

NOBBLERS ROUND - INT. PRINCE ALBERT HOTEL - DAY

A bottle of whiskey stands on the counter of the bar.

WIESENHAVERN, the bartender, stares at half a dozen dirty glasses and half a dozen dirty men who watch with eyes like animals scenting poison bait. Of these Vandemonians the largest is MCADAM.

MCADAM

We got no money.

WIESENHAVERN

I know.

The Vandemonians look from the bottle to WIESENHAVERN and back again.

MCADAM

Out of tradition you're standin us that. We got no money or credit to pay.

WIESENHAVERN

One for tradition. Then you'll leave and do so without fuss.

MCADAM narrows his eyes at WIESENHAVERN, who does not flinch.

MCADAM

(gesturing at the bar)
Nobblers round then, lads.

They Vandemonians grin and swarm forward. MCADAM's eyes do not leave the bartender as he takes his drink. They all dispatch the whiskey. MCADAM puts his glass back on the counter.

MCADAM (CONT'D)

It's bloody good. The real sort of stuff.

WIESENHAVERN

I would not do insult with anything less.

MCADAM smiles with a mouthful of teeth smashed, cracked and missing.

MCADAM

You got your observance, mate. We got ours too and we hate bad manners. To be all square I'd say it's our shout and around again.

The Vandemonians guffaw and turn predatory looks upon WIESENHAVERN, who shows no immediate reaction. MCADAM motions one of his boys forward.

MCADAM (CONT'D)

Go and be mother, Danny.

The Vandemonians laugh as a thin and leering man moves toward the bar. WIESENHAVERN speaks and the man stops.

WIESENHAVERN

Hold on one moment then. I've got something rowdier in the back room.

WIESENHAVERN exits. The Vandemonians grin and MCADAM watches carefully. WIESENHAVERN emerges holding a decanter of dark Champagne Cognac. His partner BRANDT follows, a double-barrelled shotgun in his fists. The laughter dies. WIESENHAVERN places the cognac on the bar beside the whiskey bottle and retrieves a revolver from underneath the counter. Both men aim their weapons.

BRANDT

You have had as much as you are getting for free. Now if any among you has got the pluck to put into his tumbler one drop from that bottle, he is a dead man.

The Vandemonians stare at the barrels of the shotgun. MCADAM smiles.

MCADAM

We meant to make nice, old man. This seems inhospitable.

WIESENHAVERN cocks the revolver.

WIESENHAVERN

You get out of here or I'll shoot you like a dog.

A long silence. Dust falls through the stifling air inside the Prince Albert. Every other table is empty.

MCADAM

We'll be gone. It's not much of a fight anyway. Out the door, all of you.

He herds the Vandemonians out before turning back himself.

MCADAM (CONT'D)

Say I come on a strike out there today and returned with saddle bags full of gold. How would my coin be reckoned?

WIESENHAVERN

Stolen as well as lied for.

MCADAM

And if I come back while you slept
with a bullet for both you briny
cunts, what then?

BRANDT shoulders the shotgun.

BRANDT

Go now or I'll shoot, goddamn you.

MCADAM raises his hands, grins, touches his hat. He slowly turns and leaves. BRANDT and WIESENHAVERN watch him go and then look at each other.

WIESENHAVERN

What time do you have it?

BRANDT pulls a watch from his waistcoat pocket.

BRANDT

Coming up on eleven.

WIESENHAVERN looks thoughtful.

WIESENHAVERN

We'd best open.

BRANDT

Alright.

WIESENHAVERN takes the bottles off the counter and replaces them on the shelf. BRANDT goes to the door carrying the shotgun loose in one hand. He steps out into the scalding sunlight and flips a wooden sign on the outer wall that reads 'OPEN FOR BUSINESS'.