

Assignment one

Cast of characters

Dillon The lazy, but brave, hero. He is tall and thin, with blond hair and dirty, ragged cowboy clothes. His clothes and hat all should look a mite too big for him, since they are hand-me-downs from his out-of-luck father. He has a natural ability to be a gunslinger, but he never practices. Few people know that he could be the best there ever was, if he had any motivation in him. Even with his lack of gumption, Dillon is very likable, as he has a heart of gold, cares for the town and all the people in it, and treats his best friend, his horse, like a brother. If he could ever muster some motivation, he could win Polly's heart and become mayor of the town he loves.

Polly A beautiful, red-haired country girl. She is part tomboy, part lady, but all firecracker! She has all the motivation that Dillon lacks. She just can't see herself with someone without a goal in life. She enjoys the company and exotic British ways of the town sheriff, but she has a strange feeling in her soul that something about him isn't right. Her mother is owner of the always empty beauty parlor in town.

Brent The sheriff gone wrong. He is a dark-haired dapper dresser from England. Why he came to this small town is a mystery to all, though he claims it is for the beautiful nearby hills and how they help his disposition. He maintains a pleasant demeanor, but when people aren't around, he enjoys being cruel to animals, especially to Polly's little dog, who hates him.

Ruthie Polly's loyal but grumpy Shiatzu dog. She senses Brent's true motives and bites him often. She likes Dillon, so much so that she is jealous of Polly whenever she and Dillon are together. A strange love triangle ensues, but it is only in Ruthie's head.

Carrots Dillon's horse, named after his addiction: carrots. He eats so many of them that he has an orange tint to his coat, which makes him stand out in the horse crowd. Thanks to his carrot habit, he also has incredible vision. He is a lean stallion, but, like his master, is not very motivated. Dillon and Carrots are lifelong best friends, though they don't always agree.

Grit The very muscular—and muscle-headed—deputy of the sheriff. Just as cruel as Brent but far less coy about it. A very intimidating guy.

A few townspeople These include Polly's beautician mom, Dillon's hobo dad, a bartender, a cook, and a washed-up cabaret chanteuse who now does Old West-style dinner theater.

Assignment one

As I discuss on page 11, throughout this book we're going to work on assignments in which we create an imaginary film. Here's a synopsis and character bios. Read this info and start thinking about how these characters will fit into the film and how, based on these descriptions, you might illustrate them.

Film Synopsis

It's 1815, and a small Old West town called Smithville has a secret: According to an age-old legend, hundreds of years ago thieves raided the Mayan treasures of Mexico and barely escaped with their lives. The thieves created a labyrinth of tunnels in the isolated spot where Smithville now stands. What they did not realize is that they had been cursed, and soon they all perished.

The thieves left a hidden map leading to the location of the riches. Now, years later, Smithville is almost a ghost town and is on the verge of disappearing. The ancient legend has long been forgotten or ignored, except by Dillon, son of the local panhandler. Dillon believes the ancient stories and has decided to find the treasure in order to save the little town he loves.

Dillon is lazy, but he has a pure heart and an incredible natural gift for gun-slinging, though he doesn't use his gift much, since it tires him out. The only thing that really gets Dillon's heart racing is Polly, the beautiful, red-haired daughter of the town's beautician.

Unfortunately, Polly is betrothed to the town's sheriff, Brent Baxley, a dashing English gentleman whose heart is black and whose intentions are cruel. Polly has no knowledge of this side of Brent. In the end it becomes a race between Dillon and Brent to find the lost Mayan treasure. They compete for the heart of Polly and to save the town as they explore the maze of tunnels studded with booby traps.