

Cowboy Travel Guide *(Prologue)*

Rusty was neither an evil nor a pious man. He was just a man. He had done some things he wasn't proud of, but he always helped out when he could. His methods were not conventional by any means. In fact, most of his defense and offensive tactics were of his own invention. If he had been alive in the 20th century, they would have called him "Rambo". Currently, he was just wandering around the west with no particular place to go. His fate was about to change. As he rode over a rise, a scene all too familiar in the old west appeared before him. A trio of bandits had circled a family and were about to close in. It looked like this was some kind of religious family. The old man was dressed in black unadorned clothing with a black round rimmed hat typical of what you might see on an Amish man. Rusty usually minded his own business, but this was one area he was fanatical about. At one point in his life, several men of these types had raped his sister. They were no longer of this world. As he rode down to the mayhem, the three bandits noticed him and could see he was not of the timid minded sort they were used to dealing with. The two colts strapped to his side were good indications of that. They halted their assault and turned to face him. Rusty continued down and stood between the family and the three. This is none of your business stranger. Actually it is. You see, this family hired me to guide them west. I was out scouting for game when I saw your dust as you rode down here. So, if you would kindly depart, I will go about my business. Rusty knew what was coming next. All three went for their guns. His two guns spit fire first and then there was only one. The third knew he had been outdrawn and took off. Rusty took aim and was about the finish him off when the old man yelled and pulled Rusty's arm up at the last second. What in the hell did you do that for? You were about to shoot him in cold blood. That would have been murder. Actually, I was trying to save you and your family from further assault. By letting him go, he will now return with a whole posse of his like kind.

Besides the old man, there were four women, one young man, one young girl, and three small kids. They had two wagons filled with some furniture, grain, a tent, and some bedding. We would gladly have given up all our food and belongings to avoid killing them. We are not violent folk. They could care

less about your belongings. It was your women they were after. Do I have to spell it out for you? An understanding spread across his face. Non-the-less, God will guide us to our destination. Where would that be? We are Mormon, heading to Salt Lake City. Maybe you have heard of Joseph Smith. Wasn't that the guy who went out into the wilderness, perhaps too drunk, and had a vision from some angel. Supposedly, he found some gold tablets in the bushes. After sobering up, he wrote down what he thought he saw in some book. Many naive followers gave him money to start a church. That is not what happened. How do you know, were you there? I will not get into a religious discussion with someone so vile as you. You can believe what you want, but I think my version is more reasonable than that of a man receiving direct instructions from an angel in the forest. Maybe you should be a Muslim. They had the same kind of revelation from someone called Mohamed. Don't forget the Bible. Jesus was a real person too. There are too many version of the same incidence. That is why I am skeptical of them all and remain open minded.

Rusty told Jeb between here and Salt Lake City there are numerous pitfalls. More bandits, raiding Indians, steep mountain pathways, and scant watering holes. Jeb considered this. In spite of our disagreements, you mentioned that you were our guide. Perhaps God sent you to us for a reason. We can pay you if you really want to be our guide.

So that is how Rusty ended up babysitting a bunch of clueless overzealous travelers.

Cowboy Travel Guide *(Chapter 1)*

The old guy's name was Jeb. As time went on, Rusty became a thorn in his side. Only because he would confront him on all kinds of issues that were against his beliefs. They would set around the campfire at night and Rusty would bring up all kinds of things that Jeb objected to. Jeb told Rusty that he had too many bad habits. Smoking, drinking, cussing, and killing. Rusty would counter with comments like, at least I don't have three wives. Although I do see some of the benefits. Jeb told him it was God's order for man to populate the earth. Rusty would say, if that was your goal you should

convert to Buddhism. The Chinese are way ahead of you in that regard. He told Jeb that he was actually thinking of converting to Mormonism. The thought of a honeymoon with three wives sounded kind of exciting. Jeb said, you are just a hedonistic immoral soul. Rusty noticed the hierarchy of Jeb's harem, as he referred to his three wives. Even though Rebekah was the youngest and the prettiest, she did all the cooking. Sarah built the fire and tended to the camp. It was obvious what Lilith's position was, as she slept in the same tent as Jeb. Faith was Jeb's teenage daughter. Rusty thought Ned was Jeb's son, but found out later that he was his younger brother. Jeb told Rusty that Ned was useless. He had been babied by his mother and was weak and dumb-witted. Rusty didn't think so.

You know that those men are going to come back. And when they do, it won't just be three of them. I can handle some, but not all. I might need some help.

Jeb was complaining that they only had beans to eat. How about I try to shoot some game? Let me take Ned with me. Why? I told you he was useless. A second pair of eyes couldn't hurt. While away from the group, Rusty asked Ned, have you ever shot a gun? No, never. It isn't as hard as you might think. Let me show you. Jeb wouldn't like it if I did that. Jeb is not here. Rusty set up some cactus barrels a short distance away. Take the rifle, take a deep breath, aim the back sight aligned with the front, and squeeze the trigger. Ned did as he was instructed. He nailed the cactus right in the middle. See, it is not that hard. They moved to another spot and sat down to wait. What are we waiting for? I am hoping something will come along. Not too long after, a rabbit showed up in their view. Quietly, Rusty pointed to it and motioned for Ned to try to shoot. He hit it right in the center just as he had hit the cactus. Later that evening, as everyone was enjoying roasted rabbit, Rusty told Jeb that he was underestimating his brother. He was a natural marksman.

We need to move the wagons and put as much distance between us and those men. You really think they are coming? I am sure of it. Even though they know I am with you, they will be on horseback and you are moving slowly with those two wagons. It won't be long before they catch up.

The next morning they took off again. The women and Ned pulled the wagons using some poles attached to the front. Jeb just walked along the side. Jeb was treating this family as if they were slaves. The children also walked. Sometimes Rusty would wander off scouting to see if they were being followed. He noticed that Rebekah would detach herself from the group and watch him. He had no intention of messing with another man's wife, no matter if she ranked first, second, or third. Still, he was curious as to how she ended up married to a cantankerous old geezer like Jeb. He got the opportunity to ask when the others had retired for the night. He was tending the last of the dying fire. She came and sat down on a rock not far from where he sat. Without being rude, he asked in a roundabout manor that exact question. She said that she had no choice. Her mother had insisted on her marrying Jeb even though she was barely 18. That was the way things were in their community. Have you ever thought about just leaving him? I have thought about it, but there is no way for me to make it on my own. At least I don't know how I could. I guess I can see that. It just seems wrong to me. That was the end of their discussion for now.

Rusty kept pushing the family to move faster. We need to put as much distance between those men and us as we can. Jeb was becoming skeptical. How do you even know if they are coming? Oh, I can assure you they are coming. This is a situation that your shortsightedness has put your family in. If you hadn't stopped me from shooting that last one, we wouldn't be in this mess. I have been thinking that we need more shooters. I understand that you have shot guns before. Ned seems to have mastered the idea. I took the guns from those bandits. If we have any chance of surviving, I need to teach some of the women to shoot. That is the most ridiculous idea I have ever heard. They have never even touched a gun. I can teach them to shoot in a short time. Absolutely not. Rebekah spoke up. I would like to try. Sarah said the same. Even Faith spoke up. Jeb said, you are just a kid. I am no longer a child. I am the same as age as Mom was when you married her. Jeb just shook his head. How did she grow up so fast? We need to protect the children and Mr. Rusty here says he can teach us. Jeb was outnumbered.

Rusty dressed a cactus in some of Ned's britches and shirt. There were four

or five guns laid out on the wagon. Pick one that fits your hand. Small hand, small gun. Get it? They did as he asked.

Now move toward the target. First thing to do is breathe. Then line up the sights. Point toward the target and squeeze the trigger. Don't jerk it. Ned, show them how to do it. He aimed the rifle and put a bullet in the center. Good. Now Rebekah, take your turn. Breathe, aim, then squeeze. As she fired she screamed. The loud bang startled her, but a hole appeared in the fabric. She smiled. OK Sarah, your turn. This went on until each of the women felt confident they could hit the target. During the shooting practice, Jeb called out to Rebekah. Go fetch some water woman. Fetch it yourself. You are not doing anything and this is really important. Apparently, Rusty's influence on the woman was not so beneficial for Jeb.

Later that night, Rusty said, I need to keep watch for those men. He sat upright with his back against a tree. Early in the morning, he fell asleep. He woke with a start. Rebekah was sitting near him. You fell asleep. I would have woke you if I had heard anything.

The next morning, Rusty was pushing the group to keep going. Jeb started complaining that he was pushing too hard. I am trying to reach dry gulch. It we are being pursued, as I believe we are, that is a good place to stage an ambush. You really think we can fight off seasoned gunmen with just these women and us? If we can't, I don't want to think about the consequences of losing.

They finally reached the spot Rusty was aiming for. Let's set up camp here and make it look like we are unprepared. Maybe this has all been a waste of time and energy. Maybe they aren't coming after all. It is better to be prepared than not.

Rusty climbed to a high hill and looked back east. He could see dust from at least a dozen riders coming fast. He reported back to the camp, they are coming like I predicted. We only have an hour before they will reach us. He ordered the women to take high ground on the surrounding rock precipice. Ned, Jed, and he would be stationed at lower points. The tension was

running high. Just keep your heads down until I fire the opening shot. Then unload on all of them. As the group approached the camp, one rider stayed back to watch the horses. They dismounted and crept up upon the camp. When they arrived they found the camp empty. That was when Rusty fired the first shot. The bad men were caught in the cross fire. As it turned out, the women came through firing as they had been taught. The entire gang was wiped out. They didn't account for the guy watching the horses though. He caught all of them off guard. Jeb saw him first and fired his rifle. But not before he caught a bullet in his side. The last one of the gunmen was down. Jeb was shot, but it was not a fatal wound. Sarah tended to his wound. He would survive.

After that encounter, Jeb had more respect for Rusty's intuition. Jeb was placed in one of the wagons and the group moved on. They also had taken the bandits horses and now some of the women were riding instead of walking. They harnessed two horses to pull the wagons. From now on their journey should be less demanding.

They made good progress until they entered Indian territory. One lone Indian appeared on a ledge over looking their path. What do you think he wants? Are there more Indians waiting to attack us? I am not sure, but there is only one way to find out. Rusty raised up his rifle, then put it down in the sand. He started walking toward him. The group observed Rusty having some kind of discussion with the lone Indian. When he returned, he told them that he was a Paiute Indian and generally peaceful.



He did say that beyond their territory was Comanche territory and that is a real danger for white folks. The Comanche never agreed to any US treaties and are on constant warpath with the white invaders. Rusty advised them to head south to avoid confrontation. Jeb's stubbornness returned. This is US territory and I am not going to let some savage Indian tell me where I can and can't go. You hired me to give you safe passage to Salt Lake City. That is what I am advising. I will let God decide our fate. I think we will be better off without your services from now on. Jeb probably didn't believe that, but he didn't like the influence Rusty had on his wives and family. OK, if that is what you wish for, I will depart and leave you to it. Rusty mounted up and started to head south. As he reached the top of a high rise, he could see in the distance a war party headed toward the caravan.



Reluctantly, he turned around and headed back. Jeb was surprised to see him back. What gives? You are about to run into a Comanche war party. They haven't seen you yet, but they will surely cross your path. What can we do? I do have some tricks left up my sleeve, but you must follow my directions exactly if you are to survive. If you think those bandits would have harmed your women and daughter, you have no way of knowing how brutal the Comanche can be. We must return to dry gulch as fast as we can. In spite of the name, the area was fed by a spring and had a vast growth of trees, brush, and foliage not unlike a desert oasis. This would suit Rusty's talents for survival. He instructed them to help him set up some traps. After completion, he told the group to hide up on an incline where a cave was located. Leave only one wagon, and me along with my horse and two more. What are you going to do? I will try to negotiate with them. If my plan fails, you can try to protect yourselves if they come for you. They might not even know you are there and that would be the best solution.

Cowboy Travel Guide
(Chapter 2)

Rusty waited for the inevitable encounter. He hoped he had set up a sufficient number of traps. A dozen Comanche warriors surrounded him. He had his six shooters, his Rambo style knife, and two horses besides his own. The Comanche had expected him to crouch down in terror. His calm demeanor belayed a level of confidence that unsettled the war chief. Rusty first tried to reason with them by saying that he was aware that he was crossing their land. He meant them no harm or disrespect. He knew enough of their language to convey these points. I am just heading west and hope you will let me pass in peace. As a goodwill gesture, I will give you these two horses. Rusty's peace offering was not accepted. We can just take these horses whether you offer them or not. No white man is allowed to traverse our territory. Rusty said, I would advise you to take my offer. The chief commanded one of his warriors to just shoot Rusty. As he brought up his bow, Rusty pulled both colts from their holsters and shot his executioner in the throat. Not one word came out of his mouth as blood gurgled down his throat. Before anyone else reacted, Rusty shot four others, then jumped on his mount and took off into the trees. Instead of continuing on, he let his horse go and took refuge behind one of the trees. The war party had been startled by his action, but soon regained their composure and began their pursuit. The path was too narrow for them to ride abreast. The first one to reach Rusty was knocked off of his horse by the vines Rusty had strung across the path. Of course he knew where they were and went under. He took the tomahawk from the warrior as he quickly ended his life using his Rambo like knife. The next to come down the gauntlet received his partner's hatchet right between his eyes. The third one started to halt, but it was too late. Rusty had strung a rope over a hanging branch, lassoed him around the neck and pull him off his horse. The fourth one witnessed his buddy dangling on the tree, legs kicking back and forth. He had seen enough. He returned to the chief who had been holding back. The white man's spirit is too strong. Let him be. Rusty had cut their party in half. When he returned to dry gulch, they were all gone. He performed a ritual that the Indians would have done to him and all of the others. He took their scalps. He cautiously approached the cave and yelled to Jeb. All is clear, don't shoot me.

What happened? I made them an offer they couldn't refuse. The departing Indians had taken the two horses Rusty had left.

They continued their trek west. Jeb noticed the scalps tied to Rusty's saddle horn. What are those for? Those are our insurance that we won't be bothered again. At least not by the Comanche. You are just as savage as those heathens. Indeed I am, and you should be glad of it. I have already saved your family's hides twice. Jeb had no comment.

The next trial would not come from Indians, but from mother nature herself. They had made good time after the encounter with the Comanche. Apparently his show of force with the scalps was an adequate enough deterrent so as not to be bothered again. As they approached a river crossing, Rusty called for a halt. We should set up camp here. Why? There is still plenty of sunlight left. Lets keep going. You see those clouds over the hills to the right? It is going to be pouring down rain any minute. Jeb could not stand not to be in charge. Keep in mind that you are just a hired hand. I am the leader of this family and I say lets keep going. Rusty just shook his head back and forth. There was no use in arguing with a stubborn old mule.

They had reached the river where it was safe to cross. That is to say, it would have been safe to cross if not for the torrential rain that suddenly poured down on them. As one of the wagons reached the middle of the river, the water line rose up and it began to be swept away. It was the one that Jeb was convalescing in. Rusty was too far away to be of any help. Ned took the initiative. He threw a line and caught the wagon handle. He quickly tied the other end around a tree. By securing it there, the current pushed the wagon back to our side of the river bank. Jeb was able to scamper out and the others pulled the wagon free. This wagon contained all of their grub and lots of their bedding and tent stuff.

The rain abated and they set up camp. Setting around the camp fire that evening, Rusty praised Ned for his quick thinking. While alone, Rusty could not help but say, maybe your brother is not as useless as you claim. If not for him, you would have been swept down stream and drowned. This time Jeb

shook his head up and down. I am learning a lot about my family that I had overlooked. You are right about Ned. I need to treat him more fairly.

No further hurdles blocked their way. They reached the hills overlooking the Great Salt Lake. If you wonder why the lake has so much salt. It has no outflow. So all the silt and minerals just flow into the lake and settle. Without the yearly snow fall, the lake would have dried up years ago.

It was time to say goodbye to Jeb and his family. Where are you headed? I believe I will keep going west until I hit the Pacific Ocean. It was already mid 1800's and California had become a part of the United States following the Mexican American war. Rebekah, to everyone's surprise, spoke up. I want to go with you. I can't take you away from your husband, that is not right. Don't misunderstand. It's not you that I want, it's my freedom. I got shoved off to Jeb when I was barely a women. I learned a lot from you and also from Jeb's actions. I no longer want to live my life as his slave. When we go in to town, Jeb needs to go to the bank to pay you for your well earned services. At that time, I will go to the Mormon Church and file papers for a divorce. Jeb's reaction to all that was, "Go ahead Rebekah, you weren't much of a cook and with your continuous bad attitude, I will be better off without you." Well I guess that is settles it. You are welcome to ride with me.

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Rusty and Rebekah are now together heading west. Well, not exactly together, and not exactly west. He had heard, in order to reach California, he needed to go south as well as west. I think Rebekah was lying when she said she was not interested in Rusty. He had no clue that the spider was weaving a web of a trap. The first one occurred a few days into their ride. Rusty had gone off searching for game for dinner. Rebekah had decided to take a bath in the small lake near their camp. When Rusty got back, Rebekah wasn't there. He thought she might have gotten lost. As he came over a hill, there she was, sans clothing, splashing water over her hair. Rusty abruptly stopped and started to turn around, but not before he got a full look at her womanly charms. Instead of rushing to grab her clothes, she just smiled as Rusty

finished his turn. It was an image that he could not unsee or easily forget. As far as Rebekah was concerned, if she could trade Jeb for a man like Rusty, she would be far better off. She wasn't afraid of his crude manner or lack of morals. In fact, that kind of excited her.

Back at the camp, Rusty told her that if she was going to go off by herself that she should at least bring her gun. You never know what danger might crop up. Also, next time you decide to take a bath, could you at least warn me. Why, you want to protect my reputation or just make sure you get another look? Rusty just shook his head. He knew she was playing with him. He also thought about her comment before that she didn't want him, only her freedom. Maybe she was changing her mind, or maybe she thought about it all along. He remembered that it was she who was always around watching him and showing up unexpected. Even though he could see that she was a beauty, he had respected the fact that she was married and he didn't encourage her company. At present, that was not the case. She was truly divorced, sanctioned by the Mormon Church. Rusty was no saint. He had many hookups in the past with women of all types. Some friends with benefits and some dance hall girls. But he had never had a steady women before. The thought was not all that unpleasant given current circumstances.

For now, he would just wait and see where fate takes him.

The next dangerous situation was one that never should have happened. Rebekah had gone off for another bath, and Rusty was just hanging around the camp. Two bad guys got the drop on him. It wouldn't have happened if his mind hadn't been on the memory of Rebekah's last river bath. They were rousting about looking through his stuff. In Rusty's past experience, this usually ended up with the robbery victim getting shot. It probably would have happened that way if Rebekah hadn't come back over the hill. This time she did bring a gun and she recognized the dire position that Rusty was in. She didn't hesitate, she breathed, aimed, and squeezed the trigger. She had aimed for the mid torso, but hit the guy's leg. That was enough of a distraction for Rusty to make his move. Both hombres departed this world with the blink of an eye.

Two bodies thrown into the river. No evidence of fowl play. Rusty had bagged a small deer earlier and had already dressed and hung it up while Rebekah had been bathing.

It looks like we have something to celebrate. What's that? Our continued existence on this earth. That was a close call and I have you to thank for saving me. He pulled out a pint of whiskey from his pouch. I had been saving this, but no better time than now. I think roasted venison with some potatoes and carrots should be considered a feast from our usual dinner fare. Jeb seemed to think you weren't a very good cook. Can you prove him wrong? I am actually a very fine cook. I just didn't want to waste my talent on that ornery old fool. She did whip up a gourmet type meal suitable for the occasion. A good meal, several substantial hits of that whiskey bottle, and that was enough for their passion to boil over. Rusty now had a steady girlfriend.

Rebekah wanted to know more about him. Is Rusty your real name? Actually it is Russel, but I prefer the shortened version. How about just between us, I call you Russel and you can call me Becky? I have no problem with that.

Their south westerly route had brought them to the mighty Colorado river. It was ragging to fast at that point for any safe crossing. They kept to the Arizona side all the way down past what was to be modern day Las Vegas. Their path brought them to an area where wild donkeys roamed. In the future, the town of Oatman would spring up and draw tourists from all around to see the wild donkeys that still occupied the town. Rusty picked up a pack animal there. He had to cajole the animal with some wild apples.

Author's note:

My Chinese wife and I visited that town. I had to laugh at her comment when she saw the donkeys. Can we eat them? Except for the countryside, there are no birds, cats, dogs, or other loose animals near developed cities in China. Years of starvation and over population took care of that. So for her, it was rare to see anything moving around that could be considered free dinner.

The best place to cross the mighty Colorado river was Beale's crossing. A place just north of modern day Needles where the river shallows out and it is possible for wagons to ford the river. With just their horses to contend with, that was the spot to aim for.

Author's note:

Beale's Crossing on the Colorado River was a crucial ford for Edward F. Beale's 1850s wagon road, connecting New Mexico Territory (Arizona) and California, near modern Fort Mohave.

After the Civil War, use of the road decreased; the Southern Pacific Railroad's completion in 1883 made it largely obsolete. Today, it's part of the historic Mojave Road, with remnants of forts and the trail still visible.



After crossing the river, there was 100 miles of desert between them and the Pacific Ocean. Normally, that would have been a prohibitive distance as there were no watering holes on the way. Rusty had bought some barrels from one of the wagoners and filled them with enough water to make the trip. His donkey had made that possible.

They arrived in what was early Los Angeles. The town had been established, but only about 2000 residents occupied it. They were mostly farmers. This was not much to Rusty's liking. He wanted more adventure. He decided, after some rest, they would head up the coast to San Francisco. Los Angeles

had fertile soil though and agriculture was high on the list. At that time, the Los Angeles river flowed year round and even had fish.



Author's note: Unlike today, where the LA river is no more than a concrete drainage ditch where under every bridge underpass homeless reside. The cement walls covered with graffiti.



Perhaps farming was not the best way to make money in Los Angeles 1850.

Already by 1849, San Francisco had been transformed into a chaotic city of 40,000, with 4,000 immigrants arriving by ship each month. Abandoned ships cluttered the harbor and most of the available lumber was used to build saloons. This fit Rusty's disposition better than LA. A bustling city filled with saloons. Becky also liked the idea. She was used to east coast cities like New York and Boston.

So they began their trek north. The Catholic missionaries had already established “El Camino Real”, “The King's Road” while building missions all

up and down the California coast. No more rough passage. They still had to be wary of bandits, but any that crossed their path had to deal with Rusty. That would have been unfortunate for them. Becky began to feel a great sense of peace traveling with Russel, as she still referred to him. One of the things woman cherish most is to feel safe with their guy.

They reached the Bay of Monterey and stayed for a couple weeks. It was so beautiful. A Chinese community fishing village had been established and they both liked the friendly treatment they received. In addition to that, Chinese cooking was a new experience.

Although historical accounts differ, a popular legend has it that our area's first Chinese inhabitants set up camp in 1851 on the cove of Point Lobos, some miles to the south of Cannery Row. Upon discovering the rich bounty of Monterey Bay, these experienced fishermen soon established additional Chinese settlements at Pescadero (now Stillwater Cove, just west of Pebble Beach on Carmel Bay) and at Point Alones near what is today the bustling tourism center of Cannery Row.

By 1853 there were some 500 to 600 Chinese fishermen working the deep waters off Monterey. The Chinese community had become well enough established that Cabrillo Point, the site of today's Hopkins Marine Station at the north of Cannery Row became known as China Point.

These skilled Chinese seamen launched the first commercial fishing industry in Monterey, taking first abalone and later other varieties of fish including cod, halibut, flounder, yellow tail, sardines, squid and shark—as well as oysters and mussels from the bay waters. It was a common sight to see the unique Chinese fishing boats setting off from the shanty-like village at “China Point.”





Not sure what the area looked like in 1850.



Cannery Row and Monterey Bay today

Besides disrespectful treatment of women, Rusty also hated discrimination. The Chinese immigrants who came to San Francisco and spread out all through America endured the harshest treatment. They worked hard labor especially helping build the railroads.

Rusty and Becky had made a daily habit of eating lunch with the Chinese fishermen. One time, while enjoying some delicious Chow Suey, three unsavory types came in and started overturning their stove pots.

Author's note: Many people believe the origin of Chop Suey was created by the Chinese in San Francisco. That is a widely believed theory. In truth, a version of that same recipe had been practiced for centuries in Hong Kong. There are hundreds of recipes for noodles.

To continue:

We don't like you dirty Chinks taking over our fishing spots. We want you

gone. One bold old Chinese man named (Hop Sing) stood up.

Author's note:

I particularly chose this Chinese name as a homage to the actor who played the Chinese cook in the Bonanza western series.

It seems you don't mind our Chinese brothels, I have seen you many times lined up at their door. Shut up old man, I don't need someone like telling me what to do. Rusty had heard enough. How about someone like me telling you what to do. What would that be? Backed up by his two buddies, he felt invincible. In addition, two more showed up. Rusty was good, but here he was seriously outnumbered. I am telling you to leave and never come back if you value your life. Hop Sing's nephew entered the restaurant. He had been out back cleaning fish.

One thing Rusty's dad had told him, if you knew you were going to get into a fight, throw the first punch. Rusty doesn't fight fair. He fights to win. All five of the dudes attacked. He was holding his own when Ling entered the fray. Ling had learned Wing Chug style of martial arts from his uncle in Hong Kong. This was the style that was later taught by Ip Man whose famous student was Bruce Lee.

The five dudes where lucky to be able to limp and crawl out of the establishment.

Rusty was amazed. Where did you learn to fight like that? He told him about his early training back in Hong Kong. His uncle was Ip Man's grandfather.

They were reluctant to leave, but it was time. San Francisco here we come.

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(Chapter 4)

In 1850, San Francisco transformed from a small village into a chaotic, rapidly growing Gold Rush boom town, officially incorporating as a city

while experiencing a massive influx of gold-seekers, leading to makeshift wooden structures, a forest of abandoned ships in the harbor, rampant disease, and a frontier atmosphere, with early development focused on quickly built piers and shanties, fueled by commerce and transients seeking fortune.



When California reached statehood, San Francisco claimed a population of over 30K. A collection of gold seekers, Chinese immigrants, fortune seekers and unsavory types looking to scam newcomers. This was the situation that Rusty and Becky found when they arrived.

Rusty was doing what Rusty does best. Drinking and playing cards in a San Francisco saloon. He won some, lost some, but mostly won. As happens all too often, the losing player starts to think the other player is cheating. Instead of accepting his poor playing ability he gets riled up. You have been winning all too often. I am a pretty good player and not beaten so easily. I think you are cheating. This coming from the one who lost the most. Well, I can't help you sir, you are either unlucky or just plain stupid. You have been playing like a novice. No one talks to me that way. How about playing one more hand, as he pushes his substantial money wad into the center, winner takes all. Sorry, I don't have that much money and I think it is time for me to go have lunch. Why not wager that lovely woman who has been watching you? I bet she is worth more than the meager dollars you have here on the table. I am sure she is, but she is not cattle, something to barter with. Rusty gets up and starts to leave the table. I am not done with you mister. Step outside and see if you present yourself like the coward you seem to be. I am calling you

a cheat. As you wish, was Rusty's reply. They went outside and faced each other about 12 feet apart. I see that you are unarmed. Would you like to borrow a pistol from my friend here? No need, I have a weapon here in my scabbard. The gunman just laughed. Haven't you heard the phrase, "Don't bring a knife to a gunfight!" If it had been 1960 instead of 1850, Rusty would have said, didn't you watch Charles Bronson in the movie "The Magnificent Seven". Of course he could not say that. He just smiled and said, make your play. The ice cold stare that Rusty had unnerved the guy. It was too late for him to back out. He had just cleared leather when Rusty's Rambo type knife pierced his throat.

There were enough witnesses so that Rusty did not have to contend with the law. It was obvious self-defense and Rusty had not initiated the showdown.

Becky had thought that this was the end of her relationship. She told him I was sure you couldn't beat a gun with a knife. Have you done that sort of thing before? Enough to know that I would come out on top.

He surprised her with another exclamation. Why don't we get married? Don't you have to get down on one knee to ask that question. I don't kneel for anyone, but this is one time I will abide.

No need to find a Mormon temple, Becky had long lost her belief in Mormon theology. They were married by the local constable.

We don't have too much money. How are you going to provide for me? I really don't like the cold, but I think spending some time in Alaska might provide with us some capital. Where would you eventually like to settle? If we strike it rich, I would really like to return to Monterey. Steak and lobster are on the menu there, but I also can't forget that savory Chop Suey.

After two years of gold mining, they did strike it rich and returned to that ocean paradise to live out their lives in peace.

The End