

**START -** EXT. MONTFORD'S HOMESTEAD - CORRAL - NIGHT

Montford races towards the corral, Winchester rifle in hand.  
Jack joins him.

JACK  
Heard it too!

Mary is a good distance behind them -- she's armed as well.

They reach the cow pen and stop -- surprised --

-- no wolves, just three head of wild cattle milling around  
the pen, trying to get close to Montford's lone cow.

JACK  
Must have come down off the  
mountains.

Montford and Jack inspect the cattle. Montford spots a brand,  
points it out.

MONTFORD  
That's Joe Carlton's brand.

Jack checks the other cow, then points to its brand.

JACK  
Henry Colbert's.  
(indicating third cow)  
That one's a maverick. No brand, so  
he's yours.

Montford moves toward the maverick -- strokes his nose, looks  
him in the eye.

MONTFORD  
(to cow)  
Where'd you come from?

MARY ELIZABETH  
See? What did I tell you? Mister,  
you just doubled your stock  
overnight.

Montford and Jack laugh -- Montford opens the corral and he  
and Jack lead them into the corral.

MONTFORD  
We'll take 'em back to Joe and  
Henry in the morning... probably  
wrote 'em off as lost for good.

MARY ELIZABETH  
I bet there's more up there... four  
years is a long time for cattle in  
the wild.

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MONTFORD

If they survived the wolves and bears.

(he thinks)

There's got to be more.

MARY ELIZABETH

Do you see Joe or Henry, given their age and health, lightin' up there after them?

MONTFORD

Hill country's dangerous... lawless up there. Wild.

MARY ELIZABETH

And full of cattle that have been breeding for years. Unbranded.

Montford thinks on it, then smiles. Mary Elizabeth is hatching a plan and he likes where it's going.

MONTFORD

That it is.

(to Jack)

You ready to play cowboy?

JACK

Only thing I know.

END

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

On horseback, Montford and Jack trot next to a cow.

JOE CARLTON (V.O.)

So you want me to agree to let you buy, at a price we set right now...

EXT. JOE CARLTON'S HOMESTEAD - 1865 - DAY

JOE CARLTON (60's), a weathered old timer works on his wagon outside his modest cabin. Montford and Jack stand nearby.

JOE

... any of my cattle that you can round up after runnin' wild for years? Cattle that I already gave up as lost?

Joe pulls a wood plank from his wagon and lays it down next to a few other planks -- he's disassembling it, breaks into a nasty cough.

MONTFORD

Yes, sir.

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