

A loud Whoooooe aahhooaaa Whoooooe! Followed by, "Damn, its hot in here!". This loud exclamation coming from someone ,woke up the man known as Sugar Bags Bobby Clementine! Sugar Bags yelled,in reply " Who the hell are you? Damn right its hot! This is southern Arizona desert country! Where the hell did you think you were, in the snowy hills of Nevada? Shut up and let a man get some sleep!" His answer came with a gunshot through the roof of the cattle car! " Listen you Damn railroad bum, I shoot wise assed bums like you! I'm the gunfighter from Nogales! Anymore of your wise mouth and you'll be eatin 44 lead! Keep your wise mouth to yourself!" Sugar Bags responded with a double barreled blast from his ten gauge shotgun blowin a hole through the roof line above the gunfighter's location at the front end of the cattle car! He yelled, "Mister Gunfighter from Nogales anytime you've got the guts, show your ugly puss and bring on your 44's ! I'll feed you a mouth full of buckshot!" The gunfighter yelled back, " Damn ! Is that you Sugar Bags? It's me Cal Bowdrie! What the hell are you doin on this train?" Sugar Bags yelled back, " Damn!, I shoulda known! There's only one blowhard gunfighter from Nogales! Yeah Cal , I'm catchin a ride to California! What's your story?" Cal replied, " Damn! I got drunk in Holbrook! Musta caught the wrong train. I was headin for Nevada! Don't shoot I'm coming back there!"

Slowly, the Gunfighter known as Cal Bowdrie made his way to the rear of the cattle car. He was an old man way past his prime and showing the ravages of a hard and low quality life style. He was met by an equally decrepit old man carrying a double barreled sawed off shotgun. The two men stood looking at each other for a long moment and finally moved to heartily shake hands and embrace as long time friends. Sugar Bags said with tears in his eyes, " Damn Cal, it's been a few years! How's life treatin you?" Cal replied, " Bout like yourself Sugar. Bumming rides in a cattle car from one place to another. Ain't much work out there for folks like us. I was headin up Nevada way to spend the winter at a sheep camp shootin wolves. Damn cold and the pay is only board , keep, and ammunition. What's goin on in California?"Sugar replied, " Didn't really have any prospects, Cal. Thought I'd try to find work where it was warm and sunny. I'm still a pretty good hand at cookin for a bunch of cowboys. There outta be something out on that California desert where a grub slinger can get a

job in warm country. Trouble is , I can't do the work I used to do; too many sore joints. Now, I kinda work as a helper. It's about the best I can do."

Cal said, " Sugar I've got a bottle of ol'Jack here. It'll sure mellow out that pain a little. Sure helps a man to get his sleep, you know." Sugar said, " Yeah, I reckon it'd be better than the smell of cow dung to help a feller pass out and lose what he's of a mind to." Cal replied, " Well , it does sorta gather your thinkin some, especially if you're catchin a train. Looks like I'm stuck . Where's this cow buggy headed?" Sugar replied, " Yuma, and then onto California. We'll have to lay low in Yuma. They use those Quechan Indians for Railroad Snipes and it's sometimes hard to fool'em. We'll have to drop outta this cattle buggy and try to catch a Box car. If it's dark we'll be Ok, but it don't look good . For once this freight is on time. We'll probably roll into Yuma in the early afternoon and get thrown off. You got any money Cal? I'm down to a couple of Peso's . Might be enough for a Mex flop and a meal, but I shore need to hook up with a job pretty quick. " Cal replied, " Still got some of my last payday of thirty dollars, but ten or twelve of them green backs won't get you much in Arizona Territory. Folks here still don't trust them Yankee dollars. Wish they'd a paid me in silver coin. It sure spends easier." Sugar said, " Well Cal it's good to run into you, but you're still just as nasty and touchy as you used to be. I was in the middle of a good nap when that coyote bellerin yell of yours woke me! Scared me! Thought at first I was in the middle of a damn stampede, with the rattling of this ol'cattle car! You're lucky, I didn't shoot you!"

Cal replied , "Me touchy? You're the trigger happy ol'Buzzard that rained buckshot all over me! You damn sure oughtta be more careful where you're shootin. I almost plugged you! Good thing I recognized you, before I showed you what a real fast draw gunfightin man can do!" Sugar fired back with, " Gunfighter! Gunfighter my hind leg! You couldn't hit a bull in the butt at ten feet with that 44 and fast draw? I'm surprised you could separate that gun from your suspenders! I'd say you was lucky to hit the roof of this cattle car. Good thing you was inside or you'd a probably missed!" Cal returned with, " Sugar Bags you're still just as sweet as ever! You unload that

blunder buss at me and then there you sit helpless as a babe if I decide to come after you! I don't know how you ever got on as a gunfighter! First time I ever met you twenty years ago . You was an ugly old man then and you still are! Nasty too! God musta been good to you, to let you live this long or maybe he don't hate the Devil that bad! Look! If you can stand your own company for a couple of minutes, I'm gonna go and get my bag. Got most of my possible's in it with a box of 44's. Don't shoot if you hear me coming. I know an old man's memory starts fadin at your age, but try to remember it's me and not a band of blood thirsty Apache warriors." Sugar replied, " Memory hell! Look who's talkin! Who got on the wrong train! Hey! Be careful walking back to your hole in the straw! Wouldn't want you to fall, as young and good lookin as you think you are; I might not be able to recognize you from the cow dung!"

Secretly both old men were glad to see each other and the bantering insults continued through the next three hours before the train arrived in Yuma. Unfortunately, their cattle car was met by Quechan Indian guards at the Water Stop station of Table Mountain a good ten miles east of town. Cal and Sugar were both surprised when their car was dropped at a siding near a group of corrals and they were faced with shooting two Indian Railroad Snipes if they insisted on getting on an empty Box car and riding on into Yuma.

It wasn't a good choice , but Sugar said, " Cal, we haven't got much choice. There's water here and we have a place to sleep. These cars were dropped here to pick up a load of cattle. Maybe we can hook up with one of the local Ranchers around here to ride the car to the Slaughter house in Yuma. They always use a boy with a stick, to keep the cows on their feet during travel. I've hired on before to do that. I was a lot younger then, but I reckon I could do it again!" Cal said , " Sugar , you're crazy! You ain't in no shape to be a cow puncher! You know that you have to walk the cattle backs to do that. One slip and you fall down between a bunch of unfriendly cows and you'll be part of the flooring! No, we'll try and hitch a ride on the next freight going through. I ain't gonna end my days being trampled by a bunch of stinking cows! I'll shoot me a few Indians first!"

Sugar said , “ Cal, you’re probably right , but I don’t want no trouble with the law. We’ll hang out here for a few days and see what comes up. I’m gonna reload ol’Betsy here with bird shot. Maybe I can knock down a dove or two for dinner. There’s plenty of them around here.”

Two days later Cal is saying, “ Sugar I’m not sold on birdshot filled scrawny half raw little doves for eatin. That’s all we’ve had for every meal. Can’t you shoot something a little bigger?’ Sugar replied, “ Yeah! There’s plenty of Buzzard, Ravens and coyotes, but I can’t eat one! You might be able to. They’ve a strong family resemblance to you and they ain’t particular about eatin their own!” The insult didn’t pass over Cal’s head, but before he could reply, a light wagon came into view coming their way. A young woman was driving.

Sugar went to the corral gate and when the rig arrived he introduced himself and Cal to the young lady and went on with, “ Miss. We’ve been sorta stranded here and we need to get into Yuma. We’re kinda out of a job and need to pick something up in town.” The young woman was wearing a gun and appeared almost afraid to stop.

The fact that these were two old codgers the age of her Grandfather, made her feel a little more at ease and she said, “ I wish I could help you, but I’m in trouble myself. I just arrived in town, rented this rig, and I’m looking for my Ranch. You see, I inherited a cattle Ranch, the Rafter H . I know it’s out here somewhere down this road. According to the instructions I received from Mr. Douglas at the Bank, my place is two miles past the Table Mountain Water Station, but I don’t know where the Station is.”

Sugar said, “ Look here Miss, this is the gather corral for the Station you’re looking for. Your place is probably two miles due east of right here! That’s probably the ranch house you can see on that hill over yonder. Cal and I been thinking of walkin over there.” The young woman excitedly said, “ That’s wonderful! You think ,if I follow this road it’ll take me right to the road leading to that Ranch house?” Sugar replied “ Yes Ma’am , I’d bet on it and if that ain’t your place. The folks there can sure point out just where your place is!”

The young lady said, “ I’m sorry. I didn’t introduce myself. I’m Kate Reason from Kansas city. My uncle Theodore Reason was killed in a gunfight near Denver Colorado and I’m his only relative. They told me in Kansas that I had to take possession of the Ranch or lose the Homestead rights. I really didn’t want to come live out here, but the Lawyer said that the Ranch was a really good one. My Uncle Trip had built it up into a very valuable piece of property.’

Cal interrupted exclaiming , “ Damn!, Excuse me Miss , but do you mean Trip Reason the Gunfighter?” Kate replied, “ Yes Mister Cal, I was told that he got drunk and was killed in a gunfight ! He must have been some type of gunfighter!”Cal replied excitedly, “ I’ll say he was! Probably the fastest gun, I’ve ever seen! He musta been awful drunk to let someone shoot him.” Kate replied, “ Reports are that he was a heavy drinker at times and he had just sold a big load of cattle. I was also informed that he died owing money to folks around Yuma. I’m hoping to settle his affairs and sell the Ranch before I head back east. There’s a good sum of money that’s been transferred to me, but I don’t know how much I can spend. The Banker, Mr. Douglas was not much help. There are no outstanding notes and Uncle Trip did most of his dealings with just a handshake.”

Sugar said, “ Miss Kate, Cal and I are lookin for a ride into Yuma. I’ll tell you what. Cal and I will ride with you to your Ranch and tomorrow we’ll take your rental back to Yuma. That’ll save you a trip and work out great for me and Cal.” Kate said, “ Ok ,but you two set up front and drive. I’ll sit in back.” Cal said laughing, “Miss Kate, you’re a true piece of ol’Trip alright. He’d never let anyone behind his back! I’d just bet you can handle that gun you’re wearin too!”

Kate laughed and moving to the rear seat,” said, “ I can shoot a little, but I really like a rifle better. You two might be the safest old men I ever met, but Dad always said, “ You can always learn to trust someone after you cock your pistol! Mister Sugar will you drive?” Sugar nodded and threw his bag in back, sayin, “Toss your possibles in Cal! Looks like we gotta ride!” He noted that Kate had a hand on her pistol. Kate might look like an innocent young lady, but this gal had been around. “She’d do to ride the river with!”

The post on the dirt road turnoff was branded a Rafter 'H'. Sugar said, "Miss Kate, looks like you done found your Ranch. Don't look too bad from here. That Ranch house don't have no woman look to it, but looks like it's in pretty good shape." Kate replied , "How can you tell Sugar? I know Uncle Trip wasn't married, but what's the Woman look?" Sugar replied, " No curtains, no garden, no flower bushes and trash piled up back of the kitchen porch. A dead sign there ain't no woman around! She wouldn't put up with none of that! Believe me , I was a married family man once!"

Cal yelped and exclaimed, " No! Sugar you're lyin! There ain't a woman alive woulda married you! She'd a had to be light headed and half blind to put up with you! Man you're ugly enough to sour milk and you got the meanness of a wolverine in you. On top of that you're a bald faced liar to go tellin this young lady you was a family man! I've known you for forty years, and the only time I ever saw you with a woman, she was shootin at you! Remember, I saved your worthless lyin hide! That was without a doubt the ugliest woman I ever saw and if she'd known how to load that ol'black power gun, you'd be dead a long time gone! "

Sugar pulled up the horse, grabbed his shotgun and jammed it in Cal's ribs sayin, " Damn you Cal, that was my wife! You take that back! Claudine weren't that ugly! She wouldn't a shot me! She was just mad cause I hadn't been home for a spell." Cal replied, " Go ahead and shoot me ! I can't believe you ever got drunk enough to marry that woman! That spell you talk about was four years! If I had been married to her I'd a been gone a lot longer! Look, I take back what I said. Maybe I was seein her sideways like and that-a-way maybe she just kinda looked like a lantern headed mule."

Sugar put his shotgun down and said, "Cal, you can really get to a man , you know! I almost shot you there!" Cal replied , " Yeah, I know but you weren't loaded again. Sugar, you're slippin. That's twice I coulda taken you down." Sugar cussed looked at his shotgun and said, " Sorry Miss Kate! Forgot you was here!" Kate was sitting in silence , afraid to speak! She had never in her young life been exposed to people like Sugar and Cal. Any minute she feared they would kill each other! Ten minutes of silence and they were back at each other

again. She finally realized they really didn't hate each other and she began to almost enjoy them.

A half hour later and Kate was introducing herself to three rough lookin cowboys that worked on the Ranch. They were not happy to see her! A cowboy named Big Boy Tyler was the leader and said, " Miss Kate Reason, if that's your real name; Trip owes us wages for two months back and we're gonna collect our pay with some of Trip's cattle. I already ordered a car for the siding down there at the Water stop ! A load of good steers will just about get us even! We'll be loadin'em in the morning! I slapped a road brand of my own on them steers so the buyer in Yuma won't make a fuss! Me and the boys here Pedro and Johnny will be back in a few days. Been a good while since we had a day on the town."

Kate said , " Mr. Tyler, I'm kinda short on money myself. What will a load of steers bring? Maybe I should take some to market myself" Big Boy said, " Can't do it Miss Reason! You gotta do a roundup to separate 'em. I'm the Ramrod of Rafter H and we won't be doin a gather for a couple of months yet!" Kate was getting upset and Sugar was starting to turn red. Cal said in a whisper to Sugar, "Take it easy ol'man!. This ain't your problem! Miss Kate is smarter than you think! Load that shotgun and let's see what happens!" Big Boy sarcastically, went on with, " You oughta see the Banker! He'll make you a loan, But I ain't putting a gather on till fall!"

Sugar popped his shotgun open and loaded two shells, snapping it back together. Everything stopped cold. Big Boy's head flew up and everyone cut their eyes to Sugar! Big Boy's face paled as Sugar pulled both hammers to full cock! At the short distance between him and the cowboys, unloading both barrels in that room would kill two and ruin the other for life! Kate placed her hand on the gun at her waist and said, " Mister Tyler I did my home work before coming out here to run a cattle Ranch! Fat steers are selling in Denver for Twenty five a head. They probably bring more in Yuma! I know a cattle car holds about forty head! Whooooee, that's a lotta money for two months wages!"

Big Boy angrily retorted, " Look Miss Back East , me and the Boys ran this ranch for Trip and got along just swell! I sure have my

doubts about workin for a woman!” Kate very quickly retorted, “ Mister Tyler, I’ll relive your doubts about working for a woman. You’re fired! You and your Boys can take ten of those steers for your wages and ten for Ranch shipping expenses. Take your possessions with you! I’ll expect you to be outta here tomorrow! I want your things outta my house tonight. Mr. Sugar and Mr. Cal will be staying here! Good Night!” Kate spun on her heels and headed up the stairs to check out the house. Big boy and the two hands stood there stricken! Big Boy let loose with a string of cusswords!

Cal spoke up sayin, “Mister Tyler, Miss Kate wouldn’t approve your language and she sure is a mighty all fired strong headed woman. I sure wouldn’t wanna cross her. You know she’s related to that gunfighter killer Trip Reason your ex boss, and you know killin runs in the blood. Mister I’d ride a long way around to steer clear of her; was I you. You boys better light a shuck outta here! Ol’Sugar here is mighty sweet on Kate and that ol’double barrel has a hair trigger!” All three cowboys caught their breaths as Sugar waved shotgun death in their faces! They immediately started grabbing clothes and personals from the bunk room and packing them outside.

Kate came down the stairway hard heeling it on the wooden planks! Even Mr. Big Boy Tyler, could see she was pretty upset! Angrily she exclaimed, “This Damn place is a hog pen! I’ve never had to sleep in a place this filthy! Sugar, your cattle car couldn’t be any dirtier! Will you and Cal help me clean it up. I’d make the so called hands do it, but if I see too much of them , I’ll probably shoot ‘em! How anyone could live this way just bogs my mind! I don’t think I have to worry about fleas, cockroaches and bed bugs. This place is even below their standards!”

Johnny and Pedro were glad to get outside and outta range of Miss Kate! When an angry Big Boy spun around and took a step back towards Kate saying, “ Miss Fancy Pants, I’ll show you a few things!” That little pistol of hers almost magically appeared and two bullets hit the ground between his boots! He moved out faster than his boys! “ Yeah” , ol’ Sugar said, “ She wasn’t putting on when she said she could shoot a little!”

Kate loudly called a nervous Big Boy and the two cowboys back and said, “ Tomorrow you load twenty head in that cattle car . Johnny can ride with the steers. You and Pedro come back here and load your stuff in my rental. Those horses you got saddled up out here carry my Brand. Leave them, and use my rental to get into town. Turn it in at the Livery, I’ll settle up when I get to town. Johnny, you and Pedro are welcome to come back if you think you can lower yourself to work for a woman!” Cal standing in the background said to Sugar, “ See, I told you that little lady is made of good iron ! Pretty fancy pistol work too!”

The room lamps were getting low on oil and it was almost midnight before Kate was satisfied that the room upstairs was clean enough for her to spend the night. Sugar and Cal brought her luggage in along with their sacks of Possibles. Their bunks were off the kitchen in the back end of the house and the sorry condition of their room was a good step above that Cattle car. They weren’t too critical, but Kate was insistent and they threw out a lotta stuff just to satisfy her. The kitchen was the real mess and Sugar Bags tore into that with hard words for Big Boy and his crew. At midnight the two old men were worn out and gratefully fell into bunks. They had no idea what tomorrow would bring.

Morning and Sugar was up early boiling coffee and going through the food box. There was a bacon square and flour. Sugar Bags true to his trade, threw together a tolerable breakfast . Kate came down the stairway with a bright “Good morning! Thought I smelled coffee!” Cal made some disparaging comments about Sugar’s ability as a cook and accused him of making the coffee so strong that it would float a horseshoe! Sugar replied, “ Cal, that just goes to show you how dumb you really are. I dropped the horseshoe in the pot to settle the grounds so you don’t wear out the two teeth you got left chewing them!” Kate wasn’t sure how much she heard was true. “ Did he really put a horseshoe in the pot? If he did, was it a clean one?” She finally decided that the two old men were at each others throats again and began to enjoy her breakfast.

Big Boy and crew were out early pushing steers to the loading corrals. They had decided to steer clear of the new lady Boss and at daybreak, had built a camp fire out near the wagon shed to make

coffee and flap jacks. The Lady Boss went out to look at the steers and check the count. Big Boy kept his mouth shut and Johnny came over saying, “ Miss Kate, Pedro and I would like to come back and keep working on your Ranch. We’d like to trail a couple of horses into town for a ride back. That’s a long walk on foot.” Kate replied , “ Johnny, like I said last night. You and Pedro are welcome, but you’re gonna be takin orders from me! I won’t have it any other way! If that’s OK? Take the horses.” Johnny , lookin much relieved; replied, “ Thanks Boss, Pedro and I will be back in three days!”

Kate came back inside saying, “ Sugar , I thank you for the help last night! Tyler had me a little worried. How would you and Cal feel about staying on here and working for me? Johnny and Pedro are staying on. I’ll have them set up a room in the barn. You and Cal keep the bunk room.” Sugar replied, “ Miss Kate, I can’t speak for Cal, but I was lookin for a job. I can do a little cookin and help some with the general Ranch work” Cal spoke up saying, “ Miss Kate, I’m not as crippled up as old Sugar Bags. I can still ride a horse and do a little cow work. Yes Ma’am , I’d like to stay on.”

Sugar immediately fired back sayin, “ Crippled up! Why you bag of rattling old bones! The only cow work you can do is eating beef. Miss Kate you don’t have a horse in your corral out there that’s short enough for Cal to ride and if he ever falls off you’re gonna have to sweep him up. He’ll break up faster than a spring icecicle!” Kate laughed saying, “ Good, it’s settled! Sugar take a look at the barn and see where we might put up a bunk room out there for Johnny and Pedro.”

Sugar said, “ Can’t do it Miss Kate! We’d be better to use that tack and saddle room by the wagon shed. It appears to have a stove in it. You don’t want a fire anywhere near the Barn with hay and feed piled up in there.” Kate replied , “Sugar, you’re right , of course! I really don’t know anything about running a Ranch. I need you and Cal until I learn a lot more about it. I want both of you to stay and help me run things awhile.” Cal said, “ Well, Sugar! Looks like we gotta job.”

Kate was pleased saying, “Good! I’m gonna depend on you two for advise. By the way! We might have a visitor coming our way some

day soon. I met a tall red headed man at the Bank with Mister Douglas. He said his name was Red Jensen and he'd like to come calling. Seemed like a nice feller. I told him , "OK. I need to meet folks out here. Sugar, you check things out for supplies and Cal take a look at our buildings and the fencing. I'm gonna do more cleaning on this pig pen of a house!"

Sugar said to Cal, " See, what I told you! Next you'll see curtains on the windows, flowers in the yard and she'll want us to haul off that pile behind the kitchen!" No sooner were the words outta his mouth , than Kate stuck her head out the door saying, "Sugar, will you and Cal please haul off that pile of trash behind the house as soon as you can. It makes the whole place look bad!" Sugar looked at Cal and nodded with his "Told you so!" look. Cal said, " Too bad Big Boy and the crew got outta here so quick. I'd a made 'em pack their trash with 'em!" Sugar nodded his head again sayin, " Cal you ain't as young as you used to be , but you sure wouldn't have any trouble with that bunch!" They went to get a team and wagon.

Days later, Johnny and Pedro returned . Sugar said to Kate, " We need food supplies and material to fix up that Tack room for the boys. Cal and I are gonna make a wagon run into Yuma. Would you like to go along?" Kate was excited and delighted to get away! She said, " Wonderful, I need material for curtains and I'd love some flower seed." Once again here was that knowing nod to Cal! Cal said , " Yeah, Sugar, I'm gittin low on ol'Jack too. I better git a bottle while I'm in town. I can do a little toleratin better , if you know what I mean." Kate spoke up sharply saying, " Cal, I hope you're not like Uncle Tip. I really don't like heavy drinking. That's what got him killed." Cal said , " Don't you worry none Miss Kate, I only drink the stuff until I can get used to the water. Might take a few days. The water out here is pretty heavy, you know. It ain't safe for a man of my age to make quick changes." Sugar rolled his eyes and grunted, " Your age don't matter Cal. You been tryin to quit drinkin water ever since I met you."

Sugar had selected a pair of lightweight horses and they made a fast trip . Kate wanted to stop by the Bank and withdraw money. After stepping down to the wooden sidewalk, Kate was immediately met by a tall Red head taking her hand and like Sugar later commented, "

Gushing over Miss Kate like a hungry dog lickin her hand!” Cal said, “ I just bet you, he knows she’s single and the owner of Rafter “R”. Look at his fancy clothes and I’ll bet his hands are soft and his nails cut! Sugar, I think we better run this yahoo off before Miss Kate gets sweet on him. Look at them Moon Eyes she’s giving him! He is a fine lookin man, but phony as a coyote! I think I’ll have a word with him.”

Sugar said , “ Don’t overstep too far Cal. Remember , he’s Miss Kate’s friend and we ain’t exactly her Dad, you know!” Cal said, “ I’ll just sorta mess up his pretty boots a little. Watch this!” As Kate entered the bank , Cal stepped down from the wagon and kinda stumbled as he hit the sidewalk staggering into Jensen. He accidentally stepped square on the toes of those pretty boots. Jensen yelped, “ Damnit old Man ! Get the hell off my feet! What the Hell’s wrong with you?” Cal regained his balance saying, “Mister, Sorry bout that , but you’re blockin the sidewalk!” Jensen was angry saying, “ What the hell do they let come into town now days. This sidewalk ain’t for the likes of you old man. You better get your friend there to hold your hand!” Sugar said, “ Mister, I suggest you leave it alone, my friend said he was sorry!” Jensen retorted, “ Yeah bout as sorry as anything I’ve seen lately!” Jensen spun around and quickly went into the Bank. Cal said, “ Well Sugar, them’s fightin words. I seen people killed for less!” Sugar said, “ You’re right Cal, but times are changing. Lets go get them supplies. Kate’ll meet us at the Mercantile.”

Later , on the way back , Kate said, “Sugar, that red headed young man was Red Jensen. He’s coming out to the Ranch this afternoon and may be staying for supper. I kinda like him .” Sugar replied, “ Miss Kate, I picked up a couple of fat hens, we might dress out for a good meal! That Mr. Jensen kinda reminds me of an old egg suckin dog I once owned. I wonder if he likes chicken? Had to shoot him!” Cal said, “The chicken?” Sugar replied, “ No ! The damn dog!” Kate frowned at the comments, but she was happily looking forward to gentleman company for the evening and ignored the disapproval from both Cal and Sugar. Later Sugar said to Cal, “ When Mister Jensen arrives , I want you to be seen around the barn wearing both of your guns. OK?” Cal winked and nodded. He had a big grin on his face as Sugar began to unload the wagon.

Sugar saw Jensen riding in that afternoon and went to meet him as he tied up his horse, saying;“Howdy there; you’d be Mister Red Jensen I reckon. Kinda surprised to see you here on the Ranch after you insulting old Callahan Bowdrie, the Gunfighter!” Jensen swung around in surprise, saying, “ What the hell are you talkin about? Callahan Bowdrie who’s that? You mean that old man that stumbled all over me in town? Gunfighter? Man you gotta be crazy! That old man can’t hardly walk. People like him need someone to lead’em around. Need to learn some manners too and respect us better class town folks.” Sugar replied. “ Most times you might be right Mr. Jensen, but this time you’re wrong! Browdie is the famous Gunfighter from Nogales. Most folks call him the Nogales Killer. He does have a long list of killings behind him. He was gonna wait for you to come outta the Bank for a gunfightin showdown! I had a heck of a time getting him away from there and here you come brassy as you please riding boldly into the Rafter R. Don’t you realize for a killer like Browdie; that’s a slap in the face!”

Jensen laughed nervously saying, “ Old man , you’re stringing me along. I’ve heard of a Nogales gunman, but surely this old man can’t be him! Why that staggering old man must be sixty or seventy years old!” Sugar replied, “ Exactly! He’s all of that and maybe more! How do you reckon a gunfighter could survive this long? Hiding behind his own gunsmoke ! That’s how he’s done it! First to draw and first to shoot! Most that had the guts to face him, died seeing their last daylight through his gunsmoke!”

Jensen more that a little shook up, but boldly said, “I think I can hold my own in a gunfight! I sure won’t back down to some old has been that can’t even walk straight! Where is he? I’ll take him on!” Sugar said, “ Well it’s your funeral , but looking at you and that little hat you’re wearing; It sure don’t offer much cover in bright sunlight that might blind a man! I would suggest you darken your cheeks with lamp black- it will help you see Bowdrie’s hands and Oh; try to look just a little sideways. Any gunfighter knows that side vision is much sharper. It may give you that extra time you’ll have to have when you face Bowdrie. I’d also recommend you use a little pork fat on your holster to speedup your draw. Old Cal is greased lightning and if he

comes at you wearing two guns Mister Jensen, you better pray for a miracle. At fifty yards Cal will use that old long barreled Colt 44. You mighta heard the story that In Tascosa last fall he killed a gunfighter from the Dalton Gang with one shot from over seventy five yards out. In his hands that ol'44 can out shoot a Spencer Repeating rifle. If he gets within twenty five yards, he'll use that short barreled 45 and the man doesn't live that can beat him with that fanning gun. Everyone knows my reputation and I've walked the graves of seventeen not countin Indians and Mexicans. Cal don't even know how many he's put under. I won't go up against him and Mister Jensen unless you've got four or five to back you, I'd say you better light a shuck for the next County."

When Cal walked out of the Bunkhouse wearing two guns, Jensen turned a yellow pale and in more than a little hurry; he quickly mounted and spurred his horse up the trail! Kate came running in saying, "What happened? I just saw Red racing his horse back toward town! We were gonna take a moonlight ride tonight! Damn you Sugar Bags! What have you and Cal been up to ?"

Sugar tried his best to look sorrowfull and said, "Miss Kate, I ain't done nothing. Mister Jensen took angry at something Cal said and was wantin to shoot him. I just give him some helpful advise about how to act in a gunfight with a killer gunfighter like Cal Bowdrie! He took scared and beat it outta here!" Kate said, " I'll just bet you gave him some helpful advise alright! Killer gunfighter . that's a crock full if I ever heard of one! You two old Wind Bags scare off the first good lookin man that comes around. I'm not sure you two were ever in any kind of fighting. Look, I'm a big girl! I can handle my own romance . You two quit tryin to pick a man for me. When's dinner ? Damn it, I'm hungry!"

Sugar and Cal had settled in and became part of the Rafter R crew. Pedro and Johnny were enjoying Sugar's cooking and going outta their way to please the pretty lady boss. Cal said, " I've never had to ramrod a crew of moon eyed cowboys! Damnit Sugar ! We need to get some cattle work done! These boys are spending most of their time doing woman work to please Kate. I've spent three days riding and some one's stealing Rafter R blind! Maybe we shoulda let

ol'Jensen hang around! Maybe we could do something besides plant flowers! Come over here to the corral and look at this. I've got two yearlings here that a Running iron has been used on ." Sugar walked over and said, **"Looks like someone has changed a Rafter H to a Circle R ! I'd say you're right Cal! Looks like we've got a rustler working on our calf crop from last year. Let's do a little checking and find out who owns this Circle R brand!"** Cal said, **" Let's keep this from Kate until we know a little more."** Sugar replied, **"Good idea Cal. She's got a new fella coming over and wouldn't want to be bothered. She's still pretty sore at us for running off Jensen! I think she'd a sent that four flusher packin as soon as she had any dealin with him anyhow. We just done her a favor!"**

That afternoon a handsome young cowhand comes riding into the yard. Cal and Sugar both guessed him to be Kate's new interest. Sugar said, " Looks like a workin man Cal. I kinda like his looks. Beats that four flusher Jensen all to hell!" Cal replied, " Yeah Sugar and I just saw Kate beating it into the house! I'll just bet she's gonna spruce up a bit to meet this young man! Maybe we better go over and palaver a little with him. Kinda see which end of the horse he looks best on. " Sugar laughed as they walked out.

" Howdy stranger ," says Cal, as the young man dismounted he went on with, **" You'd be from the Circle R seein as how at least your horse is carryin that brand. I'm Cal Bowdrie and this here older gentleman with me is Sugar Bags Bobby Clementine. We work for the Rafter H."** Sugar angrily, spun around to utter a retort, but the young man said, **" Buckley Harris, yeah, I'm from the Circle R. Glad to meet cha. Come calling to see Miss Kate."** Sugar says, **" Knew we had some neighbors around here, but they sure been scarce in coming around to see Miss Kate. Cal and I been wonderin what kinda hydrophobia have we got that scares folks away?"** Buckley laughed saying, **" Red Jensen's been spreadin it around that Kate's gotta couple gunfightin killers on her pay roll. I sure couldn't believe that ! I know she's kin to ol'Trip, but she's just a sweetheart of a young lady and when I met her in town, I almost fell off my horse. Couldn't believe there was a girl that pretty in the whole Territory."** Sugar said, **" Mister Harris, You're welcome as a good rain . Come on up to the porch and have a seat.**

Miss Kate will be out directly. Mister Bowdrie will see to your horse, won't you Cal; ol'man." The insult was not missed by Cal.

Kate came out and happily greeted Buckley, inviting him in and offering him a cool drink. She said, " Sugar, Mister Harris will be staying for dinner. I'm going to show him around the Ranch and have him take a look at our horses. I think that we need to get a few new stock horses . Pedro and Johnny have been complaining that ours are getting too old." Sugar began to reply, but nodded and headed for the kitchen. He was thinking, " Yeah, Pedro and Johnny run hell outta them trying to show off for Kate, then wonder why they're crippled up or show a limp for a few days. It'll be interesting to see what Mister Buckley Harris thinks."

Following dinner that evening, Kate and Buckley went for a ride along the local creek, getting back at dark. Sugar was pleased with Buckley's opinion concerning the horses. He said, " No Miss Kate, your stock horses are in great shape. They appear to be worked a lot and need their feet tended to , but these are some of the colts that your Uncle Trip bought from my Dad. They're all under five or six years old. With any kind of proper care, they should be good for three or four more years. And mentioning that, Kate , there's a serious situation that's been going on now since your Uncle was killed. I've got some papers at home that you need to look at. I'll bring them along next week one day, but tonight was wonderful and Sugar that was a great meal. Miss Kate, thank you again. I'd love to call again." Kate replied " Please do, Buck; I loved our ride." As Harris rode off, Kate asked, " OK, Sugar what did you two think of Buck? Since you and Cal seem to think you've gotta protect me from these wild cowhands around here, I guess I need your opinion. ?" Sugar replied, "Kate we're concerned for you but you're still the Boss. We just kinda watch over you in spurts like, but this Harris seems to be OK. We kinda feel that we'll give him a little slack in his lead rope and see how he does." Kate quickly says, " Don't you be giving him some cock and bull story about wild gunfighters, and try to run him off. I just might call your bluff!" Cal responded, "Kate you have our solemn vow that we'll stay plumb outta your way." Kate rolled her eyes and replied , " Yeah like you did with Red Jensen! I better not hear any bad mouthing from either of you, or I

might do a little shooting on my own.” Kate laughed at her own comment as she went inside. Sugar said, “ Cal I think she really likes Buckley and hope he’s what he appears to be. She needs a good man and it looks like he’s OK. I’m some worried about that worked over brand we saw, but it mighta been a mistake during round up.”

Unfortunately, the following morning; Cal came riding in from pulling a calf from the mire around a watering hole He was covered in mud and angry as he rode into the yard . Practically shouting, he yelled for Sugar saying, “Damnit Sugar we got a real problem. Come out here!” Sugar came hurriedly out to the hitchrail saying, “ What the hell is all the yelling about Cal? Them chickens are already holding off laying eggs. Your Damn yelling’ll scare ‘em off the nest for another week.” Cal replied, “ I ain’t worried about you and your damn eggs, Sugar , we got a real problem. Where’s Kate? I need to tell her about this.”

Kate answered from the porch saying, “ What is it Cal? Did someone get hurt?” Cal replied “ Not yet Miss Kate, but we’re gonna have to hang or shoot a damn cattle thief! I pulled a five month old calf outta that sink hole over near the east gate . It was branded Circle R.” Kate replied , “ Oh Cal, that’s nothing to get upset about. I’m sure some of our calves get over on the Circle R Ranch also.” Cal angrily replied, “Not when they’re nursing Rafter H cows! I took a look through that bunch over east and saw half a dozen this years Rafter H calves running iron branded to a Circle R. Miss Kate , your Mister Harris better have a damn good answer for this . We hang Rustlers here in Arizona.”

Sugar said, “ Miss Kate, Cal’s right. Two more months or so to roundup time and nobody would know the difference. The Rafter H could lose it’s whole calf crop and we couldn’t do a damn thing about it. We’re lucky Cal spotted the stealing. I kinda wonder now why Pedro and Johnny didn’t spot the running iron brands. Cal, I think we better have a talk with those boys. I’m gonna get my shotgun!.”

Kate anxiously said, “No, No! Sugar, Cal ! Both of you take it easy. I wanna go talk to Buck before we do anything. Get the wagon out and we’ll run over to the Circle R. I just can’t believe he’d be a

party to stealing my calves. There's gotta be an answer." Cal replied, " Miss Kate , when it comes to money. You can't trust no one. Sugar, I'll get the wagon."

On the way to Circle R, Kate noticed that Cal was wearing two guns, Sugar had loaded his shotgun , there were two ropes coiled in the back of the wagon and there was no bantering talk going on between Sugar and Cal. Their attitudes had turned deadly serious and she was beginning to dread what they might find or do at Buck's place. Four miles to go and Kate was praying that shooting wouldn't be part of their visit. She had already heard too many harrowing tales of cow thief hangings and shootouts. The closer she came to Circle R, the more unsettled she became. She was almost to the point of calling off the visit when they came into a gathering pen full of cattle. Buck Harris was there with two cow hands just finishing up branding and cutting a number of young bull calves. Kate had told Cal and Sugar to hold off talking until she had a few words with Buck. She didn't want to start the conversation with bullets.

Buck was thrilled to see Kate and introduced her to his two hands as owner of the Rafter H. He sent his hands on back to the Ranch and offered lunch for Kate , Sugar and Cal. Cal kinda ignored Kate's warning and started to say something, but quickly interrupted by Kate saying, " Buck we have a problem. It appears that some of your crew are getting our two brands mixed up and we have cow calf combinations that are carrying different brands." Buck replied, "Yeah, I realize that. The two brands are quite similar in size and location. During long hair months the H and R are almost alike. During that time it's easy to make a mistake. There is a problem and I've been looking for an opportunity to discuss it with you."

Cal could no longer hold his temper, he forcefully said, " Mister Buck Harris you say that your Circle R looks like a Rafter H, but I say otherwise. Those cows that you claim belong to you are really Rafter H stock and I wanna see your Branding iron. Looks to me like a running iron's been used on all of Kate's calf crop for this year connecting the rafters to the top of the H. Circle R looks like a cattle rustling brand to me! There's damn sure a problem all right! You know , rustling is a hanging offense and if I was you I'd disclaim any knowledge of how to

use a Runnin iron. I think maybe the Sheriff would be interested in what I'm saying. Miss Kate , don't you go gittin all flustered up over Mr. Bucko Harris. He's a thieving cattle rustler. Sugar and I are gonna hang him!" Kate held up a hand saying, " Buck ,it's pretty plain that Sugar and Cal are right. Those calves have all had their brands changed to a circle "R". Some are still nursing Rafter "H" cows. It looks like you or someone has been stealing my calves."

Buck spoke up saying, " You're right! I have been changing the brands, but let me explain. You see Trip!" and that's as far as he got. Cal jerked him off his horse saying, " Told you so! A stinking rustler! Get a rope Sugar!" Kate yelled, " Just a minute Cal! Damn it I wanna hear what he's got to say. Sugar, you stay right where you are . Don't be gittin no rope. They're my cows he's stealing. Buck what were you saying about my Uncle Trip Reason?"

Buck said, " Kate ,I had no idea that things would ever get this far or that what my Father and Trip did two years ago would almost get me hung. They had a handshake agreement over two years ago to swap calf crops so Trip could market two thousand steers. He wanted to take twenty two hundred prime Rafter H beeves to market and he did. Next year was to be the same number for the Circle R. Well my Father died before we even found out that Trip had been killed. Trip, of course never returned and he had no time to get a bank draft for my Father, The Circle R was entitled to half the profits from that sale, and we're way over our heads in debt credit right now. Yes we've branded every bull calf we could find in your herd with the Circle R. Some of the newborns you'll find wear a natural Circle R. Those , we found before your hands branded them. There are no papers that are signed by Trip or my Father. I do have tally sheets showing the actual numbers, but once again, these are in my Fathers hand writing. Trip and my Dad were comrades from the War and everything they did was by hand shake. There was never a need for anything more." Sugar Said, " You know Kate, what he says does make a lotta sense. Cal mentioned earlier that all the calves he saw miss branded were young bulls and when it comes to money, I'm guilty of doing the same thing because I owe Cal a few dollars that ain't shown on paper nowhere. It's a good thing to get this cleared up before shootin starts, but I reckon it's up

to you two to sort things out. Buck, I'm sorry we took you to be a cow thief, and now that I know the story of the brand changes, I'm glad we didn't get in a war over that. We do have another problem though, Cal brought in the cow count from our west range and comparing the Spring numbers we're missing about forty head of grown steers." Kate was shocked at that news and Buck said, " You know my west herd looked a little light of prime steers too. Maybe we do have a rustler problem." Kate exclaimed, "Buck, What should I do? What should I do?"

Sugar answered saying, "Cal and I may have to attend a hanging after all. We'll ride over that way and see if we can find anything." Kate said, " OK , but if you catch'em don't do no hanging. I just can't see tradin a few cows for a man's life. Do a cowman's arrest and we'll take them into the Sheriff." Buck said, " Kate, I'll ride back to the Ranch and get my hands to do a count on that west grazing. It could be some of your primes are in there. I'd love to offer you lunch, if you care to ride along." Kate was happy and pleased to go with Buck.

Cal said, " Sugar it looks like them two are cookin up something." Sugar laughing, agreed saying, " Like a wedding cake , maybe. Yeah, she's a wonderful gal,. Just a little tender hearted when it comes to hanging rustlers" Cal agreed and said, "Lets go catch up with Johnny and Pedro. There's something going on here and I think we ain't hearing everything from those two. They shoulda told me long ago about this. There ain't no way a cow hand could work these cows every day and not notice the running iron mixed pair branding. These moon eyed boys are working for Miss Kate, but they damn sure ain't ridin for the Brand! If we're missing market steers , I'll just bet; they know something about that too." Sugar agreed saying, " Cal, you let me do the talkin. When I get outta the wagon to talk to the boys, you bring that rifle along. I'm gonna get them two ropes out. We'll get some answers pretty quick."

Johnny and Pedro were at the corral catching up mounts for the afternoon when Cal and Sugar drove into the barn yard. Sugar stepped down from the wagon carrying the ropes as he yelled for them to drop what they were doin and come over. He said, " Boys, we've got a problem. I hope it doesn't include you two." As he spoke he looked at

the ropes in his hand and then up at the hay hook rail projecting from the Barn hayloft. "I wanna know who's stealing our cows and why you two haven't said a word about the mixed cow, calf brands on every bull calf we have." Pedro and Johnny both turned pale. It was obvious to Sugar that they were guilty of something. Johnny exclaimed, "Sugar it weren't us! Pedro and I haven't taken anything. It's Big Boy and a friend of his. He threatened to kill us if we said anything. He didn't think you'all would notice. He was only gonna take a few head. He told us not to say anything about the Circle R brand changes, that when you and Cal found out about it, you would start a Range war with the Circle R. When the shootin and hanging started, he and his friend could take all the cattle they wanted." Sugar said, "Here you are just as damn guilty as Big Boy. I wanna know where our cows are and who is in this with him. Now boys don't start shakin your heads that you don't know. Cal git a rope over that hook rail up there. I'll just bet ya it'll make their heads shake up and down don't you rackon." Before Cal could make a throw, Pedro exclaimed, "I don't wanna die Johnny! It's Red Jensen at the Livery, Senor Sugar. He'll kill me for tellin." Cal said, "Well that explains a couple of things Sugar. Our Mister Red Jensen owns the Yuma Livery and the Jensen Slaughter House. It's easy to see the set up. Just push a few head into that livery pen with his killers and guess which steers are cut out and pushed up that ramp for slaughter. You got it! A sweet set up and I'll bet Mister Big Boy Tyler is working at the Livery. You know with that set up and two thieving cowhands pushin prime stock their way, it's a wonder we've got any steers left." Sugar said, "You two outta be hung right along with Big Boy and Red, but Cal, I've got an idea. You keep your rifle handy while I go get a paper printed up." Cal said, "Sugar whatta you talkin bout old man you can't hardly write your name. Sugar replied, "See you don't know it all Cal, Claudine mighta been off in looks some, but she had real learnin. She learned me to print. You hold our two rustlers here and I'll be right back."

It took Sugar awhile, but when he returned he asked, "Johnny can you and Pedro write your names?" They could and Sugar said, "Put your name right here on the bottom of this paper If you wanna miss your own hanging." When Johnny refused, Cal looped a rope up and over the barn hook saying, "Still gotta good arm Sugar but I can't

remember how many loops you wind in a hanging noose” When Sugar said “Thirteen!” Johnny reached for the pencil. He asked after reading the two names on top of the printing, “ What the hell is it we’re putting our names on. That’s Big Boy and Reds names on there.”

Sugar replied , “Boys it’s just a nice letter to them asking for your share of the money for the forty Rafter H steers you pushed into the livery corral this last month. You’re telling them that you know they’ve been slaughtered and want your money.” Pedro exclaimed, “ How did you know we ain’t been paid?” Cal laughed saying, “ Sugar you’re still just as cagey as ever. I though old age was gittin to ya, but when it comes to cow thieves, you’re still just as good as the best of them. I’m thinkin, you maybe had a lotta hands on training.”Sugar said, “ Now Cal you know when Miss Kate didn’t want no gunplay, she probably figured the famous Nogales gunfighter couldn’t get the job done and wanted me to step in.” Cal couldn’t reply to that jab, but said, “ I reckon we’ll still have to do a little shootin, when we face Red and Big Boy. Maybe you’ll have a little more appreciation for me when the lead starts flyin.” Sugar replied, “ No Cal we ain’t gonna be gittin in no gunfight. We’re gonna deliver Johnny and Pedro to the Sheriff and give him this letter. After that we’ll just have a seat on the saloon porch and let him and his deputies take care of things. All the evidence is right there and Pedro will sing like a bird. A feller can really get put out when he ain’t paid.” Sugar went on, “ Cal, we’ve done a good days work and after we deliver these two, I think we’ll have a drink and cool our heels a little before we head back to the Ranch. I printed and left a note for Kate. I’ll bet she comes stormin into town.

Kate and Buck rode into Yuma looking for Sugar and Cal. Sugar’s note had been short and scared Kate as it mentioned catching and arresting the rustlers. When they arrived everyone was talking about the arrest of four rustlers and it was Sugar and Cal that had broken up the gang.

They were seated on the saloon porch arguing about who knocked over and broke Cal’s whiskey bottle,when Kate finally caught up with them. Mistakenly she thought the spilled whiskey was blood. Both Sugar and Cal were soaked around the waist. Kate was horrified saying, ‘ Oh God! Sugar there’s blood all over your side and your whole

side is wet! What should I do? What do I do? You're both bleeding to death! Oh my God! I got you both killed! I got you both killed!' Buck made her a little angry when he made her realize her mistake. Then she got angry with Sugar and Cal, because they weren't injured. Buck was enjoying the whole thing and finally when things had settled down he said, " Men I'm not sure you need another drink, but Kate and I are both gonna join you in a celebration. We're getting married!" Cal and Sugar both jumped up trying to hug Kate congratulating the two. It was a wonderful evening of celebrating, but Buck had to drive the wagon back to the Ranch. Cal and Sugar were stretched out in back. Kat said, " Buck my two famous gunfighters over did it a little and I love'em both, but maybe we outta drop'em off in the creek. If we don't they'll smell like a bar room all week.

Weeks later wedding plans were underway and Buck had sent two cowboys over to help Kate out. Their plans were to merge the two Ranches. Kate assured Sugar and Cal that they'd have a job as long as she owned the Ranch. She asked Cal, "How did Sugar ever get the name of Sugar Bags Bobby ?" Cal took a long time answering, saying, " I'm not sure he would like me tellin the story, but here it is.

Sugar as a young man was feared by everyone that knew him along the Colorado and Gila Rivers. He was a wild and fearless youngster that had a violent temperament. His past is probably filled with stories and fights that he'd rather forget. I came in contact with him during a gunfight in the town of Vulture in northern Arizona Territory. He had been shot up in a fight with the Hoodoo Brown Mining Company and was laid up in an Indian camp where an old Squaw was tending to him. The camp was a gathering Site for summer Indian Trades. When Sugar was informed that Hoodoo's Gang was coming to kill him, he had no place to go and he couldn't see too good. Both eyes was swollen almost shut from a bullet wound across his forehead. He crawled into one of the trading tents and hid inside a stack of woven reed bags of brown sugar cane crystals the Indians had packed in for trading. He lived there for three days in hiding while the killers tore the encampment apart looking for him. During this time drainage syrup from the Sugar cane completely soaked him and his clothes.

Living inside a stack of sticky smelling bags of sweet cane crystals must have warped Sugar's mind , because he came outta hiding on that third day, a fighting mad! Folks said he was like a wounded Grizzly and boldly walked down the Main Street in Vulture tracking down Hoodoo's Gang. He opened a gunfight in the Fargo Saloon: killing two and driving the Gang out into the back alley. They say that he stripped the Saloon gun rack of belts and weapons, then retreated to his hiding place. Crawling back into his bags of sugar, he fought off the killers for another four hours using a Spencer repeater and Sugar is more deadly with the long gun than any I've ever met They were unable to get to him surrounded by a bulwark of crystallized sugar and after suffering a number of injuries, the Gang decided to call it quits. But ol'Sugar was just gittin warmed up. He came out again blazin away and Hoodoo's Gang fled the town! From that day , he became known as Sugar Bags Bobby, a Gunfighter to ride clear off!"

" Now I was a little drunk when this fight was going on and Sugar was in no mood to deal with a drunk when I ran into him at a saloon that evening after his big fight! That sugar cane musta sweetened him up , because he laughed at me when I called him Sweetie which woulda been plenty to start a gunfight ! I think he'd taken on a little too much whiskey and like a couple of drunks, we kinda stuck together that evening. He was covered with sticky stinky stuff and I was too drunk to stand up! Later, I think we both wound up in the Horse trough at the Livery Stable. After that, we worked together for a number of summers on a few ranches over the years. Had a few run ins with the law, but been friends ever since." Kate laughed saying, "Now that you mention it Cal, he does have a sweet disposition. " Cal quickly said, " Miss Kate don't let that sweet ol'man fool you! He can turn into a rabid wolverine when he's crossed. One other thing! Don't never offer him anything sweet! He kinda hates sugar!"

Kate said, " Well, what about you Cal? What's your story?" Cal replied, "Miss Kate , you really don't wanna hear mine. It'll ruin your dinner." Kate said, "No I wanna hear it and there ain't nothing that'll spoil a bowl of Sugar's beans." Cal said. "Well, it's kinda long, but it has to be cause I'm seventy years old. When I was a young sprout down Nogales way, there was a number of Mexican Raiders that kept

things on edge down there raidin and killin folks. As a young boy ,I learned to handle a gun really good. Almost too good. Shootin Raiders got me a reputation as a bad gunfighter and it wasn't long until some fast guns came to try me out. I had a couple of gunfights shootin them coming at me. I have two guns, one for long range and a short barrel for close work. I met and put down some really bad boys, but I hated killing. I wasn't about to leave town so I luckily figured out a way to scare off would be gun fighters. When I fought El Porto Silver and killed him one of my bullets put a hole in his left ear. Silver's history of killing and murder was so terrible the town folks wanted to put his head on a stake and mount it next to an elephant tree just at the edge of town. Since I killed him I said, " No ,we'll use his ears". I nailed them high up on the trunk of that tree with his name between them."

" This gave me a great idea, because everyone stopped to see the ears. I bought a Number of Hog's ears from the Butcher. Cut them into pieces the size of my ears and smoked them a little to make'em curl. Every few weeks or so I'd add a new set to that tree. My terrible reputation grew like wild fire with a dozen sets on that tree. I used the last name of other gunfighters dead or alive folks had heard of . It didn't matter. I lived a very peaceful life after that working as a Deputy or Cattle Drive Ramrod. I seldom had to draw on a man, my reputation was usually enough to prevent a gunfight, but don't get me wrong Miss Kate, I can still hold my own in a gunfight." Kate laughed and said, "Cal that story hasn't hurt my appetite one little bit." Cal said, "Sure glad to hear that! And you know something, Ol'Sugar uses smoked pig ears in his beans." Kate threw her head up in disgust, Then said ,at Cal's laugh, "Damn you Cal ! You're lying again."

With a wedding coming up, both Sugar and Cal were getting their store boughts out to get slickered up. Sugar was eyeing Cal's outfit and said, "Them pants look a little too long, but I reckon as bowlegged as you are , you'd need an extra six inches on the pants just to reach your boots . Speakin of boots. You ain't wore a pair of socks since you put them boots on- I hope you ain't takin them off in here. I've got fresh milk in the kitchen and the smell of your feet'll sour vinegar. No tellin what it'll do to my milk."

Sugar, you're being concened about your milk I gotta tell you something. I know you finally broke down and shaved for this wedding , but don't come walzin into that milk barn again; that long ugly puss of yours without the hide out beard caused all four of them milk cows to stampede. They probably won't give a drop for two weeks." Kate over hearing their arguing, knew that things were normal and frequently enjoyed their insults, but a fire storm started on her wedding day when Cal said, " It sure is an honor, Miss Kate; you gittin married on my Birthday."

Sugar erupted with,"Your birthday? You gotta be kiddin. You cain't read a lick, but now I got you figured. That's why you're so ugly. You been claiming two or three Birthdays a year. They done wore your face out. You ain't never looked like much and when you started wearing a beard, I'd a swore your head was upside down."

Cal said , " Damn you Sugar, I'll just bet there ain't a man alive could say when you was born or if you was born. If was up to me , I'd say you crawled out from under a flat rock, but your brother in Saint Jo told me your Mama's goat had twins and you was the good lookin one. All I got to say for a story like that It's really hard to believe. You being the good lookin one that is."

Sugar replied, "You know something Cal, I finally got it figured out how come you're so ugly. God gave you a perfect head, but the Devil hung your face on it. " Cal exclaimed, " Damn you Sugar, I outta shoot you. All of your mouthin and you made me miss gittin to kiss the Bride." Sugar said, " You know Cal, I always figured Kate was a very lucky girl. That just goes to prove I'm right!" Cal missed that one as they waved Good Bye to the newly weds.

The End