

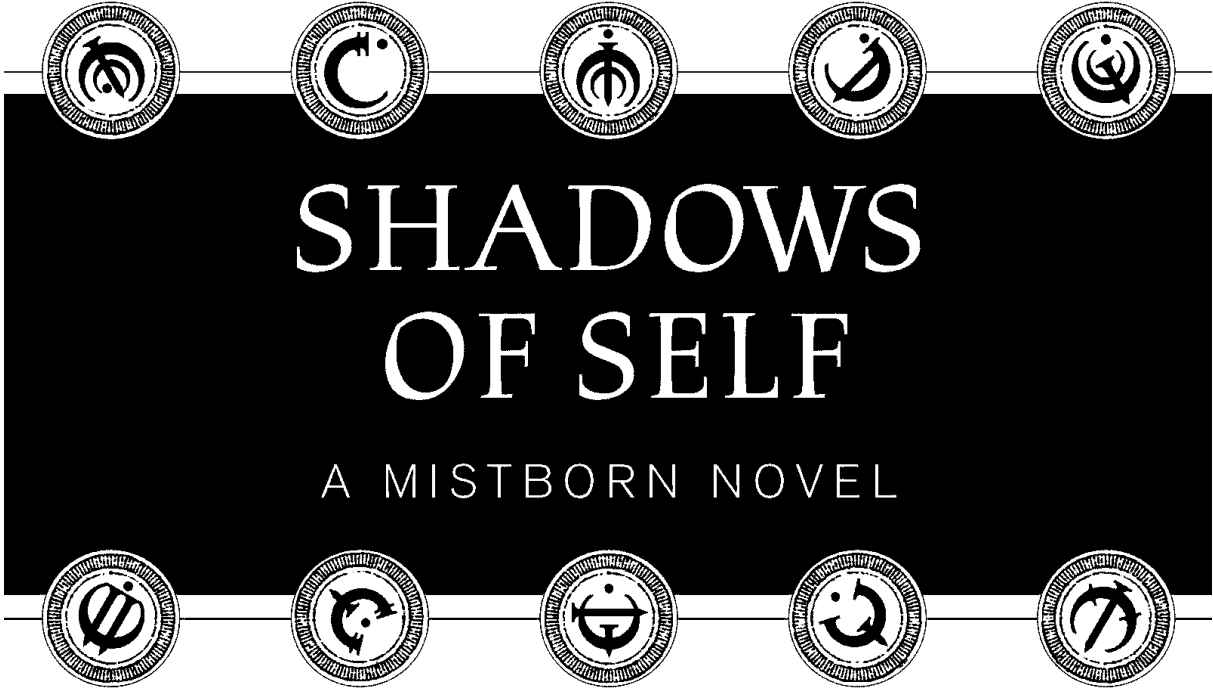
# BRANDON SANDERSON

*#1 New York Times Bestselling Author*



# Shadows of Self

A  
MISTBORN  
Novel



# SHADOWS OF SELF

A MISTBORN NOVEL

BRANDON SANDERSON



A TOM DOHERTY ASSOCIATES BOOK  
NEW YORK

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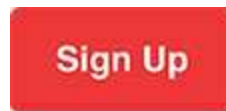
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**FOR MOSHE FEDER**

*Who took a chance on me*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has a somewhat storied past, as I wrote a third of it during the process of writing another book. (I was waiting for editorial notes to come back; I believe it was the final Wheel of Time book.) I had to drop work on this and dive into the other book.

By the time I came back, my vision for a new trilogy about Wax, Wayne, and Marasi had transformed—so the first third took some serious work to whip into shape and make match the last two thirds, as I wrote them. I relied a lot on the excellent editorial vision of my editor, Moshe Feder, my agent, Joshua Bilmes, and my editorial assistant, the Instant Peter Ahlstrom. Special thanks as well to my editor in the UK, Simon Spanton.

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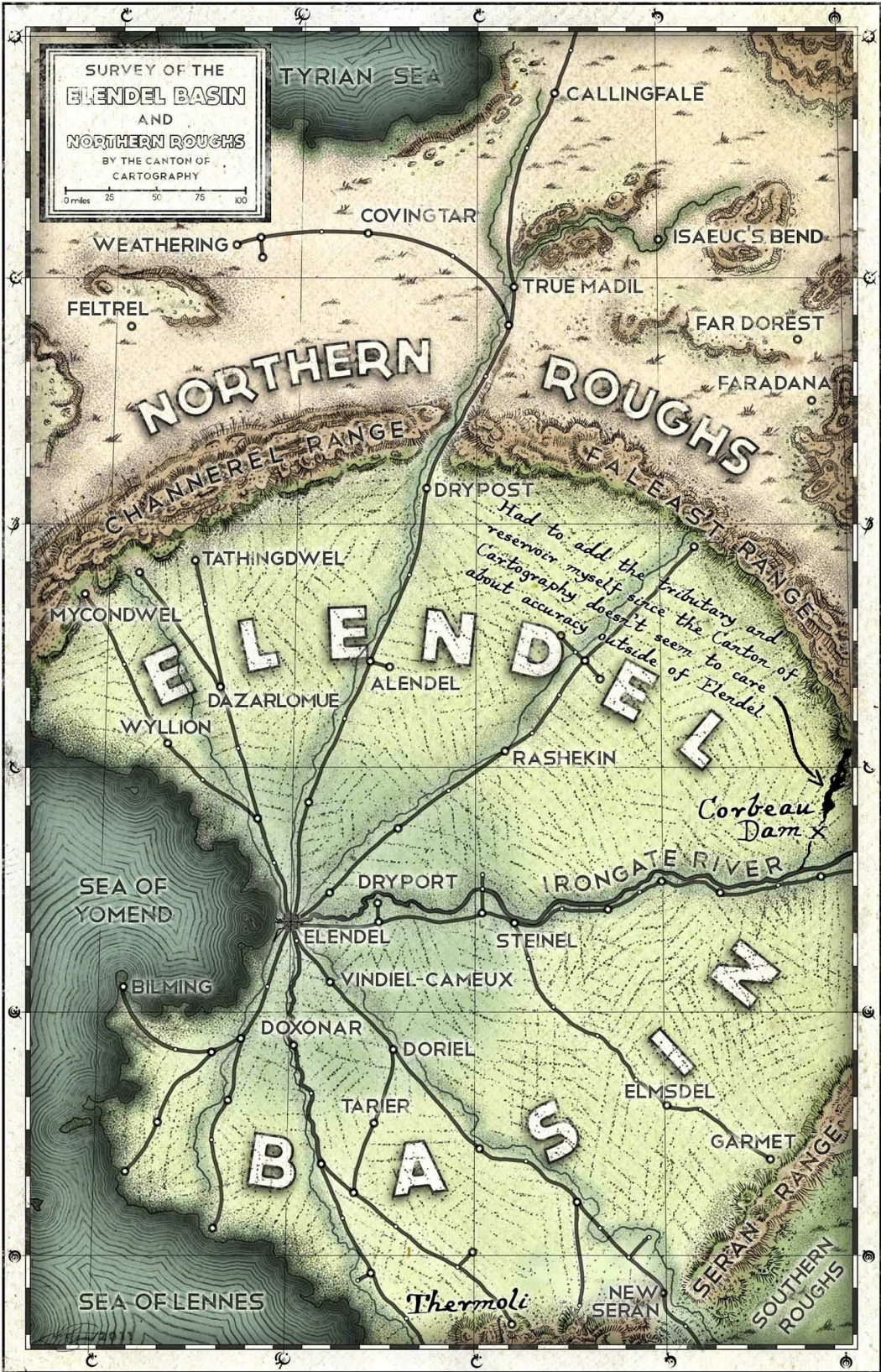
We did a blitz of a beta read, and some vigilant people jumped in with excellent commentary. They were: Jory Phillips, Joel Phillips, Bob Kluttz, Alice Arneson, Trae Cooper, Gary Singer, Lyndsey Luther, Brian T. Hill, Jakob Remick, Eric James Stone, Bao Pham, Aubree Pham, Steve Godecke, Kristina Kugler, Ben Olsen, Samuel Lund, Megan Kanne, Nate Hatfield, Layne Garrett, Kim Garrett, Eric Lake, Karen Ahlstrom, Isaac Skarstedt, Darci Stone, Isaac Stewart, Kalyani Poluri, Josh Walker, Donald Mustard III, Cory Aitchison, and Christi Jacobsen.

Over the years, it's been incredibly satisfying to see the artwork for my novels develop. I've always had this wild vision for including way more art than usual—basically all I can get away with. Three wonderful artists made this possible on this volume. Chris McGrath did the cover, and I *love* his depictions of the characters. My good friend and now full-time art director Isaac Stewart did the maps and symbols, as well as the heavy design lifting on the broadsheet. Art on the broadsheet was done by the ever-excellent Ben McSweeney.

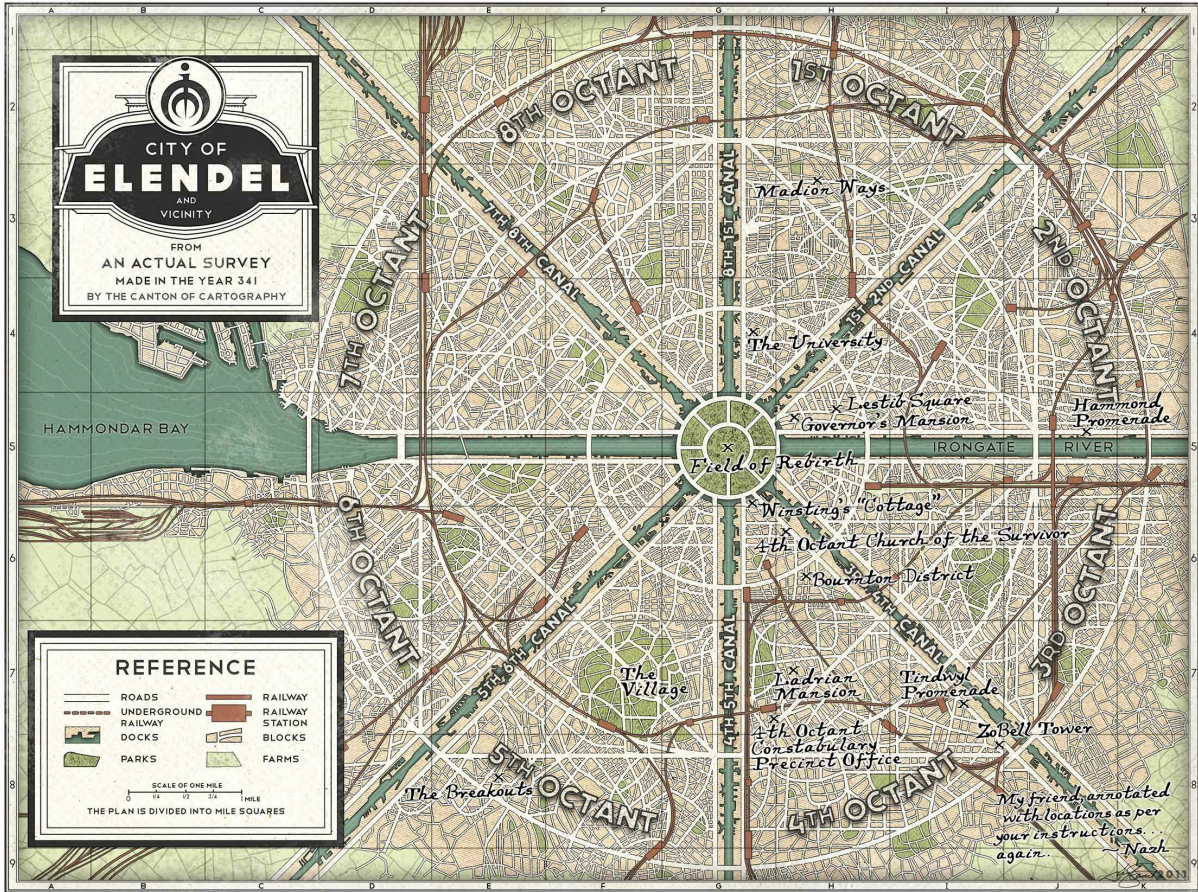
At JABberwocky, my agency, thanks go to Eddie Schneider, Sam Morgan, Krystyna Lopez, and Christa Atkinson. In the UK, John Berlyne of the Zeno Agency deserves your applause.

From Tor Books, many thanks to Tom Doherty, Linda Quinton, Marco Palmieri, Karl Gold, Diana Pho, Nathan Weaver, Edward Allen, and Rafal Gibek. Ingrid Powell was the proofreader. Copyediting was done by Terry McGarry, and the audiobook is by my personal favorite reader, Michael Kramer. Other audiobook pros who deserve thanks are Robert Allen, Samantha Edelson, and Mitali Dave. Adam Horne, my new executive assistant, gets his name in a book for the first time in this one. Well done, Adam!

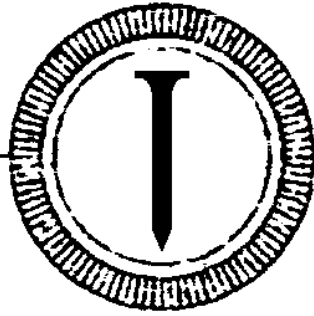
Finally, big thanks to my family, as always. A wonderful wife and three little boys who still get confused as to why the books Daddy writes have so few pictures.







# PROLOGUE



Waxillium Ladrian, lawman for hire, swung off his horse and turned to face the saloon.

“Aw,” the kid said, hopping down from his own horse. “You didn’t catch your spur on the stirrup and trip.”

“That happened *once*,” Waxillium said.

“Yeah, but it was *super* funny.”

“Stay with the horses,” Waxillium said, tossing the kid his reins. “Don’t tie up Destroyer. I might need her.”

“Sure.”

“And *don’t* steal anything.”

The kid—round-faced and seventeen, with barely a hint of stubble on his face despite weeks of trying—nodded with a solemn expression. “I promise I won’t swipe nothin’ of yours, Wax.”

Waxillium sighed. “That’s not what I said.”

“But...”

“Just stay with the horses. And try not to talk to anyone.” Waxillium

shook his head, pushing into the saloon, feeling a spring in his step. He was filling his metalmind a smidge, decreasing his weight by about ten percent. Common practice for him these days, ever since he'd run out of stored weight during one of his first bounty hunts a few months back.

The saloon, of course, was dirty. Practically everything out here in the Roughts was dusty, worn, or broken. Five years out here, and he still wasn't used to that. True, he'd spent most of those five years trying to make a living as a clerk, moving farther and farther from population centers in an effort to avoid getting recognized. But in the Roughts, even the larger population centers were dirtier than those back in Elendel.

And here, on the fringes of populated lands, dirty didn't even *begin* to describe life. The men he passed in the saloon sat slumped low to their tables, hardly looking up. That was another thing about the Roughts. Both plants and people were more prickly, and they grew lower to the ground. Even the fanlike acacias, which did stretch high at times, had this fortified, hardy sense about them.

He scanned the room, hands on hips, hoping he'd draw attention. He didn't, which nagged at him. Why wear a fine city suit, with a lavender cravat, if nobody was going to notice? At least they weren't snickering, like those in the last saloon.

Hand on his gun, Waxillium sauntered up to the bar. The barkeep was a tall man who looked to have some Terris blood in him, from that willowy build, though his refined cousins in the Basin would be horrified to see him chewing on a greasy chicken leg with one hand while serving a mug with the other. Waxillium tried not to be nauseated; the local notion of hygiene was another thing he wasn't yet accustomed to. Out here, the fastidious ones were those who remembered to wipe their hands on their trousers between picking their nose and shaking your hand.

Waxillium waited. Then waited some more. Then cleared his throat. Finally, the barkeep lumbered over to him.

“Yeah?”

“I'm looking for a man,” Waxillium said under his breath. “Goes by the

name of Granite Joe.”

“Don’t know him,” the barkeep said.

“Don’t— He’s only the *single* most notorious outlaw in these parts.”

“Don’t know him.”

“But—”

“It’s safer to not know men like Joe,” the barkeep said, then took a bite of his chicken leg. “But I have a friend.”

“That’s surprising.”

The barkeep glared at him.

“Ahem,” Waxillium said. “Sorry. Continue.”

“My friend might be willing to know people that others won’t. It will take a little time to get him. You’ll pay?”

“I’m a lawman,” Waxillium said. “I do what I do in the name of justice.”

The barkeep blinked. Slowly, deliberately, as if it required conscious effort. “So ... you’ll pay?”

“Yes, I’ll pay,” Waxillium said with a sigh, mentally counting what he’d already spent hunting Granite Joe. He couldn’t afford to go in the hole again. Destroyer needed a new saddle, and Waxillium went through suits frightfully quick out here.

“Good,” the barkeep said, gesturing for Waxillium to follow. They wove through the room, around tables and past the pianoforte, which sat beside one of the pillars, between two tables. It didn’t look like it had been played in ages, and someone had set a row of dirty mugs on it. Next to the stairs, they entered a small room. It smelled dusty.

“Wait,” the barkeep said, then shut the door and left.

Waxillium folded his arms, eyeing the room’s lone chair. The white paint was flaking and peeling; he didn’t doubt that if he sat down, he’d end up with half of it stuck to his trousers.

He was growing more comfortable with the people of the Roughts, if not their particular habits. These few months chasing bounties had shown him that there *were* good men and women out here, mixed among the rest. Yet they all had this stubborn *fatalism* about them. They didn’t trust authority,

and often shunned lawmen, even if it meant letting a man like Granite Joe continue to ravage and plunder. Without the bounties set by the railroad and mining companies, nothing would ever—

The window shook. Waxillium stopped, then grabbed the gun at his side and burned steel. The metal created a sharp warmth within him, like the feeling after drinking something too hot. Blue lines sprang up pointing from his chest toward nearby sources of metal, several of which were just outside the shuttered window. Others pointed downward. This saloon had a basement, which was unusual out in the Roughts.

He could Push on those lines if he needed to, shoving on the metal they connected to. For now, he just watched as a small rod slipped between the window casements, then lifted, raising the latch that held them closed. The window rattled, then swung open.

A young woman in dark trousers hopped in, rifle in one hand. Lean, with a squarish face, she carried an unlit cigar in her teeth and looked vaguely familiar to Waxillium. She stood up, apparently satisfied, then turned to close the window. As she did, she saw him for the first time.

“Hell!” she said, scrambling backward, dropping her cigar, raising her rifle.

Waxillium raised his own gun and prepared his Allomancy, wishing he’d found a way to protect himself from bullets. He could Push on metal, yes, but he wasn’t fast enough to stop gunfire, unless he Pushed on the gun before the trigger was pulled.

“Hey,” the woman said, looking through the rifle sights. “Aren’t you that guy? The one who killed Peret the Black?”

“Waxillium Ladrian,” he said. “Lawman for hire.”

“You’re kidding. That’s how you introduce yourself?”

“Sure. Why not?”

She didn’t answer, instead looking away from her rifle, studying him for a few moments. Finally she said, “A cravat? Really?”

“It’s kind of my thing,” Waxillium said. “The gentleman bounty hunter.”

“Why would a bounty hunter need a ‘thing’ in the first place?”

“It’s important to have a reputation,” Waxillium said, raising his chin. “The outlaws all have them; people have heard of men like Granite Joe from one side of the Roughts to the other. Why shouldn’t I do the same?”

“Because it paints a target on your head.”

“Worth the danger,” Waxillium said. “But speaking of targets...” He waved his gun, then nodded toward hers.

“You’re after the bounty on Joe,” she said.

“Sure am. You too?”

She nodded.

“Split it?” Waxillium said.

She sighed, but lowered her rifle. “Fine. The one who shoots him gets a double portion though.”

“I was planning to bring him in alive....”

“Good. Gives me a better chance of killing him first.” She grinned at him, slipping over to the door. “The name’s Lessie. Granite *is* in here somewhere, then? Have you seen him?”

“No, I haven’t,” Waxillium said, joining her at the door. “I asked the barkeep, and he sent me in here.”

She turned on him. “You asked the barkeep.”

“Sure,” Waxillium said. “I’ve read the stories. Barkeeps know everything, and ... You’re shaking your head.”

“*Everyone* in this saloon belongs to Joe, Mister Cravat,” Lessie said. “Hell, half the people in this town belong to him. You *asked the barkeep?*”

“I believe we’ve established that.”

“Rust!” She cracked the door and looked out. “How in Ruin’s name did *you* take down Peret the Black?”

“Surely it’s not that bad. *Everyone* in the bar can’t...”

He trailed off as he peeked out the door. The tall barkeep hadn’t run off to fetch anyone. No, he was out in the taproom of the saloon, gesturing toward the side room’s door and urging the assembled thugs and miscreants to stand up and arm themselves. They looked hesitant, and some were gesturing angrily, but more than a few had guns out.

“Damn,” Lessie whispered.

“Back out the way you came in?” Waxillium asked.

Her response was to slip the door closed with the utmost care, then shove him aside and scramble toward the window. She grabbed the windowsill to step out, but gunfire cracked nearby and wood chips exploded off the sill.

Lessie cursed and dropped to the floor. Waxillium dove down beside her.

“Sharpshooter!” he hissed.

“Are you always this observant, Mister Cravat?”

“No, only when I’m being shot at.” He peeked up over the lip of the windowsill, but there were a dozen places nearby where the shooter could be hiding. “This is a problem.”

“There’s that razor-sharp power of observation again.” Lessie crawled across the floor toward the door.

“I meant in more ways than one,” Waxillium said, crossing the floor in a crouch. “How did they have time to get a sharpshooter into position? They must have *known* that I was going to show up today. This whole place could be a trap.”

Lessie cursed softly as he reached the door and cracked it open again. The thugs were arguing quietly and gesturing toward the door.

“They’re taking me seriously,” Waxillium said. “Ha! The reputation is working. You see that? They’re frightened!”

“Congratulations,” she said. “Do you think they’ll give me a reward if I shoot you?”

“We need to get upstairs,” Waxillium said, eyeing a stairwell just outside their door.

“What good will that do?”

“Well, for one thing, all the armed people who want to kill us are down here. I’d rather be somewhere else, and those stairs will be easier to defend than this room. Besides, we might find a window on the other side of the building and escape.”

“Yeah, if you want to jump two stories.”

Jumping wasn’t a problem for a Coinshot; Waxillium could Push off a

dropped piece of metal as they fell, slowing himself and landing safely. He was also a Feruchemist, and could use his metal minds to reduce his weight far more than he was doing now, shaving it down until he practically floated.

However, Waxillium's abilities weren't widely known, and he wanted to keep it that way. He'd heard the stories of his miraculous survivals, and liked the air of mystery around them. There was speculation that he was Metalborn, sure, but so long as people didn't know exactly what he could do, he'd have an edge.

"Look, I'm going to run for the steps," he said to the woman. "If you want to stay down here and fight your way out, great. You'll provide an ideal distraction for me."

She glanced at him, then grinned. "Fine. We'll do it your way. But if we get shot, you owe me a drink."

*There is something familiar about her*, Waxillium thought. He nodded, counted softly to three, then burst out of the door and leveled his gun at the nearest thug. The man jumped back as Waxillium shot three times—and missed. His bullets hit the pianoforte instead, sounding a discordant note with each impact.

Lessie scrambled out behind him and went for the stairs. The motley collection of thugs leveled weapons with cries of surprise. Waxillium swung his gun back—out of the way of his Allomancy—and shoved lightly on the blue lines pointing from him toward the men in the room. They opened fire, but his Push had nudged their guns enough to spoil their aim.

Waxillium followed Lessie up the steps, fleeing the storm of gunfire.

"Holy hell," Lessie said as they reached the first landing. "We're alive." She looked back at him, cheeks flushed.

Something clicked like a lock in Waxillium's mind. "I *have* met you before," he said.

"No you haven't," she said, looking away. "Let's keep—"

"The Weeping Bull!" Waxillium said. "The dancing girl!"

"Oh, God Beyond," she said, leading the way up the stairs. "You remember."



“I *knew* you were faking. Even Rusko wouldn’t hire someone that uncoordinated, no matter how pretty her legs are.”

“Can we go jump out a window now, please?” she said, checking the top floor for signs of thugs.

“Why were you there? Chasing a bounty?”

“Yeah, kind of.”

“And you really didn’t know they were going to make you—”

“This conversation is done.”

They stepped out onto the top floor, and Waxillium waited a moment until a shadow on the wall announced someone following them upstairs. He fired once at the thug who appeared there, missing again, but driving the man back. He heard cursing and arguing below. Granite Joe might own the men in this saloon, but they weren’t overly loyal. The first few up the steps would almost certainly get shot, and none would be eager to take the risk.

That would buy Waxillium some time. Lessie pushed into a room, passing an empty bed with a pair of boots beside it. She threw open the window, which was on the opposite side of the building from the sharpshooter.

The town of Weathering spread before them, a lonely collection of shops and homes, hunkered down as if waiting—in vain—for the day when the railroad would stretch its fingers this far. In the middle distance, beyond the humble buildings, a few giraffes browsed lazily, the only sign of animal life in the vast plain.

The drop out the window was straight down, no roof to climb onto. Lessie regarded the ground warily. Waxillium shoved his fingers in his mouth and whistled sharply.

Nothing happened.

He whistled again.

“What the hell are you doing?” Lessie demanded.

“Calling my horse,” Waxillium said, then whistled again. “We can hop down into the saddle and ride away.”

She stared at him. “You’re serious.”

“Sure I am. We’ve been practicing.”

A lone figure walked out onto the street below, the kid who had been following Waxillium. “Uh, Wax?” the kid called up. “Destroyer’s just standing there, drinking.”

“Hell,” Waxillium said.

Lessie looked at him. “You named your horse—”

“She’s a little too placid, all right?” Waxillium snapped, climbing up onto the windowsill. “I thought the name might inspire her.” He cupped his hand, calling to the boy below. “Wayne! Bring her out here. We’re going to jump!”

“Like hell we are,” Lessie said. “You think there’s something magical about a saddle that will keep us from breaking the horse’s back when we drop into it?”

Waxillium hesitated. “Well, I’ve read about people doing this....”

“Yeah, I’ve got an idea,” Lessie said. “Next, why don’t you call out Granite Joe, and go stand out in the road and have a good old-fashioned showdown at noon.”

“You think that would work? I—”

“No, it won’t work,” she snapped. “Nobody does that. It’s stupid. Ruin! How *did* you kill Peret the Black?”

They stared at each other a moment.

“Well...” Waxillium started.

“Oh hell. You caught him on the crapper, didn’t you?”

Waxillium grinned at her. “Yeah.”

“Did you shoot him in the back too?”

“As bravely as any man ever shot another in the back.”

“Huh. There might be hope for you yet.”

He nodded toward the window. “Jump?”

“Sure. Why not break both my legs before getting shot? Might as well go all in, Mister Cravat.”

“I think we’ll be fine, Miss Pink Garter.”

She raised an eyebrow.

“If you’re going to identify me by my clothing choices,” he said, “then I figure I can do the same.”

“It shall never be mentioned again,” she said, then took a deep breath. “So?”

He nodded, flaring his metals, preparing to hold on to her and slow them as they fell—just enough to make it seem like they’d miraculously survived the jump. As he did, however, he noticed one of his blue lines moving—a faint but thick one, pointing across the street.

*The window in the mill.* Sunlight glinted off something inside.

Waxillium immediately grabbed Lessie and pulled her down. A fraction of a second later, a bullet streaked over their heads and hit the door on the other side of the room.

“Another sharpshooter,” she hissed.

“Your power of observation is—”

“Shut it,” she said. “Now what?”

Waxillium frowned, considering the question. He glanced at the bullet hole, gauging the trajectory. The sharpshooter had aimed too high; even if Waxillium hadn’t ducked, he’d likely have been all right.

Why aim high? The moving blue line to the gun had indicated the sharpshooter running to get into position before shooting. Was it just rushed targeting? Or was there a more sinister reason? *To knock me out of the sky? When I flew out the window?*

He heard footsteps on the stairs, but saw no blue lines. He cursed, scrambling over and peeking out. A group of men were creeping up the steps, and not the normal thugs from below. These men wore tight white shirts, had pencil mustaches, and were armed with crossbows. Not a speck of metal on them.

Rusts! They knew he was a Coinshot, and Granite Joe had a kill squad ready for him.

He ducked back into the room and grabbed Lessie by the arm. “Your informant said Granite Joe was in this building?”

“Yeah,” she said. “He most certainly is. He likes to be close when a gang is being gathered; he likes to keep an eye on his men.”

“This building has a basement.”

“... So?”

“So hang on.”

He grabbed her in both hands and rolled onto the ground, causing her to yelp, then curse. Holding her over him, he increased his weight.

He had a great deal of it stored in his metalmind by now, after weeks of siphoning it off. Now he drew it all out, magnifying his weight manyfold in an instant. The wooden floor cracked, then *burst* open beneath them.

Waxillium fell through, his fine clothing getting ripped, and dropped through the air, towing Lessie after him. Eyes squeezed closed, he Pushed the hundreds of blue lines behind him, those leading to the nails in the floor below. He blasted them downward to shatter the ground level’s floor and open the way into the basement.

They crashed through the ground floor in a shower of dust and splinters. Waxillium managed to slow their descent with a Steelpush, but they still came down hard, smashing into a table in a basement chamber.

Waxillium let out a puffing groan, but forced himself to twist around, shaking free of the broken wood. The basement, surprisingly, was paneled in fine hardwoods and lit by lamps shaped like curvaceous women. The table they had hit bore a rich white tablecloth, though it was now wadded in a bunch, the table legs shattered and the table itself at an angle.

A man sat at the table’s head. Waxillium managed to stand up in the wreckage and level a gun at the fellow, who had a blocky face and dark blue-grey skin—the mark of a man with koloss heritage. Granite Joe. Waxillium appeared to have interrupted his dinner, judging by the napkin tucked into his collar and the spilled soup on the broken table in front of him.

Lessie groaned, rolling over and brushing splinters off her clothing. Her rifle had apparently been left upstairs. Waxillium held his gun in a firm grip as he eyed the two duster-wearing bodyguards behind Granite Joe, a man and a woman—siblings, he’d heard, and crack shots. They’d been surprised by his fall, obviously, for though they’d rested hands on their weapons, they hadn’t drawn.

Waxillium had the upper hand, with the gun on Joe—but if he *did* shoot,