

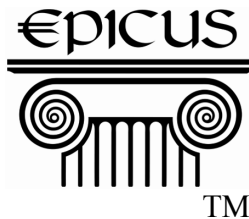
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Billy^{The} Kid

An American Epic Poem

SAMPLE

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An Out Break of Small Pox

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Within a few days Chisum left El Paso
Driving before him the herd of cattle
Which he journeyed with to New Mexico
Putting many long hours in the saddle

To join his outfit near the mountains
The Guadalupe and stream the Delaware
When he began to have aches and pains
Blaming them on his long trip unaware

That he now had small pox the disease
That others diagnosed since they knew
The symptoms and urged a time of ease
Which for John a restless man was new

Because he liked overseeing the drive
During the spring as cowboys round up
The calves born on the range and give
Each one a hot iron brand on the rump

But Chisum took their advice and went
To lay on his cot with a rising fever
While Frank a one time slave was sent
To Fort Stanton a trip he would cover

In four days riding all night and day
Only stopping to rest his tired horse
At Ft Stanton before going on his way
Carrying medications to save his boss

Who to his great surprise got soaking
Wet when the water flooded the stream
Because of rain then continued rising
Around his cot like in some bad dream

Until nurses moved him to a dry place
After water had soothed his condition
Seemingly unbearable leaving his face
With the pitted and marked complexion

That would fade in time after he rode
Back to Bosque where he would recover
In his home which would later explode
When Buck Powell came with a revolver

To arrest him for attacking Beckwiths
Ranch and about jumped from his socks
When he learned Chisum came down with
Sickness and left not wanting the pox

A Fourth of July Celebration

58

Bonney stopped at the store in Roswell
While McSween went on to Chisums ranch
And so right here Ash Upton would sell
Him a box of candy hearts on the hunch

They are Sally Chisums favorite sweets
Because William Bonney felt partial to
A blond girl with large bosom or teats
And dreamt about her as lots of men do

Including the three pals who rode next
To him after leaving the general store
Some observer described a hurried exit
After seeing riders of a dozen or more

Suddenly coming along the road to town
And then recognized they were Warriors
Led by Buck Powell banging his six gun
With no tall hills or natural barriers

To halt shots from the posse who raced
Them even as far as John Chisums ranch
Where Bonney gave a warning then faced
Buck Powell and all of that damn bunch

By climbing on the roof and from there
Shooting from behind walls of a façade
Built like a Spanish mission and where
Many of its occupants felt very afraid

Save for Sally Chisum who wouldn't let
This event keep her from doing laundry
Even after the cowboys had taken a bet
She might die and so it was a quandary

For everyone including Bonney who gave
Sally the box of hearts and then asked
That she go inside while she said save
Your breaths sweet boy and then basked

In happiness at Bonney's embarrassment
That showed again why Bonney liked her
Courage and humor like some endearment
And charm that everybody who was there

Couldn't help seeing and which started
The rumor going that both of them were
Sweethearts and for some time thwarted
Strangers from interrupting them there

Three Deputies Come for Salazar

77

Early next morning Col Dudley examined
The battle field from the night before
Along with Lt Dan Appel who determined
Precise cause of death and furthermore

Gave some assistance to the undertaker
John Newcomb when he came in the wagon
For the deceased and saw Marion Turner
And John Kinney and Andy Boyle come on

The scene after they had been stealing
From Tunstall's store and noticed that
Andy Boyle now stood up there pointing
At the spot where Yginio Salazar's hat

Lay on the ground looking at the trail
Of blood they immediately shall follow
Where it leads to Salazar without fail
Unless Dr Appel prevented them somehow

Since he knew Salazar was at the house
Where he had just spent half the night
Replacing bandages and spooning a dose
Of elixir for wounds made in the fight

Because Appel suspected such movements
And told Dudley he must return to camp
To find a forgotten bag of instruments
Also a horse that would friskily stamp

When he mounted and rode in the saddle
Covering the half a mile in good speed
Up to the house where he would startle
The three men caught right in the deed

Of carrying Salazars body out the door
So that as he shouted for them to stop
They dropped Salazar down on the floor
Then yelled like an Indian would whoop

Because he said he would see them hang
If Salazar died from the loss of blood
Saving the boy from a most brutal gang
While a hysterical sister in law stood

In a night gown and screamed murderers
As Appel took his body in light of day
Back inside the house by his shoulders
While the three abductors slipped away

Bonney Shoots to Kill Joe Grant

95

Billy the Kid's fame continued to grow
Even more after the Lincoln County War
When folks heard he had tried to throw
A William Rynerson out of business for

Having bought Tunstall's old Rio Feliz
Right after Sue McSween lost the ranch
To unpaid taxes which he soon realized
The town sold to save Rynerson a bunch

Of money the same Rynerson who refused
To drop murder charges and let Wallace
Grant Bonney a pardon in that confused
Anarchic amnesty spread over the place

And given to everyone but him it seems
The reason why he liked safe Ft Sumner
And passed these days between extremes
Of being either a rustler or a gambler

Who often would exhibit feats of skill
While shooting targets with his pistol
Taking challenges from anyone who will
Pay up in costly cartridges or alcohol

While always being alert for strangers
Like Joe Grant who fails each match up
At target shooting and suddenly angers
Later on after he fills everyone's cup

Inside Teets saloon with Irish whiskey
Telling everyone his name is Texas Red
Boasting he can draw blood from Bonney
By getting off the first piece of lead

He being faster and in a reckless dare
Would prove it with hand on the handle
Of his gun as seen by eyewitness there
Frank Loyed when Billy drew his pistol

After saying I'll go you and then shot
Three times shooting Grant in the chin
And mouth and neck while he was caught
With his hand on the handle all within

A split second he changing from benign
Friend to somebody who frightened them
Giving those near the bar a clear sign
Bullies like Joe Grant were no problem

The New Celebrities of Las Vegas

115

They left Ft Sumner early the next day
All four prisoners riding in the wagon
Which gave Bonney only a moment to say
A few words in the first blush of dawn

To Deluvina Maxwell the adopted Navajo
Woman he spoke to with great affection
And then called his mother even though
She wailed because he was in detention

But that hardly bothered Bonney at all
Who felt high spirited during the trip
Along with Dave Rudabaugh who was tall
And rotund and would often sneer a lip

Or crack a joke to cheer the day along
Until at Puerto de Luna they soon meet
At Gazelachowskis Road House for among
Other things Christmas dinner then eat

Everything on that menu since it might
Be their last good meal at least until
They arrived in Las Vegas within sight
Of a large crowd who seemed to delight

At seeing Billy the Kid who smiled and
Waved at folks like a famous celebrity
Yet spit at Rudabaugh who they planned
To lynch as soon as they lost sobriety

Because they resented Dave for killing
Lino Valdez an unfortunate man he hung
From the town's windmill after telling
Rudabaugh he was part of a wanted gang

And for this reason shouted complaints
Until he was locked up behind bars and
Was given a brand new suit compliments
Of mail contractors who took the stand

Publicity would bring in more business
And so had them all looking their best
On the day Bonney reports to the Press
To the Las Vegas Optic that the latest

Tally of those who died in the Lincoln
County War was over two hundred but he
Did not kill them all and had acted in
Self defense and so should pardoned be

