

THE HOTTEST PART OF WINTER

By Paul Allor

Five-Page Comic Script

PAGE ONE – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE

The bedroom of a small cabin in 1890s Montana. THE MARSHAL is getting dressed. He has his work shirt on, still unbuttoned, and is pinning his Marshal star to the chest.

CLARA, our protagonist, lies in bed. Overall, this panel (and the next few) should give the impression that the Marshal is the hero and Clara a supporting characters, before we flip that expectation on page two.

1. CLARA: You're starting awfully early for a Sunday.
2. MARSHAL: Got a tip on the **Henry Gang!** Gonna pay 'em an early-morning visit.
3. CLARA: Sounds exciting.
4. MARSHAL: Hope not. I like things nice and predictable.
5. CLARA: I'm not predictable. Don't you like me?
6. MARSHAL Are you kidding?

PANEL TWO

The Marshal leans in and kisses Clara gently on the forehead.

7. MARSHAL You're the prize, Clara. Don't you know that?

PANEL THREE

He's leaving the room, fully dressed now, as Clara watches him go.

8. CLARA: Try not to shoot anyone.

PANEL FOUR

He's gone, and Clara is out of bed, FRANTICALLY pulling on a pair of pants.

PANEL FIVE

Outside shot, as Clara JUMPS out the (first floor) window of the cabin. It's morning, and snowing.

PAGE TWO – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE

Clara is on her horse, bundled up and galloping out of town at top speed through the snowstorm. She has a satchel bag wrapped around her.

PANEL TWO

Establishing shot as Clara rides into the Silver Star ranch, toward an abandoned-looking homestead. JOE HENRY stands outside it, and there are a few horses tied to a hitching post.

PANEL THREE

Clara sits on her horse by the homestead. Two members of the Henry Gang – Joe and PETE – are gathered around her. The last member, RODDY, is just leaving the house.

1. CLARA: We gotta ditch this place! Marshal's on the way.
2. JOE: Alright. We hit the bank now.
3. JOE: Then get outta town.

PANEL FOUR

Pete mounts his horse while talking to Clara. Behind them Roddy walks up to his horse, holding several sticks of dynamite.

4. PETE: Hey, nice job. You saved our bacon, huh?
5. RODDY: Hell, she's been letting the Marshal under her petticoat for months.
6. RODDY: 'Bout time it paid off.

PANEL FIVE

Clara glares at Roddy, one hand on her pistol. Roddy loads the dynamite into his horse's saddle bags.

PAGE THREE – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE

Establishing shot outside the bank, just after an EXPLOSION goes off inside, sending smoke out the windows. Next to the bank, the horses are tied up, but they're rearing back, reacting to the explosion.

1. SFX: Ka-Boom

PANEL TWO

The gang is inside the bank vault. It's filled with cash, and also some debris and sizzling money from the explosion. Joe has picked up a big bundle of the cash, and looks it over.

2. JOE: This is the prize. You know?

PANEL FOUR

Clara SHOTS Roddy in the head.

PANEL FIVE

Joe has just drawn his gun as he's shot, too.

PANEL SIX

Clara and Pete stand across the vault, looking at each other. Clara looks sorrowful. Pete is scared shitless.

3. CLARA: Keep your gun holstered, Pete. Let's both of us just walk away.

PAGE FOUR – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE

Pete pulls his gun –

PANEL TWO

And is shot from the side.

PANEL THREE

The Marshal stands just outside the vault entrance with his smoking gun.

PANEL FOUR

He looks vexed, trying to figure out what to do.

1. MARSHAL: Guess now I know why the Henry Gang wasn't at the ranch.
2. MARSHAL (small): This whole time...
3. MARSHAL: This your way of saying goodbye to these folks?
4. CLARA (OP): These folks. This line of work. The whole damn thing.

PANEL FIVE

Without saying another word, the Marshal walks away from the vault.

PAGE FIVE – THREE PANELS

PANEL ONE

The Marshal stands in the bank lobby, calling out to Clara.

1. MARSHAL: Well?

2. MARSHAL: Let's go home.

PANEL THREE

The Marshal and Clara walk towards their horses through the snow, his arm wrapped around her.

PANEL FIVE

Marshall and Clara ride their horses. He looks content. She looks downright happy; like a woman who's just discovered the secret to life.

END