

## **GANGS OF NEW YORK**

It was your birthday in the spring of 1856. You had turned eighteen, and the one gift you received was the greatest gift of all: your freedom. There you stood under the dilapidated awnings of the Marriotten Orphanage for Children, released upon your majority to fend for yourself in the bustling streets of New York. No visions of the open West or the hills of Virginia piqued your appetite on this occasion, and though always starved for bread and company, you were hungry for something less tangible: revenge.

Its satisfaction could only be found in a place called the Five Points, an intersection of five New York streets that marked the epicenter of the most notorious crime ridden section of New York, if not the United States. The location had been variously described as the “very rotting skeleton of civilization, the great ulcer of wretchedness, the resort of thieves and rogues of the lowest degree, a 7500 square foot triangle that was occupied by the most degraded and abandoned of the human species.” This pestilential slum hole of both natives and immigrants was a hotbed of murder, robbery, prostitution and drunkenness.... The abject poverty of its inhabitants was accented by the cries of men and women, writhing in the anguish of delirium tremens, and the wailing of starving children. Public corruption suffused the politics of the area like the stench that rose up from the rotting sewage of the streets. Charles Dickens himself once described it as “a place where debauchery has made the houses prematurely old and how their patched and broken windows scowled dimly like eyes that have been hurt in drunken forays.” Lower than the Five Points

it was not possible to sink: all that was loathsome, drooping and decayed was there.

These five streets stuck out like the five fingers of a hand that when clutched together formed a giant fist.

It was the specter of this neighborhood that had haunted your childhood years. It was in fact your birthplace and the locale of the violent demise of one John Vallent, noble leader of Irish immigrants, devout Catholic, fearsome brawler and captain of the Dead Rabbits, an Irish gang to be reckoned with in the anti-immigrant sentiment of the times. He was also your father. You remembered how he once advised you to carry your knife unsheathed in the palm of your hand, for in the Five Points you always had to watch your back; you often reminisced upon his lessons of honor; and most vividly you recalled that moment, crystallized in your memory like a ragged scar, his fatal and cowardly stabbing by the ignominious Bill "The Butcher" Cutting of the Bowery Boys, in one of the most violent gang fights that ever bloodied the street of New York. Bill "The Butcher" was alive and prosperous in your old stomping grounds, but things had changed. The street names were different, and infiltrating his circle was a challenge that most would never dare to undertake.

But at the very least, as Gertrude Stein would later write, revenge is a dish best served cold.

Of course, one of you must wear that tress. (Leo wouldn't be happy otherwise). It's in your bag.

1. You were just a young boy,  
When your father had to deploy  
His Irish spirit to defend,  
Against the Native American trend,  
The Bowery Boys were bent to lick,  
Irish control of their bailiwick,  
Vallent was admired by the crowds,  
His son Amsterdam was quite proud,

But in the fray of a gang war,  
"Bill the Butcher" made his score,  
Vallent went down, a knife in the back,  
No orphanage avoids your pact,  
It's now time to infiltrate,  
Johnny helps you navigate,  
To 109 Montague,  
Jeff Lorry will bring you right on cue,  
Introduce yourself with your gang name,  
The Dead Rabbits of Five Points Fame,  
Alcohol consumption was the king,  
But quantity is not the thing,  
Nothing like champagne to start the morn,  
Point it out, or now risk scorn,  
Uncork them soon or they will pale,  
Next to yesterday's Five Points Ale,  
Alcohol can surely enable,  
You to shed that loser label.  
Vengeance can only have its chance,  
If you agree to *first* tap dance.

2. Among the hobbies of sporting men,  
Was prizefighting now and again,  
But the boxing matches were soon banned,  
At least anywhere upon firm land,  
Bill the Butcher was sure to hang out  
At the famous Hyer and Sullivan bout,  
Though the Irish Yankee was defeated,  
His original namesake was not deleted,  
Your toast will now show the locale,  
Where you entreat the butcher to be your pal,  
Walk up north to the ice cream dock,  
The aqua cabs run around the clock,  
Take the first stop at the eleventh pier,  
North up FDR you veer,  
To be a true itinerant,  
It's \$ 5.00 for each entrant,  
To a barebuckle match you'll now sally,  
If you look around the galley,

If you're losing timing,  
There always is fine dining.

3. At the match William Cutting was quite  
The roving Manhattan socialite,  
He took to you like a surrogate dad,  
You were just a misbegotten lad,  
You join up with the 'Boys retinue,  
It's time to find a new venue,  
Walk up Fulton to a J,M,Z seat,  
Uptown stop at *Rooms on Midstreet*,  
Revenge cooks best at low heat,  
To Five Points now you make your retreat,  
City Hall is bound to confound,  
Even when lawyers abound,  
A plaque in a square named after an f/x soundman,  
Finds your ambition in the can,  
You must go to the origins of your upbringing,  
If its revenge you're truly seeking,  
The map in Yankee's arms shows the rest,  
But names have changed, just meet the test,  
Near the Triumph of the Spirit,  
To a nearby circle you must steer it,  
Where a stone refers to 1840,  
Begins the direction for your sortie,  
From there follow the small point of a star,  
To a place to sit a few paces far.
  
4. The smoke filled rooms of old New York,  
Have their share of barreled pork,  
Whenever someone's in the need,  
Who shows up but ol' Boss Tweed?  
In Italy they buy police protection,  
With financial genuflection,  
Nothing's left that's sacred and holy,  
Except what you'll find in a canoli,  
Vengeance resides with stings and hurts,  
A man should get his just desserts.

The local 6 up to Canal,  
Should not strike you as banal,  
Up to Grand you'll walk a right,  
And a place is soon in sight,  
Be sure to check the enclosed guide,  
For two places names collide.  
Present yourselves with ears complete,  
As the Dead Rabbits' elite,  
That tail should fit behind a belt loop,  
And please don't let the white tie droop,  
Don't look at us askance,  
Just focus on performance!  
If your next clue is to vest,  
Beware of what you digest.

5. Nancy is a beautiful blonde,  
You both now share a vengeful bond,  
When Bill and she did consort,  
Her unborn babe he did abort,  
Now a scar she has that doesn't heal,  
And people's things she's inclined to steal,  
With a kleptomaniac penchant,  
She undertakes to lift a short pendant,  
To the B, D, Q for her next foray  
And a blinking red arrow upon a display,  
Uptown at a station at Bowery and Grand,  
At Broadway/Lafayette you must next land,  
Walk south to Prince and a conservative turn,  
A store on the right you should not spurn,  
With the manager there is no rift,  
If you discretely shoplift.
  
6. You must delete declarations romantic,  
Without an address you'll be quite frantic,  
For murder, rape, theft and pillage,  
Are quite the thing in Greenwich Village,  
It's now time to confront Butcher Bill,  
'Twas your father's blood that he did spill,  
Back to the B,D,F,Q you must now jet,

At W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. you bayonet,  
I'm sure you'll be somewhat abused,  
And by the markers here confused,  
Even tough Dead Rabbits,  
Can finally learn to cab it,  
Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> the meat will Flo,  
Bill, Bennie or Maria will be chopping to and fro,  
To them with obvious threat you declare,  
With a bit of bugs bunny flare:

“ Oh my heritage you did destroy,  
In the name of the Bowery B'hoys.  
My father you stabbed from behind,  
Vallent was a hero of an Irish kind,  
Now its time for vengeance red,  
A duel in a square I'll take to bed,  
We are the Dead Rabbits now revived,  
To stop the violence that you've contrived,  
Death for you would be a gift,  
On the Hudson you should be adrift!”

7. Bill's pretty keen with his sharp knives,  
But he's given you a cat's nine lives,  
You survived the butchery,  
Though brother rabbit was killed with his cutlery,  
Johnny betrayed your identity,  
But for his two-faced loyalty,  
He was **parked** on a spire for all to see,  
Brave soul, you threw down a glove  
From this defeat you must rise above,  
West down W. 4<sup>th</sup> you must now march,  
A duel is set near an arch.  
In the riots of 1863,  
Cannons delayed your last decree.
8. Since the riots were hell bent,  
Revenge's cold dish was not spent,  
**Who** coined the phrase of your vengeful will?  
For Vallent's death was *one bitter pill*,

Retrace your steps to the uptown B,D,F,Q  
From W. 4<sup>th</sup> to 42<sup>nd</sup> ,you'll find your cue,  
An election might put the Butcher in power,  
Barber McGunn's your man of the hour,  
The Irish voters can the natives outfox  
By voting often and stuffing the ballot box.

9. Jump on the uptown B,D,F to 57<sup>th</sup>,  
Walk north to CPS South after walking to seventh  
Pass a hall of musical fame,  
And soon into the brush to make your claim.  
If there was to time to imitate,  
Bill the Butcher's last portrait,  
It would've been that sliced neck,  
That Nancy suffered at his beck,  
Upon high with your trusty knife,  
You finally took the Butcher's life,  
Your Five Point Fist is at the base,  
To a certain tree you now race,  
If you find yourself in a pile of turds,  
Then your clue is for the birds,  
No civil war was about to rent,  
Revenge that was so heaven sent.
10. Oh, with cannons blasting around,  
Twas revenge that you finally found,  
It was time that Bill succumbed,  
His taste for violence had so numbed,  
But where is now your next fancy,  
It's time to find poor ol' Nancy,  
It appears she was distraught,  
An escape from New York she has sought,  
At Central Park South you vote Republican  
A 59<sup>th</sup> Street subway is your beacon,.  
A walk to the 1,2,3, and 9,

Near Columbus Circle is sublime,  
Board it and head south to a train station,  
An underground path will make your connection.

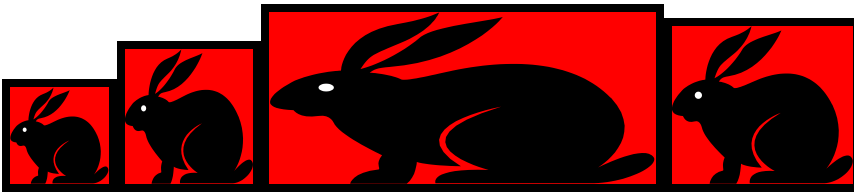
**HOTLINES: (310) 779-3057 MARC**  
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## LITTLE CLUES

1. In champagne bottles:

**A M B R O S E**



Bolded on brands: South Seaport

2. Mini-map of Five Points

3. Under bench



**Johnny betrayed your identity,  
You're a rabbit for all to see,  
In love with Nancy the butcher's ex,  
It's now time to beat this devil's hex,**

**You've started leading men to fight,  
To 17 you must alight,  
A neighborhood bagmap gives you sight,  
At a counter you must disclose,  
The included Dead Rabbit prose.**

## DEAD RABBIT PROSE

“Here comes Peter Cotton Tail  
Hoppin’ down the mayhem trail  
Hippity hoppity, Revenge is on its way!

Bringin’ every girl and boy  
A basketful full of gory toys  
I’m feeling kind of gay

He’s got turdy beans for Tommy  
Rotten eggs for sister Sue  
There’s a wretching pale for Mommy  
And an Irish sonnet too!

Here comes Peter Cotton Tail  
Hoppin’ down the bunny trail,  
Hippity Hoppity, Five Points is in decay!

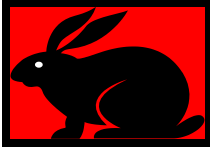
Look at Bill hop, and listen to him say  
“I took your father down  
So I could own this town  
And it’s time that I must pay!”

He’ll wake up one fine morn,  
With his lower bowels quite torn,  
He’ll surely know that I was there,  
I’m tired of hiding everywhere. Oh!

Here comes Peter Cottontail,  
Hoppin’ down the bunny trail,  
Hippity hoppity, a gang war’s on its way!

Knock knock  
Who’s there?  
Dead Rabbits! Dead Rabbits!  
Dead who???  
A happy fist to you! “

4. In canolis at Ferrara's



Letters that spell: G I R L / P R O P S / . C O M

5. In pendant

FIILV OEVJEOYN OEU S



6. **Bennie's rebuke:**

You pathetic pansy with such balls,  
It's time for you to climb the walls,  
Here let me show you what I'll do,  
With a Dead Rabbit stew.

He cuts up stuffed rabbit. Once or twice.  
And hands it to the team.

**In stuffed rabbit**



Okay I hope that you'll regress,  
To a place for some progress,  
For Bill the Butcher, you're no match,  
It's time for an organized plan to hatch,  
The draft riots are now brewing,  
In Washington Square you will be stewing,  
Face it now at nine o'clock,  
In British flight you place some stock.  
Near where Holley makes his stand,  
The cannons fire at his command.

## 7. In cannon near Holley statue



Your candidate soon is elected sheriff,  
But poor McGunn is now a stiff,  
All he got for his ideals,  
Was a blade in the back of Cutting steel.  
Now “natives only” can apply,  
Police and fire posts to occupy,  
A rebellion starts in Bryant Park,  
But where is revenge’s literary spark?  
The statued plaza that you see,  
Is behind a library.

## 8. In Pill



The final duel is at the Park,  
Go Central now without remark,  
North through an archway you walk on West,  
A liberal castle bridge is your next test ,  
Bridge your hopes to a rocky hill,  
Heck your sure you’ll get old Bill,  
To the far reaches stands a tree,  
Whose leaves you now accompany.  
You’ll find that when you reach these heights,  
Double-down to find your rights.

## 9. In fist at Rocky outcropping/birdhouse



Pick up your LIRR ticket from Otis Banks,  
With the coolers, you owe him thanks  
But first let us know with a quick call,  
The number of column pieces in that side hall.  
Where travelers escalate to the left of counters,  
Your hunt for justice will not founder  
To the left of two women half unclad,  
On two walls your clue is had,  
Please let us know with a quick call,  
The number of column pieces in that side hall,  
You are the party animal on the train,  
Get on the right track without refrain.  
Upon one train car you'll soon alight,  
A switch at Jamaica will help your plight  
The first is the 8:48 Montauk bound,  
The change allows access to local towns,  
Westhampton Beach is where you'll aground,  
You find yourself finally partybound,  
Head straight to 14 Blueberry Court,  
With Westhampton Cabs you must resort.

**DEAD RABBIT PROSE**

