

## «Destry Rides Again»

*In the film's pre-credits opening sequence, a sign reading "WELCOME TO BOTTLENECK" is shot up. Bullets smash a whiskey bottle next to the sign and another one that is tied and hanging from the sign. [A real bottleneck is left swaying.] The camera pans right across a 'Boot-Hill' cemetery and scenes of the brawling, wild frontier town of Bottleneck, characterized by fist fights and lawlessness. The credits play, accompanied by Frank Skinner's thrilling stagecoach music, ending with a view of the LAST CHANCE SALOON. There is complete mayhem in the wicked town - raucous riders shoot their guns into the sky and gallop on horseback into the gambling bar through swinging doors.*

*In a series of economical shots in the film's first few minutes, most of the major characters in the cast are introduced or glimpsed. A crane takes the camera up above the front porch into a dissolve through the lighted windows on the second floor, where a crooked card game is in progress. The saloon's owner is gambler and slick rogue Kent (Brian Donlevy) - his face obscured by his tilted hat, setting up a rancher/farmer named Lem Claggett (Tom Fadden) in a poker game.*

*Kent deals himself out of the next hand after losing - a calculated move, and wanders around on the upper interior hallway of the saloon - his steely-eyed dominance and control of the saloon are evident. He hits the agitated bartender Loupgerou (Billy Gilbert) on the back of the head with a half-eaten apple, signaling him to notify his star attraction to join him upstairs. The camera pans down the long bar, first hearing the famous Dietrich voice. It finds the back of lusty, tawdry, saloon singer and hostess/bad girl Frenchy (Marlene Dietrich) - she turns to face the camera in a close-up. Responding to Kent, she winks at him - and at the camera, and rolls her own cigarette. She is already singing the rousing Western number "Little Joe the Wrangler" with a whiskey, monotoned, deep-throated voice - a ribald elegy for a unlucky cowboy.*

Frenchy: Little Joe, Little Joe  
Oh, whatever become of him, I don't know  
Oh, he sure did like his liquor  
And it would have got his ticker  
But the sheriff got him quicker - yeeha!  
Little Joe, Little Joe  
Oh, wherever his body lies, I don't know  
When the yellow moon was beamin'  
He could wrangle like a demon  
And you'd always hear him screamin' - yeeha!  
Little Joe, Little Joe  
Oh, whatever he's doing now, I don't know  
He had women by the dozen  
And he swore they woz his cousins  
Till he met up with their husbands - yeeha!

*After belting out the song, Frenchy demonstrates how she answers to no man - except Kent. She throws a glass of whiskey into the face of Russian émigré Boris Callahan (Mischa Auer) after he appreciatively slaps her fanny. He reacts positively by nibbling on the wet liquid on his face and lips. Further along, she pushes aside another boisterous dancer. She moves across the room to town drunk and banjo-player Washington Dimsdale (Charles Winninger), who is so soused that the first view of him is of his hand grasping to steal a bottle of whiskey from underneath a table. When he is detected, he proceeds into an innocent-sounding reprise of the "Little Joe" song. The black top-hatted, corrupt, tobacco-chewing town Mayor Judge Slade (Samuel S. Hinds) who plays checkers with himself, observes the action.*

*After being recruited upstairs, Kent gives Frenchy a coded request: "I could use a little touch of that rabbit's foot of yours." Claggett boasts about his winning luck: "He'll need more than a rabbit's foot to catch up with me. I'm more than likely to own this whole she-bang before the night's over. Then you'll be working for me, Frenchy." She offers sandwiches and hot coffee to the players in the upstairs cardroom as they gamble during the next deal: "It's all or nothing, I always say." Knowing he has a unbeatable hand of three aces, Claggett bets his 3,000 acre ranch and 1,500 head of cattle worth at least \$10,000. Suddenly, Frenchy purposely spills a cup of hot coffee into his lap - allowing enough time for the cards to be switched. Claggett is victimized by Kent's professional cohorts, knocked out, and dragged from the room:*

*"You were bluffin' and you were called." The villainous saloon owner congratulates his lovely partner for executing their land-grabbing scheme:*

Kent: Nice work, honey.  
Frenchy: Practice makes perfect.  
Kent: Well that does it. This gives us a solid strip of land right across the valley.  
Frenchy: And what do we do now?  
Cowboy: Nothin', until those cattlemen try to drive their herds through without payin'.  
Bugs: How many steers will come through?  
Kent: Last year, there were 350,000. Now if we charge 'em twenty-five cents a head, that makes...\$87,500.  
Bugs: Now that's money.  
Frenchy: We're rich!  
Gyp Watson: I'll get my gal's teeth plugged with diamonds and just set and watch her smile. (Frenchy stuffs the signed-over deed to the land into her low-cut dress)  
Kent: (as he grabs the paper) I'll take care of that.  
Frenchy: (She takes some gold coins from the poker game and drops them down the front of her dress.) I'd rather have cash - in the bank.  
[A potentially-famous line of dialogue was eliminated by censors, although the action remains. The censored line was delivered by Gyp: "There's gold in them that hills!"]

*Cheated out of his property, Claggett is dumped on the ground outside the Last Chance Saloon. When Bottleneck's Sheriff Keogh (Joe King) hears Claggett's tale ("Why that low-down skunk sucked me into betting my ranch and cattle and then switched cards on me"), he intervenes on Claggett's behalf: "I've been waiting a long time to catch up with that tin-horn." He accuses Kent of switching cards in the poker game: "I am to find out from Kent why he's turnin' that poker game into a land-grab business." As Keogh storms upstairs to confront the saloon owner, Frenchy conspires with tiny-bespectacled Mayor Slade during a partner-less game of checkers. During their conversation, the Sheriff's death take place offscreen - two shots are fired and they both look toward the sound of the upstairs gunfire:*

Frenchy: I still serve the best coffee in Bottleneck.  
Slade: What did Keogh have on his mind?  
Frenchy: Oh, he was just getting a little curious about that real-estate business.  
Slade: I think I'll have to buy an option on his curiosity. (Two shots are heard from upstairs)  
Frenchy: I think you'll have to buy yourself a whole new sheriff - if you can find one.

*In her dressing room, Frenchy's chattering black maid Clara (Lillian Yarbo) cowers like "a mass of quiverin' flesh" from the "boomin' and the bangin' of them there pop-guns," although Frenchy is accustomed to gun violence in Bottleneck: "What do you expect in a town like this?" Frenchy bends over and empties her bustier of gold coins:*

Clara: What's comin' up? A new gold rush?  
Frenchy: We never got anything like that in New Orleans, did we?  
Clara: Maybe so, maybe so, but it was a heap more peaceful. I'd like to sink my teeth into some good ol' Louisiana oysters.

*When Frenchy is called to the stage for her next number, she seductively and cynically chirps: "The longer they wait, the better they like it." In the smoky atmosphere of the saloon stage, Frenchy performs "You've Got That Look (That Leaves Me Weak)" in a low register, while wearing feather boas a la Mae West:*

Frenchy: All I do is dine with 'em and split a pint of wine with 'em  
Respectable as can be. Yet here's what they say to me.  
You've got that look, that look that leaves me weak.  
You with your eyes-across-the-table technique.  
You've got that look, that look between the lines  
You with your let's-get-more-than-friendly designs  
I should be brave and say, let's have no more of this

But oh what's the use when you know I love it.  
You'll only kill my will before I speak  
So turn on that low left-hook, that look that leaves me weak...

*During the song, the camera cuts back and forth between close-ups of Frenchy and a sexually-excited Boris. At one point, his eyes roll upward into his head and he embraces a wooden post next to him. Later, he sprays a deck of cards and kisses the post, and then appears embarrassed by his ejaculatory responses. Further evidence of her turn-on power is exhibited when an excited admirer fires both his pistols into the air.*

*In a politically-sounding announcement, Kent has arranged for the criminal Mayor to nominate/appoint hard-drinking Dimsdale to be the new sheriff for the now-vacant position.*

*Fellow citizens, our esteemed sheriff, Mr. Joseph Keogh, has been suddenly called out of town on urgent business. He'll be gone permanent. So it becomes necessary for me to appoint somebody to fill out the unexpired term. Therefore, with the power conferred on me by Statute number 85-E and other statutes thereunto appertaining, I do hereby appoint to the post of Sheriff that paragon of courage, that credit to his community, the pride of Bottleneck, Mr. Washington Dimsdale.*

*The crowd is stunned for a moment, and then bursts into uproarious laughter. As the camera elbows its way through the crowd, Dimsdale is found unconscious and lying on the floor. Frenchy stirs him with a glass of whiskey in the face, and he mechanically begins strumming "Little Joe." Kent orders "drinks on the house" to celebrate the appointment. Bartender Loupgerou repeats a familiar refrain as he slides glasses of whiskey down the counter:*

Bartender: I set 'em up and you drink 'em down. I set 'em up and you drink 'em down....(A cut-away to a befuddled Dimsdale)...This is getting monotonous.

*Dimsdale takes a swig of the free whiskey from a bottle, but then spits it out. Taking his new position seriously, Dimsdale reforms himself and smashes the bottle to the floor: "Then I'm off the liquor. A man has gotta choose between the bottle and the badge." Boris likewise drops his glass to the floor to indicate his affinity to the lawman. The bartender does a double-take: "Aw, he didn't say that, or did he?" The "strong-minded" new sheriff shouts to the mocking crowd:*

Dimsdale: Shut up, you fools. But I'm tellin' you, this town of Bottleneck has gotta respect law and order or I'll put everybody in jail.

Slade: The Sheriff's right. Now you can see why I chose such a strong-minded man.

Kent: We're all with ya, Sheriff. If you need any help, I'll be your deputy.

*At one time before he became the town drunkard, the banjo strummer had served as deputy for famous Marshal Destry ("When I was Destry's deputy, I was good with guns, you know. I was equal to any emergency...They don't know what a big man I was. I was Tom Destry's deputy..."). To their utter surprise, he unexpectedly sobers up and informs everyone that he is now hiring the great Tom Destry's son as deputy to clean up the town:*

Dimsdale: I want a deputy like I was when Destry was my boss. Why we handled a much tougher and ornery crowd than I see present. Why when we started shootin', they ran out of town so fast, the breeze from their coat-tails set off a scythe of a windmill.

Frenchy: But Destry is dead.

Cowboy: That makes him the right man for the job.

2nd Cowboy: Saves us a lot of trouble.

Dimsdale: Is that so? Well young Tom ain't dead and his father brought him up to be the toughest and fighting-est man that ever growed up in the West. He ain't got as big a name as his pa, but he cleaned up Tombstone. And I'm sendin' for him to be my deputy. And when he gets here, Destry will ride again!

*The scene cuts to pairs of running horses' legs, attached by harnesses to a rumbling stagecoach on the way to Bottleneck. Inside the Pioneer Stage Line coach is Thomas Jefferson Destry (James Stewart) [a reference to the famous 3rd President and to the recent role Stewart had played in another 1939 film Mr. Smith Goes to Washington - Jefferson Smith], the son of a legendary frontier peacekeeper, called upon to*

help him tame the town as the new deputy lawman. The pleasant young man spends his time carving wooden napkin rings as a hobby to calm his nerves: "You'd be surprised at the genuine rage you can work off just by carvin' a little piece of wood like that." One of his fellow passengers, a cattleman named Jack Tyndall (Jack Carson) is baffled by the unarmed deputy's pacifism: "Are you sure your name is Destry?" It's a common question for the namesake of the famous deceased lawman: "Folks is always askin' me that."

In the saloon, the misunderstood, henpecked Russian Boris, who is often mistakenly called Callahan by his boarding house manager/wife Lily Belle Callahan (Una Merkel) (the former Mrs. Callahan), plays poker with Frenchy:

Lily Belle: Please, Frenchy, I am not Callahan. Callahan was my wife's first husband and he's dead. I am Boris Alexandrovich Stavrogin and I'd like to be called by my name.

She bets thirty bucks against his pants just as the Pioneer Stage Coach Line arrives in town. In parallel sequences, the film cuts back and forth between the poker game in the saloon and the grand entrance of the stagecoach on the Main street. After Wash Dimsdale has tidied up the sheriff's office, he alerts the townspeople in the saloon that the town's new, tough lawman is arriving: "Kent, you'd better prepare yourself. You're gonna need a man." Wash expects a fearsome gun-shooter and quickly identifies headstrong Jack as his new deputy after he assaults the stagedriver (Bud McClure) for deliberately making the trip a rough ride. After a misidentification, the sheriff turns and is dismayed to be introduced to the real Destry. The soft-spoken, gawky, mild-mannered deputy steps from the stagecoach holding a frilly parasol and a birdcage for Jack's sister Janice Tyndall (Irene Hervey) as she steps out. Upon his arrival, he is the object of ridicule and laughter:

Bugs Watson: Canary bird.  
Gyp Watson: Parasol.

When tempted by her, Boris loses his pants to Frenchy's two Aces - she immediately demands that his pants be stripped from him:

Boris: I'll call. I'll bet my pants.  
Frenchy: Two aces.  
Boris: I was right. Why didn't I listen to myself?  
Frenchy: Hand over those pants!  
Boris: Oh but little Frenchy, I can't. It's undignified. Think of my position. I've met every king in Europe.  
Frenchy: Now you met two Aces in Bottleneck. Off with those pants.

Wash is embarrassed by his new assistant's first impression of weakness:

Dimsdale: Everybody's laughin' at ya. Tom, you made an impression on this town that's got to be eradicated right now.  
Destry: Oh now Wash, don't you think them first impressions are darn fool things to jump at, though?  
Dimsdale: Around here, you gotta jump first or you don't live long.

Destry shrugs and tells a homespun story about how first impressions are foolish to judge a person by. As they walk inside the saloon, Boris flees in his long johns after being humiliated in the card game. Dimsdale introduces Tom to Kent, Slade, and to Frenchy: "the real boss of Bottleneck." She looks up at the tall lanky deputy and makes a cliched reaction: "How's the weather up there?" He retorts smartly: "You can do better than that." Kent approaches to assert his dominance and provoke a fight by demanding his gun, and is baffled that the soft-spoken wimp doesn't even like to wear a gun. Destry is also teased for ordering milk at the bar:

Kent: Mr. Destry, before we start drinking, I think you and me oughta come to an understanding.  
Tom: Well, I'm all for folks understandin' each other. That's a mighty fine idea, Mr. Kent.

Kent: I'm glad you agree with me. So I'll start by telling you that I have a very peculiar hobby.  
Tom: So have I. Mine's carvin' napkin rings. What's yours?  
Kent: Mine's collectin' deputy sheriff's guns. (The saloon empties out) Whenever I meet a new deputy, I always ask him for his gun. And I ask 'em real nice.  
Tom: Well, I'm sorry Mr. Kent, I'm afraid this here's one gun your collection's gonna be minus.  
Kent: You mean I'm gonna have to take it?  
Tom: If you can. Now hold on, hold on. Don't get excited here. I was just tryin' to tell ya that I ain't got any guns. You see, if I would have had a gun there, why, one of us might have got hurt - and it might have been me. I wouldn't like that, would I? (Kent laughs with amusement)  
Bugs: Tweet, tweet. I'm a canary. Where's my cage?  
Gyp: It's gettin' sunny. Where's my parasol?  
Kent: Folks - seems like we got a deputy that knows what's good for him. If he don't carry a gun, he can't get into any trouble. And if anybody comes to you, you come to Uncle.  
Tom: I'll remember that, Mr. Kent.  
Kent: What'll you have, deputy? (They turn and face the bar)  
Loupgerou: Milk?  
Tom: Yeah, I think I will.

*To challenge and mock him even further in front of the laughing crowd, Frenchy hands Tom a broom and a wooden bucket full of water with the comment that he can use those things to clean up Bottleneck: "I can see now how you cleaned up Tombstone. You can start right here - and don't forget the corners." While everyone is still laughing at Destry's gentle ways, angry wife Lily Belle Callahan storms her way in. In contrast to Destry, she is upset that her Russian "lummo" of a husband has lost his trousers to Frenchy in a poker card game and accuses Frenchy of cheating:*

Lily Belle: Hey you, give me those pants. (She grabs them from Frenchy.) And from now on, you leave my husband alone!  
Frenchy: I don't want your husband, Mrs. Callahan. All I want is his money - and his pants.  
Lily Belle: And how did you get 'em? By makin' eyes at him while you cheat? You gilded-lily you!  
Frenchy: (insultingly and tauntingly) But Mrs. Callahan, you know that he would rather be cheated by me than married to you.  
Lily Belle: What did you say?  
Frenchy: You heard me.  
Lily Belle: That's what I thought you said.

*They engage in the roughest female catfight in film history. The unladylike, wild, free-for-all western brawl in the saloon (without stunt stand-ins) lasts almost two minutes, and includes scuffling, hair-pulling, dress-tearing, punching, wrestling, scratching, kicking and rolling on the floor. Peace-maker Destry breaks (or cleans) it up and cools off their heated argument by pouring a bucket of water on them. Feeling publically humiliated by him, Frenchy vengefully continues the fight with Destry, punching, kicking and clawing at him, then grabbing a six-shooter to aim at him. Everyone in the saloon stampedes for the exit. Further, when she tosses bar glasses, steins and bottles at him, he calls "Uncle" for Kent to rescue him, or ducks behind a raised chair. Hot-tempered, she rides on his shoulders as if he was a bucking bronco. He pleads with the furious saloon queen for reason (and law and order): "Hey, can't we talk this over?...Now wait a minute, lady." As he escapes one flying object after another and backs out from the wrecked saloon, he narrowly avoids being hit with another chair by ducking. He tells her that his 'welcome' at Bottleneck hasn't been exactly friendly: "You sure have a knack of makin' a stranger feel right at home, ma'am. Nice knowin' ya."*

*Excitedly frustrated and distressed, Dimsdale is dubious about his appointment of the placid Destry to be his deputy and berates his impotent assistant: "I never thought I'd live to see the day that Tom Destry's son would be the laughing-stock of the whole town....Why, you won't be able to stick your nose out of a door without everybody a-hootin' at ya." He threatens to fire Destry: "You're leavin' on the next coach." The sheriff asks: "How ya gonna face anybody after what you took from Kent and Frenchy?...I expected you to be like your Pa, comin' up blastin' behind shootin' irons. And what happened? You didn't have any. Why?" Destry talks about restoring order to the town in a new way - without guns. Philosophically, he*

*believes that guns are not the answer - his father was gunned down in Tombstone in the back even when armed with his weapons. Tom is resolved to stay and persuades the dubious Sheriff to swear him in as deputy and give him a badge:*

Tom: Didn't seem to do him much good, did they? That's one reason I don't believe in them.  
Wash: What in tarnation do you believe in?  
Tom: Law and order.  
Wash: Without guns?  
Tom: *(resolutely)* Without 'em!  
Wash: *(In a characteristic gesture of exasperation, he pulls up the front of his shirt, leaving the shirt-tails hanging out.)* Well, if that don't beat all, let go. Oh Tom, the reason they made me sheriff here is because I was the town drunk. They wanted someone they could kick around, someone who wouldn't ask questions. But I was aimin' to fool 'em, do things right, sendin' for you. And now, you fooled me.  
Tom: Well, you will fool 'em, Wash. We'll fool 'em together.  
Wash: The only way to do that is fill 'em full of lead.  
Tom: No, no, no, what for? You shoot it out with 'em and for some reason or other, I don't know why, they get to look like heroes. But you put 'em behind bars and they look little and cheap, the way they oughta look. And that serves as a warnin' for the rest of 'em to keep away.  
Wash: Oh that won't work here in Bottleneck. You go on home and I'll go back to bein' the town drunk. That's all I'm good for.  
Tom: Now you're not goin' back to bein' the town drunk and I'm gonna stay here and do this job I come for. My pa did it the old way and I'm gonna do it a new way. And if I don't prove to you that I'm right, I'll get out of town quick enough, don't worry. *(Understandingly, he tucks the shirt-front back into Wash's pants.)* But first you got to give me a chance, Wash. You've got to give me a chance on this thing...Now come on, come on, swear me in, Sheriff.

*The Sheriff presents Tom with a deputy's badge, cautioning: "Don't let anybody see it." Kent and his men surround Claggett's farm, forcibly attempting with gunfire to take what they had crookedly won. As the Sheriff makes his rounds with his deputy, he points out a blood-soaked, bullet-holed porch post with a tale of the Wild West to encourage his assistant to carry a gun or leave town. Unimpressed by the monument or the reasoning of the story, a laconic Tom stubbornly responds with one of his own folksy, pedagogical anecdotes/stories which compares himself to a stamp:*

Wash: Look at this post. Soaked through and through with the blood of Saw-tooth Magee. Yeah, he objected to a petticoat a neighbor's wife was wearing and they fit to a draw. Both buried in the same grave.  
Tom: It's all due to the petticoat.  
Wash: No, Saw-tooth and the neighbor and four innocent bystanders. You gotta listen to reason or get out of town.  
Tom: Aw, I think I'll stick around. You know, I had a friend once who used to collect postage stamps. He always said the one good thing about a postage stamp - it always sticks to one thing 'til it gets there, you know. I'm sort of like that too.

*Rowdy, "playful" cowboys ride through town shooting their pistols into the air. "No-gun Destry" quietly confronts the men with his drawl and borrows one set of guns from them: "Aside from being nice ornaments, a fellow can have a whole lot of harmless amusement out of these here toys." To their astonishment during spectacular target practice, the 'castrated' westerner demonstrates his dazzling six-shooter skills by shooting ornamental knobs off a distant storefront street sign - and then authoritatively confiscates the weapons from the over-awed reveller (Harry Cording): "Now the next time you fellows start any of this here promiscuous shootin' around the streets, you're gonna land in jail - do you understand?"*

*Destry questions the mysterious disappearance of the late Sheriff Keogh: "He forgets his rabbits, he forgets all these papers." In the meantime, they are alerted by young son Eli Whitney Claggett (Dickie Jones) that the Claggett farm family is under seige from Kent and his gang. At the ranch, Claggett affirms*

*that Kent's claims to their hard-earned farm are unfounded, due to Frenchy's involvement: "But I told you what that woman did to me. The game was as crooked as a hog's tail." Initially, Sheriff Keogh tried to uphold the law, according to Dimsdale: "He couldn't do nothin' about it. Everybody knows that he left town sudden." Destry insists that the piece of paper that deeds Claggett's property to Kent must be respected. But his next strategy is to visit Frenchy and "get better acquainted with the enemy...it's poker and coffee that's preying on my mind right now."*

*On "official business" later that afternoon at Frenchy's home, Destry is introduced as "the waterman" to Frenchy on a visit to "get neighborly." In an amiable, subtle confrontation, he first apologizes "for not knowin' who's the real boss of Bottleneck," and then insinuates that her reputation as a chanteuse is tarnished by rumors - while they are served coffee for breakfast:*

Destry: Of course, I could have come bargin' in here with all sorts of remarks, like a couple of rumors I just heard about you. That you not only sing down at that saloon but you also take part in crooked poker games - cheatin' folks out of their ranches.

Frenchy: Who said that?

Destry: Oh, it was just a rumor, of course. It ain't true. Well, anybody with half an eye could see that you wouldn't be part of any action like that. *(Clara serves coffee to him.)* I'll take that - I wouldn't want to have this coffee spilled in my lap, would I?

Frenchy: Just what are you getting at?

Destry: Well, when you have hot coffee spilled in your lap, you sort of get up quick and turn your back, and you don't know what's gonna happen, do ya?

*Enraged, she throws him out - they have a severe shouting match as he departs. He pretends to be naive, eliciting from her the fact that Keogh was 'taken care of.' He startles her at the door when he suggests that her excessive makeup may hide real loveliness under her tough facade:*

Destry: I've seen hundreds like you all the way from Jacksonville to Sacramento. And you all think easy pickin's will last forever.

Frenchy: You'd better mind your own business or you're heading for trouble.

Destry: Trouble is my business.

Frenchy: Well, you'll have plenty from me. I do as I like in this town - understand? *(She trips.)* And anyone who gets in my way is taken care of.

Destry: Like they took care of Keogh?

Frenchy: Yes, just like that.

Destry: That's what I thought.

Frenchy: What do you think you're going to do?

Destry: Don't get scared.

Frenchy: I'm not scared of anything, and you keep your mouth shut and get out of town before it's too late for you.

Destry: Oh now come on, I don't think you're half as bad as you make out to be.

Frenchy: Never mind what I am.

Destry: I'll bet you've got kind of a lovely face under all that paint, huh? Why don't you wipe it off someday and have a good look - and figure out how you can live up to it.

*After he leaves, she touches her face as if feeling it for the first time, looks into a wall mirror, and reflects on what he has just told her. She wipes the lipstick from her mouth with the back of her hand, and then cleans it with her feather boa. As the scene dissolves, a connection is established between Frenchy and the newly-arrived Janice, who is also looking in a mirror and applying makeup with a new chamois skin - a novel method that other towns-ladies are eager to try:*

Janice: It's one of the new chamois skins. It takes the shine off your nose.

*The ladies are also curious about her opinion of Destry: "Oh I know little about him. Apparently very nice and certainly different from the rest of the men you meet out in this country." The bartender, who is boarding in Mrs. Callahan's place, interrupts and calls to his landlady from a doorway where he has modestly wrapped himself in a curtain - Boris has robbed him of his pants:*

Boris: Prunes every day for breakfast I don't mind. Torn sheets I've got used to. But pants cannot swallow...Pants, mine are gone!

*With a menacing shot-gun, Lily Belle catches her husband fleeing out of one of the boarding house windows, wearing the bartender's oversized pants: "You misfit Cossack you - take off them pants!" The unlucky gambler pleads with her: "All I want to do is to be a cowboy and wear my own pants." She returns the pants to a demure Loupgerou as a commotion from outside brings everyone to the street.*

*The dispossessed Claggetts have moved into town, displaced by Kent's villany and Destry's reinforcement. Cattleman Jack Tyndall agrees with their assessment of the corrupt saloon owner: "That man Kent's got ahold of every ranch in the valley and he wants to charge two bits for every head of cattle going through." Fiesty Lily Belle is fed up with talk: "It's time the decent people of this town joined up and got rid of them hoodlums." Contemptuous, Tyndall is frustrated with the ineffectual Sheriff and deputy who won't use their fists or guns:*

Tyndall: Well, you'd better start in with that watery-eyed Sheriff and that gun-shy, lady-fingered Deputy of his...I ain't one of your weak-livered citizens that busts out cryin' every time you snap your fingers and I ain't gonna pay Kent's fancy prices....I'll get somethin' done about it if I have to take the law in my own hands.

*Finally, Destry stands up against taking the law into one's own hands, with another yarn:*

Destry: Nobody's gonna set themselves up above the law around here. You understand? I've got somethin' to say to you. I think maybe I can illustrate it a little better if I told you a story. I used to have a friend that was an Opry singer. But he went into the cement business. And one day, he fell into the cement. And now he's the cornerstone of the post office in St. Louis, Missouri. He should have stuck to his own trade. You'd better stick to yours.

*Later, Destry discovers Boris hiding in his closet and wearing his pants, and inquires: "What are my pants doing on your legs?" In a deal, Callahan is allowed to keep the garment if he assents to being sworn in as a second deputy, and commissioned as "one human bloodhound who will keep his mouth shut" to find the body of the slain Sheriff Keogh: "We can't prove that a murder's been done if we can't produce a corpus delecti, now can we?" Now that he has two eccentric deputies, Sheriff Dimsdale pulls on his shirt-front and exclaims: "Oh, why didn't I stay in the gutter where I was well off?"*

*Frenchy has had a change of heart about Destry and has begun to admire him, evidenced when she refuses to tell Kent, now jealous, about their conversation, and then is threatened by her boss: "If I ever catch you stackin' 'em on me, I'll personally put the lights out and then I won't know you from anyone else in the game." He predictably sidesteps at the door of her saloon dressing room as he exits, narrowly missing being hit from a vase she tosses at him from behind.*

*Outside the saloon for "fresh air," she approaches Destry and asks: "Got a match?" He compliments her beauty, noting the calm on her pretty face, and guessing that she has just experienced a violent episode. He compliments her with the pretense of a recollection from a book: "I read a book once that said that women always look their best in the peace and quiet that follows the storm of violence." Affectionately and with concern, she offers him urgent advice and a superstitious good-luck charm: "Keep my rabbit's foot. Keep away from dark corners." Having seen Destry with Frenchy, Tyndall bullies his way over, insulting the weak-kneed deputy and stating his intention to trespass on Kent's land:*

Tyndall: I see now why you don't need guns and why I can't get my cattle through. Let me tell you something, Destry, nobody's gonna rob me. I'm taking them through in spite of you, Kent, or anybody else...[referring to Frenchy] You're cuttin' in on Kent two or three different ways, aren't ya?

*In his first outward display of aggression, Destry flattens Tyndall with a solid, crowd-pleasing punch in the face. Over a game of checkers in the saloon, Destry speaks to Mayor Slade about the lack of cooperation in town toward him as a new lawman: "It seems every time we ask a question, folks either just shut up or*



walk away like they never heard us." In coded language, he predicts: "It looks like I'm gonna take one of your men. Evidently, Sheriff Keogh wasn't very popular, either, was he?...Every time I mention his name, it's sorta like I was talkin' about a ghost."

Wearing a cowgirl/bolero outfit on stage, Frenchy first asks her audience: "Anybody thirsty?" - and then places her leg up on a chair and begins belting out one of her most famous numbers, the saloon song: "See What the Boys in the Back Room Will Have." In the midst of the song, she kicks in the hind-end another saloongirl tart, sitting in the lap of a cowboy, who has taken attention away from her. To emphasize one line of the lyrics, she makes her throat quiver by grasping the flap of skin below her chin and jiggling it. And during the finale, she struts down the length of the bar:

Frenchy:        See what the boys in the backroom will have,  
                  And tell them I'm having the same.  
                  Go see what the boys in the backroom will have,  
                  And give them the poison they name.  
                  And when I die, don't spend my money  
                  On flowers and my picture in a frame.  
                  Just see what the boys in the backroom will have,  
                  And tell them I sighed,  
                  And tell them I cried,  
                  And tell them I died of the same.  
                  And when I die, don't buy a casket  
                  Of silver with the candles all aflame  
                  Just see what the boys in the backroom will have,  
                  And tell them I sighed,  
                  And tell them I cried,  
                  And tell them I died of the same.  
                  And when I die, don't pay the preacher  
                  For speaking of my glory and my fame  
                  Just see what the boys in the backroom will have,  
                  And tell them I sighed,  
                  And tell them I cried,  
                  And tell them I died of the same.

After Frenchy's performance, Destry baits and tricks Kent into thinking that he knows where Sheriff Keogh's body is to be found: "Supposin' we knew where there was one. It's in pretty good condition too." At the bar, Kent sends Gyp, one of his gang members, to check on the hidden body - "run out to the place to see if it's gone."

Bugs:            I'll bet if the thing's gone that Destry's in on it. If he is, can I personally slap him in the mouth with my pistol?

Kent:            You wouldn't want to hit a dead man, would ya?

Bugs:            (befuddled) Yeah. No. Well, I don't know.

Outside, Boris and Wash follow Gyp to the site of the hidden body of Sheriff Keogh. Inside the saloon as he rolls a cigarette with Frenchy, Destry tells another story. Realizing that the end of his tale will cause increasing trouble with Kent, she interrupts his tale with one of her own telling, about a man who found a pearl but died from eating the bad oyster:

Destry:        That fellow Kent reminds me of a friend of mine back in Kansas City. He was a great wine drinker. Every time he'd come into town with a new load of stock, he'd rush right into the first saloon. It didn't matter what saloon it was.

Frenchy:        I had a friend in Louisiana like that. Only every time he came to town, he went to the nearest oyster house and eat a hundred oysters. I'm sorry I interrupted you.

Destry:        Well, I don't think there's much point to my story. A hundred oysters?

Frenchy:        Yes, and everybody told this friend of mine not to eat oysters in July. And he wouldn't listen.

Slade: What's the point to that?  
Frenchy: He found a pearl - that big.  
Slade: Oh, that's good.  
Frenchy: No, it was bad. The oyster, I mean. It killed him.  
Destry: Who got the pearl?  
Frenchy: I did.

*Destry interrupts the rousing square dancing with an announcement of "official business," transmitted to him by a whispered message from Boris:*

Boris: The Sheriff and me have been pesterin' you folks with a lot of questions about the former Sheriff Keogh. Hold on, hold on now, don't go away. We ain't gonna ask no more questions because Wash has just found the answer. And uh, one other thing, all the relatives and friends of Gyp Watson are hereby notified that he's over at the jail, charged with murder.

*Gyp Watson has been arrested for the murder of the former Sheriff in a "darn-near air-tight" case. Kent is delighted that the trial will be presided over by the crooked Mayor/Judge.*

*When a twenty-five hundred dollar toll is being extracted from Tyndall at a cattle crossing by Kent's men, the cattlemen break the law and shoot his way through. In the next scene, Tyndall is jailed and behind bars in Bottleneck: "I don't care what the law says or anybody says. I brought those cattle through. I didn't pay a penny. And what's more, I ain't gonna pay and nobody's gonna make me." Janice regards her brother as "the most stubborn, ornery, mule-headed...self-opinionated bully I ever saw or heard of." Destry suggests that he "sue and recover the money," but that isn't a viable option: "Sue Kent with Slade on the bench? Ha, ha. You must think I'm awful dumb." Offscreen, Boris brings lunch to the imprisoned Gyp from his brother - Gyp complains about the lack of variety - and possible constipation: "Cheese, cheese, cheese for breakfast, cheese for lunch. Tell my brother to stop sending me cheese. I ain't no mouse."*

*Meanwhile, Destry has sent for a federal judge to keep Mayor Slade from presiding over the murder case. Tyndall is persuaded by Destry to pay Kent the toll: "I can get my murderer and you can get your money back." In the saloon, the jurors selected by the Mayor for the case are promised that they will be "plentifully provided with liquid refreshment," and "amply rewarded," if they will bring in a verdict of not guilty. Second deputy Boris is sent as a courier with the funds to pay Kent - he promises emphatically: "Command me. Nothing can tempt me from my duty...I'm a courier, fast as a bolt of lightning. Silent as the night itself." Boris delivers Tyndall's payment, faithfully refusing to answer any further questions from Kent: "I'm a mummy, I'm a Sphinx. I don't answer questions." The Russian is proud of his role as a deputy: "I'm trying to live up to the blood of my forefathers." As he leaves, he speaks to the inmate's simple-minded brother:*

Bugs: Hey you! You keepin' my brother comfortable? He's very delicate.  
Boris: Oh, he's doing as well as can be expected. But he told me to tell you, 'No more cheese.'  
Bugs: Did he say that?  
Boris: I'm quoting his every word.  
Bugs: Gee, that's bad if he don't want no more cheese. They're not gonna hang him, are they?  
Boris: Fortunately, that is not up to me. It's up to Judge Murtaugh.  
Bugs: That's good. *(He pauses and thinks)* Judge Murtaugh? *(To Slade)* Hey, Mayor. Who is this Judge Murtaugh? What's he got to do with my brother?

*In the jail that night, yarn-spinning Destry is determined to keep his prisoner "good and healthy":*

Destry: You wouldn't want to hang a sick man, would we?  
Gyp: Do you still think you're gonna hang me?  
Destry: Why, did you think you're gonna get out of it because you're innocent?  
Gyp: I ain't sayin' who's innocent or who's guilty

Destry: Well, I always say, you have to admire a man who'd get himself hanged for a friend. I used to know a fellow once...  
Gyp: *(cutting him off)* You know too many fellows, Destry.

*Learning that Destry is bringing in an outside judge, Kent's men plan to thwart Destry's scheme and break Gyp out of jail. According to Destry's way of thinking, "either Gyp or his brother are gonna tell us alot as soon as they find out that Slade ain't gonna be on the bench...I think this old town's gonna settle down into somethin' pretty peaceful one of these days." Frenchy knows that there will be an assault on the jail and sends a message through Clara to protectively lure and summon Destry away from being murdered. As they share drinks at her place a second time, she sits next to him with glittery gold sparkles in her hair. Frenchy tells him that she has suddenly decided to leave town to return to Louisiana: "...I wanted to see you before I left...I'm just tired of Bottleneck - the whole crowd and everything I've been doing. So I'm going back to New Orleans."*

Destry: Well, the folks are all gonna miss you around here. All except a few wives, I suppose.  
Frenchy: What about you?  
Destry: Me too.

*She invites him to join her in New Orleans: "It's wonderful this time of year. You'd like it there. How about it?" Three gun shots ring out, and she deliberately holds him back from rushing toward a certain death: "No Tom, you can't go out there. They know all about the federal judge. They'll kill you if you go down the stairs. Stay here, Tom." When Destry eventually enters the jail, he finds a crowd standing silently. Gyp has been rescued, and Wash is on the floor, fatally wounded. In his final moments of life during the death scene, Destry assures Wash that he bravely died like his own father:*

Wash: Well Tom, they came.  
Destry: Now don't do any talkin' now, just rest.  
Wash: I'll talk if I wanna - for a little while, anyway.  
Destry: All right, if you wanna talk.  
Wash: *(attempting a joke)* I'll bet you knew a fellow once who did something like falling asleep when he oughta kept awake. Didn't ya, huh?  
Destry: Yeah, I knew a fella that lived down around Wichita. He was a ...well you see, he tried to keep awake one night when he was gonna catch a stage over to a nearby town and he had a girl over there he was courtin'...  
Wash: A man must be an awful fool to get shot in the back....  
Destry: Wait a minute, you know, that's how they shot my father. They didn't dare face him either.  
Wash: They didn't give us a chance, did they?  
Destry: No.  
Wash: Oh, I'm sleepy, plumb-tuckered out. That Gyp has kept me awake too much. *[The plaintive tune of "Little Joe" is played softly.] (Destry tucks Wash's shirt into his trousers one last time.)*

*Destry's stuttered, hesitating words are cut short by pain that rushes over Wash's body. At one point, the Sheriff begs for the end to the story ("this better be good") about a man who fell asleep - but he never hears the end of the unfinished story.*

*In the conclusion, the normally pacifistic Destry becomes militant and determined to bring justice to Wash's murderers. In silence, he returns to his boarding house room and straps on his father's guns to seek vengeance, abandoning his principles of passive resistance. A group of men, including Tyndall now as an ally, follow him to the corral to get ready to ride into town on horseback. He leads the good people of the town in a raid on the saloon. Frenchy, now on Destry's side and convinced of the mounting evidence of Kent's crimes, incites the respectable ladyfolk in town to aid and protect their men from getting shot:*

Frenchy: What do you stand here like a lot of sheep? Why don't you stop them?  
Townswoman: Get out of here.  
Mrs. Callahan: Go back where you belong.

Frenchy: Well, wherever I belong, I don't pretend.  
Townswoman: You shut your mouth.  
Frenchy: And I wouldn't wait around for my men to get killed without doing something about it.  
Mrs. Callahan: Will you get out of here?  
Janice: Wait a minute, wait a minute, what can we do?  
Frenchy: Oh, I'll tell you what you can do.

*Kent and his men barricade themselves inside the Last Chance Saloon - a massive shootout commences as the townspeople battle the gang from the street. Janice and Mrs. Callahan lead the armed women (with pitchforks, garden implements, pieces of picket fences, and various wooden clubs) in a march down the main street between the two opposing sides. They burst into the saloon wielding their weapons and engage in a wild, hand-to-hand combat with Kent's men - without gunfire. Meanwhile, Destry has stealthily climbed in the second floor saloon window and emerged into the melee on the saloon floor, while searching for Kent. One by one, Gyp, Bugs and Slade are knocked unconscious by gangs of women with rolling pins, as they protest: "You can't do this, it ain't legal."*

*Frenchy helps to defend Destry against Kent who stalks him from the saloon's second story balcony. She cries out to attempt to warn him about the ambush: "Look out, Tom!" She forces her way over to Destry and fearlessly leaps into the line of fire to block the bullet meant for him. She is mortally wounded in the back as she throws her arms around him. Destry shoots Kent, but Frenchy collapses and dies in his arms. Before dying, she lets him know that she loves him, gasping:*

Frenchy: Would you kiss me goodbye?

*Before their last kiss, she wipes away her lipstick - as he had suggested - as a final gesture. She expires and her head rolls away from Destry just as their lips touch.*

*In the film's concluding sequence, there is a new welcoming sign to the transformed town of Bottleneck. On a "fine day," an unarmed Destry strolls down the peaceful main street, whittling a napkin holder. Young Eli Claggett adoringly worships and imitates his footsteps, dress, whittling, and other mannerisms. Destry repeats the oft-told story of Saw-tooth Magee at the famous porch post. The story is so well-known that Eli spins another tall tale:*

Destry: Did you ever hear the story about Saw-tooth Magee? Right at that post there.  
Eli: You mean the one where he fit his neighbor into a draw over a petticoat?  
Destry: Yeah, that's the one.  
Eli: Aw, everybody's heard that one. Wash sure could make 'em up, couldn't he?...Did he ever tell you the one where he shot a whole tribe of Indians singlehanded?  
Destry: I guess I missed that one.  
Eli: Well, it goes like this, see? He was out scoutin' one mornin', and he come face-to-face with a whole tribe of Indians....

*His story is interrupted by a passing wagon of young girls loudly singing: "Little Joe." A smile crosses Destry's face as the song invokes the memories of both Wash and Frenchy - fallen friends who sacrificed their lives. He is summoned by Janice rushing from the boarding house porch and calling out for him. She is distressed about a fight ("that sounded like murder") going on between Boris and Mrs. Callahan. Now that he's proven himself, Boris smashes the picture of his wife's ex-husband (reclaiming his masculinity and his dominance in the household), and replaces it with his own, deputy cowboy-style portrait: "The old regime is over and the new regime is here. Boris Alexandrovich Stavrogin is the head of his own house." Tom and Janice leave the domestic squabble in which Boris regains the respect of his wife. Destry begins reminiscing again:*

Destry: You know, speakin' of marriage, Janice...  
Janice: (moving a step closer) Yes, Tom?  
Destry: I had a friend once...

*THE END scrolls up the screen to interrupt his talkative anecdote*