

1ST STANZA: BEAMQUAKE

ONE

"How long will the magic stay?"

At first no one answered Roland's question, and so he asked it again, this time looking across the living room of the rectory to where Henchick of the Manni sat with Cantab, who had married one of Henchick's numerous granddaughters. The two men were holding hands, as was the Manni way. The older man had lost a granddaughter that day, but if he grieved, the emotion did not show on his stony, composed face.

Next to Roland, holding no one's hand, silent and dreadfully white, sat Eddie Dean. Beside him, cross-legged on the floor, was Jake Chambers. He had pulled Oy into his lap, a thing Roland had never seen before and would not have believed the billy-bumbler would allow. Both Eddie and Jake were splattered with blood. That on Jake's shirt belonged to his friend Benny Slightman. That on Eddie's belonged to Margaret Eisenhart, once Margaret of Redpath, the lost granddaughter of the old patriarch. Both Eddie and Jake looked as tired as Roland felt, but he was quite sure there would be no rest for them this night. Distant, from town, came the sounds of fireworks and singing and celebration.

There was no celebration here. Benny and Margaret were dead, and Susannah was gone.

"Henchick, tell me, I beg: how long will the magic stay?"

The old man stroked his beard in a distracted fashion. "Gunslinger -- *Roland* -- I can't say. The magic of the door in that cave is beyond me. As thee must know."

"Tell me what you think. Based on what you *do* know."

Eddie raised his hands. They were dirty, there was blood under the nails, and they trembled. "Tell, Henchick," he said, speaking in a voice, humble and lost, that Roland had never heard before. "Tell, I beg."

Rosalita, Pere Callahan's woman of all work, came in with a tray. There were cups on it, and a carafe of steaming coffee. She, at least, had found time to change out of her bloody, dusty jeans and shirt and into a housedress, but her eyes were still shocked. They peered from her face like small animals from their burrows. She poured the coffee and passed the cups without speaking. Nor had she gotten all the blood, Roland saw as he took one of the cups. There was a streak of it on the back of her right hand. Margaret's or

Benny's? He didn't know. Or much care. The Wolves had been defeated. They might or might not come again to Calla Bryn Sturgis. That was ka's business. Theirs was Susannah Dean, who had disappeared in the aftermath, taking Black Thirteen with her.

Henchick said: "Ye ask of kaven?"

"Aye, father," Roland agreed. "The persistence of magic."

Father Callahan took a cup of coffee with a nod and a distracted smile, but no word of thanks. He had spoken little since they'd come back from the cave. In his lap was a book called *'Salem's Lot*, by a man of whom he had never heard. It purported to be a work of fiction, but he, Donald Callahan, was in it. He had lived in the town of which it told, had taken part in the events it recounted. He had looked on the back and on the rear flap for the author's photograph, queerly certain that he would see a version of his own face looking back at him (the way he'd looked in 1975, when these events had taken place, most likely), but there had been no picture, just a note about the book's writer that told very little. He lived in the state of Maine. He was married. He'd written one previous book, quite well reviewed, if you believed the quotations on the back.

"The greater the magic, the longer it persists," Cantab said, and then looked at Henchick questioningly.

"Aye," Henchick said. "Magic and glammer, both are one, and they do unroll from the back." He paused. "From the past, do'ee ken."

"This door opened on many places and many times in the world my friends came from," Roland said. "I would open it again, but just on the last two. The most recent two. Can that be done?"

They waited as Henchick and Cantab considered. The Manni were great travelers. If anyone knew, if anyone could do what Roland wanted -- what they all wanted -- it would be these folk.

Cantab leaned deferentially toward the old man, the dinh of Calla Redpath. He whispered. Henchick listened, his face expressionless, then turned Cantab's head with one gnarled old hand and whispered back.

Eddie shifted, and Roland felt him getting ready to break loose, perhaps to begin shouting. He put a restraining hand on Eddie's shoulder, and Eddie subsided. For the time being, at least.

The whispered consultation went on for perhaps five minutes while the others waited. The sounds of celebration in the distance were difficult for Roland to take; God knew how they must make Eddie feel.

At last Henchick patted Cantab's cheek with his hand and turned to Roland.

"We think this may be done," he said.

"Thank God," Eddie muttered. Then, louder: "Thank *God!* Let's go up there. We can meet you on the East Road -- "

Both of the bearded men were shaking their heads, Henchick with a kind of stern sorrow, Cantab with a look that was almost horror.

"We'll not go up to the Cave of the Voices in the dark," Henchick said.

"We *have* to!" Eddie burst out. "You don't understand! It's not just a question of how long the magic will or won't last, it's a question of time on the other side! It goes faster over there, and once it's gone, it's gone! Christ, Susannah could be having that baby right now, and if it's some kind of cannibal -- "

"Listen to me, young fellow," Henchick said, "and hear me very well, I beg. The day is nigh gone."

This was true. Never in Roland's experience had a day run so quickly through his fingers. There had been the battle with the Wolves early, not long after dawn, then celebration there on the road for the victory and sorrow for their losses (which had been amazingly small, as things had fallen). Then had come the realization that Susannah was gone, the trek to the cave, their discoveries there. By the time they'd gotten back to the East Road battlefield, it had been past noon. Most of the townsfolk had left, bearing their saved children home in triumph. Henchick had agreed willingly enough to this palaver, but by the time they'd gotten back to the rectory, the sun had been on the wrong side of the sky.

We're going to get a night's rest, after all, Roland thought, and didn't know whether to be glad or disappointed. He could use sleep; that much he did know.

"I listen and hear," Eddie said, but Roland's hand was still on his shoulder, and he could feel the younger man trembling.

"Even were we willing to go, we couldn't persuade enough of the others to come wi' us," Henchick said.

"You're their dinh -- "

"Aye, so you call it, and so I suppose I am, although it isn't our word, ye ken. In most things they'd follow me, and they know the debt they owe your ka-tet out of this day's work and would say thank ya any way they could. But they wouldn't go up that path and into that haunted place after dark."

Henchick was shaking his head slowly and with great certainty. "No -- that they will not do.

"Listen, young man. Cantab and I can be back at Redpath Kra-ten well before full dark. There we'll call our menfolk to the Tempa, which is to us as the Meeting Hall is to the forgetful folk." He glanced briefly at Callahan. "Say pardon, Pere, if the term offends ye."

Callahan nodded absently without looking up from the book, which he was turning over and over in his hands. It had been covered in protective plastic, as valuable first editions often are. The price lightly penciled on the flyleaf was \$ 950. Some young man's second novel. He wondered what made it so valuable. If they ran into the book's owner, a man named Calvin Tower, he would surely ask. And that would only be the start of his questioning.

"We'll explain what it is ye want, and ask for volunteers. Of the sixty-eight men of Redpath Kra-ten, I believe all but four or five will agree to help -- to blend their forces together. It will make powerful khef. Is that what ye call it? Khef? The sharing?"

"Yes," Roland said. "The sharing of water, we say."

"You couldn't fit anywhere that number of men in the mouth of that cave," Jake said. "Not even if half of them sat on the other half's shoulders."

"No need," Henchick said. "We'll put the most powerful inside -- what we call the senders. The others can line up along the path, linked hand to hand and bob to bob. They'll be there before the sun goes rooftop tomorrow. I set my watch and warrant on it."

"We'll need tonight to gather our mags and bobs, anyway," Cantab said. He was looking at Eddie apologetically, and with some fear. The young man was in terrible pain, that was clear. And he was a gunslinger. A gunslinger might strike out, and when one did, it was never blindly.

"It could be too late," Eddie said, low. He looked at Roland with his hazel eyes. They were now bloodshot and dark with exhaustion. "Tomorrow could be too late even if the magic *hasn't* gone away."

Roland opened his mouth and Eddie raised a finger.

"Don't say ka, Roland. If you say ka one more time, I swear my head'll explode."

Roland closed his mouth.

Eddie turned back to the two bearded men in their dark, Quakerish cloaks. "And you can't be sure the magic will stay, can you? What could be opened

tonight could be closed against us forever tomorrow. Not all the magnets and plumb-bobs in Manni creation could open it."

"Aye," Henchick said. "But your woman took the magic ball with her, and whatever'ee may think, Mid-World and the Borderlands are well shed of it."

"I'd sell my soul to have it back, and in my hands," Eddie said clearly.

They all looked shocked at this, even Jake, and Roland felt a deep urge to tell Eddie he must take that back, must unsay it. There were powerful forces working against their quest for the Tower, dark ones, and Black Thirteen was their clearest sigil. What could be used could also be misused, and the bends o' the rainbow had their own malevolent glammer, Thirteen most of all. Was the sum of all, perhaps. Even if they had possessed it, Roland would have fought to keep it out of Eddie Dean's hands. In his current state of sorrowing distraction, the ball would either destroy him or make him its slave in minutes.

"A stone might drink if it had a mouth," Rosa said dryly, startling them all. "Eddie, questions of magic aside, think of the path that goes up there. Then think of five dozen men, many of them nigh as old as Henchick, one or two blind as bats, trying to climb it after dark."

"The boulder," Jake said. "Remember the boulder you have to kind of slide by, with your feet sticking out over the drop?"

Eddie nodded reluctantly. Roland could see him trying to accept what he couldn't change. Groping for sanity.

"Susannah Dean is also a gunslinger," Roland said. "Mayhap she can take care of herself a little while."

"I don't think Susannah's in charge anymore," Eddie replied, "and neither do you. It's Mia's baby, after all, and it'll be Mia at the controls until the baby -- the chap -- comes."

Roland had an intuition then, and like so many he'd had over the years, it turned out to be true. "She may have been in charge when they left, but she may not be able to stay in charge."

Callahan spoke at last, looking up from the book which had so stunned him. "Why not?"

"Because it's not her world," Roland said. "It's Susannah's. If they can't find a way to work together, they may die together."

TWO

Henchick and Cantab went back to Manni Redpath, first to tell the gathered (and entirely male) elders about the day's work, and then to tell them what payment was required. Roland went with Rosa to her cottage. It stood up the hill from a formerly neat privy which was now mostly in ruins. Within this privy, standing useless sentinel, was what remained of Andy the Messenger Robot (many other functions). Rosalita undressed Roland slowly and completely. When he was mother-naked, she stretched beside him on her bed and rubbed him with special oils: cat-oil for his aches, a creamier, faintly perfumed blend for his most sensitive parts. They made love. They came together (the sort of physical accident fools take for fate), listening to the crackle of firecrackers from the Calla's high street and the boisterous shouts of the *folken*, most of them now well past tipsy, from the sound.

"Sleep," she said. "Tomorrow I see you no more. Not me, not Eisenhart or Overholser, not anyone in the Calla."

"Do you have the sight, then?" Roland asked. He sounded relaxed, even amused, but even when he had been deep in her heat and thrusting, the gnaw of Susannah had never left his mind: one of his ka-tet, and lost. Even if there had been no more than that, it would have been enough to keep him from true rest or ease.

"No," said she, "but I have feelings from time to time, like any other woman, especially about when her man is getting ready to move on."

"Is that what I am to you? Your man?"

Her gaze was both shy and steady. "For the little time ye've been here, aye, I like to think so. Do'ee call me wrong, Roland?"

He shook his head at once. It was good to be some woman's man again, if only for a short time.

She saw he meant it, and her face softened. She stroked his lean cheek. "We were well-met, Roland, were we not? Well-met in the Calla."

"Aye, lady."

She touched the remains of his right hand, then his right hip. "And how are your aches?"

To her he wouldn't lie. "Vile."

She nodded, then took hold of his left hand, which he'd managed to keep away from the lobstrosities. "And this un?"

"Fine," he said, but he felt a deep ache. Lurking. Waiting its time to come out. What Rosalita called the dry twist.

"Roland!" said she.

"Aye?"

Her eyes looked at him calmly. She still had hold of his left hand, touching it, culling out its secrets. "Finish your business as soon as you can."

"Is that your advice?"

"Aye, dearheart. Before your business finishes you."

THREE

Eddie sat on the back porch of the rectory as midnight came and what these folk would ever after call The Day of the East Road Battle passed into history (after which it would pass into myth...always assuming the world held together long enough for it to happen). In town the sounds of celebration had grown increasingly loud and feverish, until Eddie seriously began to wonder if they might not set the entire high street afire. And would he mind? Not a whit, say thanks and you're welcome, too. While Roland, Susannah, Jake, Eddie, and three women -- Sisters of Oriza, they called themselves -- stood against the Wolves, the rest of the *Calla-folken* had either been cowering back in town or in the rice by the riverbank. Yet ten years from now -- maybe even five! -- they would be telling each other about how they'd bagged their limit one day in autumn, standing shoulder to shoulder with the gunslingers.

It wasn't fair and part of him knew it wasn't fair, but never in his life had he felt so helpless, so lost, and so consequently mean. He would tell himself not to think of Susannah, to wonder where she was or if her demon child had yet been delivered, and find himself thinking of her, anyway. She had gone to New York, of that much he was sure. But when? Were people traveling in hansom cabs by gaslight or jetting around in anti-grav taxis driven by robots from North Central Positronics?

Is she even alive?

He would have shuddered away from this thought if he could have, but the mind could be so cruel. He kept seeing her in the gutter somewhere down in Alphabet City, with a swastika carved on her forehead, and a placard reading GREETINGS FROM YOUR FRIENDS IN OXFORD TOWN hung around her neck.

Behind him the door from the rectory's kitchen opened. There was the soft padding sound of bare feet (his ears were sharp now, trained like the rest of his killer's equipment), and the click of toenails. Jake and Oy.

The kid sat down next to him in Callahan's rocking chair. He was dressed and wearing his docker's clutch. In it was the Ruger Jake had stolen from his father on the day he had run away from home. Today it had drawn...well, not blood. Not yet. Oil? Eddie smiled a little. There was no humor in it.

"Can't sleep, Jake?"

"Ake," Oy agreed, and collapsed at Jake's feet, muzzle resting on the boards between his paws.

"No," Jake said. "I keep thinking about Susannah." He paused, then added: "And Benny."

Eddie knew that was natural, the boy had seen his friend blown apart before his very eyes, of *course* he'd be thinking about him, but Eddie still felt a bitter spurt of jealousy, as if all of Jake's regard should have been saved for Eddie Dean's wife.

"That Tavery kid," Jake said. "It's his fault. Panicked. Got running. Broke his ankle. If not for him, Benny'd still be alive." And very softly -- it would have chilled the heart of the boy in question had he heard it, Eddie had no doubt of that -- Jake said: "Frank...fucking...Tavery."

Eddie reached out a hand that did not want to comfort and made it touch the kid's head. His hair was long. Needed a wash. Hell, needed a cut. Needed a mother to make sure the boy under it took care of it. No mother now, though, not for Jake. And a little miracle: giving comfort made Eddie feel better. Not a lot, but a little.

"Let it go," he said. "Done is done."

"Ka," Jake said bitterly.

"Ki-yet, ka," Oy said without raising his muzzle.

"Amen," Jake said, and laughed. It was disturbing in its coldness. Jake took the Ruger from its makeshift holster and looked at it. "This one will go through, because it came from the other side. That's what Roland says. The others may, too, because we won't be going todash. If they don't, Henchick will cache them in the cave and maybe we can come back for them."

"If we wind up in New York," Eddie said, "there'll be plenty of guns. And we'll find them."

"Not like Roland's. I hope like hell they go through. There aren't any guns left in any of the worlds like his. That's what I think."

It was what Eddie thought, too, but he didn't bother saying so. From town there came a rattle of firecrackers, then silence. It was winding down there. Winding down at last. Tomorrow there would undoubtedly be an all-day party on the common, a continuation of today's celebration but a little less drunk and a little more coherent. Roland and his ka-tet would be expected as guests of honor, but if the gods of creation were good and the door opened, they would be gone. Hunting Susannah. Finding her. Never mind hunting. *Finding.*

As if reading his thoughts (and he could do that, he was strong in the touch), Jake said: "She's still alive."

"How can you know that?"

"We would have felt it if she was gone."

"Jake, can you touch her?"

"No, but -- "

Before he could finish, a deep rumbling came from the earth. The porch suddenly began to rise and fall like a boat on a heavy sea. They could hear the boards groaning. From the kitchen came the sound of rattling china like chattering teeth. Oy raised his head and whined. His foxy little face was comically startled, his ears laid back along his skull. In Callahan's parlor, something fell over and shattered.

Eddie's first thought, illogical but strong, was that Jake had killed Suze simply by declaring her still alive.

For a moment the shaking intensified. A window shattered as its frame was twisted out of shape. There was a crump from the darkness. Eddie assumed - - correctly -- that it was the ruined privy, now falling down completely. He was on his feet without realizing it. Jake was standing beside him, gripping his wrist. Eddie had drawn Roland's gun and now they both stood as if ready to begin shooting.

There was a final grumbling from deep in the earth, and then the porch settled under their feet. At certain key points along the Beam, people were waking up and looking around, dazed. In the streets of one New York when, a few car alarms were going off. The following day's papers would report a minor earthquake: broken windows, no reported casualties. Just a little shake of the fundamentally sound bedrock.

Jake was looking at Eddie, eyes wide. And knowing.

The door opened behind them and Callahan came out onto the porch, dressed in flimsy white underpants that fell to his knees. The only other thing on him was the gold crucifix around his neck.

"It was an earthquake, wasn't it?" he said. "I felt one in northern California once, but never since coming to the Calla."

"It was a hell of a lot more than an earthquake," Eddie said, and pointed. The screened-in porch looked east, and over there the horizon was lit by silent artillery bursts of green lightning. Downhill from the rectory, the door of Rosalita's snug creaked open and then banged shut. She and Roland came up the hill together, she in her chemise and the gunslinger in a pair of jeans, both barefoot in the dew.

Eddie, Jake, and Callahan went down to them. Roland was looking fixedly at the already diminishing flickers of lightning in the east, where the land of Thunderclap waited for them, and the Court of the Crimson King, and, at the end of End-World, the Dark Tower itself.

If, Eddie thought. If it still stands.

"Jake was just saying that if Susannah died, we'd know it," Eddie said. "That there'd be what you call a sigul. Then comes this." He pointed to the Pere's lawn, where a new ridge had humped up, peeling the sod apart in one ten-foot line to show the puckered brown lips of the earth. A chorus of dogs was barking in town, but there were no sounds from the *folken*, at least not yet; Eddie supposed a goodly number had slept through the whole thing. The sleep of the drunken victorious. "But it wasn't anything to do with Suze. Was it?"

"Not directly, no."

"And it wasn't ours," Jake put in, "or the damage would have been a lot worse. Don't you think?"

Roland nodded.

Rosa looked at Jake with a mixture of puzzlement and fright. "Wasn't our *what*, boy? What are you talking about? It wasn't an earthquake, sure!"

"No," Roland said, "a *Beamquake*. One of the Beams holding up the Tower -- which holds up everything -- just let go. Just snapped."

Even in the faint light from the four 'seners flickering on the porch, Eddie saw Rosalita Munoz's face lose its color. She crossed herself. "A *Beam*? One of the *Beams*? Say no! Say not true!"

Eddie found himself thinking of some long-ago baseball scandal. Of some little boy begging, *Say it ain't so, Joe.*

"I can't," Roland told her, "because it is."

"How many of these Beams are there?" Callahan asked.

Roland looked at Jake, and nodded slightly: *Say your lesson, Jake of New York -- speak and be true.*

"Six Beams connecting twelve portals," Jake said. "The twelve portals are at the twelve ends of the earth. Roland, Eddie, and Susannah really started their quest from the Portal of the Bear, and picked me up between there and Lud."

"Shardik," Eddie said. He was watching the last flickers of lightning in the east. "That was the bear's name."

"Yes, Shardik," Jake agreed. "So we're on the Beam of the Bear. All the Beams come together at the Dark Tower. Our Beam, on the other side of the Tower...?" He looked at Roland for help. Roland, in turn, looked at Eddie Dean. Even now, it seemed, Roland was not done teaching them the Way of Eld.

Eddie either didn't see the look or chose to ignore it, but Roland would not be put off. "Eddie?" he murmured.

"We're on the Path of the Bear, Way of the Turtle," Eddie said absently. "I don't know why it would ever matter, since the Tower's as far as we're going, but on the other side it's the Path of the Turtle, Way of the Bear." And he recited:

"See the TURTLE of enormous girth!

On his shell he holds the earth,

His thought is slow but always kind;

He holds us all within his mind."

At this point, Rosalita took up the verse

"On his back the truth is carried,

And there are love and duty married.

He loves the earth and loves the sea,

And even loves a child like me."

"Not quite the way I learned it in my cradle and taught it to my friends," Roland said, "but close enough, by watch and by warrant."

"The Great Turtle's name is Maturin," Jake said, and shrugged. "If it matters."

"You have no way of telling which one broke?" Callahan said, studying Roland closely.

Roland shook his head. "All I know is that Jake's right -- it wasn't ours. If it had been, nothing within a hundred miles of Calla Bryn Sturgis would be standing." Or maybe within a thousand miles -- who could know? "The very birds would have fallen flaming from the sky."

"You speak of Armageddon," Callahan said in a low, troubled voice.

Roland shook his head, but not in disagreement. "I don't know that word, Pere, but I'm speaking of great death and great destruction, sure. And somewhere -- along the Beam connecting Fish to Rat, perhaps -- that has now happened."

"Are you positive this is true?" Rosa asked, low.

Roland nodded. He had been through this once before, when Gilead fell and civilization as he then understood it had ended. When he had been cast loose to wander with Cuthbert and Alain and Jamie and the few others of their katet. One of the six Beams had broken then, and almost certainly not the first.

"How many Beams remain to hold the Tower?" Callahan asked.

For the first time, Eddie seemed interested in something other than the fate of his lost wife. He was looking at Roland with what was almost attention. And why not? This was, after all, the crucial question. *All things serve the Beam*, they said, and although the actual truth was that all things served the Tower, it was the Beams which held the Tower up. If they snapped --

"Two," Roland said. "There have to be at least two, I'd say. The one running through Calla Bryn Sturgis and another. But God knows how long they'll hold. Even without the Breakers working on them, I doubt they'd hold for long. We have to hurry."

Eddie had stiffened. "If you're suggesting we go on without Suze -- "

Roland shook his head impatiently, as if to tell Eddie not to be a fool. "We can't win through to the Tower without her. For all I know, we can't win through without Mia's chap. It's in the hands of ka, and there used to be a saying in my country: 'Ka has no heart or mind.'"

"That one I can agree with," Eddie said.

"We might have another problem," Jake said.

Eddie frowned at him. "We don't *need* another problem."

"I know, but...what if the earthquake blocked the mouth of that cave? Or..." Jake hesitated, then reluctantly brought out what he was really afraid of. "Or knocked it down completely?"

Eddie reached out, took hold of Jake's shirt, and bundled it into his fist. "Don't say that. Don't you even *think* that."

Now they could hear voices from town. The *folken* would be gathering on the common again, Roland guessed. He further guessed that this day -- and now this night -- would be remembered in Calla Bryn Sturgis for a thousand years. If the Tower stood, that was.

Eddie let go of Jake's shirt and then pawed at the place he had grabbed, as if to erase the wrinkles. He tried a smile that made him look feeble and old.

Roland turned to Callahan. "Will the Manni still turn up tomorrow? You know this bunch better than I."

Callahan shrugged. "Henchick's a man of his word. Whether he can hold the others to his word after what just happened...that, Roland, I don't know."

"He better be able to," Eddie said darkly. "He just better be."

Roland of Gilead said, "Who's for Watch Me?"

Eddie looked at him, unbelieving.

"We're going to be up until morning light," the gunslinger said. "We might as well pass the time."

So they played Watch Me, and Rosalita won hand after hand, adding up their scores on a piece of slate with no smile of triumph -- with no expression at all that Jake could read. At least not at first. He was tempted to try the touch, but had decided that to use it for any but the strongest reasons was

wrong. Using it to see behind Rosa's poker face would be like watching her undress. Or watching her and Roland make love.

Yet as the game went on and the northeast finally began to grow lighter, Jake guessed he knew what she was thinking of after all, because it was what *he* was thinking of. On some level of their minds, all of them would be thinking of those last two Beams, from now until the end.

Waiting for one or both of them to snap. Whether it was them trailing Susannah or Rosa cooking her dinner or even Ben Slightman, mourning his dead son out there on Vaughn Eisenhart's ranch, all of them would now be thinking of the same thing: only two left, and the Breakers working against them night and day, eating into them, *killing* them.

How long before everything ended? And *how* would it end? Would they hear the vast rumble of those enormous slate-colored stones as they fell? Would the sky tear open like a flimsy piece of cloth, spilling out the monstrosities that lived in the todash darkness? Would there be time to cry out? Would there be an afterlife, or would even Heaven and Hell be obliterated by the fall of the Dark Tower?

He looked at Roland and sent a thought, as clearly as he could: *Roland, help us.*

And one came back, filling his mind with cold comfort (ah, but comfort served cold was better than no comfort at all): *If I can.*

"Watch Me," said Rosalita, and laid down her cards. She had built Wands, the high run, and the card on top was Madame Death.

STAVE: *Commala-come-come*

There's a young man with a gun.

Young man lost his honey

When she took it on the run.

RESPONSE: *Commala-come-one!*

She took it on the run!

Left her baby lonely but

Her baby ain't done

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