

The Strange White man Part 6

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The Cactus Flower saloon and hotel was the last establishment you encountered when you exited town heading West and the first one you saw when you entered the town headed East. It attracted a rougher bunch of customers than the Silver Fox did, usually stagecoach drivers and their shotguns. So when the man called Carpenter walked in no one gave him a second look. "What can I do ya for stranger?," The bartender asked when Carpenter leaned against the bar. "I am looking for Texas Jack Johnson." "I ain't seen him all night, he's probably up in his room." Carpenter thanked him and purchased a bottle of whiskey before he went to the attached hotel and inquired at the desk. "Yeah, he is in and I believe he has a lady with him." The desk clerk informed him. "Which room?" "Number 10, but he won't like being disturbed." "I will take my chances." "Its your funeral." Carpenter knocked on the door of the room and almost immediately it swung open and man in long underwear and bootsthurst a six shooter was in his face. The man holding the gun was younger than Carpenter expected but he had a determined and tough look about him. "What the hell do you want?" the man asked. "I need to talk to you." "I'm busy, now git." "I need to talk now, but you must invite me in" "Sure come on in an see what you get". In the blink of an eye Carpenters hand wrapped itself around the barrel of the six shooter and yanked it out of the mans hand almost breaking his trigger finger. As he crossed the threshold he gave Texas Jack a small push and he stumbled backward slamming into the wall. Once inside the room he placed the pistol on the dresser and then he noticed the pretty dance hall girl in the bed holding the covers to her chin in an effort to cover her naked body. "Leave us harlot," he hissed. The woman in the bed began to curse him for interrupting them and told him that he should leave. Carpenter only repeated his order to leave but she didn't move. Carpenter's eyes grew wide and he stared at her for a moment and she suddenly got out of the bed and began to dress and was gone in less than a minute. Texas Jack pushed himself off the wall and pulled a knife from his boot. "Mister, I'm gonna cut you up into a hundred pieces," he said as he advanced waving the knife in front of him. Texas Jack noticed that the man did not move or show any signs of fear, in fact there was a slight smile on his face as he advanced. Once again moving faster than he ever imagined any man could, this stranger had gripped the wrist of the hand that held the knife and the grip was so strong that he lost all feeling in his hand and dropped the knife. The stranger twisted his wrist in such a way that Texas Jack wound up on the bed. The stranger then picked up the discarded knife and casually threw in against the wall where it buried itself up to the hilt. Texas Jack sat there on the bed

rubbing his wrist in an attempt to restore feeling to his hand. "Now if you are finished I would like a word with you," the stranger said as he set the bottle of whiskey on the small table. Texas Jack got up where he poured and downed two glasses in rapid succession before he turned to the stranger and said, "OK, Mister, what do you want to talk about?" "First off my name is Carpenter." Then over the course of the next hour Carpenter inquired about a trip to the territorial capital and the bank there He wondered how long would it would take? What measures could be taken to ensure his shipment would not be robbed and above all could he, Texas Jack be trusted? "Carpenter, with me its all about money and my reputation." "Really?" "Yep, if I accept a contract to transport a shipment and I am paid what I ask then come Hell or high water the shipment will be there safe and sound." "Is this sufficient enough to secure your services?" Carpenter asked and tossed a large bag of gold at him. Texas Jack opened it and his eyes popped as they took in the size of the nuggets contained within. "Yep, that's more than enough." Texas Jack felt comfortable enough to take a seat and Carpenter sat opposite him .When Carpenter informed him that the assayer said it was a two day trip Texas Jack only laughed. "Yeah, it takes two days if in ya stop and sleep for the night, but if ya go non-stop its just about a days journey." Carpenter seemed very pleased with this information. "I own my own wagons and horses and employ the best shotgun rider around. All I do is telegraph the Wells Fargo station before we leave and they will have a fresh team of horses waiting for me. I stop long enough to swap horses and sometimes take on a bag of mail before I start moving again." "Can your shotgun rider be trusted?" "If he couldn't then he wouldn't be workin for me". Carpenter then tossed a smaller bag of gold at him. What's this fer?". "So you and your shotgun can stay here for about a week and not accept any other consignments." "Mister Carpenter, you just hired yourself a driver," Texas Jack said as they shook hands. As Carpenter headed to the livery stable to recover his horse his path was blocked by the beautiful dance hall girl he had asked to leave Texas Jacks room and she held a small pistol in her dainty hand. "OK Mister, give me your money," she demanded. "Please let me pass," Carpenter said as he tried to walk around her. "Anyone that hires Texas Jack has got to have money cause he don't work for cheap," She stated and moved again to block his path. "Ignorant bitch, you are making a big mistake. Now get out of my path and you will live to see the sunrise." A look of anger crossed her face and she fired her pistol. The bullet struck the man in the chest and he fell backwards on the wooden sidewalk. She very ladylike lifted her skirts and walked over to him and placed her ear to his chest to listen for a heartbeat. When she heard none she realized her first shot had killed him and she reached under his jacket to find his wallet. Suddenly her wrist was held in a grip that she screamed in pain but no one could hear her because another hand covered her mouth. Fear gripped her as she came to the realization that the man she had confirmed was dead by her hand had a hold of her and that his eyes were open. "Stupid whore," he hissed and he pulled her into him and fastened his mouth to her neck. There were sounds of her shoes kicking the wooden sidewalk as she struggled and a few muffled screams, but they didn't last long and soon silence once again ruled the evening. The few men standing in front of the Silver Fox saw Carpenter ride by heading back to his ranch with a female in his lap. "Looks like the stranger is taking Holly home," one commented. "Lucky devil," another commented. "She'll probably love him to death," the third chimed

in. "Yeah but what a way to go," the fourth joked and they all laughed.