glorious
musical instrument
this glorious musical instrument
that I present to you now.
I want you to take a look
at this beautiful
musical instrument.
Who will take this beautiful
instrument? Who will take it?
That is a pathetic scene.
Yes, sir.
A ruined and desolate family
wiped out
by economic misfortune.
- I find it touching.
- Yes, sir.
I'll never forget
the first time I set eyes
on General
George Armstrong Custer.
Ruined! That what we is, Jack!
Ruined!
Do you have another trade,
my good man?
Well, General, I...
not exactly.
Then take my advice: Go west.
West! Oh! Oh!
My wife, she... she's
awful scared of Indians.
My dear woman,
you have nothing to fear
from the Indians;
I give you
my personal guarantee.
Olga! Olga!
Hit him! Hit him!
Sorry, brother.
I think we're going to get away!
Let me at the savages!
I got a gun!
Let me at 'em!
Let me at 'em!
Let me at 'em!

I got a gun here!
We must be civilized!
Hey! Hey!
"And it came to pass,
after the plague,
"that the Lord stayed,
and then He said... "
Grab the reins!
Grab the reins!
Shoot him!
Give me... give me
that shotgun!
No, it's mine!
Get back in! Get back!
I'll protect you!
Olga!
Olga!
Ow!
Olga...
I covered most of three states
and hundreds of square miles
looking for Olga,
with no luck at all.
Hey, Crabb!
Whiskey...
Crabb!
Whiskey...
Whiskey...
For a drink of whiskey,
they'll give you
one of their squaws.
Whiskey...
Sure save you
a lot of looking.
Whiskey...
I looked everywhere for my wife
but couldn't find her.
Finally, I had to go
deeper into Cheyenne country.
I didn't figure
for me it was dangerous...
speaking Cheyenne and having
once been a Human Being myself.
Let's kill him.

I didn't steal
your father's ponies, brother.
Why do you keep calling me
brother?
I want you to stop doing that.
I am not your brother.
I am a Human Being.
I suppose you will say
you have never heard
of Little Big Man.
Little Big Man was my brother,
but you're not him.
He fought beside me
in battle and was killed
after rubbing out
many bluecoats.
Did you see the body?
No, he turned into a swallow
and flew away.
Let's kill him and go home.
Shadow!
You were shot there.
I picked you up
and put you on a pony.
I saved you.
Dirt on the Nose.
Do you still have the black pony
I gave you
up at the Powder River?
No, the Pawnee stole him,
when we camp at the Old
Women Butte, five snows ago.
It is true there is a thing here
I do not understand.
There is a pain between my ears.
My son.
To see you again causes my heart
to soar like a hawk.
Sit here
beside me.
Grandfather, I brought you
this present.
Is this the hat I used to own,
except grown softer of skin

and fatter?
No, Grandfather, it's another.
We must smoke to your return.
I saw you in a dream.
You were drinking from a spring
that came from the long nose
of an animal.
I did not recognize the animal.
Alongside his nose,
he grew two horns,
and the water that gushed
from his nose was full of air.
I can't explain it,
but he was talking about
that elephant-head spigot
in the soda shop.
And this wasn't the only time
Old Lodge Skins had dreams
that turned out true.
Don't be angry,
my son,
with Burns Red, Shadow,
and the others.
They had many a bad experience
with the white man last year.
I have thought and talked
and smoked on this matter
and my decision is...
Little Big Man has returned.
It was quite a homecoming.
Little Big Man.
It was Little Horse,
the boy who didn't want
to fight the Pawnee.
Don't you remember me?
This hurts me in my heart.
I think I'll cry.
He'd become a Heemanah,
for which there ain't
no English word.
And he was a good one, too.
The Human Beings
thought a lot of him.
Hello, Younger Bear.

Good-bye.

It was the boy
whose life I had saved,
to his mortal embarrassment.

Did you catch rabbits
on your hunting trip?

No.

Then don't give the rabbits
you didn't catch
to Buffalo Wallow Woman.

You see,

Younger Bear had become
a Contrary, the most dangerous
of all Cheyenne warriors
because the way they live
drives them half crazy.

Except for battle,
a Contrary
does everything backwards.

He says good-bye
when he means hello,
yes when he means no,
walks through bushes
instead of on trails,
and washes with dirt,
and dries with water
and so forth.

I thought you were dead.

Why have you come back
when nobody

wants to see you?

You mustn't speak
to Little Big Man like that.

You owe him a life.

I'm glad I said it. Hello.

That was supposed to mean
he was sorry he said it,
good-bye.

But that warrior wasn't sorry.

He hated me still.

Grandfather,

I have a white wife.

You do?

That's interesting.

Does she cook
and does she work hard?
Oh, yes, Grandfather.
That surprises me.
Does she show pleasant
enthusiasm when you mount her?
Well, sure, Grandfather.
That surprises me even more.
I tried one of them once
but she didn't show
any enthusiasm at all.
Well, Grandfather,
all the whites aren't crazy.
I'm glad to hear that, my son.
I thought they were.
Oh, no.
I know of one who is
as brave as any Human Being.
I'd like to meet this man
and smoke with him.
What is he called?
He's called General Custer.
General Custer.
What does the name mean, my son?
Well, it, it means...
long hair.
Good name.
How did he win it?
He won it in the war
of the whites
to free the black men.
Oh, yes.
The black white man.
I know of them.
It is said a black white man
once became a Human Being.
But mostly they are
strange creatures.
Not as ugly as the white, true,
but they're just as crazy.
Don't worry, my son.
You'll return
to the Human Beings.
I dreamed it last night.

I saw you and your wives
as you crawled
from one to the other
in your tepee.
Wives, Grandfather?
Oh, yes.
Three or four.
It was dark
and they were hidden
under buffalo robes.
But it was
a great copulation, my son.
Grandfather,
the Human Beings
only take one wife.
How could I have three or four?
I don't know.
It worries me.
I was sure
I'd never see him again.
Sir, I expect being a scout
is the best way for me
to find my wife, General.
She was captured by the Cheyenne
due to our going west,
just like you advised.
I advised? That's impossible.
I've never set eyes
on you before.
Oh, I wouldn't figure
you'd remember me, sir.
Furthermore, you don't
look like a scout to me.
Not a bit.
A scout has
a certain appearance.
Kit Carson, for example.
But you don't have it.
You look like...
a mule skinner.
Well, I don't know
anything about
mules, sir.
It's a remarkable thing,

but I can tell
the occupation of a man
merely by looking at him.
Notice the bandy legs.
Hmm?
Strong arms.
This man has spent years
with mules.
Isn't that correct?
Well, I...
Yes, sir.
Hire the mule skinner!
Yes, sir.
Over here.
Come on.
Did you just hear what he said?
Supposed to hire you.
I wouldn't want
no wife of mine back
after she'd been
with the Injuns.
Kindest thing,
a bullet in the brain.
Well, I don't agree.
And I want my wife back.
Well...
one of the Pawnee located
a band of the vermin
camped down the river.
We ride in the morning!
Is-Is there, is there
any white women with them?
Now my advice to you
is to get yourself
a little revenge
on them bucks.
All right.
Spare the females and children,
if possible.
Let's go.
No!
Hey!
No!
Hey!

He said spare the women
and children!
Give me that!
Let go of my rifle!
The hell I will.
You've killed
the women and babies!
You bastard!
You son of a bitch!
Let go of my horse!
Call 'em back, sir!
You'll hang for this!
It was downright discouraging.
If it wasn't the Indians
trying to kill me for a white,
it was the whites trying
to kill me for an Indian.
It made me sick.
The Pawnee scouts
and soldiers both
was killing
everything in sight.
Shadow!
Brother, let's talk.
You'll be took care of later.
I'm saving you for the hanging.
There's no describing
how I felt.
An enemy had saved my life
by the violent murder
of one of my best friends.
The world was too ridiculous
even to bother to live in.
That was why Shadow was there,
and that was why
he'd fought so hard.
I sat there
and watched that baby
come into this world.
Except for her breathing,
that woman never made a sound.
If woman she was.
She didn't look
more than a girl.

I couldn't take my eyes
off of that girl and her baby.
All right,
let's get the hell out.
Let the Pawnee clean up.
Bugler, assemble our troop!
Listen to me.
If you are kin to Shadow...
then you know of Little Big Man.
I was a friend
of the Human Beings
until they stole my wife.
Are you Shadow's wife?
His daughter?
Where is your husband?
Killed.
What's your name?
Sunshine.
I'm going to
take you with me...
and trade you
for my wife.
Clear them bushes, Younger.
Move on. Nobody here.
Let's get the hell out.
Wait here, woman.
Hello, Grandfather.
Greetings, my son.
Do you want to eat?
Grandfather?
What happened to your neck,
Grandfather?
It's a wound.
It cut the tunnel
through which light travels
to the heart.
You... you mean you're blind?
Oh, no.
My eyes still see.
But my heart no longer
receives it.
How did it happen?
White man.
Where's Buffalo Wallow Woman?

Rubbed out.
And White Elk Woman, too.
And Dirt on the Nose.
And High Wolf.
And many others.
And Burns Red?
Yes.
Burns Red in the Sun?
Rubbed out.
His wife... his children...
and many more.
Do you hate them?
Do you hate
the white man now?
Do you see this fine thing?
Do you admire
the humanity of it?
Because the Human Beings,
my son,
they believe
everything is alive.
Not only man and animals,
but also water, earth, stone,
and also the things from them,
like that hair.
The man
from whom this hair came,
he's bald on the other side
because I now own his scalp.
That is the way things are.
But the white men,
they believe
everything is dead:
Stone, earth, animals,
and people.
Even their own people.
If things keep trying to live,
white man will rub them out.
That is the difference.
You will stay with us...
my son.
A year later,
I was still with 'em.
After wandering all over,

in constant danger
of being killed by white
settlers or white soldiers,
we come to a place
known as the Indian Nations.
It was a tract of land
by the Washita River
that had been gived forever
to the Indians by the Congress
and the President
of the United States.
We was safe there.
This was Indian land.
As long as grass growed
and wind blow
and the sky is blue.
Your new son's
kicking a lot today.
I think he wants to come out
and see his father.
Tell him to wait
until I finish my dinner.
I'll tell him, but I don't think
he's going to wait much longer.
It's a good thing
I have a strong, brave husband
who brings in so much
game and food.
Mm-hmm.
My strong husband
brings in much more
than we need.
There are many
Human Beings here.
Many bands
from many places.
But it's sad.
Many husbands
have been rubbed out
by the white man.
It is sad because women
sleep alone and cry.
Be quiet now.
I'm digesting.

Yes, but I think
my sisters are here.
Your what?!
My sisters.
Digging Bear, Little Elk
and Corn Woman.
I think they're here.
What do you mean,
you think they're here?
I believe they are.
You bring in
much more food than we need.
It is very sad.
They have no husbands
and they cry.
Well, that's too bad;
I'm sorry.
Digging Bear had a baby
and lost it.
And so did Corn Woman.
But Little Elk
had no baby at all.
All right, what do you want me
to do about it?
I knew you'd understand.
It was Old Lodge Skins' dream
trying to come true.
I was determined to stay out
of them buffalo robes.
Three young and healthy women
with no man
for who knows how long. Mmm.
The very idea kind of shrunk me
like a spider on a hot stove.
Why, it's Little Big Man!
Oh, Little Big Man!
Younger Bear,
it's Little Big Man!
He's not a Contrary anymore.
He has a wife.
She's plump, she works hard,
but she henpecks him.
Just when I think you are dead,
and the buzzards have eaten you,

you always come back.
Yes, and I always will
till you pay me
the life you owe me.
I've heard you.
Now, come to my tepee
and eat.
We was caught
in Cheyenne hospitality.
I'm a very important man.
More important than you.
I have a wife
and four horses.
I have a horse
and... four wives.
Well, that may be.
But... my wife,
she's a very good one.
See?
Oh, so
there you are,
you crawling coyote.
What are we going to eat, huh?
This starved duck?
Oh...
Oh, who's the foolish beggar
you brought to steal
what little food we have?
Clean it, clean it!
Ooh!
It was Olga.
I had found her at last.
One duck.
Olga never did learn
much English
but she sure in hell
had learned Cheyenne.
I, I, I just
don't understand it.
Usually, this woman is...
gentle as a dove.
My words were not the words
to speak to a stranger.
You stay and eat.

You see what a good wife she is?
It's because
I'm a wonderful lover.
Go in my tepee.
She will cook this duck for you.
That's all right;
I'm not hungry.
You've humiliated him again.
Good-bye, Younger Bear.
You look tired, Little Big Man.
Do you want
to come into my tepee
and rest on soft furs?
Why don't you live with me,
and I'll be your wife?
Thank you for inviting me.
Well, I've got to fix my hair
to sing tonight.
Good-bye, Little Big Man.
Good-bye, Little Horse.
And so I finally found Olga.
I'd lost her long ago
to the Human Beings,
and I saw no good reason
to reveal myself to her now.
Grandfather!
Why have you moved your tepee
so far from our band?
The ponies are trying
to tell me something.
Last night I had a dream.
The ponies were dying.
I heard them scream.
I'd learned to respect
Old Lodge Skins' dreams,
but for once,
we were in a safe place,
give to us by a treaty.
Why do you hate my sisters?
I don't hate your sisters, I...
It... it's just that...
the Great Spirit...
tells me...
Where are you going?

Your son won't wait any longer.
He wants to come out
and see his father.
Sunshine, Indian style,
was going off to have her baby.
As I watched her walk away,
it come over me
that the Great Spirit wanted me
to go in that tepee.
Who wants to be first?
Who's this here?
It's me.
Well, I...
guess you'll do as well as any.
I figured
she was the littlest one,
and it would be easy.
But Lord help us,
them young girls is deadly.
However, the Great Spirit
was with me...
and I survived.
Only thing was,
just as I was about
to drift off real peaceful...
No, you stay.
Not yet.
Maybe I can get back later.
Idle boasting, I assure you.
Who's this here?
It's me, Digging Bear.
Well, she wasn't called
Digging Bear for nothing,
I can tell you that.
Stay here.
Corn Woman's too tired.
Oh.
She don't sound tired to me.
That's not her.
That's Little Elk.
That's both of them.
Little Elk, you go on to sleep.
You, too.
Digging Bear!

Corn Woman, where are you?
I was lucky
I come across her last.
The others, too?
Yes.
I knew you were a good man.
Here's your new son.
I reckon right then
I come pretty close
to turning pure Indian,
and I probably would have spent
the rest of my days
with Sunshine and her sisters.
But sometimes grass don't grow,
wind don't blow...
...and the sky ain't blue.
Something's wrong
with the ponies.
Wolves.
Grandfather's d... Here!
Go inside.
Don't leave the tepee.
Grandfather,
what's wrong with the ponies?
Don't you hear that, my son?
I wonder why I didn't see them
in my dream.
Sunshine!
Grandfather,
you've got to get inside.
Why bother, son?
It's a good day to die.
We've got to get
to the riverbank!
I am blind.
I cannot fight.
But I won't run.
If it's
my day to die,
I want to do it here
within a circle.
Grandfather...
the river is part
of the great circle

of the waters of the Earth.
That's true,
but the soldiers would kill us
before we could get
to the river.
The sol...? Grandfather,
you didn't see any soldiers
in your dream,
and-and that means that...
that they can't see you now.
You think so?
Yes, yes.
What else did your dream mean?
I think you're right.
Then let's go to the great
circle of the river!
Invisible.
I never been invisible before.
It's too late.
We're cut off.
It doesn't matter.
We're invisible.
Grandfather, wait!
Grandfather!
I know it sounds ridiculous
but them soldiers never
lifted a hand to stop us.
I reckon it was so crazy,
they couldn't figure it out.
Or maybe they thought
we was prisoners
or even friendlies
since Old Lodge Skins
was grinning at them
like a raccoon.
Or maybe
we really was invisible.
All I knowed is we walked
right through 'em to the river.
Circle the camp!
Circle the camp, boys!
That was extremely enjoyable.
Glad you liked it
Grandfather.

Captain!

Captain...

...shoot the Indian ponies.

I beg your pardon, sir?

That is my decision.

- I shall shoot the ponies.

- But, sir!

- Sunshine...

- Go and do it!

Yes, sir.

Young man,

your self-righteous piety
is commencing to annoy me.

But I-I didn't

say anything, sir.

You think it's shocking
to shoot a few ponies?

Well, let me tell you,
the women are far more important
than the ponies.

The point is,
they breed like rats,
however, Lieutenant,
this is a legal action.

And the men are under strict
orders not to shoot the women.

Unless, of course,
they refuse to surrender.

Isn't that correct?!

Yes, sir, yes, sir.

Sunshine!

Run! Run!

Run!

No!

Where you going, soldier?

Message for the General.

Wait a minute.

What's that on your face?

Oh, mud, sir.

That's not mud,
that's Indian paint.

And that's an Indian knife.

What's your company?

My company, sir?

Yes, and the name of
your commanding officer.
What's the trouble, Captain?
I think we've got
a renegade, General.
He's wearing Indian paint
and he doesn't know
his commanding officer
or his company.
Take him away and hang him.
General!
General, don't you remember me?
I'm Jack Crabb,
the mule skinner!
Mule skinner?
Yes, sir!
I applied for a job as scout,
but you could tell
my true occupation
just by looking at me.
Yes, yes, I believe
I do remember that.
How did you become a renegade?
General...
I ain't no renegade!
I was captured by the Cheyenne
and held prisoner!
Why, they...
they took cactus thorns
and stuck them in me!
But I just laughed
and begged them
to keep on doing it!
You... laughed?
I laughed my head off!
Otherwise, I wouldn't be here.
Gentlemen, it is difficult
to admit to an error.
Captain?
Captain, your summary judgment
was wholly mistaken!
Now aren't you glad I saw fit
to question this
man more closely?

Yes, sir.

Please be more careful
in the future, Captain.
I'll drink the tea now,
Corporal.

Yes, sir.

What are you doing
up here, mule skinner?

Nothing, I...

just brought you tea, General.

And I wanted to...

thank you again
for sparing my life.

Why are you standing
to the side?

Turn this way.

You came up here
to kill me, didn't you?

And you lost your nerve.

Well, I was correct, in a sense.

You are a renegade,

but you are no Cheyenne brave.

Custer was right.

I was a total failure
as an Indian.

Do I hang you?

I think not.

Get out of here.

You're not going to hang me?

Your miserable life

is not worth

the reversal

of a Custer decision.

That was the worst thing
he could have done to me.

There was nothing left
of my self-respect at all.

I couldn't go back

to the Indians

so I went back among

the whites and become a drunk.

Boy, you're a sad sight, Hoss.

You should have stuck

to sody-pop.

How are things with you, Bill?

Fine.

I've changed my ways, Hoss.

That's good.

Say, Bill,

I need a drink worse than
a breath of life itself.

- Here's \$20.

- Oh!

Get gloriously drunk.

But first, go across
the street to the barber,
and have yourself a bath,
and buy some clothes.

Then come see me in the saloon.

One thing I do know, Hoss,
any damn fool
can drink himself to death.

Come on. Come on!

Bill, I want to...

Hoss, I'd like to ask you
a confidential favor.

It's a delicate matter
involving a-a widow.

She needs a train ticket
out of town.

You give her this.

Sure, Bill.

See, my new, beautiful wife
is violently jealous,
and... and this widow,
oh, she's quite a widow.

I think I know
what you mean, Bill.

Her name was Lulu Kane.

Right now, Bill.

Good.

Get out of the way!

Get out of the way!

Get out of the way!

Bill! Bill...

He killed my daddy!

He killed my daddy!

He killed my daddy!

He's never gonna shoot
nobody again!
Took me seven years
to get him, but I got him!
Who was he anyhow?
Some boy.
Hoss...
...you know that matter
we discussed?
The widow?
Yes, Bill.
Don't tell my wife.
That'd really get me in trouble.
You've got me down
in this goldang water!
Come in, stranger.
Whatever it is you want,
we've got it.
Miss Pendrake?
You've mistaken me
for someone else, stranger.
My name is Lulu.
Your name ain't Lulu.
You're Louise Pendrake.
Who-who are you?
Well, I am Jack Crabb.
Miss Pendrake,
don't you remember me?
Jack Crabb?
My God.
Jack.
Well, this is quite
a pleasant surprise.
Th-this room
is more commodious.
And now, wh-what have you
been doing with yourself?
Lulu! What the hell
are you doing in here
sitting on your ass?
There's a
gentleman waiting.
I have a gentleman
in here, too.

Oh, I didn't see you, stranger.

Is everything

all right?

- Oh, everything's fine.

- Need anything?

If you do, just ring the bell.

Our motto here is

"Whatever you want,

we've got it. "

Well, Jack.

Now you know.

This is a house of ill fame,

and I'm a fallen flower.

That widow hadn't lost

her style one bit.

"A fallen flower. "

Chokes me up to think about it.

This life is not only wicked

and sinful,

it isn't even any fun.

No, I reckon, I reckon not,

Miss Pendrake.

If I was married

and could come here

once or twice a week,

well, it might be fun.

But every night?

It's just boring.

Oh, I can understand that.

I can't seem to save any money.

Well, if I could just

save a few dollars

I could go to visit

my-my maiden aunt in Washington.

New clothes, a carriage.

And who knows,

I might even marry a senator.

Oh! You'd make a good wife

for a senator

Miss Pendrake.

You always were a sweet boy.

Do you know,

I often had wicked thoughts

about you?

Huh?

Oh, yes.

Several times.

I almost gave in to temptation.

And now... here we are.

Miss Pendrake,
what are you doing?

Do you know that once
I tiptoed into your room,
and stood over you
for the longest time?

It was the most awful
temptation to wake you up.

I wish that I had.

It would have been
deliciously wicked.

Is anything
the matter, Jack?

No.

Then I'll wait for you in the...
place of retirement.

You should have
woke me up that night
years ago, Miss Pendrake.

This is from Wild Bill.

It was his last wish
that you go to Washington
and live with your maiden aunt.

His last wish
was to save me?

Oh, Jack.

I must honor that wish.

You can do it, Miss Pendrake.

Yes, I can...

and I will.

I got to go now.

Good-bye, Miss Pendrake.

Oh, good-bye, Jack.

And thank you ever so much.

Oh, and Jack...

...if you're ever
in Washington, do look me up.

How are things with you,

Mr. Meriweather?

Splendid.
Well, now, look at that.
Buffalo hides.
There's a world of money
chewing grass
on those plains, Jack.
There goes
Buffalo Bill himself.
Oh...
Yes, sir.
Multiply that by thousands.
Little Jack, the buffalo
is getting scarce.
You were raised by Indians.
You should
know how to track them.
Yeah, but...
We could make a killing, Jack.
Haven't changed a bit, Jack.
Neither have you.
You'd better watch out,
Mr. Meriweather.
They're whittlin' you down
pretty serious.
You can't afford to lose
any more of your parts.
Every business
has a particle of risk.
Bye, dear boy.
That was my low.
I had reached the bottom.
I'd become a hermit.
I went deep in the wilderness,
as far away as I could get.
Then one day,
I found something
trappers see fairly regular.
An animal had gnawed off
its own foot
to escape from the trap.
Something snapped in my head.
I decided
life wasn't fit to live
and the only thing to do

was to mingle
with the twinkling stars.
Good-bye, Jack.
Good-bye, Little Big Man.
At that moment,
I really was crazy
and I was darn near
off that cliff when...
The time had come
to look the devil in the eye
and send him to hell
where he belonged.
The only question was,
how to get him there?
Sergeant, take this man...
...and give him some clothes.
This man will be invaluable
to me, Major.
Invaluable, sir?
I almost hanged that man
as a renegade.
Now, he asks me for a job
as a scout.
Oh, his game
is very obvious... to lead me
away from his Indian friends.
I still don't quite
follow you, General.
Anything that man tells me
will be a lie.
Therefore, he will be
a perfect reverse barometer.
Isn't that correct?
Of course, General.
Move them out, men. Ho!
In my belief,
Custer's hate for the Indians
and his ambition
had combined on him.
He figured he needed one more
dramatic victory
over the Indians
to be nominated for
President of the United States.

That is a true historical fact.
Men, hold!
We will take brief refreshment.
Water only!
Dismount!
Water break!
Oh, excuse me, Lieutenant.
It's the celibacy of the saddle.
I had muscle spasms all night.
The poison from the goo-nads.
Poison from the what, sir?
Goo-nads.
That's medical terminology.
General, it's my duty as your...
The poison rises
from the goo-nads
to the throat and then seeps
down to various muscles.
General...
the Crows want to know
if you're going down
in the Medicine Tail Coulee.
Oh, they do, do they?
Yes, sir, they do.
They claim they want time
to sing their death song.
Tell the Crows they're women!
But, sir...
if the hostiles
come in behind us,
and if they're
waiting for us down below,
we'll never get out of there.
Hostiles behind us?
I see no hostiles behind us.
Do you see any hostiles
behind us, Major?
No, sir, not at the moment...
Then, then, then...
...stop trying to cause
a reversal
of a Custer decision.
But, sir, wouldn't it...
wouldn't it be best

to send a squad down
Medicine Tail Coulee?
No, it wouldn't.
But, sir...
may I ask, sir, why it wouldn't?
Because Major, it would cost us
the vital element of surprise.
Surprise? General,
they know we're here.
Yes, but they don't know
that I intend to attack them
without mercy.
But, General,
that's no surprise.
Of course it is.
Nothing is this world
is more surprising
than the attack without mercy.
General...
General, I must protest
this impetuous decision.
A Custer decision, impetuous?
Grant called me impetuous, too!
The drunkard.
Sitting there
in the White House,
calling me impetuous!
General, General,
I implore you to reconsider.
Think of the men
whose lives depend upon you.
What do you think
I should do, mule skinner?
Sir, that man
doesn't know anything.
What do you say, mule skinner?
Should I go down there
or withdraw?
I had him.
But this time
what I held in my hand
wasn't a knife
but the truth.
Well?

What's your answer,
mule skinner?
General...
you go down there.
You're advising me
to go into the Coulee?
Yes, sir.
There are no Indians there,
I suppose?
I didn't say that.
There are thousands
of Indians down there.
And when they get done with you,
there won't be nothing left
but a greasy spot.
This ain't the Washita
River, General.
And them ain't helpless women
and children waiting for you.
They're Cheyenne brave
and Sioux.
You go down there
if you got the nerve.
Still trying to outsmart me,
aren't you, mule skinner?
You want me to think that you
don't want me to go down there,
but the subtle truth is,
you really don't want me
to go down there.
Well, are you
reassured now, Major?
Men of the seventh!
The hour of victory
is at hand!
Onward to Little Big Horn
and glory!
We've caught them napping!
Sound the charge!
We have them on the run, men!
Take no prisoners!
Now we've got them, men!
Men, Custer's with you!
Custer's honor!

Stay with me!
What are they doing?
Why aren't they charging?
There's nowhere to charge to!
Fight! Stand up and fight!
Fools! They're shooting
their own horses.
Arrest them! Arrest them!
Bugler! Sound the charge!
We've got to make breast-works!
I know all about that, Major.
Don't try to tell me
my business.
Make breast-works, men!
Show them no mercy!
I said, give them a volley!
We're running out of ammunition,
General.
Right!
Now, we are running
out of ammunition.
I told him
this would happen.
But he just sat there...
in the White House
and laughed at me!
That damn Cossack.
This is horrible...
We're being wiped out!
For Christian America...
Let your arrows fly, savages!
I am unbowed!
Mr. President...
Distinguished visitors...
honored members of the Senate!
Taking the Indian
as we find him,
- waiting...
- Oh, why don't you shut up?
Mr. President, you are drunk.
We can't have a man like you
in the White House!
Get on your feet
and face the enemy!

Go away, General.
All right.
The sentence is death.
All right...
then you know you and I
are even at last.
I paid you the life I owe you.
And the next time we meet,
I can kill you
without becoming an evil person.
He goes to dance his joy.
Grandfather.
I am glad to see you.
Glad to see you,
too, my son.
My heart soars like a hawk.
Do you want to eat?
I won't eat with you,
because I'm going to die soon.
Die, Grandfather?
Yes, my son.
I want to die
in my own land
where Human Beings
are buried in the sky.
Well, why do you
want to die, Grandfather?
Because there's no other way
to deal with the white man,
my son.
Whatever else
you can say about them
it must be admitted:
You cannot get rid of them.
No, I suppose not, Grandfather.
There is an endless supply
of white man
but there always has been
a limited number
of Human Beings.
We won today.
We won't win tomorrow.
Snake Woman, get me
my Elk burial robe.

Come, my son.
We will go.
It makes my heart sad.
A world without Human Beings
has no center to it.
Go where, Grandfather?
To the mountain.
To the top.
Come out and fight!
It is a good day to die!
Thank you for making me
a Human Being!
Thank you for helping me
to become a warrior.
Thank you for my victories...
and for my defeats.
Thank you for my vision...
and the blindness
in which I saw further.
You make all things
and direct them in their ways,
oh, Grandfather.
And now, you have
to silence the Human Beings!
We'll soon walk a road...
...that leads nowhere.
I am going to die now,
unless death wants to fight.
And I ask you for the last time
to grant me my old power
to make things happen.
Take care of my son, here.
See that he doesn't go crazy.
Grandfather?
Am I still in this world?
Yes, Grandfather.
I was afraid of that.
Well, sometimes the magic works,
sometimes it doesn't.
Let's go back to the tepee
and eat, my son.
My newest snake wife
cooks dog very well.
All right, Grandfather.

She also has
a very soft skin.
The only trouble
with snake women
is they copulate with horses,
which makes them strange to me.
She says she doesn't,
that's why I call her
"Doesn't Like Horses. "
But of course, she's lying.
Of course, Grandfather.
Well, that's the story
of this old Indian fighter.
That's the story
of the Human Beings,
who was promised land where they
could live in... peace.
Land that would be theirs...
as long as grass grow...
wind blow...
and the sky is blue.
Mr. Crabb, I didn't know...
Get out, get out.