

# The Showdown

By Mantrid Brizon

Pushing open the saloon doors, the muscular Mitchell “Quick Mitch” Bridges steps inside. Patrons turn as the six foot and five-inch-tall sheriff enters the establishment. As he walks into the bar, he is followed by his deputy, Roscoe “Moss” Clinton. Though Moss is a dark-skinned human with a full bear, Quick Mitch is a Voeldahn; his chocolate brown fur is thick and full, with brown eyes, a long and broad snout, short rounded ears and a nub of a tail. Taking off his gray ten-gallon hat, he sets it atop the bar and runs his claws through his shaggy brown hair. His leather boots thud loudly as he walks inside, his eyes narrowing as he sees Stacy Sharpe sitting at the end of the bar.

A cowboy often called “Angel Eyes” by the women in town, it has become the only name that Stacy Sharpe goes by. Angel Eyes has been a problem for Quick Mitch for quite some time, though no one can understand why. The feud has never progresses beyond harsh language and a thrown fist or two. Hearing the loud thudding of the bear’s boots, Angel Eyes turns in his stool. The cream colored feline Voeldahn leans toward a bar girl, her cleavage quite close to his short snout. He spins in his stool, his long tail swishes through the air as Quick Mitch approaches. He narrows his green eyes, quickly placing his black flat-top hat over his shoulder length, sandy blonde hair, his triangular ears jutting through pre-cut holes.

Rising to his feet, Angel Eyes turns to leave the saloon. He balls a fist in preparation as he tries to pass Quick Mitch, who is a head taller and considerably heavier than himself. Quick Mitch reaches out a hand, placing it on Angel Eye's chest and stopping him in his tracks. Before he has time to react, Quick Mitch coils his fingers, gripping the lambskin vest tightly in his powerful hand. The patrons rise to their feet and back away from their barstools and tables, preparing to watch a scuffle erupt between the two men.

"Hold up. What are you doing in here?" Quick Mitch asks.

"You want to let go of me, Mitch?" Angel Eyes retorts.

"You aren't supposed to be in here. Do you remember what I said the last time?"

Angel Eyes raises his hands and plants his palms firmly on Quick Mitch's chest, shoving hard and pushing the sheriff back. Quick Mitch draws his Colt Peacemaker, but Angel Eyes only raises a brow, perplexed by the sheriff's sudden show of force. Moss steps to the side, his brow furled as he looks at the gun in Quick Mitch's hand.

"You best come with me." The sheriff sternly demands.

"For what?" Angel Eyes chuckles.

"I'm placing you under arrest."

"What?!" The cowboy exclaims.

Quick Mitch steps forward, attempting to take Angel Eyes prisoner. The cowboy struggles, turning and ripping free from the sheriff's grasp. Darting around a table, the cowboy makes no attempt

to draw his own sidearm. To Quick Mitch's surprise, Moss does not back his play.

"What are you doing, Mitch?!" A bargirl exclaims.

"Come on, Mitch. Let's just go." Moss adds.

"Why you little skunk!" The sheriff barks, glaring at his deputy. "Are you going to help your sheriff or not?!"

"Let's go sir. It's almost time anyway."

Turning his eyes to the mechanical clock hanging on the wall by the shelf of alcohol, growling under his breath as he sees the time. He turns and points a clawed finger at the cowboy, who pats down his vest and straightens his hat.

"I better not see in town again, or you won't be going to jail; there's a plot in boot-hill with your name on it." Quick Mitch warns.

Angel Eyes, Moss, and the other patrons all look horrified at the threat, which is not made idly by the sheriff. He turns and claims his hat from the bar, placing it on his head as he storms out. After a moment of silence, Moss turns back to the cowboy and patrons, tipping his hat and quickly leaving to follow his sheriff. Racing to join the sheriff, he catches up to him as he returns to their office, which also houses the jails. He glances over, turning his eyes to the tall sheriff as he walks down the dusty road. Quick Mitch turns his eyes back to his deputy, who looks quite surprised by the confrontation at the saloon.

"What?" He asks the human.

**“Are you alright, Mitch?”**

**“I’m fine. Just tired of seeing that low-down cowboy in my town.”**  
Quick Mitch answers.

**“Are you sure?” Moss persists.**

**“Are you my deputy or my mother?!” The Voeldahn snarls.**

Startled, Moss decides not to press the matter further. After stopping at the office, the pair go their separate ways and return home for the night. Lying in bed, Quick Mitch can hardly sleep, only able to think about the disrespectful and arrogant cowboy who consistently causes him trouble. Looking over to his gun as it sits on the nightstand, he makes a fateful decision. If Angel Eyes is there tomorrow, he’ll have to finally use it. Waking early the next morning, the groggy Angel Eyes sits up in bed. He looks back at the human woman lying next to him; an attractive blonde specimen with an hourglass frame who he met in the saloon the previous night.

He didn’t give much thought to the sheriff or his threats, as he was preoccupied with the woman who sleeps beside him. Now, however, he ponders his situation. Quick Mitch has never thought highly of him or responded well to his jokes the way everyone else has. Perhaps he was serious when he made the threat? Unsure of what to expect, Angel Eyes retrieves a small metal lockbox from underneath his bed, using a key in the nightstand to open the case and retrieve his sidearm and ammunition. While the woman sleeps peacefully, he stands beside the bed and prepares the firearm, sighing as he locks the cylinder in place.

The anticipation is palpable; he leaves later than usual. Nearly ten o’clock in the morning, he walks down the dusty thoroughfare to his favorite place, his eyes scanning the street and the buildings lining it. As he nears the saloon, he hears a familiar voice calling out.

**“Well, well...” Quick Mitch begins.**

**Angel Eye’s heart sinks. He glances over his shoulder to see that Quick Mitch has emerged from the doctor’s office and stands roughly ten meters behind him. The bear Voeldahn leans against a pillar that holds up the wooden awning in front of the office, chewing what appears to be tobacco. Turning his head away from the cowboy, he spits out the brown ooze onto the hot earth before stepping off the rickety wooden porch. His boots thud as he walks toward the middle of the street. As he turns to face the cowboy, Angel Eyes can see the gun in his brown leather holster. His eyes grow wide; he is thankful that he prepared for this moment.**

**“Didn’t I tell you to get out of town?” Quick Mitch continues.**

**Townfolk gasp and point their fingers as they see the tension taking shape; a confrontation is imminent. Angel Eyes takes a few deep breaths and steps to the side, planting himself firmly across from his adversary.**

**“You did. I decided not to listen. After all, what kind of outlaw would I be if I did that?” Angel Eyes grins.**

**“I’m going to make you eat those words, after you eat the dust at your feet.” Quick Mitch snarls.**

**“What’s going on?! What are you doing?!” Moss yells.**

**“Either help me or get lost! You’re not much of a deputy anyway!” Quick Mitch retorts.**

The men collectively raise their arms, bending them slightly at the elbows.

“I’ve been practicing.” Angel Eyes warns.

“I certainly hope so. They don’t call me Quick Mitch for nothing.”

“And all this time I thought that was because you have a hair trigger in bed.” Angel Eyes chuckles.

“Why you son-of-a!”

Drawing his revolver in the blink of an eye, Quick Mitch fires and the crowd panics. Everyone, even Moss duck for cover, hiding behind corners, wooden barrels, and even a horse trough. Moving quickly, Quick Mitch misses with his first round. Angel Eyes briefly panics but manages to draw his own gun. Firing back, the round grazes Quick Mitch’s left arm. Quick Mitch fires a second shot before diving to the side, dodging Angel Eye’s second shot, which strikes a lantern post to the sheriff’s left side. Several more shots ring out as each man fires as fast as he can. The sheriff puts two rounds into the cowboy, driving them into his chest and gut, while Angel Eye’s last shot strikes the sheriff in the throat and severs his spine.

Dropping to the ground, the silence is deafening. After cowering for some time, Moss is the first of the townsfolk to rise to his feet. He looks over the bodies as they lie in the street, blood pooling beneath them. Nearly unable to comprehend what has happened, he slowly approaches the corpses. Angel Eyes stares blankly at the sky with his emerald green eyes, while Quick Mitch lies dead on his side, curled up somewhat as he had fallen to his knees before keeling over. He looks down at their guns, wondering why either of the men would bother to bring them. Was it really so serious a matter? Some time passes before help can arrive.

Barely an hour later, Jose Franco looks over the bodies. He kneels beside Mitchell Bridges corpse as two coroners stretch him out, lying him flat on his back. The Hispanic human sighs, shaking his head as he wonders how it could have come to this. He turns as he hears a familiar noise; Marcus Scott, a canine Voeldahn with snow white fur and icy blue eyes closes the door of their police car, walking down the dusty road.

“So, who’s this guy?” Marcus asks.

“Mitchell Bridges, a local actor playing the sheriff.” Detective Franco answers.

“And what about this other guy?”

“That’s Stacy Sharpe. He played the cowboy. The actor playing the deputy was the first one to call.” Detective Franco continues.

Detective Scott scratches the top of his head, running his fingers through his short white hair as he looks down at the firearms lying in the dirt. Mitch’s Taurus 66-7 sits empty, as does Stacy’s older Smith & Wesson Model 19.

“Why they hell would these guys bring real guns to their job at a western town?” Detective Scott thinks aloud.

“Maybe they got too into their rolls? Maybe Stacy slept with a girl Mitch liked? Who knows.” Detective Franco shrugs.

Rising to his feet, the human detective walks past his Voeldahn companion as he begins to write out the evidence taken from the scene. He approaches Roscoe Clinton, sitting on the edge of the now

empty horse trough, pierced by one of Angel Eye's bullets. Moss is in shock as he looks to the bodies of his friends lying in the street. Though he stares directly at them, he seems to be a thousand miles away. Detective Franco waves a hand in front of his face, gaining Moss' attention.

"Hey there... Are you going to be okay?" Detective Franco asks.

"Why would they do this? I don't understand what made them do this..." Moss murmurs.

"I guess this makes you the sheriff now."

Moss turns his head to the detective, glaring at him in response to his rather cold remark.

"Sorry... Cop humor." Detective Franco remarks, taking out his notebook and pen.