

WALKER: INDEPENDENCE

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STICK TO YOUR GUNS PRODUCTIONS

RIDEBACK

PURSUED BY A BEAR

TEASER

1 **EXT. THE GREAT PLAINS - DAY** 1

A wagon train stretches across the prairies, heading deeper into Texas. The rolling green hills, the setting sun is picturesque as all get. But we LOOK THE OTHER WAY...

We shift our focus from that classic western tableau to find one lone wagon on its own now.

As we get a closer look, we can see the canvas covering of the wagon has been splashed with VIVID COLORS. There's a quote from Jules Verne painted across - "*I dream with my eyes open.*" Also the wagon... it's SHAKING. And we hear MOANING...

Someone's having a fun time in there.

2 **INT. WAGON - DAY** 2

With the magic hour light dancing on their naked bodies, a couple rolls around in the wagon. They bang into steamer trunks. Knock over luggage, books spilling out.

They take a more... upright approach. Kissing passionately as they rise. The man lifts the woman up and -- PING -- lowers her onto a small upright piano, her... bottom landing on a few keys. Our sweaty couple start to laugh.

ABBY

It may need to be... tuned.

The man laughs even harder. They look into each other's eyes deeply and bring each other close. They don't stop.

The woman is ABBY. The man is LIAM CALLAHAN. And like the Verne quote says, right now, they're dreaming with their eyes open.

3 **EXT. WAGON - DAY TO NIGHT** 3

We hear their cries of ecstasy from the wagon as the sun slowly fades over those rolling green hills...

4 **INT. WAGON - NIGHT** 4

Now under the lantern light, Abby and Liam lie together looking up at the various tableaus Abby's painted across the inside of the wagon: shipyards, a lighthouse...

ABBY

Will you miss it? Boston?

LIAM

My cases, your family? Scandal,
corruption? Can't say I will.

(shifting)

It's a fresh start for us, Abby.
Don't be scared.

ABBY

I'm not. I'm excited... about fresh
air, nature, painting new
landscapes. It's just... when you
spend your whole life in one place,
going somewhere else can be --

LIAM

Scary? You've always been brave,
Abby. Maybe more people will start
to see that out here.

Liam's humor, support gets a smile out of Abby, who reaches
for a book: Texas Penal Code by James Willie.

ABBY

Shall we review the Old Codes?
Section 2.05, the burden of proof
had some perplexing word choices.

LIAM

Always treating me like a pupil.

ABBY

Well, you're my only student until
the town builds a school house.

LIAM

If you have your way, I'll bet it
gets built within a month.

ABBY

The laws are different out here. If
you're going to be a sheriff --

LIAM

(citing the code)

Conduct that occurs in an attempt
to commit, during the commission,
or in immediate flight after the
attempt or commission of theft.

ABBY
(finishing the code)
A felony of the second degree.

LIAM
Is that what you expect out here?
Bank robbers and bandits?

ABBY
No school house but how many banks
in town did you say there were?

LIAM
(laughing)
Two.

ABBY
Well, narrows down the number of
places to find your bank robbers.

LIAM
Crime's everywhere, Abby. Whether
it's prairie views or harbor views.

ABBY
I suppose it can't hide under the
vener of mahogany and polished
brass like it did in Boston.

LIAM
No, it can not.

Abby picks up on her husband's sour tone, knows why --

ABBY
Liam. Your last case wasn't your
fault. You did everything you --

LIAM
It's all in the past.

ABBY
I just don't want to think that had
something to do with heading out --

LIAM
Heading west isn't about me or some
case and we both know it. You hated
your family. What happened. Boston
was suffocating. For both of us.

Abby, her own wound now exposed, crosses to the upright piano. She sits on a steamer trunk and starts to play.

LIAM (CONT'D)

You always play when you're out of sorts.

ABBY

I play when I'm figuring things out. I just don't like to think you're hiding something from me.

LIAM

I love you more than you'll ever know. That's my secret.

Abby warms again to Liam, their future together --

LIAM (CONT'D)

Listen, we couldn't change Boston, Abby, but this place...

Abby considers her words between keys --

ABBY

Is it our... fate? Our... destiny?

LIAM

It's what we make of it.

She turns to Liam, sees nothing but love. They share a smile, feeling like they can take on the world together. Then --

ABBY

What was that?

Abby turns -- there's SOMETHING outside.

LIAM

Probably just an animal.

Liam looks calm. Then he grabs his WINCHESTER and heads out --

5

INT/EXT. WAGON - NIGHT

5

Liam stalks out into the night. He looks around the wagon, out at their horses tied to a tree. They neigh, uneasy.

CLOSE ON Abby, watching as Liam disappears into the darkness.

ABBY

(on edge)

Liam? Liam?

It's quiet other than the cicadas. Then... GUNFIRE and MUZZLE FLASHES illuminate the darkness. From Liam and someone else.

After a moment, Liam staggers forward, a bullet wound to his chest. He locks eyes with Abby but there's no life behind his eyes, just sadness knowing this is the end.

LIAM

Abby...

ABBY

Liam...

BAM! Another gunshot rings out, the muzzle flash illuminating Liam's killer -- a face Abby won't forget. Abby gasps, drawing the killer's attention. BAM! BAM!

He fires two more shots in her direction -- one bullet grazes Abby, who falls back, off the wagon. Another bullet shatters the hanging lantern, setting the wagon ablaze.

Abby lies on the ground, her shoulder bleeding. She slowly looks over at the horses being untied, stolen.

The lantern fire spreads, igniting the painted canvas. Both visions of the past and the present (everything in the wagon) burn. Abby hears the horses ride off. The killer now gone.

Abby manages to pick herself up, walk to where her husband fell. She looks down at Liam, at his lifeless eyes.

The fire rages behind Abby as she falls to her knees and cries out.

6

EXT. DESOLATE FIELD - MORNING

6

The sun rises over the scrub-grass. A man in a priest's collar digs a grave. This is HOYT RAWLINS. Another man stands above the grave. A single horse is nearby.

HOYT

For I will forgive their wickedness
and remember their sins no more.

JACOB (O.S.)

You're not forgiving a damn thing.

Hoyt looks up at a sour looking man holding a pistol. JACOB.

HOYT

Maybe you prefer Micah 7:19 --

JACOB

I prefer you keep diggin' because
you're no preacher.

HOYT

No, but I did become well-versed in the good book enough to know it's more of the same. Especially when it comes to forgiveness.

JACOB

You fooled too many people in town to be forgiven by all of 'em.

HOYT

That is the truth, Jacob. But it looks like the one person I need forgiveness from is you.

JACOB

Won't get it. We welcomed you in and you stole from us. A sermon of lies every Sunday.

HOYT

They were good sermons, Jacob.

JACOB

Don't matter. Ends here and now.

HOYT

I can get your money back.

JACOB

It's not about the money.

HOYT

It's always about the money.

JACOB

You slept with my wife!

Hoyt closes his eyes. Didn't think Old Jake knew that part.

HOYT

If it makes you feel any better she wasn't the only one.

CLICK. Jacob's had it. Hoyt keeps diggin' his own grave (in all senses) buying time to think of a way out of this.

HOYT (CONT'D)

A man in my spot gives their last words right about now but... being that I was the one who listened to your confessions, maybe I can hear one more.

(off his hesitation)

(MORE)

HOYT (CONT'D)

C'mon Jake, I know something's eating you. I could always tell.

JACOB

Yeah, you could. Fine then. You're dead anyways.

Hoyt carefully takes a step back, getting closer to Jacob.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I've sinned. Gambled. Last weekend.

HOYT

In Abilene? Thought you were at a cattle auction.

JACOB

It was a lie. I got swindled out by a bunch of high rollers. Chips stacked as high as any building.

Hoyt takes note. An opportunity presenting itself --

HOYT

Where was this den of sin?

JACOB

Independence. Near Austin.

Hoyt stops digging. He knows the place all too well.

HOYT

Three card monte, faro --

JACOB

Draw and stud.

HOYT

Poker. A gentleman's game.

JACOB

These men were nothing of the sort.

HOYT

Any tells you remember when they lost a hand?

JACOB

Tells? Are you hearing my confession or --

Hoyt spins and SWINGS his shovel back, knocking Jacob on his ass. Then another WHACK, to knock Jacob unconscious. Hoyt uses Jacob's body to pull himself out of his grave --

HOYT
Jacob's ladder it is.

Hoyt takes off the priest's collar then swipes Jacob's
SIDEARM. He turns to look at Jacob's horse --

JACOB
Change of ownership, my friend.

The horse neighs. Hoyt approaches and glides right up in the
saddle like he belongs. He looks back at Jacob, the grave he
just dug for himself, then out at a town in the distance.

Hoyt gives the sign of the cross then looks west. As they
start to ride off --

HOYT
Old Jacob ever give you a name?

The horse neighs.

HOYT (CONT'D)
No matter. How 'bout... Cordell?

Hoyt and Cordell ride westward. Toward Independence.

7

EXT. CLEARING - MORNING

7

Morning light dances across the tall grass. A horse and rider
appear. Then another and another. An Apache scouting party.
They ride in silence, stoic figures in motion, then --

APACHE RIDER
[I've been working on a song.]

CALIAN
[Not another war song, is it?]

APACHE RIDER
[This is about the Iron Horse.]

CALIAN
[Can we start calling them trains?]

APACHE RIDER
[Not all of us share your joy as
more settlers cut through our land
like a spear.]

CALIAN
[Those are words to your song,
aren't they?]

APACHE RIDER
[Close your mouth, Calian.]

CALIAN
[The settlers aren't all bad.]

APACHE RIDER
[Yes. They are.]

CALIAN
[They bring ideas. Tools. Recipes.
And hopefully songs so I don't have
to listen to yours.]

They share a laugh then stop at the sight of...

Abby. Up ahead, wandering through a field. Eyes hollow, dry
blood caking a shoulder wound. She might be in shock but Abby
somehow manages the strength to keep going.

The scouting party eye each other, not sure what to do. Then--

Calian dismounts and walks toward Abby. She doesn't even
notice until he's right in front of her. Abby looks at him, a
flicker of fear --

CALIAN (CONT'D)
It's okay. I want to help.

ABBY
I need to get to Independence. I
need to...

Abby collapses...

8 **EXT. LIPAN APACHE CAMP - DAY** 8

Teepees and wickiups (wooden structures) line the Brazos.
Families bathe in the river. A peaceful setting...

9 **INT. WICKIUP - DAY** 9

A group of Apache, including Calian, surround Abby who sleeps
on animal furs near a fire. Her shoulder wound's been
dressed.

CALIAN
[It's been six days and no one has
come to look for her.]

APACHE ELDER

[They always come. And they will
blame us for what happened.]

CALIAN

[They are not all bad.]

APACHE ELDER

(re: Abby.)

[Tell that to whoever did this to
Walks in Tall Grass.]

Abby's eyes flutter open. She looks up. A stranger in a
strange land. The Apache debate stops.

ABBY

Uh... hello.

CALIAN

How are you feeling?

Abby's surprised Calian speaks English (and well), but she's
more surprised to find herself naked under the furs --

ABBY

Naked. How long have I been here?

CALIAN

Almost a week. We found you on the
Plains. The elders healed you.

ABBY

Thank you. Can you thank them?

CALIAN

[Walks in Tall Grass thanks you.]

APACHE RIDER

[Where is Walks in Tall Grass
from?]

CALIAN

Where are you from?

ABBY

Boston. It's east, in --

CALIAN

Massachusetts. I've read of Boston.
Lobsters, lighthouses, snow.

ABBY

Yes. Where did you learn to speak --

CALIAN

I used to scout for the US Cavalry.

APACHE RIDER

[Don't tell Walks in Tall Grass
these things.]

ABBY

What does that mean?
(in Apache)
[Walks in Tall Grass?]

CALIAN

Walks in Tall Grass. That's where
we found you. What they call you.

ABBY

My name is Abby. Abby Callahan.

CALIAN

I am Calian.

ABBY

Calian, can I have my dress now?

Calian gestures to an Elder to bring Abby's dress, now clean.

ABBY (CONT'D)

You know what happened? Out near
where you found me...

Calian bows his head, solemn.

CALIAN

Yes.

ABBY

My husband was going to be sheriff
of Independence. Do you know where
that is?

CALIAN

I will take you there.

10

EXT. HILLTOP OVERLOOKING INDEPENDENCE - DAY

10

Abby and Calian crest a hilltop, overlooking the town of
Independence. Abby takes it in for a moment.

ABBY

I need to tell them what happened.
I can't let my husband die in vain,
without any justice.

CALIAN

Find Deputy Augustus. He's a good man. He will help you.

ABBY

Aren't you coming with me?

CALIAN

This is as far as I go. Some might not want to see an Apache with a white woman.

ABBY

Well, that should change.

CALIAN

Maybe one day.

ABBY

Thank you. I hope to see you again.

CALIAN

[So do I, Walks in the Tall Grass.]

Calian mounts his horse and rides off. Abby watches for a beat then turns to look down at the town. A new world.

ABBY

Independence...

Echoing Liam's last words --

ABBY (CONT'D)

It's what we make of it.

Abby instinctively straightens her hair and heads toward Independence, a new resolve starting to take hold...

11

EXT. THE TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - DAY

11

Abby makes her way through town. We start to get a sense of this place: It's only a few years old and it shows. Most of the buildings are wooden, two stories or less. The roads are dirt, mud with planks as sidewalks. Cowboys tie horses to hitching posts as aspiring businessmen make finishing touches on their shops. There are two saloons and a dance hall.

For a town of a hundred people, it's surprisingly diverse. Almost half the cowboys are Black or Mexican. And there are a handful of Chinese laborers. There are women and children -- a few women wearing holsters, while others wear the finest fashion courtesy of Kansas City. But it's no Boston.

As Abby swims through, a fish out of water --

KATE CARVER (O.S.)
Whadya think?

Abby turns to find KATE CARVER, walking out of the post office. There's a depth, but also an off-kilter humor to Kate's attitude, her every move. Think Aubrey Plaza.

ABBY
I'm sorry?

KATE CARVER
You're new here, aren't you? Eyes as big as saucers. So, what do you think?

ABBY
Of the town? Hard to tell. But I'm not sure I'll be staying.

KATE CARVER
Lotta people say that when they get here.
(then --)
New England, huh?
(off her look)
I have an ear for accents.

Abby nods, then: *two can play this game:*

ABBY
Mid Atlantic. Baltimore, I'm guessing. But you've been here for awhile. How long?

Kate nods, amused, but she's the one asking the questions --

KATE CARVER
So, any first impression?

ABBY
I don't know yet.
(deadpan)
Or were you asking about the town again?

They share a smile, but Abby's is a little more... faint. Kate reads it (read: grief) as something else --

KATE CARVER

Still homesick? Well, the post office is over there, if you need to send a letter back East. They just put in a telegraph system.

Citing the first Morse code message ever sent --

ABBY

What hath God wrought.

KATE CARVER

Oh, educated too. Rules out you being a white dove.

ABBY

A white dove?

Kate Carver points to a hotel across the street, above a saloon. There are several women in WHITE DRESSES loitering on the outside stairwell, flirting with lonely cowboys.

KATE CARVER

Prostitutes. Most of them came from the mining towns up north. Once they heard the train might be passing through, they bloomed.

ABBY

Do you know where the Sheriff's Office is?

KATE CARVER

Sheriff's Office? Not a crime to sell your body here. Least not yet.

ABBY

I need to report... something else.

KATE CARVER

What happened?

ABBY

You ask a lot of questions.

Kate smiles, then relents.

KATE CARVER

End of the way, turn left.

As Abby heads toward the sheriff's office --

KATE CARVER (CONT'D)

Welcome to Independence.

Abby nods, then makes her way down the boardwalk - literally plank boards laid out in front of buildings. She glances back across the street, at the white doves when --

BAM! She runs right into Hoyt!

HOYT

Whoa! Pardon me, your highness.

Abby takes in Hoyt: hair wild, eyes bloodshot, his steadiness... unsteady. Abby glances at the saloon.

ABBY

A little early for... that.

HOYT

What's *that*?

ABBY

Drink.

HOYT

Drink? Sounds like a great idea!
Care to join me?

ABBY

In there? I'd rather not.

Abby turns to leave, set to purpose.

HOYT

Ah, beneath you I suppose.

ABBY

What kind of man drinks during the day?

HOYT

The kind that doesn't care about what royalty thinks of me.

ABBY

Or the kind with something to hide.

Hoyt smiles, bullseye. Then steps over to a water trough (normally reserved for horses) and DUNKS his head in. After a moment, he pulls his head out -- sober enough -- shaking the water from his face and hair, spraying Abby in the process.

HOYT

How 'bout that? Looks like rain.

Abby shakes her head -- she might even want to slap Hoyt in the moment but... she carries on.

Hoyt puts his hat back on, tips it in Abby's direction and heads back inside --

12 **INT. SALOON & GAMBLING HALL - DAY** 12

Hoyt returns to a table-full of GAMBLERS. A BARTENDER and a few PATRONS watch on, including a WHITE DOVE, eyeing Hoyt.

HOYT

Deal me in. Feeling lucky.

Hoyt sizes up the other players, a rogues gallery of riverboat rich and seasoned professionals. As he takes a seat, and places his bet - we notice Hoyt has added ABBY'S WEDDING RING to his winnings.

13 **INT/EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY** 13

Abby takes a left at the end of the street. The end of town, really. She approaches a small sheriff's office. She swallows hard, about to recount the murder of her husband.

A striking Black man with a kind face and eyes filled with a world of experience turns to greet Abby. This is AUGUSTUS.

AUGUSTUS

Afternoon, ma'am. Can I help you?

ABBY

Yes, I need to talk to the deputy.

Augustus pulls back his coat to reveal a star on his vest.

AUGUSTUS

That'd be me. Name's Augustus.

ABBY

Augustus. Calian said I could trust you.

AUGUSTUS

You know Calian?

ABBY

Yes, he brought me here. Then...

AUGUSTUS

He turned back around, huh? Calian has mixed feelings about coming to town. Both nervous and curious all at once.

(shifting)

(MORE)

AUGUSTUS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. There something I can help you with, ma'am?

ABBY

It's the sheriff. He...

As Abby struggles to put into words what happened --

AUGUSTUS

He just arrived yesterday. Talking to the judge as we speak.

Gus turns to introduce Abby to the new sheriff. Abby looks surprised that Liam's replacement has already been sworn in. But as the sheriff turns to face her, Abby freezes at the sight of him as we --

PRELAP the sound of GUNFIRE!

FLASHBACK TO:

14 **INT/EXT. THE WAGON - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)** 14

The night of Liam's murder. A muzzle flash illuminates the face of Liam's killer. It's the new sheriff!

15 **EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - INTERCUT** 15

Abby faces the new sheriff --

GUS (O.S.)

Ma'am, this is Tom Davidson. Our new sheriff.

TOM DAVIDSON faces Abby. Tom's handsome for someone you don't know is the devil. Abby musters all the courage in the world to try not to give away that she's scared as hell.

TOM DAVIDSON

Morning, ma'am. How can I help you?

Off Abby, staring at the silver star in disbelief, hoping the man who killed her husband doesn't know who she is...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

16

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

16

Abby stands across from Tom Davidson. "Sheriff." Murderer. Gus moves off to converse with the judge. Leaving Abby alone.

ABBY

I can come back another time.

Abby faces Tom, glances down at his hand casually resting on the hilt of one of his pistols. A gun that could've shot Liam. After a moment, she turns to leave --

TOM DAVIDSON

Something rattling you, ma'am?

Tom steps toward Abby, reaching out to touch her shoulder. Abby recoils, instinctively. Being touched by the man who just killed your husband might do that to you.

TOM DAVIDSON (CONT'D)

You seem awfully on edge.

Abby realizes her hands are shaking, puts them behind her. In the moment, she realizes that her ring is MISSING.

ABBY

You're the new sheriff?

TOM DAVIDSON

Just sworn in and all.

ABBY

I'm sure you have a lot to do. I wouldn't want to take up time --

TOM DAVIDSON

I'm sure I can find the time to help a lovely woman such as yourself. My first good deed as sheriff of the town.

ABBY

First good deed...
(shifting)
Have you been in Independence long?

TOM DAVIDSON

I was made aware of the position just a few days ago, to be honest.

ABBY

Did the last sheriff...

TOM DAVIDSON

Retired. There was another man who wasn't fit for the job. Didn't even show up from what I gather.

As revulsed as she is, Abby keeps searching for answers --

ABBY

Where were you before this? I mean, were you a lawman elsewhere?

Tom Davidson steps closer to Abby -- in the moment, it comes across as mildly threatening but then he... STRIKES a match from a fence post beside her and lights a cigarillo.

TOM DAVIDSON

Texarkana.

ABBY

That's a portmanteau.
(off his look)
A word made of other pieces. Texas,
Arkansas and Louisiana.

TOM DAVIDSON

Learn something new everyday.

ABBY

As do I.

TOM DAVIDSON

Ma'am, did you need my help with something?

Abby squeezes her hands, her mind racing --

ABBY

I was going to report a crime.

She holds up her hand, noting an empty ring finger --

ABBY (CONT'D)

My ring. It may have been stolen...

Abby looks back in the direction of the saloon, of Hoyt.

ABBY (CONT'D)

But I now recall where I lost it.

Abby turns to leave, when --

TOM DAVIDSON

Be seeing you, ma'am.

Abby swallows hard, hides her contempt, buries her fear and walks away. It takes everything in her power not to unravel.

Off Tom Davidson watching her drift away, then looking out at the town like it's his.

17

INT. SALOON & GAMBLING HALL - DAY

17

BACK WITH HOYT. Cards fly, bets are placed.

Play aside, we focus on these colorful characters: Their shifty eyes, weathered faces, wiping whiskey, tossing chips. The tension is palpable. Then --

HOYT

What'd the three-legged dog say
when he walked in the saloon?

More taps, more wagers. A few glances, awaiting a punchline.

HOYT (CONT'D)

I'm looking for the man who shot my
paw.

Guffaws from most of the table. Hoyt pours drinks, trying to get everyone comfortable enough to lower their guard. Everyone warms to his charms, except the SALTY DOG seated directly across from him. Watching Hoyt like a hawk.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Don't like jokes, huh?

SALTY DOG

I prefer the humorous ones.

HOYT

Serious man in a serious game.
Alright then, raise.

SALTY DOG

Can't match that.

HOYT

(feeling confident)
Maybe the house would extend you a
line of credit. Or maybe you have
something else to wager.

Salty Dog eyes Hoyt, THEN IN A FLASH, draws a Flintlock Pistol. Everyone flinches as he levels it at Hoyt for a moment before placing it on the table.

SALTY DOG

Sorry, did I scare you?

(re: the gun)

Won it off some drunk old Mexican in San Antonio. Said he found it after the battle at the Alamo.

Hoyt reacts, this hit a nerve. There's a history there.

HOYT

People died fighting for our independence. That's history. And you're just gonna bet it away?

SALTY DOG

Had to match with something.

(off Hoyt's reaction)

What, you have kin who died there?

HOYT

How 'bout we quit talking and play.

Hoyt's had enough -- plays his cards. Pocket tens.

SALTY DOG

Well, look at that.

Salty Dog turns his cards. Pocket Kings. Hoyt loses the hand.

SALTY DOG (CONT'D)

Guess I'll hold on to this.

Salty Dog collects his winnings, eyes Hoyt.

SALTY DOG (CONT'D)

So, how'd you hear about this game?

Eyes fall on Hoyt, trying to keep his poker face.

HOYT

Guess I was lucky enough to overhear about it from someone who couldn't keep their mouth shut.

SALTY DOG

Lucky? You? Nah...

HOYT

You're right. Maybe I'll cut my losses. Another time.

Hoyt gets up -- pocketing what little he has left. (NOTE: We're not sure if that includes Abby's ring or not). As Hoyt turns, Salty Dog stands -- we notice he's holding the gun.

Hoyt keeps his cool as he walks away. Salty Dog grips the weapon, ready to draw. Every step building tension.

Hoyt's hand falls toward his own pistol, lingering, ready to spin and go down in a blaze of glory. If it comes to that...

The room watches Hoyt and Salty Dog's every move. No one's laughing now. Just quietly watching, waiting until Hoyt makes it to the door or there's a shoot-out.

Hoyt stops, hand still on his holster. Waits a moment. A test, a challenge. Then, he pushes open the swinging doors --

18

EXT. SALOON & GAMBLING HALL - DAY

18

SMACK!

Abby slaps Hoyt across the face the second he steps outside.

ABBY

How dare you!

Hoyt recoils for a moment, then hears laughter from the gamblers watching behind him. Even Salty Dog sits back down to focus on his cards. Abby's slap, the scene she's causin' right now, may have just helped Hoyt stay out of trouble.

Abby glances in the saloon, sees the poker table --

ABBY (CONT'D)

What did you do with it?!

HOYT

Let's just step away from all that.

ABBY

Where's my ring!? Did you gamble it away?

Hoyt digs in his pocket and holds up the ring, using it to guide her away.

HOYT

Here's your damn ring.

Abby grabs it, puts it on her finger. She lets all the raw emotion take hold for a moment. A reminder of Liam. What she's lost. Abby looks at Hoyt, her pain almost turning to gratitude that he didn't gamble it away. The moment fades --

ABBY
I can't believe --

HOYT
-- Someone would do something as
low down as that. Well, I didn't.

Hoyt wanders down the road and into --

19

INT. HAGAN'S DANCE HALL & HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

19

A dance hall -- there's a bar to one side, and a lavish stage to the other. A stairwell leads to the lodgings upstairs. Hagan's Dance Hall is the finest establishment in town.

Abby follows Hoyt inside. There's a determination to her now -- in figuring out Hoyt, the outlaw mindset --

HOYT
Are you following me? You got your
ring back, now whadya want?

Abby is staring at Hoyt's gun holster.

ABBY
Would you have shot him? The man,
at the saloon with the gun. You
both looked ready to... Would you
have shot him?

Hoyt eyes Abby, surprised she would ask so bluntly. He chooses to echo their first encounter --

HOYT
Looks like you're startin' to
figure out what kind of man I am.

Abby realizes Hoyt's a killer. And right before she presses --

LUCIA (O.S.)
Hoyt Rawlins.

Hoyt turns to spot LUCIA MONTERO, her smoldering eyes burning at the sight of Hoyt.

HOYT
Lucia.

Lucia keeps walking until she's right in front of Hoyt. She steals a kiss -- normally not one for public display, it's been ages. And she's in love with this outlaw.

HOYT (CONT'D)
What're you doing here?

Lucia eyes Abby, might have her own questions. For later.

LUCIA
I was in town with my brother.

HOYT
Luis? Where is he?

LUCIA
Attending to some business for my
father. Might take some time. I
thought I'd find you here.

Hoyt eyes her, the lodging upstairs. Connects the dots.

HOYT
So, we have time to catch up.

LUCIA
(suggestive)
Alone.

Hoyt turns to Abby, speaks low so only she can hear --

HOYT
Stay out of trouble.

Hoyt flashes a smile and then takes Lucia's hand. They both rush upstairs, wasting no time. Abby watches for a moment, then hears the sound of a STAGECOACH outside. Passengers load up, getting out of town.

Abby considers it for a moment: Leaving town. As she takes a step toward the door, she notices something hanging above the bar, a banner reading: **Independence Welcomes Our New Sheriff!**

Abby stares at the banner, knowing it was meant for her husband but now hangs to honor his killer.

Anger building, Abby steps up on the bar and TEARS DOWN the banner. All those refined manners of hers have vanished. Replaced by something else behind her eyes... Revenge.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

20

INT. HAGAN'S DANCE HALL & HOTEL - DAY

20

Abby plays a song on an UPRIGHT PIANO. "Out of sorts", trying to piece things together. We realize it's the same song she played the night Liam was killed --

FLASH POP: To Abby and Liam making love, smashing up against the piano. Abby closes her eyes at the memory, trying to keep the tears and pain at bay when --

KATE CARVER (O.S.)

I like your song. It's sad. But
kinda sweet too. An original?

Abby turns to find Kate, the woman she encountered when she first arrived. Kate's now dressed like a burlesque dancer but there's still her offbeat attitude on display.

ABBY

I tend to play when I'm trying to
figure things out.

Kate assumes to know what Abby's trying to figure out --

KATE CARVER

Not sure about staying in this town
of ours, huh?

Vengeance still on Abby's mind --

ABBY

I might have found a reason, I'm
just not sure if it's a good one.

Kate casually takes a piece of tumbleweed out of Abby's hair. Leaning over, bustier boobs in Abby's face, who blushes.

KATE CARVER

Are you blushing?

ABBY

No, it must be from all the sun.

KATE CARVER

Were you looking at --

ABBY

No.

KATE CARVER

I'm just playing. You seemed like
you could use a laugh.

Abby smiles at Kate, then gestures to a PT Barnum-esque mural
above the bar.

ABBY

Who's the showman on the mural?

KATE CARVER

Nathaniel Hagan. Subtle, isn't he?
He runs this place and the hotel.
Well, if the new sheriff doesn't
buy him out if rumor's prove true.

Abby turns to Kate, interested in finding out more. Like the
wife of a police officer or someone seeking revenge...

ABBY

An entrepreneur and sheriff?
Doesn't that conflict of interest
seem... suspicious?

KATE CARVER

You say that like you know
something about him we don't.

Abby studies Kate, not ready to trust her. Anyone really.

ABBY

People aren't what they seem.

KATE CARVER

True, we're all running from
something, trying to find ourselves
out here. Guess that's why they
call it Independence.

ABBY

And you? What are you running from?

Kate smiles, doesn't answer but extends a hand --

KATE CARVER

Kate Carver.

Abby shakes her hand, starts to introduce herself when -- a
DOZEN BURLESQUE DANCERS rush in. Their costumes are similar
to Kate's: colorful, edgy for the times and... revealing.
They giggle and gossip and line up on stage for a rehearsal.

KATE CARVER (CONT'D)
Big show tonight. You should come.
Half the town will be here.

Kate turns to join them for rehearsal, then circles back --

ABBY
I don't have a place to stay --

KATE CARVER
I do. My roommate got hitched to a
stage coach driver. Ironic, isn't
it? Left for California last week.
I can show you the room...

ABBY
You really want me to stay, don't
you?

KATE CARVER
Come on, we'll make a good pair.

Abby smiles at Kate, giving in.

21 **INT. HOTEL - KATE'S ROOM - DAY**

21

Kate shows Abby the room, we can't help but notice it's
incredibly well-kept, immaculate in fact.

ABBY
It's very... clean.

Kate runs her finger over a dresser, makes sure there's not a
fleck of dust. She's a little OCD.

KATE CARVER
Everything has its place.
(moving on)
There's this curtain we can pull
between us.

Kate demonstrates by pulling a drab divider curtain.

ABBY
Ever thought of painting it?

KATE CARVER
Not the artist type. But feel free.
If you decide to stay.

Abby listens to the sounds of moaning and thumping on the
other side of the wall.

KATE CARVER (CONT'D)
There's that. But rent's cheap.

ABBY
Until the sheriff hikes the prices.

KATE CARVER
He did ask Kai and Bowen to do his laundry for free. Benefits of the badge, I guess.

ABBY
Who are... Kai and Bowen?

KATE CARVER
They do the hotel laundry and have a restaurant in town. You should go, their food is wonderful.

ABBY
I need to send a telegram. You said there was a Western Union at the post office?

KATE CARVER
There is indeed. Look at you, out and about with places to be.

Abby and Kate head for the door --

KATE CARVER (CONT'D)
Just be sure to be back for the show tonight.

ABBY
(ominous)
Wouldn't want to miss the sheriff's welcome party.

Abby and Kate step out, passing by --

22

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - SAME

22

Hoyt and Lucia SMASH against a wall, KISSING, tearing off each other's clothes. They're as passionate as a couple can be after not seeing each other for weeks. Lucia guides Hoyt to the bed. He starts to kiss her from the legs up --

LUCIA
Where were you? It's been over a month. Were you in trouble again? Jail? Mexico? Jail in Mexico?

Hoyt stops kissing her long enough to laugh.

HOYT

There was a calling of sorts. But I found my way back to you.

LUCIA

Were there others?

HOYT

Lucia.

LUCIA

Who was the woman downstairs? The sad one?

HOYT

A woman as beautiful as you shouldn't have room for jealousy.
(re: Abby)
She was just someone with a lot of questions.

Hoyt pulls her close.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Speaking of, I want to hear about your music, the ranch, your family.

LUCIA

They miss you.

HOYT

I miss them. But, I miss you more.

Lucia smiles, but there's a hint of worry behind her eyes.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Somethin' you need to tell me?

There is, but Lucia gives in to the moment.

LUCIA

Later. Right now we only have time for this. And maybe a song.

As Lucia pulls Hoyt in for more --

Abby walks downstairs with Kate, dancers rehearse onstage. Kate spots BOWEN SING, a middle-aged, stern, Chinese man, struggling to carry two large baskets of laundry out back.

KATE CARVER
Bowen. [Good afternoon].

Bowen turns to Kate, sizes up Abby. Not the smiling type.

KATE CARVER (CONT'D)
(low, to Abby)
His partner is much nicer. And
easier on the eyes.
(to Bowen, re: Abby)
Bowen, this is my friend --

Abby starts to extend a hand -- and then in the moment, she notices something: A shirt in Bowen's laundry basket, the letters TD stitched on them. And... *is that blood?*

Seeing an opportunity, Abby GRABS the other basket. He makes his own assumptions on the reasons why --

BOWEN SING (O.S.)
[White Dove? Hagan said you would
help with laundry. Follow me.]

KATE CARVER
Umm, I think he believes you're a
White Dove.

ABBY
Like you said, we're all trying to
find ourselves here.

Kate laughs then joins the other dancers onstage as Abby follows Bowen outside, playing here role.

She follows Bowen as he weaves behind the main street, down an alley, back along another side street, draped with sheets.

BOWEN SING
[You have to keep moving.] Keep
moving. [It is not much further.]

Abby looks at Bowen, as if his words speak volumes beyond their simple meaning in the moment.

24

INT. SING RESTAURANT - DAY.

24

Abby follows Bowen inside a small building. In the front is a small restaurant, in the back is a kitchen -- including several washboards, sinks and buckets. 1870's laundromat.

A younger Chinese man with a kind face approaches, KAI.

KAI

Thank you. I haven't seen you before. How long have you been working for Hagan?

ABBY

Not long.

Abby lives the lie for a moment, then folds --

ABBY (CONT'D)

Actually, I don't. I just wanted to help. And Kate, at the dance hall, said your food was wonderful.

Kai takes the basket, turns to Bowen. They speak to each other in Mandarin as they head to the back.

Abby eyes the "TD" shirt, presumably belonging to Tom Davidson. She steps toward the shirt reaching out. Right before Abby could grab the shirt, possible evidence --

Bowen takes the shirt away, starts to scrub it clean.

ABBY (CONT'D)

No.

Kai and Bowen look at her, curious. Abby covers --

ABBY (CONT'D)

I wanted to help.

KAI

You helped enough bringing the basket here. Did you want something to eat? Egg drop soup.

ABBY

What's that?

KAI

Egg, chicken broth, scallions, tofu.

ABBY

What is tofu?

KAI

Bean curd.

Abby swallows hard, famished as Kai pours a bowl of soup and gestures to a table out front. Abby exchanges one last look with Bowen, washing the dirty laundry.

KAI (CONT'D)

Please, sit.

ABBY

Thank you. Oh, I have no money --

KAI

Consider it your wages. For helping
my... business partner.

Abby eats. Happy in the moment. Kai pours tea. She smiles.

KAI (CONT'D)

Where are you from?

ABBY

Boston. And you?

KAI

Macau. In China.

ABBY

I've never met anyone from China.
How did you end up here?

KAI

My... partner and I, we worked on
the railroads. Saved enough money,
learned enough English to start a
business here.

ABBY

Did you know anything about this
place before you arrived?

KAI

No. We knew the railroads would
come. That it would become
something one day.

ABBY

Very brave of you.

KAI

Sometimes you just know when you
need a new beginning.

Abby considers his words, reflective of her own situation.

KAI (CONT'D)

Can I ask, how did you end up here?

ABBY

I suppose, I needed a new beginning too.

KAI

Look at us. You came west, I came east and here we are in the middle.

ABBY

Thank you for this. There's something I need to do, but I hope to see you again.

They share another smile as Abby heads off...

25

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

25

Hoyt and Lucia head down an exterior stairwell of the hotel, still smiling at each other, buttoning up clothes. Hoyt hears music in the distance from the burlesque show rehearsal --

HOYT

Sounds like whatever fiesta Hagan's got planned could use a voice like yours. Whadya say?

LUCIA

Sneaking away with you for an hour is one thing. But if mama ever found out I sang in town, she'd drag me to mass seven days a week.

HOYT

(more to himself)
I know a good priest.
(shifting)
Shame she thinks using your god-given gift is somehow a sin. She forget how she met your father, singing at a border cantina?

LUCIA

Where she met your father too.

HOYT

Always wish I heard his side of it.

There's a history here, but Hoyt's not one to dwell --

HOYT (CONT'D)

Point is, rougher places than this by a hard mile.

(MORE)

HOYT (CONT'D)

Not to mention you have the voice
of an angel. Why let that go to
waste?

They reach the street, knowing they have to part ways --

HOYT (CONT'D)

Alright, I'll see you tonight.

LUCIA

Tonight's not enough.
(off his look)
Why don't you stay, Hoyt?

Hoyt eyes Salty Dog out on the street below, already wary of
overstaying his welcome in town.

HOYT

Not sure this town needs me.

LUCIA

I do.

Hoyt looks into her eyes, knows she means it. He wishes he
could commit, stay, give her everything she wants. Before he
tries to explain himself, he notices someone behind her --

HOYT

Luis.

Her brother, LUIS. The protective younger brother with the
same Montero good looks.

LUIS

Hoyt. What're you two --

HOYT

I ran into Lucia and we decided to
take a stroll looking for you.

Luis eyes them, sees his sister look away.

LUIS

I thought you were buying a dress.

LUCIA

I didn't see any I liked. Did you
get everything father wanted?

Hoyt looks behind Luis, at the family wagon full of goods.
There are bags of seed. And RIFLES and AMMO CRATES.

HOYT

Looks like Old Francis wanted more
than just cattle feed.

Luis covers the weapons with a tarp. Not a good sign --

HOYT (CONT'D)

Problems out at the ranch?

LUIS

Nothing we can't handle.

HOYT

C'mon, Luis, you're hiding those
weapons 'bout as well as the
problem you're having out there.
Bandits, Comanche --

LUIS

Not sure. But someone stole a bunch
of our cattle couple nights ago.
Around the time we found out a
family of ranchers laid claim to
the land beside ours.

HOYT

Not the friendliest of neighbors,
huh?

(to Lucia, concerned)

Knew something was bothering you.
How bad is it?

LUCIA

Papa hasn't slept since it
happened. We were struggling before
and now --

LUIS

Lucia. That's enough. It's time to
leave.

Luis gets in the wagon, eyes the empty seat beside him,
expectant.

Hoyt whistle-hums La Paloma, a cantina classic/traditional
Mexican melody. A not-so-subtle hint that Lucia needs to sing
her own tune.

LUCIA

See you tonight.

HOYT

It'll be nice to catch up.

Lucia shares a final smile with Hoyt then joins her brother, heading off, back to the family ranch. Hoyt waves as he watches her go, but his smile fades to concern. About a prideful family and what he can do to help them.

Hoyt takes out a handkerchief, wipes some sweat from his brow then looks down the street. At the bank. At that moment --

26

EXT/INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

26

FIND ABBY, facing the WESTERN UNION OPERATOR, nervous.

ABBY

I'd like to send a telegram.

OPERATOR

Sure thing, ma'am. Where to?

ABBY

The police.

OPERATOR

The new sheriff is just down --

ABBY

I know. But... I need to send word out of town. To the state police.

OPERATOR

I could get a message to the old Rangers office in Austin. Who should I say it's from?

Abby looks hopeful, on the verge of sending a message, a cry for help when she hears WHISTLING. Not just any song, but the same song she was playing on the piano the night of...

Abby turns to find Gus, who tips his hat with a smile.

GUS

Afternoon.

ABBY

That song you were whistling....

GUS

Heard the sheriff humming it this morning. Kinda catchy. Know it?

Abby shakes her head, unsettled in the realization Tom Davidson heard them, he was listening that night. Abby turns to leave and we follow her out, as she does her best to keep her composure.

She tries to decide where she should go, then looks down the street at Hoyt. Eyeing the bank. Holding a bandana. Having met the man, the wife of a police officer does the math.

Off Abby, heading to the bank, a plan being set in motion.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

27

INT. BANK - DAY

27

Abby walks inside a small bank. A few folks make deposits, withdrawals. Someone brought a pig in with them. Abby lingers for a moment, waiting on something. Or someone...

BANK TELLER (O.S.)

Ma'am, can I help you?

The pig farmer steps aside as a TELLER beckons Abby. She looks up at the teller, who's sporting one helluva mustache.

ABBY

(stalling)

Uh, yes. I'd like to make a withdrawal, please.

BANK TELLER

Do you have an account?

ABBY

Um, I believe my husband wired the money here last month.

BANK TELLER

Is he here with you?

ABBY

No.

BANK TELLER

Can I see documents of that wire transfer, your name, his name?

Abby might appear to be empty-handed, and in a sense, she is. But we can't help but suspect she's playing another role (as a bank customer) as she eyes the door, biding her time.

ABBY

I don't... could you...

BANK TELLER

Ma'am, I'm gonna need some type of documentation, some proof.

Abby eyes the teller, the pig farmer, everyone. She feels their gaze. She eyes the door again, waiting...

BANK TELLER (CONT'D)

Maybe if you can tell me your name,
I can look up your account. I need
to know who you are.

Abby faces him, considers those words.

ABBY

I am...

EVERYTHING GOES SILENT for a moment. Then Abby makes a
fateful decision, one that will last generations --

ABBY (CONT'D)

Walks in Tall Grass.

The bank teller looks at her, confused.

BANK TELLER

I'm sorry?

ABBY

My name is Abigail. Abigail Walker.

That's the moment that Abby first puts down roots. The moment
the Walkers became the Walkers. And that's the moment --

The doors of the bank burst open and Hoyt robs the place!
Well, we know it's Hoyt but his face is wrapped in that
bandana we saw earlier. No one can tell who it is. No one,
except Abby.

HOYT

Afternoon folks, this here's a
robbery. So, everyone just take a
little siesta down on the floor.

Everyone drops to the floor. Everyone except Abby.

HOYT (CONT'D)

(to the tellers)

Now, you two, oblige me and empty
out your cash boxes and hand over
whatever else you got back there.

The Tellers do as they're told. Then Hoyt turns to Abby,
recognizing her from earlier.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Ma'am, I know it's a lot to take,
but if you could just lie down --

ABBY

I will not.

HOYT
Then sit down.

ABBY
No.

HOYT
Pardon me, your highness but I
really think you should listen.

ABBY
Have you thought this through?

Hoyt, nor anyone, knows what to make of her. Abby eyes the Pig Farmer, on the floor behind Hoyt, reaching for a gun.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Not sure you're gonna make it out
of here in one piece.

Hoyt follows Abby's eyes, spots the armed Pig Farmer --

HOYT
Maybe I shoulda made that clear: No
one's gonna be a hero today. If you
have a gun, hand it over.

Hoyt pockets the gun. Eyes the rest of the crowd then turns to the tellers who place bags of money on the counter.

ABBY
Robbery. Why not round out the day
with some kidnapping?

Hoyt grabs the bags of money then turns to Abby.

HOYT
Thanks for the idea. Let's go.

Hoyt rushes Abby out at gunpoint --

28

EXT. BANK - MOMENTS LATER

28

Cordell the horse is waiting beside the bank. Hoyt places the money in the saddle bags then grabs Abby --

ABBY
What on earth are you --

Hoyt hoists Abby over the horse, then glides up in the saddle. She sits up, now facing Hoyt (facing the other way).

ABBY (CONT'D)

I'm not luggage you can just --

HOYT

Ya!

They gallop away!

29

EXT. THE TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - VARIOUS - DAY

29

Hoyt rides the horse hard, heading out of town when he sees Gus up ahead, mounting his own horse. Before Gus spots them, Hoyt turns his horse and races down a side street.

Abby bounces up and down in front of him as Hoyt stops again. On the main street up ahead, a wagon has broken free of its lead horses -- SOARING out of control until it CRASHES into a hitching post. Wooden barrels from the back SMASH onto the ground, spook other horses, creating a real stir. The 1870's equivalent of a traffic jam.

Abby eyes a side street, back the other way --

ABBY

Turn around! Back there.

The lawman's wife now helping an outlaw, Abby directs Hoyt down the alley -- navigating the same street Bowen guided her down earlier. They race through lines of hanging laundry. Hoyt spots a COLORFUL DRESS, grabs it, then looks ahead as --

HOYT

Whoa!

Hoyt bucks the horse right before they run into Salty Dog, now drunk, staggering down the street.

They circle back to the main street. They see Gus cross through, doubling-back toward the bank. Where they see the Pig Farmer has assembled a small posse, hellbent on revenge.

Hoyt eyes one row left of buildings before they're home free.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Hold on.

Hoyt races across the street, fast enough no one notices. They reach the open prairie, heading outside of town.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

30

INT/EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH - DUSK

30

Abby and Hoyt ride out to the ruins of an old church, long abandoned. Hoyt dismounts then offers a hand to Abby, who swats it away.

ABBY

I can help myself, thank you.

Hoyt ties his horse (Cordell) out of sight.

HOYT

I can see that. So why'd you help me? That's the question.

Abby walks up to Hoyt and SLAPS HIM IN THE FACE AGAIN! Hoyt holds his jaw, Abby put a little bit more behind that one.

HOYT (CONT'D)

What do you think you're doing?

Then -- Abby pulls his BANDANA OFF!

ABBY

I knew it was you.

HOYT

You're putting me in a prickly position knowing who I am! What am I supposed to do now?

ABBY

Help me.

Hoyt is taken back. We sense it's been a long time since someone needed his help. Or at least asked for it.

HOYT

You want me to help you?

ABBY

As unlikely as that seems, yes.

HOYT

Why are you even in Independence?

ABBY

My husband was a police officer in Boston. He was good man, but the city was cruel, warped, crooked.

(MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)

And he was too good to bend to its will. So we left. To come out here. So he could be sheriff.

Hoyt listens to it all, but senses there's more --

HOYT

You strike me as a strong-willed kind of lady. Why'd you agree to trade Boston for... this place?

ABBY

I had my troubles too. My family. They were the cruel ones. The warped. The crooked.

HOYT

And now your husband's the new sheriff?

ABBY

No, my husband was killed.

Hoyt reacts, sorrowful, seeing Abby in a new light now.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Happened... six days ago. I'm not sure, I was recovering from this.

Abby pulls her dress from her shoulder, showing her wound.

HOYT

Who killed him? Who did that?

ABBY

The new sheriff.

HOYT

The new -- what do you want me to do about that?

ABBY

I want you to help me kill him.

Hoyt laughs until he realizes she's dead serious.

HOYT

Lady, someone stole your rudder.

ABBY

You're a criminal. Not a very good one if earlier was any indication.

(MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)

But a criminal, no less, with a gun. Who knows what it's like to take a man's life.

HOYT

And how would you know that?

ABBY

My husband served in the war too. You can tell sometimes.

HOYT

This is a bad idea, lady. Why don't you... testify to what happened?

ABBY

Against a man who now wears a badge? Who this town is throwing a welcome party for? I'm a stranger here, no one will believe me. And imagine what that imposter would do if he heard me speak against him?

Hoyt considers, Abby's thought this through --

HOYT

What if I don't agree?

ABBY

I tell everyone you robbed the bank. Took me hostage. Then I paint the wanted signs myself. I'm quite an artist.

Hoyt can't help but laugh, but... Abby's asking a lot.

ABBY (CONT'D)

You risked a lot robbing a bank in a town you were spotted in earlier today. Must mean you need money. Or is it for someone else you care about more than yourself?

HOYT

You help your lawman husband with that put-together mind of yours?

ABBY

Yes, and I'm beginning to think I'm the only one who can help him even after...

(moving on)

My point is, you're staying in town for someone. That's a risk.

(MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)

I wouldn't want to make that more difficult for you.

Hoyt taps his gun belt, draped over his saddle.

ABBY (CONT'D)

You don't kill women.

HOYT

You came here because of your husband. So now you're gonna stay to get revenge?

Abby ponders that question as Hoyt turns to his horse, all she knows is --

ABBY

He can't get away with it.

HOYT

Cordell, you hearing all this?

(to Abby)

You were right, I do know what it's like to kill a man. And I'm in no rush to do it again. Even if he deserves it.

ABBY

No, it can't wait. It has to be tonight. At the dance hall. He'll be there --

HOYT

And so will half the town. Listen, I don't think you understand: This is a risk I'm not willing to take. I'm sorry.

Abby moves in close to Hoyt as he saddles back up.

ABBY

If you leave now, I'll be forced to turn you in.

Hoyt looks in Abby's eyes, then --

HOYT

That's a risk I am gonna take.

Hoyt rides off. We stay with Abby a moment longer to realize... she's stolen one of his pistols, taking matters into her own hands.

31

EXT. HILLSIDE OVERLOOKING TOWN - DUSK

31

Magic hour over Independence. A beautiful sight. Our view is Calian's view, who watches the town from above as lanterns are lit and music and laughter starts to fill the air.

Calian's attention shifts to a rider approaching. Gus. He was expecting him. Gus gets off his horse. Nods to his friend.

GUS

Bank robbery earlier.

CALIAN

Been awhile.

GUS

Took a hostage. A woman.

CALIAN

Need me to track him?

GUS

Spotted headed north by Mister Bordeaux. East by Old Molly.

They both know that means it's a dead end. Too many trails.

CALIAN

Who was the woman?

GUS

Folks at the bank said her name was Abby. Abby Walker. No one knew her.

Calian smiles to himself, knowing who it is.

GUS (CONT'D)

A lady came by to meet the sheriff earlier. New face in town.

CALIAN

You think it's the same woman?

Gus shrugs as they both watch the festivities below.

GUS

C'mon, ride down with me. No one will bother us when we're together.

Calian gives a smile and a nod as they both mount up. Off this oddly delightful pair riding into town together...

32

EXT. MONTERO'S RANCH - DUSK

32

Hoyt rides toward a modest ranch house. He swoops down to pick some flowers before reaching a hitching post. He hops off, ties his horse as the door opens. Hoyt turns to find FRANCIS MONTERO, standing there with a rifle.

HOYT

Francis. We didn't leave on that bad of terms did we?

Francis lowers the rifle as Lucia rushes to meet Hoyt. Hoyt starts to offer the flowers to Lucia when her mother, ANNA MARIA, appears. Hoyt promptly hands her the flowers.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Beautiful as always, Anna Maria.

ANNA MARIA

You look too skinny. Come in. Eat.

33

INT. MONTERO'S RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

33

Hoyt and the family finish their feast of pozole rojo and tamales at a wooden table of a simple, rustic home.

FRANCIS

You stay out of trouble?

HOYT

So far.

FRANCIS

I promised your father to keep an eye on you. Not easy when you disappear again and again.

HOYT

I go where the jobs take me.

ANNA MARIA

If you don't let roots take hold, you'll always be moving.

Her comment plays like both parental advice and motherly disapproval -- Anna Maria wishes Hoyt would clean up his act.

HOYT

Speaking of roots, saw that garden of yours out there. Eden right here in Texas. How's the rest of the ranch?

LUCIA
Father could use your help.

Hoyt slaps his gut --

HOYT
Happy to work this fine meal off.

Luis and Lucia share a laugh. Even Anna Maria smiles.

HOYT (CONT'D)
Heard some of your cattle wandered
off around the same time you got
new neighbors.

Francis shoots his children a look --

HOYT (CONT'D)
Who are they?

ANNA MARIA
Didn't take the time to introduce
themselves.

FRANCIS
They have deep pockets. In Austin,
up in Abilene. Back East.

HOYT
That doesn't sit right. You tell
anyone in town about what happened?

FRANCIS
We can handle it ourselves.

HOYT
Look, Francis, if they stole --

FRANCIS
Your father wanted to be a hero. To
stay, at the Alamo. I always regret
not being able to save him. Stay
out of this. We will find our way.

Hoyt nods, lets it go. For now. He turns to Anna Maria --

HOYT
Well, if I remember right, you
would sing for everyone after a
good meal. How 'bout it?

ANNA MARIA
Those days are behind me.

HOYT

Maybe it's time for your daughter
to carry on the tradition.

Lucia and Hoyt share another look. Anna Maria disapproves --

ANNA MARIA

It's dark, you should head back to
town.

Lucia starts to object, but Hoyt gets it --

HOYT

Appreciate the meal.

And with that Hoyt grabs his hat and heads out. He tips his
hat at Lucia, the family and then steps outside.

Anna Maria looks at the flowers Hoyt gave her, then sees
something underneath... the money from the bank.

ANNA MARIA

[Francis. Come here.]

Francis rushes over to see the money. They listen as Hoyt's
horse rides off into the night. Then turn...

ANNA MARIA (CONT'D)

Where is Lucia?

34

EXT. MONTERO'S RANCH - NIGHT

34

Hoyt rides with Lucia, her arms wrapped tightly around him.

HOYT

Left a little something in the side
saddle for you.

Lucia reaches down to find... the colorful dress Hoyt swiped
from the alley of hanging laundry.

HOYT (CONT'D)

You said you were looking for a
dress earlier. Figured trying it on
tonight was as good as any.

Lucia squeezes her arms around Hoyt even harder.

Hoyt glances down, something catches his eye -- his holster,
in the saddle where he placed it earlier. But... his pistol
is missing. And Hoyt's pretty sure he knows who stole it...

Off Hoyt, riding fast toward Independence...

35 **INT. POST OFFICE - NIGHT.**

35

Kate Carver stands at the Western Union desk finishing writing a telegram. She hands it to the operator we met earlier, who scans it. He glances up at her.

KATE CARVER

These are to remain... discrete.

OPERATOR

Yes, ma'am.

As the operator begins to send the message, we PUSH IN close on the words: SHERIFF LIAM CALLAHAN MISSING. PRESUMED DEAD. NEW SHERIFF SWORN IN TODAY. MADE OFFER TO BUY HOTEL AND OTHER BUSINESSES. BANK ROBBED EARLIER. STILL CONNECTING THE DOTS. Then we notice the recipient: Allan Pinkerton.

Yes, Kate Carver is a Pinkerton agent, undercover in Independence as a burlesque dancer.

36 **EXT. THE TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - VARIOUS - NIGHT**

36

With her report sent, Kate exits the post office and walks into town. She gets lost in the crowd, as folks stagger out of saloons, everyone heading toward Hagan's Dance Hall.

FIND Kai and Bowen Sing, walking out from the alley near their business. After a few more steps, Bowen hangs back.

KAI

[We are welcome. We are part of this town as much as anyone else.]

BOWEN SING

[As long as we stay in the shadows.]

KAI

[That's not true. It's different here.]

BOWEN SING

[You go. I sleep.]
(then --)
Don't sleep with the White Doves.

KAI

[You speak from experience?]

Bowen narrows his eyes, not approving of Kai's humor. *Or is it bringing up the past?* As Bowen heads back down the dark alley, Kai turns toward town looking up at...

FIREWORKS, illuminating the sky as we FIND ABBY... her eyes set to some darker purpose. We follow her as she walks toward the dance hall -- the camera drifting down to highlight the PISTOL she stole from Hoyt, now clutched in her hand.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

37

INT/EXT. HAGAN'S DANCE HALL - VARIOUS - NIGHT

37

Lucia takes the stage as a boisterous crowd fills the dance hall. She stands in her new dress, a mariachi band nearby. A few heckles. A few cat calls. Lucia looks nervous, closes her eyes. Then she sings. Her voice building, becoming more powerful. Everyone falls silent under her spell --

LUCIA

[From the mountains, they come,
heavenly one/a pair of deep, dark,
thievish eyes/lower as they
approach, pretty sweetheart...]

We find Abby moving through the crowd, the pistol concealed at her side. She looks over to spot Kai watching the show from the back. Kai gives Abby a smile, happy to see her here.

LUCIA (CONT'D)

[Sing and don't cry, heavenly
one/for singing warms the heart/a
bird that abandons/his first nest,
heavenly one/then finds it occupied
by another/deserves to lose it/ay,
ay, ay/sing and don't cry]

Abby nods politely then spots Gus watching her from the bar, she turns away and bumps into Kate, who's about to join the rest of the dancers backstage. Abby eyes Kate, nervous.

KATE CARVER

Are you blushing again?

Abby smiles, keeping her sidearm hidden.

ABBY

Thank you. For being so kind.

KATE CARVER

Sure. Hey, watch close. I'll wink
at you from the stage.

Kate rushes off as the crowd erupts in applause as Lucia finishes. She spots Hoyt off to the side --

HOYT

Listen to them. They love you.

LUCIA

I couldn't have done it without
you. Thank you.

She kisses Hoyt but notices he's a little distracted,
scanning the crowd (for Abby, the pistol thief that she is).

LUCIA (CONT'D)

Don't leave again.

Hoyt forces a smile, then --

AUGUSTUS (O.S.)

Quite a song.

Hoyt and Lucia turn to find Gus.

AUGUSTUS (CONT'D)

Augustus. Deputy.

LUCIA

Lucia Montero. This is Hoyt.

Gus sizes up Hoyt, a hint of suspicion.

AUGUSTUS

Hoyt? Feel like I saw you in town
earlier. On horseback maybe?

The comment's as loaded as it gets. But Hoyt plays it cool,
his natural state.

HOYT

Nice day for a ride.

August flashes a smile -- *game on*.

AUGUSTUS

See you around.

NATE HAGAN takes the stage. A huskier version of the man
painted in the mural above the bar.

HAGAN

Ladies and gentleman, it's time to
welcome the new sheriff of
Independence... Tom Davidson.

The crowd cheers as Hagan gestures to Tom Davidson, who rises
from a nearby table. We notice Salty Dog nearby, friendly
with the new sheriff. Tom Davidson shakes the hands of
everyone else around him, a hero's welcome.

LUCIA

Davidson. That's the name of the family who moved next to our ranch. I heard they're from back east.

Hoyt narrows his eyes at the coincidence, then --

HOYT

Lemme guess, Boston?
(off her nod/sotto)
The timing of all this gets better and better.

FIND Abby again, moving closer to Sheriff Davidson, her hand gripping the pistol. Looks like she hasn't given Hoyt's warning much thought -- she wants to kill the sheriff now.

Everything goes quiet again for Abby. We see all the mixed emotions etched across her face -- anger, trepidation -- as she slowly raises the pistol at Tom Davidson. And in that moment...

DOZENS OF GUNSHOTS ring out. All around the dance hall, outside, all over town. Some sort of tradition. As the cacophony of gunfire goes off --

Abby points her pistol, her hand trembling when...

BAM! Hoyt pulls her away just as Abby fires.

The shot grazes the shoulder of Sheriff Davidson's suit, shredding the cotton stuffing. With all the commotion, no one notices. For now.

Hoyt pulls Abby away, into a dark corner.

HOYT (CONT'D)

You're gonna get yourself killed.

ABBY

He deserves to die for what he did--

HOYT

That how your husband would want you to avenge him? Vengeance?

Abby considers how close she came to murder. Then --

HOYT (CONT'D)

His name's Tom Davidson. From Boston. Odds on that.

ABBY

What? How did you --

HOYT

His family's buying land all around town. Stealing rancher's cattle.

ABBY

Being family to the town sheriff is one way to avoid trouble.

HOYT

There's that put-together mind of yours.

The town hoots and hollers at the rowdy dance number being performed on stage. Abby glances up to see Kate, who gives her a playful wink. Meanwhile --

We spot Lucia near the door. Watching Hoyt and Abby together, jealous. Reading the situation wrong, she turns to leave...

At the same time, Calian watches Abby from a balcony. Making the same assumptions, he turns to leave.

ACROSS THE FLOOR. Gus shake hands with his new boss --

GUS

Welcome to town, Sheriff.

TOM DAVIDSON

Augustus. I know I wasn't the town's first choice, but I promise not to let anyone down. I have big plans for this place.

Gus considers his plans, then notices the ripped portion of his suit where Abby's bullet tore through.

GUS

Lucky on your first day.

TOM DAVIDSON

That's gotta be a sign.

Tom Davidson playfully puts his finger through the bullet hole, knowing someone in this room tried to shoot him. But instead of being scared or concerned... we see a flash of the same sadistic smile we saw the night of Liam's murder.

Sheriff Davidson studies the crowd, looking for suspects while hobnobbing to his townspeople, all congratulating him, blissfully unaware that he is in fact a killer.

RESUME ON ABBY and HOYT...

ABBY

No one knows who he really is.

HOYT

Snakes shed their skin eventually.

(off Abby's look)

Lady, he's wronged people close to me. And he might deserve what's coming. But I get the feeling we both need to know the why's and the how's before it gets here.

Abby looks across at Sheriff Davidson, Gus, Salty Dog and a couple other ARMED MEN nearby. No one can be trusted.

ABBY

Yes, but we have to do it without anyone knowing.

HOYT

And like you said... no one's gonna believe an outlaw and a stranger.

ABBY

Not yet.

(a beat)

We need to go back. To where it happened.

Off Abby and Hoyt, watching the celebration for a killer, a plan forming...

38

EXT. OUTSIDE OF TOWN - DAY

38

The morning sun rises over Independence as Hoyt rides out of town with Abby behind him in the saddle.

HOYT

Guess you should learn how to ride on your own.

ABBY

(wry)

You might have to steal a horse for me first.

Hoyt flashes a smile -- this woman's growing on him.

HOYT

Reckon the one thing we both need to learn is why this new sheriff is buying out rancher's land, hotels.

ABBY

And how his ties back East helped
him put on my husband's star a week
after he killed him.

HOYT

He might be wearing it in public,
but you gotta act like you're the
real sheriff in private if we're
gonna get to the bottom of this.

Hoyt eyes Abby, like the de factor sheriff that she is now.

ABBY

Maybe they should call the town
Redemption. Bank robber helping a
widow and a rancher's family.

HOYT

Independence sounds 'bout right
considering how folks find their
own way 'round here.

Abby flashes a smile -- this man's growing on her.

39

EXT. THE GREAT PLAINS - DAY

39

Abby and Hoyt arrive at the burned-out hull of the wagon. The scene of the crime. Hoyt dismounts, helps Abby down. The emotion of it all starting to rise again.

Abby searches the wagon. She notices the steamer trunk near what was the upright piano is missing. Then she turns to her pile of books, now mostly ash. Save for one book, still intact: The Texas law book. She pockets the book.

She exits the wagon to see Hoyt, gun raised, on edge. Abby's heart starts pounding, a familiar fear, in the same setting.

HOYT

Get down. Someone followed us.

Abby lowers as Hoyt gets ready for a fight, when --

CALIAN

[Walks in Tall Grass]. It's Calian.
Tell your friend not to shoot.

Abby rises, recognizing Calian's voice --

ABBY

Wait. It's okay. He's a friend.

Hoyt lowers his weapon as Calian makes his presence known. He and Hoyt exchange a look --

CALIAN
I'm Calian.

HOYT
Hoyt. And then there were three.

The trio stand there for a moment. Then Abby wanders out in the field again. To Liam's body. She lowers herself to retrieve his sidearm. Then, after a solemn moment --

ABBY
Will you help me bury him?

40

EXT. MOUNT BONNELL - VARIOUS - DAY

40

A series of images:

-- Abby looks down from an overlook, the Colorado River below and Independence in the distance.

-- Calian places Liam's body, now wrapped in a blanket, on the ground near a precipice.

-- Calian uses stones to make a small tomb over Liam's body. After a moment, Abby wipes her tears and she and Hoyt join him.

Moments later. They stand, solemn. This is Liam's funeral.

CALIAN
There is no death, only a change in worlds. His soul goes to the air now.

Abby looks at her husband's final resting place. Then glances out across the vista, toward Independence.

HOYT
Ma'am, I didn't know the man, but I am sorry for your loss.

ABBY
You asked me if I was staying here for revenge or something else... Maybe it's justice. One way or another.

Abby looks down at the Texas law book in one hand and Liam's pistol in the other. Then turns to Hoyt and Calian...

ABBY (CONT'D)

Portmanteau.

(off their looks)

It's when a blend of words make one word. This place is like that. But not words, people...

As Abby considers her interactions these past few days, we FLASH-POP:

- To Abby and Calian, riding together.
- To Gus, flashing Abby a welcoming smile.
- To Kai Sing, feeding her and offering a kind word.
- To Kate Carver, making her laugh again.

ABBY (CONT'D)

The people in this town have made me feel more welcome than my own family did back east. Even without my husband, it almost felt like... I belong here.

Abby considers the town, its people. Then she has one more memory, the worst of its kind. Tragedy. As we FLASH-POP TO:

- Tom Davidson shooting Liam that fateful night.
- Tom Davidson wearing the sheriff's badge.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Tom Davidson has to be stopped.
(looking at the grave)
So this can never happen again.

Off Abby, Hoyt and Calian. An unlikely alliance.

END OF EPISODE