

# RUNNING GUN

By

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15 PAGE EXCERPT

LOG LINE:

A promising young man has his relationship and future destroyed when he befriends a troubled teenage runaway. The year is 1877. The troubled teenager is Billy the Kid. RUNNING GUN tells the dramatic story of Adam Corrigan, a good kid who falls in with the ultimate 'bad crowd.'

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EXT. OPEN FIELD (ARIZONA) - NIGHT

In a torch lit field the townspeople of Fort Grant have gathered for a celebration. It's the 4th of July circa 1876.

On a hill overlooking the field, a LONE RIDER on a horse pauses to take in the scene. He watches as young and older folks dance to a lively three piece string band.

Among the dancers ADAM CORRIGAN (16) struggles mightily to keep time as he two steps with his imposing partner. The source of his nervousness is a flame haired beauty, JESSICA FREMONT (also 16), who is amused by his efforts.

As the song finishes, TWO CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS ignite rockets with their kerosene torches. The fireworks zoom into the black sky and explode with color.

A particularly bright blast illuminates the figure on the horse. He's HENRY 'KID' ANTRIM (17). Afraid to be seen he rides off toward a barn in back of the gathering.

The sky rockets explode above as Adam shyly moves his arm around Jessie's waist. Feeling it, she leans over and whispers something in his ear. He nods and the two run off.

Seeing this, Jessie's starched white shirt of a father, JOHN FREMONT (40) calls out to them.

MR. FREMONT

Jessica!

Jessie trots away with Adam toward the barn. Mr. Fremont is about to follow when his wife (35) lovingly holds him still.

MRS. FREMONT

Leave them be, John. They're just kids.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Adam and Jessie enter the darkened barn. Occasional bursts of light from the fireworks mix in the air with stray moonlight.

ADAM

We can climb up and watch from the loft if you like.

JESSIE

Why? Everything I want to see is down here.

Jessie leans forward and kisses him. Momentarily startled, Adam eagerly and awkwardly returns the favor.

Peeking at them from between the slats of a horse stall is the Kid from the trail. He smiles at the sight.

JESSIE

Didn't you say you could get us  
some corn liquor?

ADAM

Yeah.

JESSIE

Well...get it.

Nodding, Adam runs off to a shed at the back of the barn. Once he does Jessie undoes the buttons of her dress and lets it fall. She is left standing in her petticoat.

Seeing this, the Kid in the stall realizes he should leave and quietly opens the door to sneak out.

Meanwhile Adam is in the shed hurriedly searching under horse blankets for the pint of corn mash he has hidden there.

Back in the darkened barn Kid Antrim tries to slip past Jessie. Thinking it's Adam she playfully grabs him.

JESSIE

Hey. Where're you going?

Spinning him around she kisses him full on the mouth. Just then a huge skyrocket explodes, lighting up the scene. In mid-kiss Jessie opens her eyes and sees that it's not Adam.

The Kid smiles at her. His blue eyes shimmer with mischief.

KID

Nice to meet you, Miss.

Jessie SCREAMS, loud and long. Kid Antrim runs off, knocking down Adam as he dashes out the back door.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

The Kid jumps on his horse and rides away as a SMALL GROUP of towns people race toward Jessie's screams. Leading them is Mr. Fremont. He pulls open the barn door and finds Adam, clutching a pint of whisky, with his semi-disrobed daughter.

MR. FREMONT

(in a rage)  
What did you do?

INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - DAY

Adam is slapped hard across the face by his 'Uncle' who is wearing the heavy leather work gloves of his trade.

ADAM

I told you I didn't do anything!

CAHILL

(smacking him)

That what they teach you in that school? To molest young girls?

ADAM

Don't you hit me.

CAHILL

(smacking him)

Somebody's gotta whoop some sense into you.

ADAM

Just 'cause you're bedding down with my Mamma don't give you the right.

Infuriated, Cahill tosses a hammer at the boy. Adam ducks.

CAHILL

You shut your smart mouth. Now go take that mule over to the Parson.

EXT. MAIN STREET IN FORT GRANT - DAY

Adam leads the Parson's mule up the street. Kid Antrim rides up next to him.

KID

Morning.

ADAM

Morning.

(looking him over)

Ain't I run into you before?

KID

Like maybe in Silver City?

ADAM

No. I was thinking more like in Hobson's barn last night.

KID  
 (laughing)  
 Oh, that was you? Ha. Sorry I  
 busted things up.

ADAM  
 Not half as sorry as me. So that's  
 where you're from, Silver City?

KID  
 Silver City lately. Kansas for a  
 time. New York City originally.

ADAM  
 Really? I'm plannin' to go to New  
 York some day. To study at the  
 university.

KID  
 What do you wanna study?

ADAM  
 Medicine. My Daddy was an army  
 doctor. So I kinda got the calling.

KID  
 Good for you. Well, Doc, my calling  
 is for hot food and a warm bed. You  
 know any ranches around here need  
 hands?

ADAM  
 Chisum has a spread up north. And  
 the Sierra Bonita Ranch is to the  
 west.

KID  
 Great. I'll go call on'em both.

A wagon passes them with TWO RANCHERS on board.

RANCHER  
 How's it going there, Romeo?

The Ranchers laugh and drive off. The Kid can see Adam's  
 embarrassed so he digs in his saddle bag for something.

KID  
 Thanks a lot for your help. Here.  
 (he tosses him something)  
 That'll help you find your way east  
 when the time comes.

Adam catches it. It's a compass, a truly wondrous thing.

ADAM

Thanks.

KID

(riding off)

My pleasure. Hope I see you around.  
Good luck with your girl.

Adam laughs until he realizes his 'girl' has moved from the sidewalk into the road and is standing next to him.

JESSIE

Who's that?

ADAM

(walking)

Never mind 'who's that'? Why'd you take your dress off in that barn?

JESSIE

(following)

Didn't you want me to take it off?

ADAM

No.

JESSIE

No?

ADAM

When I want you to take your dress off I'll take it off. What I mean is...if the time and place were right I would have.

JESSIE

It was a full moon and we were all alone with fireworks bursting in the sky. What could be more right?

ADAM

I'm thinking more along the lines of a hotel on our wedding night?

JESSIE

Adam Corrigan, are you asking me to marry you?

ADAM

No. I'm not.

JESSIE

You're not?

ADAM

No. Not if you stay like you are.  
You're too damned forward. And  
you're always in a big hurry.

JESSIE

You bet I am. With the railroad  
comin' the wild west ain't gonna be  
wild much longer. And what do you  
mean 'forward'?

ADAM

I mean it'd be nice if you'd slow  
down and let me do the askin' once  
in a while.

JESSIE

(stopping)

Okay. I'm standing still. Ask me.

ADAM

(stopping)

Okay. Will you come meet me tonight  
under the water tower by Hog Ranch?

JESSIE

No. I won't.

ADAM

You won't? Why not?

JESSIE

Because my father has forbidden me  
to consort with low lifes like you.  
(in a whisper)  
I'll be there at seven.

She winks and walks off leaving Adam sputtering irritation.

INT. STABLE ATTACHED TO THE CHURCH - DAY

PARSON DAWLESS (31) counts out the cash to Adam for his mule.

PARSON

That's sixteen dollars for Windy.  
(offering some coins)  
And here's a little something for  
that college fund you've been  
putting together.

ADAM

How do you know about that?

PARSON

When you sit in that confessional and talk about your sins who do you think's listening on the other side of that screen, God?

ADAM

I never meant to steal anything. I'd find a stray dollar or two...

PARSON

Son, life is a complicated business. The bible says 'thou shalt not kill' and then we send men off to war to do just that. Good men like your Daddy.

(placing the coins in his hand)

I like to think that when a man is pursuing a noble cause it's up to him to decide what's right and what's wrong. Understand?

EXT. SIERRA BONITA RANCH - DAY

Standing by his pen of cattle, WILL WHELAN (45) chews tobacco as he eyeballs Kid Antrim.

WHELAN

Well, we got a drive startin' in a couple of days. But it ain't my habit to be hirin' no kids.

KID

I'm not a kid. I'm twenty.

WHELAN

(with a snort)

You's seventeen if you's a day.

KID

I really need the money, sir. If you won't hire me maybe I can sell you my horse and saddle.

WHELAN

I ain't buying no stolen army horse. I do business with them boys. Now you move along.

He spits on the ground and walks off. Standing near the Kid is a rugged looking fellow, JOHN STANCY (20).



KID  
 (to Stancy)  
 How'd he know it was army?

STANCY  
 'Cause of them ear marks. See?  
 (touching the ear)  
 I can always use a good horse.

HENRY  
 Well I didn't steal him. I won him  
 at cards over at Camp Anthony.

STANCY  
 Ain't my business where you got 'em.  
 Tell you what. You hold on to this  
 one and go 'win' me some more.

EXT. HOG'S RANCH - NIGHT

THREE ARMY OFFICERS ride up, dismount and tie up their horses by the ranch fence. The officers walk up toward McDowell's Saloon passing Jessie who is running the other way. She cuts around the hog pen to get to the water tower behind it.

EXT. WATER TOWER - NIGHT

Waiting for her is Adam. Jessie runs into his arms and plants a kiss on him before he can speak.

ADAM  
 (breaking it off)  
 What are we gonna do about your  
 Daddy?

JESSIE  
 I didn't come all this way to talk  
 about him. He's my Mamma's problem.

ADAM  
 If we're gonna have any kind of  
 future then I'm gonna have to set  
 things right with him. I can't  
 spend the rest of my days sneaking  
 around in the dark.

JESSIE  
 Why not? Don't you think it's  
 exciting?

EXT. HOG RANCH - NIGHT

The Kid rides up and spies the three army horses tied to the rail.

He quietly hops down and binds their reins together with a rope from his saddle. A GUY exiting the saloon sees the Kid ride off with the horses and runs back inside.

GUY  
Sergeant Hartman!

EXT. WATER TOWER - NIGHT

Jessie is still trying to get friendly with Adam.

JESSIE  
Stop worrying. Once you go off and become a doctor, Daddy'll learn to respect you.

ADAM  
That'll take years. I want him to respect me now.

JESSIE  
Look at you. You're the one always telling me 'slow down, be patient.'  
(pushing him)  
How come you need my Daddy to respect you? Is there something you're itching to ask me? Hmmm?

ADAM  
Yeah. There is. Will you please shut up so I can kiss you?

JESSIE  
Fine. If that's what you want I'll shut up. But you're the one who...

Adam silences her with a kiss. Just then the Kid rides up with the three horses in tow.

KID  
Hey! That you, Doc?

FOUR MEN on horseback come thundering around the ranch toward them. The Kid kicks his horse into a gallop.

KID (CONT'D)  
Gotta run. G'night folks.

He rides off and three of the riders follow him. The fourth, SERGEANT HARTMAN (25), stops at the water tower by Adam and Jessie. They are about to run when he draws his pistol.

SERGEANT  
Hold it right there you two!

EXT. HILLS ABOVE FORT GRANT - NIGHT

The Kid is chased by the three riders. He cuts the reins of one of the stolen horses and two of the riders peel off to corral that pony. The Third Rider continues after him.

Riding up the steep hills, the Kid jumps off of his mount and climbs up onto some rocks as the horses run off.

When the third rider passes the Kid jumps on him, pulling him off his horse. As they hit the ground the Kid grabs the gun out of the rider's holster and aims it at him.

KID

Now get up and get going.

Spooked, the rider jumps to his feet and runs away. Laughing the Kid holsters the gun and mounts the guy's horse.

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Adam and Jessie are being interrogated by Sergeant Hartman, MARSHALL OSGOOD (38) and the town clerk, MILES WOOD (40).

ADAM

I tell you I didn't see who it was.  
It was too dark.

SERGEANT

You're lyin'. I could see you two talkin'. What's that on your belt?  
(grabbing the compass)  
This is army issue. It's stolen property. Where'd you get it?

MILES

Did the fella who took the horses give it to you? Who is he?

MARSHALL

I knew your father, Adam. He'd want you to tell us the boy's name.

ADAM

I...I only knew him...

JESSIE

(cutting him off)  
He only knew him as a no good horse thief. When Adam saw him ride by he said, 'You get out of here or I'll shoot you down like a yellow dog! You bastard!'

Standing, fuming, in the doorway is Jessie's father.

FREMONT  
Jessica!

JESSIE  
Papa, I was just telling how...

FREMONT  
(grabbing her hand)  
Never mind. We're going home.

ADAM  
Mr. Fremont, sir?

Fremont ignores him and addresses the rest of the men.

FREMONT  
I want to thank you for telling me  
where to find my daughter.  
(he hands them gold coins)  
And I trust you'll keep her name  
out of any mention of this matter.

MARSHALL  
Yes, Mister Secretary.

FREMONT  
If you have any more questions  
please stop by my office in the  
morning. Good night.

Once he leaves they all turn their eyes back to Adam.

MARSHALL  
Now son, are you ready to tell us  
the boy's name?

ADAM  
Can I have my compass back?

MARSHALL  
No.

ADAM  
Then I can't say as I know.

EXT. ROCK RIDGE IN THE HILLS - NIGHT

The Kid rides with two horses in tow to the designated meeting spot where Stancy and a FRIEND are waiting for him.

STANCY

Here y'are, Kid. Fifty a head like we agreed.

As Stancy counts out the money the Kid pulls the gun out of his belt. Seeing this Stancy and his friend draw their guns.

KID

(startled)

Woa! Hold on. I was just gonna ask if you want to buy this here gun.

STANCY

(laughing)

No. You best hold onto that.

EXT. CORRIGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Exhausted, Adam trudges the last steps back toward his house.

INT. CORRIGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

As Adam climbs the stairs to the second floor bedrooms he finds his little sister KELLY (6) sitting in the hall.

ADAM

Hey half pint. What you doing up?

KELLY

Momma's crying. Listen.

Adam puts his head to the door and hears the sounds of lovemaking.

ADAM

She'll be okay. You need to get to bed now. If Windy catches you here he'll light up your britches.

KELLY

Okay.

She hugs him hard. He can tell she's upset and scared.

INT. MCCONNELL'S SALOON - DAY

Four gold coins drop on the table as ante. The Kid deals poker to TWO GRIZZLED LOOKING GUYS (25) and Adam at a table. The Kid is dressed in a new shirt and pants looking better fed and washed than we've seen him.

KID

So this fella refused to pay the Chinaman.

(MORE)

KID (cont'd)

Said he charged too much to clean his clothes. Then the fella hired me to go and steal his stuff. And I got caught. Cards?

FIRST GUY

I'll take two.

SECOND GUY

One.

ADAM

I'm fine. So how old were you then?

KID

(dealing)

I was twelve. So they drug me off to jail and told me I'm not gettin' out until my parents come and collect me. Well, my mama died the year before and my step dad was off with every other damned fool minin' for silver. So I was stuck. Bets?

FIRST GUY

(tossing in coins)

I raise twenty.

SECOND GUY

I'm out.

ADAM

Me too. So what happened?

KID

Lucky I was a scrawny little thing 'cause I crawled up the chimney, popped out onto the roof and off I run. And I've been runnin' ever since. What you got, friend?

The first guy turns over his hand. He has three queens.

FIRST GUY

Three beautiful ladies.

KID

They are pretty. You know what those ladies need?

(turning over three kings)

Some nice boys to ask'em to dance.

Adam, the Kid and the second guy laugh.

FIRST GUY

Well, maybe if you didn't talk so damned much, maybe then I'd be able to...you know?

ADAM

Concentrate?

FIRST GUY

No. Win!  
(to his pal)  
Come on. Buy me a drink.

The Kid gathers up the cards while Adam counts his winnings.

ADAM

My college fund's gettin' plenty fat since you got here.  
(pocketing the coins)  
Hope you'll stick around a while.

KID

If I had a nice family and a great looking girl like you I might. But I don't. So I best keep moving.

During this he does a fancy one handed cut with the cards.

ADAM

Can you teach me to do that?

KID

Sure. Here. Give me your hand.  
(handing him the deck)  
Hold the cards on your finger tips.  
Let half drop down in your palm.  
(he does)  
There you go. Now push those cards up with these fingers.

Adam tries to do as he says and the cards fall out of his hand all over the table. They both laugh.

KID (CONT'D)

Well you almost got it. Except for the last part. That takes practice.

ADAM

When they locked you in that cell in Silver City, were you scared?

KID

(gathering the cards)  
Scared? Nah. I was terrified!  
(MORE)

KID (cont'd)  
Bein' locked up like that  
definitely ain't for me. Now watch  
close.

As the Kid repeats the trick Frank Cahill enters the saloon.  
Seeing his 'nephew', he barks in his direction.

CAHILL  
You get outta here now.

Cahill moves to the bar while Adam gathers his things.

KID  
He your family?

ADAM  
No. I just work for him. You look  
out. He's a mean son of a bitch.  
'Specially when he's drinkin'.

Adam is about to move off when the Kid hands him the cards.

KID  
Hey. Next game you deal.

Smiling, Adam takes the cards and goes. TWO TAVERN GIRLS (20)  
move to the Kid. He hands the one with a guitar some money.

KID (CONT'D)  
Sing me a song, Rosa.

Rosa begins to sing a lovely Mexican song. The Kid dances  
with the OTHER GIRL as she plays.

Over at the bar Frank Cahill has just downed a shot of  
whiskey. He taps the glass on the bar for attention.

CAHILL  
Gimme another.

BARTENDER  
Can't do that, Frank. McDowell says  
no more credit for you.

Frank digs through his pockets and comes up empty. He eyes  
the stacks of coins on the Kid's table.

The Kid dances around to amuse the folks in the bar as Cahill  
quietly moves to the table and puts his hat on top of the  
stack of coins. He then picks up the money in his hat and  
moves away. Seeing what he did the Kid dances toward him and  
trips him. Frank falls down and the money scatters all over.