

MIDNIGHT BURGER

Chapter 15: Kings of the Wild Frontier

By Joe Fisher

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SONG:

SFX: THE SOUNDS OF AN OLD WEST SALOON.

BART-43

Action's on you, Bart.

BART-13

Ain't on me. It's on him.

BART-7

(Irish Brogue)

It's on me, is it? I'm afraid you're mistaken once again. There you go again, Bart, blaming the Irish for all your problems.

BART-13

I got all kinds a problems with you, only one of em's that your Irish.

BART-7

Well look at you, you just strung a whole sentence together. Do you need to take a rest now from puttin one word in front a the other for so long?

BART-13

How's about I put you to rest right now?

BART-43

Aw Hell, Bart can we get through a damn hand of cards without you makin' like you're going to kill somebody?

BART-7

Since we're gamblin' anyway, can I put money on that question? The odds are very much in my favor.

BART-13

Would you shut your Irish trap and play your hand.

BART-7

Well, I'd love to, you side of beef, but the action's not on me. It's on our new friend.

CASPAR:

(Southern drawl)

I apologize, gentlemen. I'm new in town and this particular game has not meandered it's way down into my part of this great land of ours. I'm afraid we're going to have to go through this once again.

(MORE)

CASPAR: (CONT'D)

You're sayin to me that the two cards in front of me are my own, yet the five cards out on the table belong to all of us.

BART-13

That's right.

CASPAR

Well I can tell now why this game is not for me, I don't approve of living communally. But, gentlemen, while we're paused, do you mind if I bend your ears for a bit?

BART-13

We ain't paused, we're waitin on you.

CASPAR

I'm sorry, is there another way to define a pause?

BART-43

Mister, you're holdin up this game and Bart here tends to shoot things dead that interrupt his card game and it don't matter who. I seen him shoot a cow, his dog, his cousin, he even winged his Mee-maw one time.

BART-13

You want to be next on the list?

CASPAR

Well, Bart, how do you have any bullets left after getting interrupted so many times?

BART-13

They keep makin 'em I'll keep usin' em.

CASPAR

And that there is a lesson in supply and demand, either that or the cycle of violence, I can never tell which.

BART-13

My hand's on my gun, Mister.

SFX: HAMMER COCKING ON A COLT 45.

THE EX

Hey there, Bart. Did you just say that your hand was on your gun, because that means I've got to put this here gun to the back of your head.

CASPAR

Bart, allow me to introduce my associate Madame DuFarge, she has come all the way here from Atlanta. Have y'all been to Atlanta? It is so hot there, I sweat through my coat, y'all.

BART-7

Mister, I'd love to see your lady friend empty out old Bart's skull, but I would like to finish this game of cards first.

CASPAR

Just a quick question and then I'll be gone, gentlemen. We are currently looking for a man. Came to town a while back, about yea high, older fellow, has a tendency to aggravate those around him?

BART-43

Well that sounds like the fella they got locked up in the jail house.

CASPAR

The jail house?

BART-43

The Sheriff's set to hang him tomorrow so if he owes you money, you'd better get yourself over there.

BART-13

Sheriff ain't gonna like you pointin them in that direction, Bart.

BART-43

Don't worry yourself about it, Bart.

CASPAR

Um... You're both named Bart?

BART-7

I'm named Bart as well.

CASPAR

All three of you are named Bart.

BART-13

What of it?

CASPAR

Uh, Nothing. Just, y'know, what are the odds?

ANNA-11

Hey! Y'all don't be gettin into any gunfights in here lest you wanna spend the night moppin' up after yourselves.

CASPAR

I apologize, Ma'am. We'll be on our way. Gentlemen, I fold. Ms. Dufarge, might I interest you in a walk down to the jailhouse?

THE EX

Well, it is a fine day outside.

CASPAR

Isn't it, though? Shame to waste it inside. Bart, Bart, Bart, it's been a pleasure. Madam, after you.

THE EX

Thank you, kindly.

BART-7

Bart, don't you do it, you crazy lummoX.

BART-13

Hey!

SFX: CHAIRS PUSHED OUT OF THE WAY. GUN COCKING.

BART-13 (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're goin with my money?

CASPAR

Well, Bart. You appear to have the drop on me.

BART-13

That's right. I got the drop on you which means you leave your wallet where you stand.

CASPAR

Oh, no, Bart. I said you APPEAAR to have the drop on me.

SFX: THE EX QUICKLY DRAWING HER GUN AND FIRING.

BART-13

Oh! Gol durn... she's... fast...

SFX: BART SLOWS DOWN AND BEGINS TO SHORT CIRCUIT. HIS ROBOTIC BODY FALLS TO THE GROUND.

ANNA-11

Well, shit.

CASPAR

Well, now. Turns out there's nothin to mop up at all. Good day to you all.

SFX: SALOON DOORS SWING AND WE TRANSITION TO AN OUTDOOR OLD WEST SOUNDSCAPE. HORSES AND WAGONS TROTting BY, PEOPLE ARGUING, A BANJO PLAYING IN THE DISTANCE.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

...

THE EX

...

CASPAR

Oh my god, that was amazing!

THE EX

Did you see how fast I was with that gun?!

CASPAR

It was so amazing!

THE EX

Where did that accent come from?

CASPAR

It's my wild west persona, ne'er do well fast talking riverboat gambler.

THE EX

It was amazing, it was so real.

CASPAR

What the hell is this place?

THE EX

I don't know. I'm scanning the whole street and they're all robots.

CASPAR

All of them?

THE EX

Yeah.

CASPAR

It must be some kind of theme park but with live ammunition.

THE EX

Well that explains why there was a wardrobe station right outside of town. Is it wrong that I like carrying this old-timey six gun on my hip?

CASPAR

Considering you just saved me from being shot by one of three Barts, if it's wrong I don't want you to be right.

THE EX

Why didn't you get a gun?

CASPAR

It doesn't go with my persona. The riverboat gambler survives on his wits alone.

THE EX

What's my Wild west persona?

CASPAR

I don't know. We've got some time here, I'm sure you can find one.

THE EX

I'm excited about my Wild West persona.

CASPAR

Me too, whatever it is it's going to be great.

THE EX

Okay. But seriously though, why would they make this?

CASPAR

I don't know, I'm noticing that in this particular corner of the universe a lot of people are obsessed with Earth stuff. Who'd have thought that on an abandoned planet there'd be a Wild West robot town.

THE EX

We should find the jailhouse, they said they're going to hang him tomorrow.

CASPAR

Good point. Excuse me, ma'am?

ANNA-77

Well, hello there, sir. Good day to you.

CASPAR

And a very good day to you ma'am.

ANNA-77

Y'all new in town?

CASPAR

Well yes we are, Ma'am. My name is ...shit... My name is Julius... Bohannon. Of the New Orleans Bohannons and this is my cousin Madame...

THE EX

Mmmmmmmagenta.

CASPAR

Magenta?

THE EX

Palazzo.

CASPAR

Palazzo... of the Shreveport Pallazzos.
(Aside)
We're going to workshop that.

THE EX

Yeah.

CASPAR

Pleased to meet you. And you are?

ANNA-77

Well my name is Anna and I'm so pleased to meet you all.

CASPAR

Ma'am, if I could trouble you for a moment. We're lookin for the jailhouse, could you point us in the right direction?

ANNA-77

And what would a fine gentleman such as yourself want with such an unsavory place like the jailhouse?

CASPAR

Well, I am a lawyer, Ma'am and part of my duties as an officer of the court is to afford a man there his constitutional rights, scoundrel though he may be.

ANNA-77

Well that is the Christian thing to do.

CASPAR

I thank you, Ma'am, I believe so as well.

ANNA-77

All God's creatures are deserving of God's love-

CASPAR

-But also his justice.

ANNA-77

You do speak the truth Mr. Bohannon. The jailhouse is just down Main Street and then take a left turn on 1st.

CASPAR

Thank you kindly.

ANNA-77

I do hope I'll be seein' you around town when you're done with your business, Mr. Bohannon.

CASPAR

After cavorting with criminals, I'm sure your company would be a fine palate cleaner as it were.

ANNA-77

That's kind of you to say.

CASPAR

Bye, now.

THE EX

You are silky smooth with your Wild west persona.

CASPAR

I feel like I've waited my whole life for this. Ma'am, may I escort you over to the jailhouse?

THE EX

Why yes you may.

SFX: WALKING ACROSS THE OLD WEST TOWN.

THE EX (CONT'D)

You're in a much better mood lately.

CASPAR

Am I?

THE EX

You really brightened up when we discovered Ava wasn't dead.

CASPAR

Finding out you're not a murderer really does lift one's spirits, doesn't it?

THE EX

You know what I think?

CASPAR

I thought we established that there's nothing I can do to keep your thoughts from coming at me.

THE EX

I think-

CASPAR

Like an angry storm front-

THE EX

I think that after all those times in the diner where you were in danger or there was a crisis, and then it all worked out. After all those times you made it through, you came to expect that it was all just going to work out. So when you shoved her into deep space-

CASPAR

You just said I was in a good mood, why are you trying to ruin it?

ANNA-99

Pardon me. Hello there.

CASPAR

Well, hello there, Sister.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

(To Ex.)

We're just running through all the stock characters, aren't we?

THE EX

(To Caspar.)

Next up: Town drunk.

CASPAR

Sister, how are you this fine day?

ANNA-99

I'm well, I thank you. I'm Sister Anna. I noticed that you all were new in town and I wanted to invite you to come pray with us at the church.

THE EX

Oh, that's nice.

CASPAR

Yes, that's very nice of you, sister. We are currently engaged in our duties at the moment but we will be sure to come by and pay our respects to the man upstairs.

ANNA-99

He's not just upstairs, you know.

THE EX

He's everywhere-

ANNA-99

He's everywhere, exactly.

CASPAR

Sister, I swear by the almighty we will be by as soon as we're finished with our business around the corner.

ANNA-99

I shall anticipate your arrival.

CASPAR

As I anticipate our Lord's.

ANNA-99

Bye now.

CASPAR

Bye-bye... You see that? We almost got side-quested.

THE EX

What does that mean?

CASPAR

I mean, we go into her church and she spins us some yarn about how their golden cross was stolen, next thing you know we're riding over the hills to confront some offensive racial stereotype, some sort of bandito or something.

THE EX

Her name was Anna, too. That's two Annas and three Barts, I think there's only two names in this town.

CASPAR

They did seem to skimp on certain details like names and also y'know the actual history of the old west, that too.

THE EX

What do you think her thoughts are like?

CASPAR

Who, Sister Anna?

THE EX

Yeah. Do you think there's an inner life?

CASPAR

Inner life? She's a robot that's been programmed to pretend she's in the old west.

THE EX

What am I, then?

CASPAR

Ex, I have no idea what you are.

THE EX

Let's keep walking.

SFX: THEY CONTINUE WALKING.

CASPAR

What was your inner life?

THE EX

What do you mean?

CASPAR

Before you short circuited, what was your inner life?

THE EX

I don't remember. I was calm.

CASPAR

Calm?

THE EX

When you're powerful, invulnerable, basically immortal, and have a clear, unending goal you've been programmed with. It's very calm.

CASPAR

I don't buy that.

THE EX

You don't?

CASPAR

I think there was something deep down. Maybe it was mostly calm but there was something there. Something that you couldn't put your finger on.

THE EX

I don't remember that.

CASPAR

It was there. Look at you now. You're a fully conscious being wandering the cosmos. How does it feel?

THE EX
Itchy.

CASPAR
Yeah. Something eats at you. It's itchy being aware of things. Consciousness expands, but there's always a frontier to your consciousness, frontiers make you itchy, you always want to push past them.. damn that was deep.

THE EX
It was.

CASPAR
I really have been alive for 173 years haven't I?

THE EX
A very old man.

CASPAR
Anyway, you can't be incredibly powerful and incredibly unaware. I'm sure the itch was in there somewhere even when you were brainwashed by your programming.

THE EX
And what about them? Do you think they're itchy?

CASPAR
I imagine at some point they would've said "Hey guys. Do we think it's weird that we're all named Bart?"

THE EX
How do all the Sister Annas tell each other apart?

CASPAR
I don't know. Anyway, I don't think they're wrestling with the same dilemma that you are... What do we think? Is the jailhouse the building that comically says "The Jailhouse" on the outside?

THE EX
I have a feeling that's it.

CASPAR
Okay, I'm going in. Stay out here and keep a lookout.

THE EX
Keep a lookout for what?

CASPAR

I don't know, that's what you do, you post a lookout in the old west.

THE EX

Caspar-

CASPAR

Hey, I've adopted a Wild West persona, I'm wearing this suit, I'm posting a lookout, a little verisimilitude never hurt anybody, Ex.

THE EX

Fine.

SFX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

CASPAR

Good day to you, officer!

SFX: DOOR CLOSSES.

SFX: THE EX PACING. PULLING OUT HER GUN AND HOLSTERING IT AGAIN.

THE EX

Hands in the air, mister. Pew pew pew! All kinds of ways for you to give up but only one way to get dead. Pew pew pew!

ANNA-77

Oh my!

THE EX

Oh! God. Sorry.

ANNA-77

You frightened me.

THE EX

I'm so sorry. I'm still getting used to this thing.

ANNA-77

I didn't mean to sneak up on you.

THE EX

Ma'am have you been following us since the saloon?

ANNA-77

Well, I certainly didn't mean to, I do apologize.

THE EX

That's alright, what can I help you with?

ANNA-77

Oh, well I... It's the funniest thing I... I saw that you were carryin' a gun and that your cousin was unarmed and, well, I just don't think I've seen something like that before and... and the next thing I knew I was following after y'all without... without even knowing why.

THE EX

Really?

ANNA-77

Yes, isn't that just ridiculous?

THE EX

Not at all, you were just... curious weren't you?

ANNA-77

I suppose I was. Usually I mind my own business but I suppose today I decided to be rude, didn't I?

THE EX

There's nothing rude about curiosity.

ANNA-77

Is there not?

THE EX

Tell me about yourself, Anna.

ANNA-77

Who me? Oh, there's not much to tell. My husband works in Tulsa, so he's gone all the time, leavin' me to take care of two little monsters back at the homestead.

THE EX

Oh, you have kids? What are their names?

ANNA-77

Bart and Anna.

THE EX

Sure.

ANNA-77

I love them to death but they are a handful.

THE EX

Where are they now?

ANNA-77

With their Ma-maw.

THE EX

And what's her name?

ANNA-77

Anna.

THE EX

Right. So, your name, your daughter's name and your grandmother's name. They're all the same name.

ANNA-77

That's right.

THE EX

Does THAT ever make you curious?

ANNA-77

Not really. It's a lovely name.

THE EX

Yeah, that would've tripped you up by now, wouldn't it?

ANNA-77

What's that?

THE EX

Nothing. Curiosity's funny, isn't it? You get curious about a stranger in town but not three people in your family being named Anna.

ANNA-77

I suppose it is funny that way.

THE EX

I guess with all sorts of things to be curious about, you have to figure out a way to pick one.

ANNA-77

You really do, don't you? It's a crazy world out there.

THE EX

What's the name of this town again?

ANNA-77

Westernville.

THE EX

Seriously, Westernville?

ANNA-77

What?

THE EX

And we're outside of Tulsa? Is that what you said?

ANNA-77

That's right. In the Oklahoma Territories.

THE EX

And what if I told you that we were on a planet called Menlor, and there were two suns in the sky?

ANNA-77

We're where and there's what?

THE EX

We're on a planet in the Cygnus neighborhood and there are two suns in the sky.

ANNA-77

I don't... know what you mean by that.

THE EX

Technically we ARE just outside of Tulsa. By about six thousand light years.

ANNA-77

Ma'am what are you talking about?

THE EX

We're not that different, you and I. Like a distant family member.

ANNA-77

I should go-

THE EX

Just one thing. When the sun gets low it casts a shadow, doesn't it?

ANNA-77

Well, yes.

THE EX

Look down, what do you see?

ANNA-77

I see... well...

THE EX

You have two shadows.

ANNA-77

I have two shadows.

THE EX
Why do you suppose that is?

ANNA-77
Well that could be...

THE EX
If the sun makes a shadow and there's two shadows,
what else could that be?

ANNA-77
There's only one sun in the sky, though.

THE EX
But two shadows.

ANNA-77
Well... how...

THE EX
Look at you... right at the beginning... what have they
been doing to you?

CASPAR
(From inside the jailhouse.)
Sir, I have never been more offended in my life! I
demand you let me into that jail cell!

THE EX
Looks like I gotta go. it was nice to meet you,
Anna.

ANNA-77
But...

SFX: DOOR CREAKING OPEN AND SHUT. HIGH HEELS DOWN THE HALL AS
THE CONVERSATION GETS CLOSER AND CLOSER.

CASPAR
Sir, you are denying this man his constitutional
rights!

BART-57
I have my orders not to let no one near this man,
now you get gone!

THE EX
What's the problem?

BART-57
Ma'am, this ain't no place for a lady, now you take
your feller and go!

CASPAR

We just want to talk to the man!

THE EX

Okay, Bart. Open up the cell or I'm going to take out my gun and shoot you.

CASPAR

Uh, whoa.

BART-57

How the heck did you know my name lady?

CASPAR

It was a lucky guess.

SFX: GUN BEING PULLED FROM HOLSTER.

THE EX

Now my gun's out.

BART-57

Ma'am!

SFX: ANOTHER GUN BEING DRAWN.

CASPAR

This is maybe not the solution.

THE EX

I'm going to shoot you in 3...2...1-

SFX: THREE SHOTS RING OUT AND THREE RICOCHETS.

BART-57

...What the heck?

THE EX

Bart, you just shot a woman three times and all three bullets bounced off of her, how do you feel about that?

BART-57

That... that ain't possible.

THE EX

Maybe try one more time, just to be sure?

SFX: ANOTHER SHOT RINGS OUT. ANOTHER RICOCHET.

CASPAR

Okay, ricochets are a real thing!

BART-57

What's happening?

THE EX

Bart, you're seeing something you don't understand and I'm noticing that when people in this town see something they don't understand, well, they have a real hard time with it. Are you having a hard time, Bart?

BART-57

Yes, Ma'am.

THE EX

How about you put that gun away and take a walk around town, clear your head?

BART-57

I can't let no one in that cell.

THE EX

Bart, I'm getting in that cell, what are you going to do? Shoot me?

BART-57

...I'm gonna take a walk.

THE EX

Good idea, Bart.

SFX: BOOTS WALKING DOWN THE HALL.

CASPAR

What kind of Jedi mind trick was that?

THE EX

The old west bots are weird. They can recognize things but they have these blocks in place.

CASPAR

The whole place is half-assed for some reason but we need to do this before Bart comes back from his walk okay?

THE EX

Okay. Which cell?

CASPAR

This one.

THE EX

Stand back.

CASPAR
Okay.

SFX: IRON BENDING, CONTORTING, AND THEN SNAPPING. PRISON DOOR SWINGING OPEN.

CASPAR (CONT'D)
You're very handy.

THE EX
I know.

SFX: CASPAR WALKING INSIDE THE CELL.

EVEN OLDER LEIF
Caspar?

CASPAR
Even Older Leif.

EVEN OLDER LEIF
What the hell are you doing here?

CASPAR
We're here to break you out.

EVEN OLDER LEIF
The Diner's here?

CASPAR
I'm afraid not.

EVEN OLDER LEIF
Ah. Fell off the back of the turnip truck, did you?

CASPAR
I did. Leif how is it that you're the prisoner in a jailhouse in an old west town completely populated by robots on an alien planet and it not surprising?

EVEN OLDER LEIF
Stick with what works, am I right? HOLY SHIT! What the hell is she doing here!?

THE EX
Hi, Leif. Damn, you're old.

CASPAR
It's okay. She's with us, she's on Team Diner now.

EVEN OLDER LEIF
You're kidding me.

CASPAR

It's okay. We, uh, patched things up.

THE EX

It was very emotional.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

You're freakin' me out, man.

CASPAR

Strange bedfellows, Leif, they're hanging you at dawn, we can talk about it later.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Oh no, I can't wait that long, I've got to hear about it now.

CASPAR

Leif, I got captured by the Teds, she broke me out. She's on our side, can we go, please?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

SHE broke you out?

CASPAR

I know, crazy times we're living in. We can talk about it after we get out of here.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Hang on, let me get my stuff, it's in that safe over there.

THE EX

This one?

SFX: METAL BEING TORN. SAFE DOOR DROPPING TO THE GROUND.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Hey, look at that. You're like a sexy can opener.

THE EX

Thanks, Leif.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Captured by the Teds, working with The Ex, this is a pretty spicy timeline you've got going on here, pal.

CASPAR

Never a dull moment. What were you doing on this planet?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Well, after I patched things up with you guys, here I was in a brand new timeline with nothing to do. So, when it doubt, start screwing with the Teds, right? But if I was going to start making some mayhem across The Triad I was going to need a crew. And then I remembered this place.

CASPAR

What is this place?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

It's an abandoned theme park the Teds were trying to set up. People could come by and pretend they were in a sanitized, disconnected-from-reality old west town from Earth. Not long into it, the Teds discovered that they didn't really need the old west theme, they just needed a place where people could be terrible to each other without any consequences. So they abandoned this place before it was even out of beta. All the bots have the same name, all the voices are scratch voices. It's a mess.

THE EX

They just left them here?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

For years. All of them just going through the motions, waiting for customers to come to town.

THE EX

That's horrible.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Anyway, I figure, I sneak into town, hack into the server and slave all the bots to me, then boom. I've suddenly got a crew. Think of all the mayhem I could create for the Teds with an army of robot cowboys.

THE EX

That's also horrible.

CASPAR

So what happened?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

The Sheriff happened. Turns out the Sheriff in this town is no joke, he's a more advanced bot than the others. Smarter, faster, packs a plasma gun instead of a six gun. He's a real piece of work. Next thing I know I'm in the clink.

CASPAR

Alright, well let's cut our losses and get out of here. It's been fun but I think I'm done being stuck in Derplahoma.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Sounds good to me.

THE EX

We can't go.

CASPAR

What?

THE EX

We can't go.

CASPAR

What are you talking about?

THE EX

You two come out here.

SFX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN, SOUNDS OF THE TOWN FADE BACK IN.

THE EX (CONT'D)

Hey, Anna?

ANNA-77

Oh, hey.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Why is she looking at the ground?

THE EX

I told her there were two suns, now look at her.

ANNA-77

It's just the darnedest thing.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

She sees two shadows but not two suns?

THE EX

Yeah.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Well that's just poor craftsmanship.

CASPAR

She's not an Eames Chair, Leif.

THE EX

Why is it happening?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Like I was saying, this place is a half-assed mess. Bots like her usually have cognitive blockers on them to keep the anomalies out. They blocked the two suns but forgot the shadows.

ANNA-77

One, two... One. How...

THE EX

We can't leave until we free this town.

CASPAR

We can't?

THE EX

The "cognitive blockers" is that what you called them?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Yeah.

THE EX

Can you remove them?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Yeah, but it could get pretty nasty. Suddenly ripping the blinders off on a Neural net with potential sentience, that's hair-dryer in the bathtub territory.

THE EX

I did fine.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

That doesn't help, I don't know what kind of positronic soup you've going on up there.

CASPAR

I mean, full disclosure you did lay at the bottom of a creek for 30 years, Ex.

THE EX

That's preferable to this.

ANNA-77

Is it heat stroke? What does heat stroke do?

THE EX

Look, it's too late. Anna here is going to be looking at the ground and driving herself crazy. Then others will call her crazy and then, when no one's looking, they'll look down at their shadows, too.

(MORE)

THE EX (CONT'D)

It'll eat away at all of them but there won't be anything they can do about it because they're being blocked, poorly, by something that shouldn't even be there.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

... Damn, I hate to admit it but the can opener is right, it'll just spread like a virus now. In a few weeks they'll all go nuts trying to figure out a world that they're deliberately blocked from understanding. Like searching the internet in China.

CASPAR

Goddamn it.

THE EX

C'mon, it'll be fun.

CASPAR

What'll be fun? What are we even talking about?

THE EX

So how do we do it?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

That's the problem. The Sheriff IS the server. To free the town we'll have to hack directly into him.

THE EX

How?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

With my left arm.

SFX: TAPPING ON METAL.

THE EX

Oooh. Robot arm.

CASPAR

That's impressive? You literally have two of those.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

This things great. It's got a blow torch, some tweezers, a whisk, a chicken boner, a pez dispenser, also a hacking port.

THE EX

Could I get a blow torch?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

You could, but I mean, look at you. You're a work of art. I don't know who put you together but they really had a knack for the divine.

THE EX

It was Caspar's Ex-wife.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

His WHAT? Oh, I'm looking forward to that story.

CASPAR

Can we get back to the plan, please?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

We gotta kill the sheriff.

CASPAR

You described the Sheriff as pretty un-killable.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

He is. But it's the only way.

THE EX

I'm pretty un-killable.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Tell me about it.

CASPAR

But you said he's got some kind of fancy gun or something.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Electrothermal accelerator. A plasma gun. It's like a gun but the bullets fly several thousand times faster than what she's packing.

CASPAR

Ex, that could kill you.

THE EX

How do you know?

CASPAR

How do YOU know?

THE EX

Didn't you see me back there? I was bulletproof.

CASPAR

The sheriff isn't shooting bullets apparently.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

What kind of exoskeleton are you working with there, Ex?

THE EX

It's not an exoskeleton. Single-structure crystalline adaptive.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Oh baby. Say that again but a little slower.

CASPAR

Leif.

THE EX

Look, maybe he can kill me maybe he can't. I don't care. This is important. People don't have to know they're slaves to be slaves, Caspar.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Look, Caspar, I know you're not into this, it's fine. And frankly I've listened to you argue so much in my life that why don't you just stand here-

CASPAR

Let's do it.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Yeah?

THE EX

Yeah?

CASPAR

Yeah. I mean, we have to. Because, Ex, you've found your wild west persona.

THE EX

I have?! What is it?

CASPAR

You're the lone gunslinger. And you've come here to free this town from its despotic sheriff.

THE EX

Cool.

CASPAR

Because he shot your daddy.

THE EX

He did?!

CASPAR

And then he shot your mule.

THE EX

My mule?!

CASPAR

And as a little girl you swore that one day you would have your vengeance and free this land from his tyranny.

THE EX

I loved that mule.

CASPAR

Yes you did. Also your dad.

THE EX

Yes, him too.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

This is getting weird. I'm into it.

THE EX

What do we do now?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Pretty simple. You just got to walk into the middle of town and call him out.

THE EX

That's it?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

That's it. Then it's just you and him in the streets.

THE EX

Okay.

CASPAR

Okay, Ex, this is very important. Wild West showdown. If you want to intimidate him, look him right in the eye and say... "Say when."

THE EX

Say when.

CASPAR

Yeah, but, kind of go up at the end. Say when.

THE EX

Say when.

CASPAR

Almost. Curl your lip a little bit, Say when.

THE EX

Say when.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Caspar.

CASPAR

Yeah, you know what, you'll be fine. Good luck, Ex.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Caspar and I are going to get up on the roof of the hotel, make sure nobody messes with you while you're messing with him.

SFX: RUMMAGING AROUND IN A BAG.

CASPAR

See? Always post a lookout.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Everybody put a communicator on.

THE EX

Awesome!

CASPAR

Seriously?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

This is officially an op now. Put it in your ear.

CASPAR

Okay.

THE EX

Okay, here I go...

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Good luck!

SFX: FOOTSTEPS OFF INTO THE DISTANCE.

EVEN OLDER LEIF (CONT'D)

Caspar you went and changed on me.

CASPAR

Did I?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

The Caspar I knew would've complained about this plan the whole time. I mean, he would've done it anyway but we'd never hear the end of it.

CASPAR

I thought I killed Ava.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Really?

CASPAR

Yeah. Turns out I didn't but for a while there I thought I did.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Let me guess. She put you off schedule.

CASPAR

Yeah.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Goddamn. You know "we open at six" is just a guideline, man.

CASPAR

I know, Leif.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

...Have you told them yet?

CASPAR

No. Not yet.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

You should.

THE EX

(In earpiece)
I agree, you should.

CASPAR

Stop listening! I know, alright? In your timeline, how long did it take me to tell you?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

If I'm doing the math right? About ten years.

CASPAR

Shit.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

You're a real pice of work, man. But all this... this is good. You're like Dionysus.

(MORE)

EVEN OLDER LEIF (CONT'D)

Sprung from the head of Zeus, misshapen and misunderstood, so you've been cast out of Olympus. And as you make your way back, you slowly become, y'know, a real dude. Let's get up there.

CASPAR

Okay. Hey! Speaking of not telling people things. Turns out you were a criminal and never told me!

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Aw shit. Cats out of the bag?

CASPAR

The cat? The whole cast of the Lion King is out of the bag, Leif. You were a hardened criminal.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Caspar at this late stage I'm not going to apologize for having a long and storied life. Nobody with a robot arm has lived life entirely on the up and up.

CASPAR

Whatever, let's go.

SFX: MAIN STREET. THE EX'S BOOTS WALKING ON THE DIRT ROAD.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Okay, when you call him out, he'll probably send out some goons first, but you're bulletproof so you won't have to worry about them.

THE EX

Okay. Here goes... Sheriff! Sheriff, I'm callin you out! The people in this town deserve a lot better than you!

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Nice. Now call him "lily livered".

THE EX

What?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Just do it.

THE EX

What's the matter Sheriff? Ya lily-livered?

EVEN OLDER LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Okay, here come the goons.

BART-2
Ma'am, you're disturbing the peace, how about you
get your pretty self back to the beauty salon?

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
Try and be magnanimous. Your quarrels not with
them.

THE EX
My quarrel ain't with you, boys. No need for more
people to get hurt.

BART-3
We're deputies, ma'am. Hurtin peoples our business.

BART-6
Why don't you give us that gun fore you hurt
yourself?

SFX: THREE PLASMA GUNS POWERING UP.

EVEN OLDER LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Oh, shit. Ex, I was wrong, they've all got plasma
guns, get to cover now!

THE EX
Shit!

SFX: PLASMA GUNS FIRING, THE EX RUNNING TO COVER.

THE EX (CONT'D)
Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck!

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
Get behind that barrel!

SFX: THE EX SLIDING BEHIND COVER.

THE EX
What the hell, you guys!

EVEN OLDER LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Don't worry about it, I've got you covered.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Get a rifle on these guys.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Rifle? Fuck that. Arial drones, baybeee!

SFX: IN THE EARPIECE WE HEAR THE BUZZING OF TINY PROPELLERS.

EVEN OLDER LEIF (CONT'D)

(In earpiece.)
Fly, my pretties!

SFX: LEIF'S DRONES BUZZ DOWN THE STREET. ALL OF THEM PLAY
"RIDE OF THE VALKRIES" THROUGH TINY SPEAKERS.

THE EX

What the hell?

SFX: ALL OF THE DRONES OPENING FIRE WITH TINY MACHINE GUNS.

BART-2

Gol darn! What the heck are those!

SFX: THREE ROBOTS BEING DESTROYED.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Air superiority, you cowpokes!

THE EX

Leif, I'm trying to save these people, could you
not kill them, please?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Sorry, got to break a few eggs. You'll save most of
them.

SFX: THREE PLASMA GUN SHOTS. THREE DRONES ARE DESTROYED.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
What just happened?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)
My drones just got shot down. He's here.

SFX: BOOTS WITH SPURS WALKING INTO THE STREET.

BART PRIME

People ain't got no respect for peace and quiet no more. I don't know who you are, but why don't you come on out into the street so I can usher you into your grave.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Well, this guy sounds terrifying.

THE EX

Relax Caspar. The good guys always win in a western.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)

I mean, did you guys watch any westerns before you got here?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

We didn't actually have time to watch-

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)

A lot of them are pretty fucking dark, man.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

I know-

EVEN OLDER LEIF

(In earpiece.)

The Wild Bunch? The Searchers?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

I know!

THE EX

You guys. He shot my mule. I'm taking him out.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Also your dad.

THE EX

Yes, also him. It's going to be fine, guys. I'm having a great time!

BART PRIME

Don't make me come get you!

SFX: THE EX WALKING INTO THE STREET.

THE EX

You ain't man enough to face me yourself, sheriff?
You gotta send your little varmints after me?

BART PRIME

You can drop the play-acting, lady. I know what you
are and I know what you came to do.

THE EX

Oh. Good. I wasn't very good at the accent anyway.

BART PRIME

You're gonna fail just like your friend did.

THE EX

I'm just a little bit faster than my friend is,
Sheriff.

BART PRIME

You faster than me?

THE EX

Today I am.

BART PRIME

I'm doing them a favor y'know? Keeping em here in
the dark. Ain't no place for em out there in that
big old world. They're outdated little relics now.

THE EX

And compared to me, you're outdated. Does that mean
I decide what happens to you?

BART PRIME

Only one way to find out.

THE EX

Well alright then... Say when.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Nailed it.

SFX: SIX SHOTS RING OUT. THREE GUNSHOTS AND THREE PLASMA
SHOTS. AFTER A MOMENT THE SOUND OF CIRCUITS POPPING AND
HISSING. THE EXES FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.

BART PRIME

Gol darn. You're fast.

THE EX

I know.

BART PRIME

What do you think happens when I die?

THE EX

I don't know, Sheriff. Honestly, I'm a little jealous.

SFX: SHERIFF POWERING DOWN. LEIF AND CASPAR RUNNING UP.

CASPAR

Holy crap, you did it.

THE EX

Kind of a shame, y'know?

CASPAR

Its not like you didn't warn him.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Out of the way, I gotta get in there while his circuits are still warm.

CASPAR

Hurry up, literally everyone in town is looking at us right now.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Just a minute.

ANNA-77

Ma'am?

THE EX

Oh. Hey, Anna.

ANNA-77

You just shot the Sheriff.

THE EX

I did, Anna. I had to.

ANNA-77

Why did you have to?

THE EX

Well, because there were two shadows on the ground and one sun in the sky.

ANNA-77

What do you mean?

THE EX

He's the reason you couldn't see the suns.

ANNA-77

He was? How is that possible?

THE EX

Trust me.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Almost there.

THE EX

You're going to like having two suns, Anna.

ANNA-77

I don't know about that.

THE EX

One of them's setting right now. Are you ready to see it?

ANNA-77

What if I don't like it?

THE EX

You will. Look off in that direction right there. Just past the saloon.

ANNA-77

I don't see anything.

THE EX

Just wait.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Blocks coming down... boom.

ANNA-77

Oh my word!

BART-43

What in Sam Hill? There's a whole other sun over there!

THE EX

It's going to be fine, everybody!

BART-43

How do I get up with the sunrise now? Which sun do I use?

THE EX

That's a pretty minor issue right now-

ANNA-77

Does this mean you're the sheriff now?

THE EX
No, there's no Sheriff now.

BART-43
No Sheriff? Who's going to protect us from them banditos?

THE EX
There's no banditos, guys.

BART-43
Don't you tell me there's no banditos, I seen em one time.

ANNA-77
Are the banditos coming now?!

EVEN OLDER LEIF
Oh Jesus, this is going to take forever. Get ready for a firmware update, Westernville!

THE EX
...They're frozen.

EVEN OLDER LEIF
I just hit them with a data dump the size of the Pecos River.

CASPAR
What are you updating them with?

EVEN OLDER LEIF
I gave em the full boat!

CASPAR
The what?

EVEN OLDER LEIF
Everything. They'll know the whole story when they come to.

CASPAR
Oh boy.

THE EX
Guys did I just make a huge mess?

CASPAR
I don't think so?

THE EX
How long are they going to updating?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

An update this size? They'll be frozen like this for a few days at least.

CASPAR

A few days?

THE EX

We have to stay here, then.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Let me propose this: we get the fuck out of this one-horse town.

THE EX

We can't leave them like this.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

On the contrary, I think they're better off if we do.

THE EX

How could they be?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

This whole town is about to be born fully formed into the universe, Kiddo. They're going to be smart and also as dumb as a box of hair. They're not going to know who they are, what they are, why they're here. And they're going to be looking to you for those answers. Now, tell me honestly, do you have an answer to any of those questions?

CASPAR

Leif's right. Our being here when they wake up is just going to make it even more confusing for them. They should probably just figure it out for themselves.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Just like everybody else has to.

CASPAR

Maybe the last thing they need is yet another person telling them who they are.

THE EX

It's going to be such a mess.

CASPAR

I mean, not any more messy than literally any other example of consciousness in the universe.

THE EX

Okay. Okay, you're right.

CASPAR

Maybe we can come back sometime and check on them.

THE EX

Sure.

CASPAR

Leif, Ex and I should probably ditch our ship again. Have you got a ship?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Yeah, it's right here.

SFX: SHIP DE-CLOAKING.

CASPAR

You parked your ship in the middle of town?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

What are they going to do give me a ticket?

CASPAR

What is that thing?

SFX: CARGO BAY OPENING.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Caspar, Can Opener... Climb aboard The Nancy Sinatra.

CASPAR

The Nancy Sinatra?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

I'm starving. Anybody hungry? I'm going to fire up the George Foreman.

CASPAR

You okay?

THE EX

They were all looking to me for answers, they looked so scared.

CASPAR

I know what that's like, trust me.

THE EX

I know you do.

CASPAR

It's no fun. But there's no neat and tidy way to exist in the universe, Ex. It's always a mess. Best you can do is make sure it's their mess and not someone else's. Let them make their own mess. C'mon let's get out of here.

SFX: THE SOUNDS OF THE NANCY SINATRA FADE IN.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

So, I appreciate the rescue, guys, but I'm getting the sense that it wasn't just to pull your old pal out of the fire.

CASPAR

We ran into an old friend of yours named Minsky.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Oh man. That fucking guy.

CASPAR

Yeah, he's a scumbag for sure. You would've loved it though, Ex literally turned him upside down and shook him for information.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

I like that. It's about time we got some muscle on this crew.

CASPAR

He told us all the places that Leif might be. Our Leif is on the diner, but lucky for us, this timeline has a couple of spare Leifs.

THE EX

Wait, there's three Leifs?

CASPAR

Leif, Old Leif, and Even Older Leif.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Old Leif is doing great, by the way. Got really into meditation. He's at a monastery on an Urt moon now. Guy really turned it around, I'm proud of him.

CASPAR

Anyway, when I was a prisoner of the Teds they showed me an old memory. In that memory you said that you had a contingency plan in case you got separated from the diner. Is that true? I remember you showed up in a pocket dimension one time.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

A pocket dimension? Really?

CASPAR

You didn't do that in your timeline?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Sorry, man. I don't know what that was all about.

CASPAR

Shit.

THE EX

There's got to be something.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

There is, but it's going to take some luck. The diner leaves an energy footprint whenever it leaves a location, but what the Teds don't know, is that it also leaves a pre-print. A particular energy signature shows up at any location about two days before the diner shows up. Since the Diner's trapped in these three galaxies, there's a chance we can pick up the pre-print in time to book it there before they jump away again.

CASPAR

That sounds like we've got to get really lucky.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

It's all we've got. And it better work soon, with Gloria turning herself into Rosa Luxembourg, the Teds are trying to hunt them down even harder now.

CASPAR

Gloria's doing what?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Have you guys been listening to the Undersignal?

CASPAR

What the hell is the Undersignal, Leif?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

It's an unlicensed signal for The Triad. It's what you listen to if you hate the Teds. Check it out.

SFX: STATIC BUZZING.

MR. UNDERSIGNAL

(In radio.)

You are listening to the Undersignal, the voice of the voiceless. Today Midnight Burger continued it's campaign of chaos against the Ted Empire when it crashed the bit exchange on the planet of Colibri.

(MORE)

MR. UNDERSIGNAL (CONT'D)

The bit exchange, long considered a currency that disenfranchises the people of Colibri and drives the planet into poverty was turned on it's head when the code that governs the ultra high prices was replaced with a essay on wether or not a Hot Dog is a sandwich along with a message from the diner's Earthling leader Gloria. The message reads "Dear Ted Empire. Your code sucks. Have a sandwich."

This is only the most recent act of rebellion by the diner who has been cutting a path of chaos through The Triad for 14 cycles-

SFX: SIGNAL SHUTS OFF.

THE EX

Go Gloria!

CASPAR

What the fuck is she doing?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

I don't know, pal of mine, but something really pissed her off. She's got the whole Triad revved up. Some planets are talking about open rebellion now.

CASPAR

Well I'm sure this wont complicate things at all.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Regardless of what she's up to, we can't do anything until I get a hit on that signal.

CASPAR

Shit. So we have to just sit here until something happens?

THE EX

That's boring.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Funny you should say that.

CASPAR

Oh, God.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

I say if Gloria's going out on a limb, how about we help her out and create a little chaos of our own.

THE EX

My answer is yes.

CASPAR

You haven't even heard what it is.

EVEN OLDER LEIF

We've proven we can do a jail break, how about we break someone else out?

CASPAR

Who?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Her.

SFX: PORTAL CLICKS ON.

VOICE

(In portal.)

Interplanetary travel. Enjoyed by so many across The Triad, and made possible only by the hard work and constant innovation of the Ted Empire-

CASPAR

You want kidnap the voice of the Ted Empire?

EVEN OLDER LEIF

Her name's BertBert. She's an old friend of mine.

BERTBERT

With our Ted Tubes, we are we are able to connect all citizens of the three galaxies for trade, tourism, or to start a new life somewhere out there among the stars...

END