The Wild Bunch Women: A Memory Play (wildbunchwomen8kf)
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Cast of Characters

PEARL HART, leader of the Wild Bunch Women.

MARY FIELDS, member of the Wild Bunch Women.

CARLOTTA THOMPKINS, member of the Wild Bunch Women.

JOSIE BASSETT (CHILI), member of the Wild Bunch Women.

ANN BASSETT (SPICE), member of the Wild Bunch Women.

ABIGAIL, orphan.

FATHER SANTIAGO, new Catholic priest.

GEORGE, mercantile owner's son.

JULIANA, mercantile owner.

ZERELDA, Jesse James' fiancée; member of the James gang.

SILENT SILAS, member of the James gang.

SISTER AGNES, spiritual leader of her nun order.

SISTER PRUDENCE, nun.

SISTER RUTH, nun.

TOWNSPEOPLE

Musicians (violins, banjo, guitars)*:* All music and organic sound will be created by live musicians; sound should be as organically created as possible.

Setting

Pearl's memory. Roma, Texas, 1867; the present, 1907.

Production Note

Our gunshots were created by a cajon, a percussion instrument used in dance. We used stage rifles and pistols with orange tips to show that they are props. Schools should use whatever their district guidelines require for the use of weapons onstage.

THE WILD BUNCH WOMEN

A MEMORY PLAY

by Nelly E. Cuellar-Garcia

Prologue

(A lone woman stands in an attic surrounded by items of her past . . . the sound of rifles being cocked and rattlesnakes are heard.)

PEARL. Memory is a queer thing; . . . strange how when one thinks of the past, it's always accompanied by music . . .

*(*ENSEMBLE *enters singing and reenacting activities from their characters' daily lives.)*

PEARL. Now, as I get closer to meeting my maker, I find myself recalling all the lives that have shaped mine.

(Acknowledges the characters of her past, who all nod in return to her.)

PEARL. I'm the only one left, and to me falls the care of these trunks. Each represents a sister, not made by blood, but by something far stronger.

*(*ENSEMBLE *hums a tune as* PEARL *dusts off and moves the chests to her.* PEARL *opens each box and gives each character their gun and gun belt; they put it on and become alive.)*

PEARL. This chest represents the life of Stagecoach Mary; Stagecoach Mary could shoot so straight, she could pierce a man's earlobes in a heartbeat and have him wearing studs the next. *(Moving on:)* The objects in this trunk were owned by the most beautiful woman in South Texas.

*(*PEARL *gives* CARLOTTA *a small bottle of poison as well.)*

Her name was Carlotta; she twinkled as beautiful as the night sky; some called her the "angel of San Antonio," but her heart was cold and black; she helped many a man "die peacefully" in their sleep.

(For the sisters, PEARL *hands over dynamite and bombs instead of guns, as they are already wearing theirs.)*

Now this beauty belonged to a pair of sisters, Ann and Josie, who came to ride with us from somewhere deep in Brownsville; we called them Chili and Spice on account of the fact that dynamite and bombs were second nature to them; and finally this box . . . this box belongs to me, and the woman I was forty years ago.

*(*ENSEMBLE *sings as* PEARL *transforms herself into her former self by adding her double guns, a bandana, and a saddle bag.)*

(She taps MARY*, and all the* WOMEN *whoop and holler, and become a gang.)*

PEARL. The time was March of 1867, a time where men were rough, and women were wily. In a previous life, we were known as the Wild Bunch Women. The old west knew us as cattle rustlers, stage coach bandits, and bank robbers, but I knew them as . . . family . . .

*(*WILD BUNCH *draws their weapons and reenact as if they're running away from a botched robbery, forming tableaus throughout the stage. Music is accompanied by violin and banjo.* ENSEMBLE *flees from a gun fight.)*

Scene 1

(Projection changes to woods; WOMEN *are winded and tired.)*

MARY. How the heck did we not see through their disguise? If you hadn't seen their cowboy boots under their dresses, we'd be hanging at the end of ropes by now, and to top it all off, there was nothing in the money box!

PEARL. We'll just have to make do 'til the dust settles; it's gotten too dangerous for us in San Antonio; we're going to have to escape through the Mexican border and lay low over there for a couple of years.

(She pulls a map from her saddlebags and shows it to the WOMEN*; the* WOMEN *all look at the map, and ad-lib different places along the way they can go; ad-lib lines about terrain, etc.)*

PEARL. If we go south, we can follow the Rio Grande River and try to cross at any of these locations.

MARY. I like the way this one sounds, Ro-ma; let's cross there.

PEARL. It's as good as any; *(folding the map and putting it up:)* we'll head out tomorrow.

CARLOTTA. Pearl, we need to be smart about how we proceed; every one of us has a bounty on their head; I think we need to disguise ourselves.

PEARL. As what? *(Looking them up and down:)* Saloon girls? I wouldn't know how to flirt if my life depended on it.

ANN. Well, we'll figure it all out tomorrow morning; we've been riding all day, and it's late; we need to get some sleep; Pearl, you want a fire?

PEARL. No, too dangerous . . . you and Spice take the first watch, then wake me up in three hours, and I'll take the second watch. It's going to be a long three days' ride to reach Roma. We'll settle there a spell, pretend to be pious citizens and scope out the place; we're going to need some seed money if we're starting fresh in Mexico.

JOSIE. This is the last of the jerky; enjoy it, because tomorrow we're back to hunting rabbits.

ANN. Pearl, do you regret leaving Jesse James?

(Everyone stops and waits for her response.)

PEARL. No, Spice, we had to, he's fallen in the Devil's belly button; that new gang he picked up are a different kind of mean; mark my words, those guys are going to betray Jesse and his brother Frank.

Scene 2

(Projection changes to depict a beautiful blue sky; ABIGAIL *stands outside in front of an old church.)*

ABIGAIL. And so Pearl and the Wild Bunch left for Roma deep in the heart of South Texas; Roma was a sleepy little town nestled right by its sister city in Mexico; Miguel Aleman; way over there was the town square, where a bluff adjacent to the town square overlooked the river; if you listened quietly at dusk, you could hear the calls of so many different birds you'd think you were in a bird-watcher's paradise. Into this drowsy little haven arrived the women pretending to be missionaries for the Lord, and this is where Pearl's memory inserts me into the story.

*(*WOMEN *arrive dressed as nuns and carrying their supplies.)*

PEARL. You might as well have dressed us up as mail-order brides; who's going to believe we're nuns?

MARY. Where did you get these anyway, Carlotta?

CARLOTTA. I found some nuns taking a bath in a creek just a couple of miles from where we camped, so I just borrowed these from the rocks they left them on; don't worry; I had some stuff in my saddlebags, so I didn't leave them naked . . .

PEARL. Well, we're already in the good Lord's black book, so I guess it doesn't make a difference.

JOSIE. Out of curiosity, Carlotta, what did you leave the nuns in exchange?

CARLOTTA. *(Avoiding the questions:)* Just this and that . . .

PEARL. *(Noticing* ABIGAIL*:)* Howdy! Do you know where we can find the priest?

ABIGAIL. The last I saw of him, he was on his way to the mercantile . . . Why are there so many nuns coming into town?

PEARL. Oh, we got a letter from the Diocese in Galveston to make our way down this way; too many people need ministering.

(Enter FATHER SANTIAGO *carrying a crate of food from the mercantile;* ABIGAIL *takes it from him during the conversation and enters the church.)*

FATHER SANTIAGO. What is going on here? Who are you?

PEARL. We are the Sisters of Divine . . . *(floundering for words:)* . . . Providence; our mission is located in San Antonio; we're on our way to Galveston to meet with the Bishop, and we thought we could rest here awhile before continuing our journey.

FATHER SANTIAGO. I am Father Santiago; welcome, sisters; please unload your supplies; you may stay here as long as you like. I'm getting ready to begin the midday meal; you are most welcome to join me. The church is small, but we'll make do.

MARY. If you don't mind, Padre *[Father]*; we'll make our camp right out here under the stars. We don't want to get used to living under a roof again; it'll create unnecessary hardship when we journey on the trail.

FATHER SANTIAGO. As you wish, please join me for evening prayers though; it would be wonderful to hear voices raised in prayer to the Lord in Latin again.

*(*FATHER SANTIAGO *enters the church.)*

JOSIE. Latin? How are we going to pull that off?

(Everyone looks speechless; gives CARLOTTA *dirty looks; the* WOMEN *start picking up their gear to make camp; as* PEARL *turns to pick up her bags, she is approached by* ABIGAIL.*)*

Scene 3

ABIGAIL. *(Stopping* PEARL *before she enters the church:)* Do you need any help while you're in town? I sure could use the work.

PEARL. Where's your parents?

ABIGAIL. Don't know . . .

PEARL. Who are you staying with?

ABIGAIL. No one in particular; Sam at the stable will usually let me bed down with the horses. I'm a really hard worker, ma'am, and I don't eat much; I sure would appreciate any work you can throw my way.

PEARL. How about you help Sister Ann with the horses? I'm sure she would appreciate the help, and we'll see how you work out in the next couple of days; in the meantime, you can bed down with us and eat by our campfire.

ABIGAIL. Thank you, Sister Pearl; you won't regret this; I'm going to be the best hand you've ever had.

(She goes off.)

*(*CARLOTTA *and* MARY *join* PEARL.*)*

CARLOTTA. Since when do you take in strays?

PEARL. There's something about her that reminds me of the innocents we used to be; it won't hurt nothing; it's not like we're going to adopt her and take her with us.

MARY. Maybe she's pulling on your mama strings; she might remind you of that baby girl you gave those ranchers after you birthed her.

PEARL. Maybe; you know I still remember the day she was born? The wind was fluttering softly, bringing in the smell of wild lavender on the wind; my body was drenched in sweat and the agony was unbearable, but I remember that baby smell more than anything else; I'm no good as a mother to anyone; giving her up was the best thing I could've done for her.

CARLOTTA. How old you think she'd be about now?

PEARL. Around fifteen, like that little girl wandering the streets of Roma by herself; except my Lavender is growing up on a fine ranch outside of San Antonio. It doesn't get better than that.

CARLOTTA. She'll never know you killed her pa, by putting a bullet right through his eye—

(They all laugh.)

PEARL. I had no choice; he betrayed me—no one does that and lives.

(Everyone hoots and laughs, and they move off into the town.)

PEARL. Enough about the past; let's go out and scope the place.

Scene 4

*(*FATHER SANTIAGO *and* ABIGAIL *sit outside the church where he is giving* ABIGAIL *a violin/guitar lesson.)*

FATHER SANTIAGO. That was much better! You seem happier, Abby; are the nuns treating you well?

ABIGAIL. Yes, Father; I'm learning so many things from them. Sister Ann has been teaching me how to make bullets, and Sister Josie showed me how to insert fuses into bottles to make them explode.

FATHER SANTIAGO. That's an odd thing for nuns to be teaching; I'm going to have to have to speak to them about their strange choice of lessons. I must ask that you no longer befriend these nuns until I speak to them.

ABIGAIL. You must pardon me, Father Santiago, but I will not do as you say; these nuns are my friends; I feel safe around them; you have to see—

(Enter GEORGE *gleefully riding a bicycle.)*

GEORGE. Father! Abby! Look at my new bicycle!

FATHER SANTIAGO. What a contraption; it looks dangerous.

GEORGE. Nonsense, Father! This is the new world; you have to change with the times or be left behind to wither and die.

(Enter JULIANNA *in a tiff.)*

JULIANNA. George! George Gilman, you left the store again in charge of that idiot, Dobson. Pardon us Father, for a moment.

*(*FATHER SANTIAGO *leaves;* ABIGAIL *hangs back to listen.)*

JULIANNA. George, what's the point of teaching you the family business if you're not around to learn?

GEORGE. I took a fifteen-minute break, Mother, to show Father Santiago my new bicycle; after all it's the only one in the town. When I'm older, I'm going to own a fleet of ships and bring merchandise from all over the world.

JULIANNA. Such ambitions, and how will you pay for all this luxury you dream of?

GEORGE. Have faith, Mother, one day I'm going to own hundreds of dry good stores all over the West; I'm calling my business "The Great American Tea Company."

JULIANNA. Such lofty business plans; how about you begin by getting to work and making sure the one store you have is profitable?

*(*JULIANNA *exits;* ABIGAIL *consoles* GEORGE*.)*

ABIGAIL. Don't let her ruin your dreams, George. You're the smartest boy I know; if anyone can do it, you can . . .

GEORGE. Thanks, Abby; I'll see you later.

Scene 5

(The horses whinny; ABIGAIL *moves toward them;* ABIGAIL *sings to herself as she works with the horses.* PEARL *enters without her noticing.)*

ABIGAIL. *(Speaking to horses:)* I hear you fellas. You hungry?

(Begins feeding horses, etc.)

PEARL. You're very good with the horses; they stay calm around you.

ABIGAIL. I love them. They are the most magnificent of God's creatures.

PEARL. Abigail, you shouldn't be alone out here. This is rough country for a young girl.

ABIGAIL. I make do. *(Continues brushing the horse's mane:)* I didn't start life like this. I never knew my real parents; I was brought up in a ranch outside San Antonio; according to Florinda, my Spanish adoptive mother, my real momma left a fortune with me, so I could be raised in the lap of luxury, but when she started having her own kids, she felt I had become a nuisance and paid a buffalo-skin trader to take me off her hands. The man turned out to be kind and left me here instead of forcing me to go on the trail with him.

*(*PEARL *realizes that this is her daughter.)*

PEARL. How long have you been on your own?

ABIGAIL. For about three years now; I was twelve; gosh, how quickly time passes . . . .

PEARL. *(Touching her cheek and stroking her hair:)* Things will be better from now on; you'll travel with us, and you'll never go hungry, and you won't have to worry about the men that walk the night. I'll keep you safe.

*(*ABIGAIL *hugs* PEARL *in her gratitude. Musicians play a riff on the"bad guys" coming into town; enter* ZERELDA *and* SILENT SILAS.*)*

ZERELDA. Well, well, well, ain't this a lovely sight. Pearl Hart, as I live and breathe, dressed as a nun and hugging a kid. Change your profession, did you?

PEARL. Go get the sisters, Abigail.

ABIGAIL. Sister Pearl, I'll—

PEARL. Do as I say . . .

*(*ABIGAIL *runs out.)*

PEARL. Zerelda Mimms, as I live and breathe, what are you doing on this side of Missouri? Don't tell me Jesse James refused to make an honest woman out of you?

ZERELDA. Hardly. My cousin would never go back on his word; I'm here on his business. Why'd you leave like that, Pearl? No goodbyes, leaving in the middle of the night like a bunch of coyotes.

PEARL. I didn't want Jesse to persuade us to change our minds. You've turned him into a stone-cold killer; he's no longer robbing to help the poor; now he's robbing for the thrill of it and to line his pockets. I lay that change solely at your feet.

ZERELDA. Don't start believing what that nun habit represents; you're just like me, ready to kill and no remorse involved . . . a hellion cat like you will always have her claws out, ready to cut and gut . . .

(Enter the WILD BUNCH WOMEN; CARLOTTA *breaks up* PEARL *and* ZERELDA *before they fight.* ABIGAIL *stays inside.)*

CARLOTTA. Zerelda! What a surprise to see you, isn't it, girls?

ZERELDA. Jesse sends his howdy and wants you to know that there's no hard feelings that you left without saying goodbye.

JOSIE. That's really kind of him; you've delivered the message; now you can leave.

MARY. Oh, she isn't going anywhere just yet, Chili, she wants something, don't you?

ZERELDA. Fine. Jesse feels that by leaving the gang you've hurt his ability to make profit on his heists, so he's asking that you send him $10,000 as a means of making amends. Me and the boys are camped outside of town; I'll give you 'til the end of the week to come up with the cash; if you don't, we're going to come in here and take it by force from every person in this town.

PEARL. And what makes you think we'll let you?

ZERELDA. Sweetheart, we got you outnumbered fifty to five. You think these village idiots will help you defend them?

PEARL. The last person who called me sweetheart ended up with a bullet through their eye . . .

ANN. Or with a stick of dynamite in their bed . . .

CARLOTTA. Or with a belly full of poison . . .

MARY. Or with a rattler underneath the hole in the outhouse . . .

JOSIE. Or with a scalping.

ZERELDA. *(Laughing:)* Oh, I truly missed the bunch of you. We'll see. May the best bunch win.

SILENT SILAS. *(Tips his hat:)* Ladies . . .

(Both exit. WILD BUNCH *walk back into church.* CARLOTTA *hesitates when she sees* FATHER SANTIAGO.*)*

Scene 6

(Projections changes to a sky with a tinge of red.)

*(*FATHER SANTIAGO *is working on his flowerbed, singing softly to himself.)*

CARLOTTA. Father, I was wondering if you could offer me confession.

FATHER SANTIAGO. Of course, my child. Let's make our way into the church.

CARLOTTA. If it's all the same to you, Father; I'd like to do my confession out in the open, with the breeze on our face and the sun on our skin.

FATHER SANTIAGO. That's rather unconventional, but I don't believe that the Almighty would protest.

*(*CARLOTTA *makes herself comfortable on a crate, and* FATHER SANTIAGO *assumes a pose of attentiveness on another one.)*

CARLOTTA. I don't want to offend your sensibilities, so I'm going to tell you a story instead. *(Slight pause.)* Once upon a time in a kingdom across the ocean, there was a mighty king who owned many servants and abused them. Into this world of pain was born a young girl, who at six years of age was already considered a beauty in her own right. One day, the king offered her a beautiful doll if she followed him to the stables, and not knowing any better, she slipped away from the fields and ran to her destruction. Afterwards the king became bolder and took her whenever he wished. He gave her pretty dresses, and beautiful dolls every time he hurt her, so that after a year, she had more things that she could ever use. One evening, as she cried by herself, an old woman came to her and presented her with a beautiful bottle filled with a clear liquid; she told her to put it in the king's drink the next time she was in the palace, and he would never bother her again. The king became the young girl's first kill.

FATHER SANTIAGO. Did this young girl repent her crime?

CARLOTTA. That's the problem, Father; she didn't, how can she get into Heaven if her soul feels clean?

FATHER SANTIAGO. *(Floundering:)* The Bible says . . . a child cannot possibly understand . . .

CARLOTTA. *(Noticing* FATHER SANTIAGO *doesn't know what to say:)* Never mind, Father, I understand; let's leave it alone for now . . . *(Walks away.)*

FATHER SANTIAGO. *(Trying to offer some comfort:)* Sister Carlotta, *(doing the sign of the cross in the air:)* go in peace . . .

Scene 7

(We hear a loud commotion as a group of distraught women enter the town square. They are the NUNS, *dressed as saloon girls along with different parts of nun habits.)*

SISTER AGNES. *(Big personality:)* Blessed be all the Saints, sisters, We have arrived none the worse for wear. Sisters!

(They all run toward FATHER SANTIAGO, *get on a slightly bended knee and cross themselves before they get up in formation:)*

SISTER AGNES. Father, we are so happy to see a man of the cloth; we didn't think we would make it.

FATHER SANTIAGO. I must admit I'm at a loss here. You look like ladies of the evening, but you act like nuns of the faith; can someone tell me what is going on?

SISTER AGNES. We were set upon by bandits when we weren't looking. They stole our habits and left only these indecent clothes you see upon our bodies. We beg your pardon, Father, for our appearance, but please believe us. We are the sisters from the Order of Divine Retribution. We were on our way to San Antonio, but right outside of Rio Grande City, Sister Prudence here couldn't stand the heat anymore, and she convinced us all to bathe in the river. While we did so, someone came by and stole all our clothes. She barely caught a glimpse of the woman as she disappeared down the slope.

FATHER SANTIAGO. Luckily, your sisters from the Convent of Divine Providence made it safely here to Roma; I'm sure they'll share their clothes with you. Sisters . . . sisters, will you please come out here?

SISTER AGNES. The Sisters of Divine Providence? I'm afraid I'm not familiar with that particular Order.

*(*WILD BUNCH *enters.* SISTER PRUDENCE *lets out a tiny scream.)*

SISTER PRUDENCE. It's her, Sister Agnes, that one! *(Pointing to* CARLOTTA*:)* I recognize her; she's the one that stole our clothes!

SISTER RUTH. They're imposters!

CARLOTTA. *(Feigning ignorance:)* What? I have no idea what she's talking about. How dare you. How do we even know they're even nuns? They're dressed like saloon girls.

(The real NUNS *gasp in horror and try to cover themselves.)*

FATHER SANTIAGO. She has a point, ma'am. How can we settle this?

SISTER RUTH. A prayer duel! The imposters won't be able to pull it off.

SISTER AGNES. Yes! A prayer duel; the demon scum won't be able to stand against the light of Heaven! Sisters!

*(*SISTERS *kneel and cross themselves.)*

SISTERS. Pater noster qui es in coelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum, fiat voluntas tua, sicut . . .

SISTER AGNES. Your turn, Spawn of Satan!

SISTER PRUDENCE / SISTER RUTH. Spawn . . .

FATHER SANTIAGO. Now, now, there is no need for name-calling . . .

PEARL. Sisters! Prepare . . . .

(The WILD BUNCH *cross themselves dramatically and hum, ad -lib.)*

WILD BUNCH. Patter, nostril, zealous, santiky, numb, fat, volcano, biscuit . . .

SISTER AGNES / SISTER RUTH. That's all gibberish! It's them! They are the imposters. Imposters!

SISTER AGNES. Stop it! Stop it! Burn in Hell, devils! Burn . . . Burn . . .

PEARL. How dare you! That's how our order prays. You need to learn to be tolerant of other religious sects.

(The two groups almost end up in a brawl.)

FATHER SANTIAGO. Sister Pearl, please just stop. It is apparent you and your group have no religious training.

PEARL. No harm done, Padre. We were just trying to avoid a bad situation back home. *(Trying to approach the* NUNS, *who move away from them in fear:)* Ladies, calm down; you're all here nice and safe; we'll just get our horses and be on our way.

CARLOTTA. Here's your clothes back . . .

*(*WILD BUNCH *have their guns and clothes underneath their habits.)*

SISTER AGNES. The stench of sin permeates these robes, sisters; let's go wash these clothes, and if that doesn't work, we'll have to burn them.

*(*NUNS *exit in a huff.* FATHER SANTIAGO *turns to face the* WILD BUNCH.*)*

FATHER SANTIAGO. Who are you really?

PEARL. We're the Wild Bunch Women.

FATHER SANTIAGO. So, you are the notorious Wild Bunch Women . . . I've heard it said that you are offspring of the Devil, but . . . I must say you are not what I would have expected from a group such as yours. It honestly feels like a betrayal that you chose to lie to me rather than simply ask for help. The church is not without heart; please, take what you need; fill your packs with food and canteens with water, but it is best if you leave immediately.

PEARL. We're sorry, Father Santiago, but we needed a rest before we moved on to Mexico and didn't expect to find any kindness.

FATHER SANTIAGO. I understand; when you live by violence, you expect to receive only violence in return; hopefully, in the future, you will see that people of faith don't turn away people in need. Farewell.

*(*FATHER SANTIAGO *exits to the church and leaves the* WOMEN *outside.* ABIGAIL *and* GEORGE *enter. She is riding the bike with* GEORGE *following after her.)*

Scene 8

(Projections changes to afternoon sun.)

ABIGAIL. We saw and heard everything, Pearl. I'm going with you tomorrow; Sister Ann, I mean Spice, taught me to shoot. Lend me a rifle, and I'll watch your back.

PEARL. You don't know how much your offer means to me, but the best way you can help is by staying safe and being happy; go back to Father Santiago—

ABIGAIL. No. Please . . . take me with you! Don't leave me behind.

PEARL. I can't. Where we're going there's no future. You have a better chance here.

ABIGAIL. Chance of what? Of getting killed by a stray bullet? Of being raped or murdered by a drunk out on the streets? I'd rather take my chances with you.

PEARL. What if I promise that if I can, I will return for you within the year? Will you stay here then?

GEORGE. She will.

ABIGAIL. You don't speak for me!

GEORGE. I'm your only friend! And . . . you're my only friend, too. Stay, Abigail; you can live with me. I promise my momma will never find you, and you'll have plenty to eat and be safe. Just try it; if it doesn't work, just leave like you always do . . .

ABIGAIL. I'll wait a year. A year, Pearl, and then I'm going looking for you.

PEARL. It's a deal.

CARLOTTA. Hey, kid, you keep an eye on George; he's a good one; keep him on the straight and narrow.

ABIGAIL. He's such a baby and a pain . . .

CARLOTTA. They grow up, kid. Trust me on that.

(The WOMEN *laugh softly, and the youngsters walk out with the bicycle between them.)*

MARY. Why would you make a promise like that? Especially after what just transpired with Zerelda.

PEARL. She's my daughter, Mary.

MARY. What? We left your daughter in San Antonio. How is this possible?

PEARL. It seems Florinda got tired of raising my girl, but kept her fortune. She's been on the street since she was twelve.

CARLOTTA. *(Intimidatingly:)* That scheming witch; wait until I ride into San Antonio and pay that Ms. Florinda a visit . . .

JOSIE / ANN. We'll go with you . . .

PEARL. Before we can all do that, we've got to settle with Zerelda; where are we going to get that kind of money?

JOSIE. *(Hesitantly:)* I went out last night to Fort McIntosh in Laredo; *(looking at everyone's face of dissatisfaction:)* don't look at me like that; we need money; a stagecoach with the infantry's pay is set to arrive tomorrow; if we leave tonight, we can rob the stagecoach before it reaches them.

PEARL. And then what? We turn it over to Zerelda, and she lets us go? Think. She never intended us to live. We have to be made an example to the others. No one leaves the gang.

MARY. We live by the gun . . .

WILD BUNCH. and we die by it . . .

ANN. So, what's the plan?

MARY. We need to attack them before they attack us—catch them by surprise, if you get my drift . . .

JOSIE. I remember seeing a ridge outside of town.

MARY. Maybe we can make our last stand there. Let me see if I can see the ridge from the top of the water tower. Hand me your spyglass, Chili.

(She climbs the tower.)

PEARL. Do you see anything?

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!



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