

THE LONELY COWBOY

by Eric Goulem

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The Lonely Cowboy was first produced by Mandela House and Glass Onion Theatre in Montreal in February, 1997 at the Geordie Space. Directed by Eric Goulem. Daniel Brochu played the Cowboy and Eric Goulem was the Sand Clown.

The second production of *The Lonely Cowboy* was in November 1997 by Montreal's Theatre 1774 as a part of their *November to Remember* series. Directed by Peter Smith. Eric Goulem played the Cowboy and Howard Bilerman was the Sand Clown

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Set: A backdrop of a desert landscape (i.e. buttes, dunes, cacti and boulders) in front of a cloudless sky.

A few cacti cutouts randomly spread out on the stage, a large rock to sit on, and a campfire.

Pre-show music: A traditional Chinese lament intertwined with original grotesque country mood music.

BLACK

LONELY COWBOY: (*sung*) I'm in my Sunday best I've got no place to go
I don't know a soul and I haven't for years
I just got my spirit, six shooters and spurs
My two gallon hat my chaps and my nerves
So if you ever see me please say "Hello !"
I'll be in my Sunday best with no place to go
I'll be in my Sunday best with no place to go

LIGHTS UP

(*Cowboy is kneeling at foot of rock staring at his fist, sand is dropping from his hand he notices the audience.*)

Hello!

I'm glad y'all came.

I hope everybody's comfortable and familiar with one another.

--- if not... I'd like for everyone to take this opportunity to greet one another.

You know! Like in church.

C'mon now, don't be shy!

Say! Now doesn't that make you feel a whole lot better now?

WHATCHU SAY!!?

I'm just askin'.

THORTON BUNTWORTH!!

Meanest son of a bitch I ever did meet!

Purdiest man I ever saw too. No! Really.

He stood six foot seven inches tall, weighed about two-hundred and seventy five trim stones and had looong golden hair --- Always in braids.

He wore this BEAUTIFUL midnight-blue silk dress, with a matching baby blue six gallon hat and a lovely pair of sandy brown suede high heel shoes.

He had a pair of Wessons made out of pure gold, with pearl handles. And he knew how to use 'em--- like an artist uses his brush. Perrrrfection!

Now. You see. Every time Thorton Buntworth came to a new town? He'd get off his horse, brush off his dress and head straight to the local saloon and order himself a tall glass of milk.

“HEY DAISY!” One of the fellas would holler from across the bar. “I think you’re missin’ a few pedals.”

Thorton would put down his glass of milk, calmly turn towards that table... and toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel.

Thorton would present his two fists --- facing up --- to the man who uttered these words. Now, that man, --- being a sinister gambler and all --- would usually smile at the challenge and choose the left hand. Thorton would smile in return and open up his left hand. In it would be a gold coin.

A silence would fall over the room. Then that man would bellow with laughter.

At the drop of a hat, Thorton had his left hand in the man’s mouth holding his tongue.

In Thorton’s right hand, concealed, was a switch blade.....PHHHT.....Thorton then cut off the man’s tongue. Concealed once again the switchblade, in the palm of his right hand, then concealed the man’s tongue aaaand the gold coin in the palm of his left hand.

He would then gaze around the table, presenting his two fists to each of the men at that table, and not a man would flinch.

His eyes would now have come full circle to the man without a tongue, who was laying unconscious in his own blood.

Thorton would open up his left hand... and there... all alone... was the gold coin. Thorton would take that gold coin and place it there, in the blood, next to the man’s head, turn around... and toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel toe-heel. Turn to the bar... reach out... take his glass of milk... and drink it and order another and drink it and order another and drink it... until everything went back to normal. He would thank the bartender and walk out of that saloon as though nothing had ever happened.

BLACK

(sung)

I think of you... everyday
You're in my food, you're in my dreams
You're in my breath, you're in my shit
I think of you... everyday.

(sound of howling wolf)

LIGHTS

The Grand Canyon. What a sight!
I wonder how many pebbles it would take to fill that sucker.

BLACK

LIGHTS

MUSIC: Traditional Chinese music

(Cowboy begins upstage, center, descending downstage doing several Tai-Chi like moves as a centring/focussing dance until he reaches downstage, centre. He flips a coin in the air.)

MUSIC ENDS

(He watches the coin rise and fall. Staring at it, waits for it to come to a rest on the ground. Backstage a twig snaps. Cowboy pulls out his gun - still staring at coin - and fires in the direction of the sound. From stage right, a clown falls dead to upstage, center.)

BLACK

LIGHTS

Cemeteries! My home away from home.
Uh-huh!
There's a certain peace you find among the dead.
The final secret! Just hummin', six feet below.
And sometimes, if you lay down in a cemetery; you can find it.
It isn't yours to keep, but you can get a taste. And the more you let go of the things that tie you to this world; the longer you can savour it. And your soul can surf in that

dimension so freely... Talking the silent talk with all the resting children... Feeling the music that the tombstones sing to one another... Smelling the affection that comes from each of the planets at the speed of love... Poing... Flirk... Frappow... but as soon as it smells something it doesn't like... SNAP! You're back to thinkin' "GEEZE! Did I change my underwear today or am I wearing that same stinking pair I had on yesterday? What if I get shot and I have to go the doctor and he's got to pull down my pants and--- Whoooooaaa!"

There's a certain comfort in death.

It's the one thing you can truly count on.

BLACK

DAMN!

LIGHTS

I've got to find that... what do I have to... that thing... just... When I was growing up... you see, my parents never spoke to one another. Not that they didn't love each other.

My father built coffins for a living; really nice, quality coffins. He took great care and pride in his work. He ever became quite ambitious with his talent for crafting these vessels. --- That's what he called them *vessels*.

He began building furniture, to make some extra money, but mostly because of his passion for building.

But you see, my father wasn't a very creative man. So all the furniture looked like coffins.

Chairs, with backs shaped like coffins, loong tables that looked like a skinny man's coffin and beds that just simply looked like... coffins.

The beds were his most popular item.

He built them so that if you flipped the mattress over, it would seal the coffin. He believed that if the occupant of the bed slept in it for years it would absorb who they were, and therefore the vessel would be protected and enter the next world with a much stronger identity and presence.

People felt comforted by this idea and so my father's theory provided our entire town with the luxury of living life without the fear of death.

My mother --- was a witch doctor.

Only, she had a theory that the cactus was the sole provider for all ailments.

She said that there were three hundred and sixty five individual elements that you could extract from a cactus and that the different combinations available from those elements was all you needed for a healthy and sound existence.

She made teas, compresses, ointments, spiritual beverages, purifying bath oils that made you piss, shit, and cry all at the same time. --- I walked in on her and a patient one day and saw this young boy laying on the table and from head to foot, my mother had pierced this boy's body with cactus needles. Only... He didn't seem to be in pain. In fact... he looked like an angel sleeping on a cloud.

Even though my mother's ways were strange, she kept our entire town healthy.

Except my father.

I imagine my father was the only person in town that my mother had no physical contact with.

BLACK

LIGHTS

(Cowboy, looking off stage right, pistol in his hand, smelling for trouble.)

Sand clowns!

One of the most dangerously clever and cold-blooded creatures on the cowboys menu of enemies.

Rejected by the circus for their diabolically self-indulgent behaviour.

EATIN' BABIES!

Giving the elderly heart attacks through the element of surpriiiiise!

Wiping out entire sections of an audience by giving exploding flowers to the purdiest little girl present.

Now what makes these creatures so dangerous, is that in order to become a sand clown they must first be accepted into the circus as a clown, completely concealing their evil tendencies.

For if the slightest fragrance of foul play is detected, it is immediately reported to the ring master and that clown would not only be ejected from the circus but also shunned... *(the Cowboy whips out a sign with the words "The Society of the Guise" written on it)* by the Society of the Guise. He would then be sentenced to the most humiliating death: *Sodomy of the Cactus*. That clown would then be left on display until the sun and the birds and the insects could no longer feast on this pathetic symbol of double failure.

However. The clown that succeeds in passing the first test of the Guise, must then commit one act of evil to graduate to the level of *Sand Clown*! The longer they are able to remain in the circus undetected, and the greater the act of evil they perform is... decides their eternal rank as a Sand Clown.

BLACK

(Cowboy crouches by the campfire and begins playing "Home on the Range" on the arhu, a two-stringed, traditional Chinese instrument).

LIGHTS FADE UP TO FULL BY END OF SONG

My hometown was quite a special place.

Acquiesce.

Every single person in that town had a specific purpose that slid right into place within the function of our entire community.

You see, our place of worship was led by a man from China *Xin Fei*. And our temple was called *Ren Mai*, the conception vessel.

Every morning before dawn, our entire town would gather in *Ren Mai* to celebrate the coming of a new day. This celebration consisted of twenty-five minutes of silence, in which everyone would meditate on the events of the day that just passed, liberating the residue from within. A bell would ring, we would all rise, and drink from the fountain of the paradoxical voyage and take our place outside the temple, facing East.

What we were drinking was a concoction of my mother's, a hallucinogen from the core of the cactus, that allowed the host of the elixir to experience an entire lifetime within the confines of their mind.

A young girl could live seventy years as a man, a boy could live five as a grizzly bear, and a beautiful young lady, could live thirty gruelling years as a slave to a demon.

And once that life was nearing its end, they would see a light and let it have them. The close, they got to the light, the more accelerated the pull on their soul would be until they arrived at their destination and they were travelling so fast, that it appeared as if time, space, and thought were all standing still; all would be black --- and in an instant --- a new light would appear.

The sunrise at *Acquiesce*.

And once in a while, one of the younger members --- while reaching puberty --- would merely have a visitation during their voyage. Their spirit guide would then reveal to them their place within this puzzle.

BLACK

LIGHTS

(Cowboy, with back to audience, pulls three, sexy, rugged gunslinging moves. He removes his handkerchief from around his neck and cleans his gun. He puts it back into its holster. He quickly spins around to face the audience. He mimes shooting the gun at a member of the audience, blows into his gun, and flicks a mime coin in that audience member's direction.)

BLACK

LIGHTS

It's just the moon and me now.

It used to be that I could look at the moon and there would be a direct link between me... and a certain someone.

I swear, it was as if I was walking in their shoes, feeling what they were feeling, experiencing each little detail.

From the simplest thing, like a scratch of the cheek, to the complex inner mechanics of a great loss or the uncertainty of where to place your next step.

And every so often --- honest to God --- be it when I'm saddlin' up or when I'm reminiscin' on my childhood, whatever it may be, I feel as if someone's holding me in the palm of their hand... admirin' me. And whenever I get this feeling? I simply look to the sky... be it at the sun or at the moon... everything around me disappears, as if the sun or the moon in an instant swallowed all existence, save me and... you.

And there's no fear, there's no loss... there's no memory... of anything... whatsoever.

BLACK

(pause)

It's just the moon and me now.

LIGHTS

The Society of the Guise.

How shall I put this to you, Ladies and Gentlemen?

Well, it's simply the largest... and longest running organization since the beginning of time.

Now. The Society does not only deal with clowns.

They are merely one facet of the myriad masks belonging to this eternally infinite beast.

Religion, medicine, politics, education, science, law, you name it --- they're in it. Always have been, always will. An institution devoted purely to the art of deceit.

(pause)

Each profession has their own set of rules. For example, a member who decides to enter into the realm of politics must choose either to be a benevolent saint or a self serving greed pig, and follow that path through to the end until they commit their one act... of self mutiny.

Be it the saintly politician executing an entire people; or the pig giving up all his earthly possessions to save a starving community so that he may retire to the jungle to be a Bush politician.

However, every profession shares the rule of eternal rank.

“The longer you are able to carry out your charade, and the greater the final act is ... ” decides your eternal rank as: Sand Clown, Bush Politician, Rock Doctor, or Water Priest.

BLACK

LIGHTS

The Sunflower Tribe.

A peaceful breed of Indians, that have sequestered themselves, to avoid the influence... or rather infections of the White Man.

These creatures have dedicated their lives, and the lives of future generation Sunflowers to maintaining a garden in the middle of a desert that receives only seven inches of rain a year.

A garden --- perfectly circular --- forty feet in diameter --- that has been in existence for two hundred years.

Potatoes, onions, carrots, peppers; red, green, orange, purple, sweet and hot.

Tomatoes, lettuce, chives, garlic, ginger, turnips, beets, radish, eggplant, cucumber, yams, celery, string beans...

Watermelon, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, corn...

And last, but certainly not least, a glorious, ten-foot high sunflower.

You may be thinkin' “How in Hell could they grow all this wonderful food in the middle of a desert?” Well, Hell isn't that far off. FIVE HUNDRED feet below the surface of

this desert, is an underground river that flows from Alaska, all down through Canada, right on through the U. S. of A. and spills out into the Gulf of California.

The Sunflowers discovered this passage quite by accident some two hundred years ago. Back when they hunted seals and polar bear and inhabited the Great White North, the Chief had a visitation one night, during his dreams. It showed him a place that he had never seen before --- a cave --- yet all that surrounded the cave was very familiar to him. In that cave were hundreds of baby seals --- it must have been a protective ground for the young, a haven for the vulnerable to sojourn until they were able to go out into the world with their elders.

When the Chief awoke the next day, he gathered the entire tribe and demanded that everyone participate in this hunt. "It will be a day for all to remember and recount for years to come." So they packed all their canoes with hunting gear and provisions for the day and set out.

The Chief recognized in his dream the usual hunting spot and knew that this cave must have been hidden behind a wall of ice there.

When they arrived, the Chief was certain of the location and had the three strongest young warriors commence at hacking away at the ice.

Hours passed --- fifteen young warriors had exhausted themselves performing this task --- when finally, a piece of ice, six feet wide, ten feet high, gave way and vanished in an instant, bringing the first canoe with it.

The remaining eight canoes hovered in silence.

The Chief then spotted something --- at first he thought they were stars, and that they had cracked a hole in the sky... but then it became clear to him --- hundreds of white, baby seals lining the walls of the cavern.

Having forgotten the fate of the first canoe, the Chief immediately tied all the canoes together and the tribe set forth to claim their provisions for an entire year.

The moment the first canoe passed through the ice portal, the seeming stars evaporated and the eight canoes were hurled into a rapid, pitch black night.

For three and a half days, the Chief lived without sight --- for the first eight hours, he only experienced sound and motion. In his front audio periphery; relentless, gushing water, bleeding into his rear periphery to accompany shrieks of terror and loss.

(Cowboy vocalises the shrieks.)

During the sixth hour, something happened to the Chief. All the sounds he heard, merged, to form one very high pitched harmonic, then slowly, the motion of the river

joined in. The Chief felt as if he was a musical note, transfixed, hovering just above the strings of a musical instrument.

He remained in this space for what could have been one second or one year, he could not tell.

A golden, horizontal, infinite cocoon.

Without any warning, he was ripped from his nest and sent spiralling through fire, rock, earth, and snow and emerged into a star filled sky.

When he reached his apex and began his descent, his entire being was overwhelmed with fear.

The peaks of the mountains were fast approaching and he could not see the opening from whence he came. Panic set in, and the Chief began to flail about, fighting for his life. The more he flailed, the slower his descent became.

The Chief then realized where he was; or rather, what he was where he was.

The fear was gone and the Chief allowed himself to plummet once again, this time picking up even greater speed. As he came to within inches of the mountain tops, he spread his wings, levelled out, then soared straight up towards the stars.

The freedom the Chief was feeling in this moment seemed to have a price tag on it. An honour bestowed upon him bearing great responsibility.

He didn't know exactly what it was, so he decided to follow his instincts and headed South, using the mountain tops as a path.

The further South he flew, the stronger his instinct grew, abandoning himself completely to his unknown purpose.

The Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Arizona --- all the while maintaining a distance of three feet from the surface of the mountains, and not once did he see anything out of the ordinary --- that is, not until he was flying over a desert. Miles and miles of flat dry land. In the distance, however, something jutted out straight up from the ground. The closer he got, the more he could feel the immensity of its presence.

A lone mountain, in the middle of nowhere, that stood twelve thousand feet high.

When the Chief reached the foot of the mountain, and began his ascent along its face, it appeared as though the mountain's peak was even further away than the sky itself.

And up he went!

Rising and rising and rising and rising... the Chief was so determined to find what it was at the top of this mountain that yearned so for him.

When he reached the summit... he saw nothing.

A vast, empty, plateau. He combed with his eyes this wasteland in the sky. But still... nothing.

Yet the yearning was ever more present, imploring him for liberation.

The Chief gathered himself and took pause.

Then it came to him.
It wasn't on the mountain top.
The Chief quickly turned and glided towards the edge of the mountain.
What appeared to be a lone flower, in the middle of the desert, pulsated as though it was beckoning the Chief to join it.

And so he did.

BLACK

(The actor playing the Clown, while crossing the stage in black, speaks in unison with the Cowboy.)

It is said that twins share a common bond. A sixth sense which makes them privy to their siblings every scream of pain. Each outburst reverberating like a self contained echo.

The Chinese believe it starts in the womb with the sharing of the mother's biological fluids.

I saw, in a dream once, a pair of unborn twins, and it looked like one had his little hands wrapped around the other's throat as if strangling him.

Sounds strange don't it?

(The voice of the Clown drops out.)

But if you close your eyes, can you honestly tell me you, yourself wouldn't think about it?

LIGHTS

(The Cowboy is looking up at the sky.)

Oooooooooo --- my beautiful, beautiful friends!

How do you all get along so well?

You're always makin' way for one another, effortlessly adapting for a newcomer's welcome so that it may be a seamlessly sensual experience.

Oooh! Look at you! You did it again. Aaaaah. You're too much.

--- Hello, Mmmister! I've been practising.

Jesuss --- fuckin' --- Christ! You are all just --- so --- do you love me as much as I love you? --- You must.

I wish I could be among you.

(The Cowboy winks.)

I will.

BLACK

LIGHTS

(The Cowboy is sitting upright on a rock at attention.)

365!

My mother. My father. My brother.

We used to play games at the dinner table every night.

All sorts! And not one night would be the same as the next.

“Name the Constellations! Poem About your Spaghetti! Sign Language Debate on Murder!”

Always with the intent... to educate; sharpening our wits, expanding our minds, nourishing our souls.

It was a place --- like no other in this world that I know of.

My mother, my father, my brother and I, played together, every single evening of our entire family life.

One night? We were all sittin’ around the table and I thought to myself, “Oh my God! Nobody’s playing the game. Somethin’s gotta be wrong. Everybody’s just sittin’, starin’ straight ahead, not sayin’ a word, not eatin’ none of the food --- just quiet.”

When all of a sudden, my mother lets out a sigh and looks over her shoulder.

Lets out another sigh, and puts her hand to her mouth, and starts sobbing to herself very quietly.

I’m not sayin’ nothin’, my brother’s not sayin’ nothin’, my fa --- My father... is lookin’ right past my mother, out the front window, lookin’ really stern, like he wants to give somebody a whoopin’.

Then he starts on the table... First reeeal slow.

(The Cowboy thumps his fist three times to a slow rhythm.)

Then his teeth.

(The Cowboy starts chattering his teeth while continuing to thump. He stops chattering, but the thumping continues.)

My mother’s sobbin’, my father’s thumping and clicking --- Theen (*the thumping stops*) my brother gets up from the table and heads straight to the window starin’ out of it he starts singing, “WHERE HAS EVERYBODY GONE? WHERE HAS EVERYBODY GONE?,” over and over again. (*The Cowboy imitates all three consecutively, starting with his mother sobbing. Pauses. Smiles. Repeats the imitation cycle again.*)

MOM! DAD! MOM! DAD!

(The Cowboy continues to imitate all three consecutively, adding his own cries of “Mom! Dad!”. Each time he goes through the cycle, it gets faster and faster, until it reaches a cacophony of sobs, thumping and chattering, singing, and cries. Then the Cowboy erupts into laughter.)

BLACK

LIGHTS

There is a Sand Clown.

--- Well, actually, No! that's not true.

There is a Clown, out there, who has entered into a circus, and gone undetected as a malevolent force, for three years... then left that circus.

Entered another circus, --- undetected, --- three more years --- and left.

He entered his third circus --- again --- undetected, three more years --- left.

Three different circuses over a period of NINE YEARS, UNdetected and still has yet to commit his final act.

No one! In the history of the Society, has ever been so ambitious, to flaunt their prowess to such a high degree as a true concealer.

The patience. The discipline. The timing of a master.

And he's still out there, waiting, for the right circus and the perfect moment, to become the highest ranked Sand Clown... Ever.

BLACK

LIGHTS

Only, when he arrived, he realized that it wasn't a flower at all!

But an elaborately, luscious garden.

He examined this garden's each little detail... plump, jolly tomatoes... full, proud lettuce... coy, little raspberries... and a glorious, ten foot high, *sunflower!*

He had never seen such a plant before.

A tall, thick, green stem, a yellow collar and hundreds of black and yellow eyeballs.

He was in awe. He felt as if he had found his place, reached his home, arrived at his destiny.

He didn't only feel this, he knew it at the core of his being --- Then, as if from over his shoulder, the Chief heard a faint sound, but nothing was there. As he turned back, he sensed something strange; the strawberries were screaming little strawberry pitched screams. (*The Cowboy imitates the sound.*) Then the string beans (*again*). Then the watermelon (*again*). Then the eggplant (*again*). Until every member of that entire organic village was screaming their little seeds out. (*Imitates all the vegetables, building to a cacophony. Eventually, returning to the sounds of Indians shrieking. Then stops abruptly.*)

The Chief was back in his canoe, with his tribe, bobbing in the Gulf of California.

The insanity of their three and a half day journey had come to an end.

Blue skies, lush green land, and tranquil, tranquil water.

The Sunflower Tribe headed for the shore and disembarked from their canoes. Once they were all gathered, the Chief described to them the garden that he had seen during his voyage.

The Tribe --- somewhat reluctant --- followed the Chief and headed due North to seek out the mountain. All along the way, trading furs and weapons for shovels, buckets, rope and seeds of all sorts in order to create the garden from the Chief's dream.

It took them three days of travel to reach the foot of the mountain and yet another day to climb to the top and down the other side, to the exact location of the dream garden.

When they arrived, they rested for a week. Regaining much needed energy for the task to come.

Then, they began digging a whole that would lead straight down to the underground river. Using the excess earth to shape the bed for the garden.

It took two full days to dig that hole. And once they reached the river, they had an endless supply of water.

A tunnel, ten feet in diameter, five hundred feet deep.

They planted their seeds and watered them and in the Spring, the garden that had been fermenting in the Chief's mind came to life.

BLACK

LIGHTS

For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Or at least there should be.

Xin Fei once told me that we must assume responsibility for each one of our actions and, therefore, accept the en.....suing repercussions.

BLACK

LIGHTS

(The Cowboy is upstage, center)

Casa del Banditos!

A drinking parlour on the border of Mexico and the United States. Frequented only by the most hardened criminals.

No-Neck Williams, Zipper-Face Phillips, Oedipus Gomez, and Rat-Man Rodriguez...
A den of maniacal debauchery.

Right down the center of this establishment, is a white dotted line.

GRINGOS!

WET-BACKS!

But as long as this segregation is respected by both parties,...

NO problemo!

And there hasn't been --- not once --- since this place swung open its doors to the
thirstiest, hungriest; village raping, church burning, outlaws both sides of the border.

In the doorway, a silhouette incredibly still, radiating an energy of monumental power.
All... six foot two inches of him, draped in luscious ebony, razor sharp teeth, and a scar,
just above his left cheek.

Every single eyeball in that joint gave its full attention to the mystery man.

*(Mimes swinging saloon doors. Follows dotted line downstage with eyes. Pauses. Then
struts along the dotted line like a freak from hell until he reaches the bar, downstage,
centre).*

Una cervesa!

And a beer!

(Spins around, facing upstage.)

He finds the meanest, dirtiest looking Mexican... and hurls the cervesa in his face.

He finds the meanest, dirtiest looking American... and hurls the beer in his face.

Looks to the doorway... and starts walkin'.

*(The Cowboy struts back upstage along the dotted line. Mimes exiting the saloon doors.
Turns around, facing the bar.)*

He stared and starred through that doorway for a good ten minutes.

And then it happened.

First the Mexican. He walked straight to the dotted line and stood there.

Then the American.

Then a Mexican. Then an American. Then a Mexican. Then an American. A Mexican.

An American. A Mexican. An American. Mexican. American. Mexican. American.

Until everybody in that bar was standing.

Thirty of THE most dangerous men in North America, facing each other, nose to nose,
awaiting the most gruesome battle imaginable.

The head Mexican and American starring into each other's eyes. Peering into each
other's souls...

Then the moment of truth.

The Mexican raised his hand and asked the American "Would you care to dance?"

And the American replied, "Why, surely."

And they began to waltz, slowly gliding across the room to a dimly lit corner.

Then the next couple joined in and off they went. Then the next couple. Then the next.

Until every single half-breed in that hole was tickling the floor with the rough soles of their filthy boots.

The Thorton Buntworth walked straight back into that bar... and swayed with a grin at his ridiculous masterpiece.

MUSIC: Tom Waits “Dave the Butcher” from the album *Swordfish Trombones*

(The Cowboy begins to waltz from side to side of the dotted line until he reaches downstage, centre.)

BLACK

LIGHTS

The year... is 1892.

Thorton and... Eli Buntworth, twins, were visited by their spirit guides.

Thorton was to leave his home... and join the Society of the Guise.

Eli was also to leave his home, and wander from town to town as a balancer of social situations.

Thorton, however, being the mischievous one, had a plan of his own.

It wasn't only his mischief that led him to this plan, but also his love and his need to be closer to his brother.

He explained to Eli, “That if we switched destinies, our bond as twins would remain strong and intact, even though we will be physically separated.”

Eli, being the peaceful one, stood in silence and stared into Thorton's eyes... and said...

“As you wish, Thorton.” As you wish.

BLACK

LIGHTS

It's the crack of dawn in the painted desert. The sun is yawning and its breath give colour to this still life. As time bleeds ever so gently from the horizon, shapes and textures present themselves randomly across the landscape; and this caress from Mother Nature wakes them up.

Among her children, is a tribe of Indians, still, in their dreams.

The Sunflowers.

Up and over; on the other side of the mountain, the sun has yet to illuminate the land.

In the darkness --- thundering across the desert --- is Thorton Buntworth and his barbaric band of fiends.

The previous night, at Casa del Banditos, Thorton had told the tale of the Sunflower's journey and said to his new-found friends that he planned to make a pilgrimage to their garden the next day.

This excited his menacing friends and so they decided to join him.

They gathered all their gear, saddled up, and set out to find the sacred garden.

They rode deep into the night and far beyond.

Thirty-one of the most dangerous men in North America were perched at the foot of the mountain... and in unison... they darted up... and up... and up... and up... The sun began to show itself, peeking over the mountain, creating a ceiling above them as if they were at the bottom of the ocean, racing to the surface.

Thorton was the first to arrive.

As he waited for the others, he admired the wondrous sunrise.

Lost in its beauty.

When the last of the clan reached the peak, they all gathered at the edge of the mountain that overlooked the Sunflowers.

One by one, Thorton watched his new found friends load their guns.

Then he spoke.

“Indians are the greatest warriors. If we are to win this battle, we must think like them and act as they do. We must form a single line and descend the mountain slowly as to not disturb anything. Their ears, their eyes. And once we have reached the foot of the mountain, we will begin our approach. First slowly, then gradually, we will ride faster and faster until we come to within twenty feet of the garden. Then we will break to one side and circle them, leaving them no way to escape. Then the slaughter may commence.”

They all listened to Thorton and agreed. And followed his lead.

Down they went! Taking pains not to disturb any loose rocks, or make any abrupt movements.

The Sunflowers were sleeping, side by side, all around the edge of the garden. They went to bed the night before expecting to wake up as usual, tend to the garden, and perform their daily routine.

Thorton and his clan had reached the foot of the mountain and were beginning their approach. At first a slow trot, picking up to a gallop, and eventually, when they were

within one hundred feet of the garden, they were racing full speed, the horses hooves pounding on the desert floor creating a deafening rumble.

The tribe began to wake, confused and disoriented by the thunderous noise, they had no idea or hope for what was to come.

The Chief of the tribe bounded to his feet... and saw what it was that was creating this disturbance.

The Sunflowers' apocalypse.

He thought back to the first Chief of the Sunflowers, and his journey, and how he and his people had struggled to build this life and the stories of all the other Chiefs and tribes between him and the beginning of the garden.

He began to wail, the loss of so many generations filtering through him.

He saw the first rider coming in at an unbelievable speed, followed by thirty more.

Thorton Buntworth tugged on his horses reins and his horse... leapt... high in to the air... landing at the Chief's feet, halting abruptly, looking down at the Chief.

Staring into each other's eyes... Thorton smiled at the Chief and turned to watch the bandits.

One by one, they dropped from the earth, falling five hundred feet. Destination? Gulf of California.

Thorton looked to the Chief once again... got off his horse... and bowed to him and started walking towards the mountain.

When he got to the mountain, he found himself a comfortable spot... and sat down... and watched the Sunflowers go through their daily routine.

And its been said... that's he's been sitting there watching, ever since. Waiting until he's worthy enough to join them.

(The Cowboy pauses. He takes off his left boot. Then he motions to take off his other boot, but before he does, he feels that someone is watching him. The Sand Clown walks slowly out from backstage left. He is wearing the same pants, shirt, and vest as the Cowboy. He also has the same facial hair. He is in full clown make-up and has one large clown shoe, the same colour as the Cowboy's boots. He is expressionless. They both stand, facing the audience, at opposite sides of the stage. The Cowboy draws his gun and points it at the Sand Clown. He pauses and stares at the Clown, smiles, then turns to the audience.)

You can lead a horse to water... but a zebra?

(The Cowboy glances at the Clown, then looks up.)

I will.

(The Cowboy winks at the sky. The Clown, slowly and deliberately, pulls out his gun and shoots the Cowboy. The Cowboy falls centre stage and reaches up to the Clown. The Clown removes his nose and hands it to the Cowboy. The Cowboy dies. The Clown turns upstage and walks slowly offstage.)

SAND CLOWN: *(singing)* Where has everybody gone?
Where has everybody gone?
Where has everybody gone?

BLACK

THE END