

"GODLESS"

Part IV

Written by

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1

EXT. THE LA BELLE SILVER MINE - DAY

1

A crowd of WOMEN and CHILDREN congregate in an eerie SILENCE.

BLACK SMOKE issues from the mouth of the shaft where a pair of DEAD MULES and the ORE WAGON they'd been pulling now lie on their sides having been hit by the blast.

We SNAKE OUR WAY THROUGH the anxious gathering, then through the smoke and that black opening... move into it... down the shaft...

2

INT. MINE - SAME

2

As several RESCUERS break through a wall, the dust floating like an apparition before their lanterns. McNue, Mary-Agnes and Asa and Elmer among them. They stop and gape at what is now a giant underground tomb...

DEAD MINERS, some no more than boys, remain frozen in place as if all the air had been sucked out all at once-- killing everyone, but disturbing none of the evacuated earth.

Many of the dead still clutch their tools. One man sits with his lunch spread out on a napkin in front of him. Another is kneeling as if in prayer.

A PASTOR covered in dust from the rescue effort places his hand on the head of this man and begins mumbling to God.

The rescuers all turn as A MINER comes stumbling through the darkness and the dust towards them, his face black with soot, blood roaring from his ears. IT'S JOHN DOE. He collapses to his knees, confused by the rescuers who now surround him.

JOHN DOE

What's all this, then?

WE BOOM UP UNTIL ALL IS BLACK AND NOW WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE RISING SKIP. AND NOW WE SEE WHITEY STANDING THERE -- HIS FACE BLACK FROM SOOT, HIS WHITE TEETH SHOWING AS HE GRIMACES AT THE BRIGHT LIGHT ABOVE AS...

...WE FINALLY RISE TO THE SURFACE AND SEE THE WOMEN SURROUNDING US/THE ENTRANCE ALL GASP AS THEY SEE--

--A HALF DOZEN DEAD MEN PILED ONTO THE LIFT.

One or two of the women faint at the sight, children begin to bawl. PUSH IN ON SADIE ROSE, standing there shaking as WATER NOW RUNS DOWN HER LEG, the woman going into labor right then and there. As she crumples to the ground unnoticed, we--

CUT TO BLACK

CREDITS

3

CUT INTO: EXT. LABELLE - DAY

3

As Sadie and Charlotte and several other women pound nails into the frame of the NEW CHURCH. Charlotte mops her brow, looks down the street towards Asa Leopold's general store, where Logan and several of his "security detail" loiter.

CHARLOTTE

Lazy bunch, aren't they?

Sadie looks at the group, climbs down a ladder. We follow her as she walks up the street, wiping dust and sweat from her face as she goes. She marches up to the general store...

LOGAN

Somethin' we could do for you,
little lady?

SADIE

We could sure use some help with
the new church. The Pastor's
supposed to arrive any day now.

LOGAN

What happened to the old church?

SADIE

We never had one.

LOGAN

Well, we'd like to help, but we
best keep a lookout for the bad
guys. If we was to go up there,
start poundin' nails one of 'em
might sneak up on us.

She sees the other men chuckle.

SADIE

I see.

She turns to go.

LOGAN

I ask you somethin', ma'am?
(she pauses)
How'd all them stinky miners get
all you pretty ladies to come out
here in the first place?

SADIE

It's pretty territory. That's why they named it *La Belle*.

LOGAN

Still.

She looks about at the other men, answers shyly--

SADIE

There was a story in the Denver paper. About the miners. About how they did their own washing and mended their own clothes. And about how they'd built a dozen new houses for the families they hoped to have. It said *La Belle* was a town full of all men, looking to settle down.

Logan nods, looks past her at the "town."

LOGAN

Well, lady, looks like y'all been had.

And now the other men burst out laughing as Sadie walks away.

4

EXT. MAGDALENA'S - SAME

4

Where Mary-Agnes, Callie and Whitey sit, watching Sadie walk back to the church.

MARY-AGNES

Serves 'em right. They never shoulda made a deal with that crooked little son-of-a-bitch.

Callie shakes her head at Mary Agnes and then gets up off the porch and starts down the street for the Church, ignoring the catcalls that come from the store. And now Whitey gets up.

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)

You, too?

Mary-Agnes watches him catch up to Callie. Then...

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)

What good's a damn church anyhow?!

She's about to turn away when THE GERMAN WOMAN, wrapped in a huge animal skin of some kind, approaches Callie.

Mary-Agnes watches as they have a word in the middle of the street before Callie quickly hurries off towards the church.

5 **EXT. OLAGRANDE, NEW MEXICO - MORNING**

5

As Bill McNue rides into town, people stop and stare. Every window, a snapshot of a frightened face. More faces on the street. Shadowed in the doorways. Bill McNue looks back at the frightened townsfolk, knows: *something happened here.*

McNue gets off his horse, feels the heat of the morning sun and opens his coat. The rays reflecting off the star pinned to his chest, lighting up some of those dark spaces, so that we can feel the town collectively begin to relax.

ELTON CUNNINGHAM, the portly Sheriff stumbles off the sidewalk and makes his way over to McNue. He's drunk.

CUNNINGHAM

You here about the Marshal?

6 **INT. UNDERTAKER'S OFFICE - MORNING**

6

Cooke's body lies on a table. McNue, surrounded now by town officials, watches as the town UNDERTAKER pulls back a sheet. Cunningham remains in a far corner, away from the rest.

UNDERTAKER

They ain't much of his face left to identify...

Grateful in this moment for his failing eyesight, McNue regards his old friend.

MCNUE

Seems you'n me keep meetin' in funeral parlors...

He shakes his head, then, turns to the others--

MCNUE (CONT'D)

His name's John Cook. He's from Santa Fe.

(throws some silver onto the table)

Send the body there.

McNue turns to Cunningham now.

MCNUE (CONT'D)

You just let Griffin ride into town?

CUNNINGHAM

I did. And then I just let 'em ride on out.

McNue says nothing. The man glances about, then...

CUNNINGHAM (CONT'D)

You take a shot at Frank Griffin and his men, you best kill 'em all, something the poor folks at Creede learned to their sad experience.

MCNUE

Where's the army regiment that's supposed to be here?

CUNNINGHAM

Wyoming. Up near Laramie. On range business.

McNue turns away from the Sheriff, starts out.

CUNNINGHAM (CONT'D)

What was I supposed to do?!

MCNUE

For starters, you can sober up.

MAYOR

You don't mind my askin', Sheriff, what all's your strategy?

MCNUE

I don't rightly know. I just wanna get a rope around the man's neck afore he does any more damage.

Something occurs to him and he looks once more at the corpse...

MCNUE (CONT'D)

Where's the Marshal's badge?

No one answers. He looks around the room.

MCNUE (CONT'D)

Where's his Goddamn badge?!

They all just stare back at him, terrified. McNue shakes his head and gets out of there.

7

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

7

Roy at the table with Alice, reads from a child's primer:

ROY

*An ant and a grass... hopper both
lived in a field. In summer the ant
worked to lay up food for winter.*

He looks up at Alice -- glowing in the light of the lantern -- she's not looking at the book, but out the open door. Iyovi stands out there, looking, too. Roy resumes reading...

ROY (CONT'D)

*The grasshopper played all day
long...*

A bit of THUNDER and Alice looks off. A BLUE LIGHT on the horizon.

ROY (CONT'D)

A Norther.
(then)
Big one, looks like.

She nods, seems to come back from wherever she was, looks at Roy.

ALICE

It's getting late.

ROY

(studies her)
Yes, ma'am.
(stands, turns)
G'night, Boy.

But Truckee's already asleep.

ALICE

You wear him out.

He looks at Alice, she's smiling a bit now.

ROY

You mind, one a these days, I take
him huntin'? I'd only keep him out
a night or two.

She thinks about that.

ROY (CONT'D)

Seems like a thing the boy should
know how to do by now.

ALICE

(finally)
I think he'd like that.

ROY
 Alright then.

He stands there another moment, then--

ROY (CONT'D)
 Good-night, ma'am.

8 **EXT. ALICE'S CABIN - SAME**

8

As Roy walks past Iyovi towards the barn. She says something in Paiute that he doesn't understand. He nods back at her...

ROY
 Sweet dreams to you, too, Grandma.

A bit of LIGHTNING AND THUNDER OVER...

9 **EXT. LA BELLE - THE SHANTIES - NIGHT**

9

As a door opens and Callie Dunne steps outside. The German Woman now joins her in the doorway. They share a quick embrace and we...

10 **PULL BACK TO REVEAL - MARY-AGNES**

10

Watching from the darkness as Callie walks to her own shanty and now goes inside.

We hear HOOFBEATS and Mary-Agnes turns as someone now rides up the dark main street.

MARY-AGNES
 Whitey?

The young deputy looks startled to see her and the kids.

WHITEY
 Evening, Maggie.

She sees that bundle again on the back of his horse.

MARY-AGNES
 What're you traipsin' around in the dark for?

WHITEY
 Just thought I'd go for a ride.

MARY-AGNES
 Now?

WHITEY
 Why not? You're out, ain'tcha?

Another buck grabs her arms, forces them behind her, pulling her hands almost down to the backs of her knees.

A third rips the yellow dress from her body so that her arched figure now shows itself to all of them.

The other bucks are laughing and poking at her, pinching and grabbing her all over. One of them pulls his knife out and holds it first to her throat, then to an eye, then her scalp.

They spin her around and let her fall down to the ground and start kicking her, taking turns, back and forth, rolling her around in the leaves... the yellow dress now down around her ankles, gets dragged along with her.

She looks to where the COMANCHE PRISONERS just stand there watching. All of them numb, in their own private shock.

She looks up at the giant BUFFALO HEADED BRAVES looking down at her. One of them is moving to get on top of her when that big buffalo head explodes.

Alice shrugs free from the dead brave as the other two now wheel around, one's chest blossoming as he's blown off his feet. Another running for his horse, getting maybe one or two paces before he's shot in the back. Yet another two are blown off their feet, one after the other.

Then three more drop, and the others take off running leaving Alice standing there among the dead braves looking around for whoever it was just put these eight men on the ground.

And now she sees him on horseback, emerging from the mist at the edge of the glade, a still-smoking rifle in his hand--
BILL MCNUE.

He leads a packhorse, an elk draped over the back. And now behind the packhorse comes another rider on horseback, this one, bundled up with scarves over the face, hat pulled down tight. This rider's rifle, also still smoking.

The second rider unwraps one of the scarves and we see **ANNA MCNUE** looking down at Alice as Bill dismounts and draws his pistol and unceremoniously shoots the back-shot brave as he tries to crawl away. He then turns to Alice...

MCNUE

You're alright now, ma'am.

She looks up, near froze to death, unable to speak, and McNue is immediately taken with her. Right there in front of his beloved wife. He cannot look away. But now Anna is crouching beside Alice and he takes off HIS COAT and throws it over her and looks off at the PRISONERS the Comanche have left behind.

ANNA

We have to get these people out of here.

MCNUE

We're at least a days ride to La Belle.

ANNA

(looks at Alice)

We'll take 'em to Narrienta.

16

EXT. PAIUTE CAMP - DUSK

16

Narrienta comes out of his lodge and watches as Bill and Anna McNue ride into the camp leading the other Comanche prisoners behind them.

Alice side saddle in front of Bill, leaning against him, wrapped in blankets. McNue passes her down to Narrienta who holds her in his arms, then turns to a young BRAVE who stares at her the same way McNue did.

NARRIENTA (SUBTITLED)

Get your mother.

We hear someone shouting in Paiute, and now IYOVI comes over, takes in Alice, and starts barking orders at everyone around her. The other prisoners are taken in as well. McNue tosses a BUFFALO HEAD to Narrienta.

MCNUE

I can't recollect the last time I seen a Comanche out this way.

NARRIENTA

(examining the head)

They were probably starved out or kicked out of wherever they'd been resting.

(looks at McNue)

She's lucky you come along.

McNue sits on his horse watching as Iyovi gathers an arm around Alice. He sees the young BRAVE -- IYOVI'S SON -- also watching Alice as she turns to Bill McNue, starts to return the coat--

MCNUE

You keep it.

McNue watches as Iyovi starts to lead Alice away... while beside him, Anna sits on her horse, watching her husband watch Alice.

21

EXT. LA BELLE SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

21

As two of Logan's men exit the office, rifles over their shoulders, and step out into the rain.

WHITEY (V.O.)

Look at them boys, walkin' around like they all so full a sand...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL WE'RE INSIDE...

INT. "THE GOOD LODE" SALOON - SAME

Whitey sits with Hiram by the window.

WHITEY

Sit in the Sheriff's chair. Think they own the damn town.

HIRAM

I think maybe now they *do*. Only a matter a time fore the mine's up and working and the town's full a men like that.

WHITEY

Except these men ain't no miners-- in their suits and their expensive iron. I been watching 'em.

HIRAM

Then you can see aside from bein' well armed, they all pretty damn big.

WHITEY

Bill says a big man's on the same terms as a runt, they both hold a gun.

HIRAM

And they both get sent under same as the other.

(off Whitey's look)

You may be fast with them pistols, boy, but you slow when it comes to just about everything else.

(then)

This ain't our town no more. The ladies sold it for twenty thousand dollars and the promise of another in their bed. Few months from now this place probably won't even be called La Belle.

WHITEY
What'll it be called?

Hiram finishes his beer as Whitey ponders that...

VOICE
That mud out there is absolutely
without bottom.

Whitey turns to the door as A.T. GRIGG takes off his hat and steps into the saloon... stomping the mud from his boots onto Barney's freshly washed floor.

GRIGG
By chance, your livery man about?

HIRAM
(stands)
That be me.

GRIGG
(gives him a coin)
If you'd be so kind.

Hiram cuts a last look back at Whitey and exits the saloon as Grigg hangs up his coat. We now see that Asa Leopold sits at the bar with Elmer Knowland. They're the only other folks in here.

GRIGG (CONT'D)
Glass a beer, barkeep.

Barney pours a drink and Grigg looks around the bar, raises his glass and smiles.

GRIGG (CONT'D)
To women, cards, and whiskey-- the
three war causes in the west!

Nobody responds one way or the other, so he goes ahead and has himself a drink, then--

GRIGG (CONT'D)
Name's Grigg. And I'm here to
inquire about your law.

ELMER
Our law?

WHITEY
(stands, to himself)
Jesus Christ -- A.T. Grigg.

GRIGG

Seems the man's repute has been
whispered all the way to Taos.

Whitey gets up from the table and walks to the bar.

WHITEY

I'm Whitey Winn, and I figured it
was only a matter a time fore you
come lookin' for me.

Grigg recoils at Whitey's sharp body odor...

GRIGG

Son, I ain't lookin' for you and
I'd appreciate you takin' a step
back fore whatever you got gets
communicable.

(then)

I'm askin' after Bill McNue.

ELMER

McNue?

GRIGG

The first lawman ever to capture
the notorious Roy Goode.

Everybody just looks at him as he unfolds A WANTED POSTER
featuring the "fierce" Roy Goode. Hard to recognize him in
this likeness. They all stare at it. Whitey in particular.

ELMER

I don't know who all your source
is, but Bill McNue certainly didn't
capture this man.

GRIGG

(takes out his notebook)
And where is Sheriff McNue? I'd
love to speak with him.

ASA

Who knows where the man goes these
days.

GRIGG

What do you mean, sir?

ASA

He's a coward. And you can print
that Asa Leopold said such.

GRIGG
A mighty strong word.

ASA
Also the truth.

WHITEY
Bill ain't no coward.

ASA
I say he is.

ELMER
Asa, keep your wind for a change.

ASA
Shot my boys in the back. Far as
I'm concerned him and that manly
sister a his can go fuck themselves
straight to hell.

WHITEY
Asa, you and I both know that you
lucky Bill didn't blow your own
damn head off along with your--

ASA
--Careful, boy!
(then)
Careful.

GRIGG
Now gentlemen, there's no reason to
quarrel. Especially not in here.
(smiles at Barney)
I'm sure you'll grok when I say,
Died in a saloon argument is my
most oft printed phrase.

Barney smiles knowingly at that as Grigg next produces the
telegram that Bill had sent...

GRIGG (CONT'D)
Perhaps one of you could make some
sense of this...

ELMER
(reads)
*To Marshal John Cook. Have RG in
custody in La Belle. Will meet up
in Olagrande. Signed Bill McNue.*

They all look at each other, shake their heads. Save Whitey.

ELMER (CONT'D)

I smell a rodent, sir. I think
someone may be fooling with you.

GRIGG

Wouldn't be the first time.
(looks at the faces)
So my trip's not a total loss, how
'bout y'all tell me about this part
a world I just rode into. You can
start by tellin' me, where the hell
everybody went?

Grigg sees the photo behind the bar as Barney nods to it.

BARNEY

Mine took 'em. Eighty-three in one
go.

GRIGG

All of them?

ELMER

Present company excepted.

Grigg takes that in a moment, looks around, then--

GRIGG

So then aside from you fine
gentlemen, who all is left?

22

EXT. ALICE'S RANCH - LATER

22

Truckee looks off as Roy finishes saddling their horses.

TRUCKEE

How we supposed to hunt in the
rain?

ROY

It's just water. You ain't gonna
melt. And it'll be gone by noon.
Game'll be all out by then takin'
in the sunshine, waitin' on us.

TRUCKEE

Waitin' on us to kill 'em?

ROY

That's the basic idea of huntin'.

Roy looks off as Alice walks out of the house with her rifle,
hands it to Roy who slides it into the scabbard on his horse.
Then hands him a basket.

ALICE
 There's lunch in there. Probably
 enough for dinner, too.

ROY
 Thank you, ma'am.

She lingers a moment, looks off--

ALICE
 How would you boys feel about
 having some company?

Roy looks at her, surprised, then at Truckee who shrugs. Roy
 smiles at her.

ROY
 Be just fine.

ALICE
 Wonderful.

Alice turns around and calls out something in Paiute and now
 we see IYOVI, dressed for a hunt, pulling a horse...

ALICE (CONT'D)
 She hasn't been on a proper hunt in
 I don't know how long. I think this
 would do her some good. Also give
 me some peace 'n quiet.

She smiles at a stupefied Roy and then gives her son a kiss.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 Good luck, now.

And then she heads for the house while Roy watches Iyovi
 mount up and give him and the boy a look. She WHISTLES.

TRUCKEE
 I think she wants to get goin'.

ROY
 Yeah, I got that.

23

EXT. COLORADO PLAIN - DAY

23

As Griffin and his men ride up to a small rise and stop. They
 look across the plain to A FARMHOUSE in the distance. BLACK
 SMOKE rising from the chimney.

GATZ
 Some places just got that dark look
 about 'em.

And now AN OPEN WAGON throws off a dust trail as it heads up the road to the house. They watch as A MAN AND A WOMAN climb down and walk around to the back. They cover their faces with kerchiefs and now reach in and lift someone from the back of the wagon, carry them into the farmhouse.

They then come back out and grab a heavy barrel of something from the back of the wagon and roll that into the house.

GATZ (CONT'D)

What do you suppose they got inside that drum?

GRIFFIN

(beat)

Water.

Griffin watches the couple turn the wagon around and ride like hell away from the house. He puts his horse into a lope across the field. The other men exchange looks, and follow.

24 **EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

24

Up close, the farmhouse is weatherbeaten and sagging-- the wood close to black. A CRUDE SKULL AND CROSSBONES has been painted in white paint on the front door.

The words *KEEP AWAY!* and *SICKNESS!* painted below it. Griffin ignores the signs, walks right up to the door and opens it...

25 **INT. HOUSE - SAME**

25

As the door swings open... looking out towards Frank as his men ride up behind him. Frank's immediately hit by a stench that knocks him back. He covers his face and steps inside.

26 **GRIFFIN'S POV - PEOPLE**

26

Lying all over the floor. Packed into the room. Most of the faces are in shadow, but the light from the door illuminates enough for us to make out the SORES that corrupt them.

GRIFFIN

Sweet Jesus.

The Devlins appear in the doorway behind him and instantly recoil, cover their faces at the smell...

DARYL

What the fuckity fuck--

GRIFFIN

Don't come in here.

He takes in the misery all around him. These people are alive, but just barely.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You best not linger yourself,
Pastor.

A YOUNG WOMAN, her face in shadow, dips a ladle in the barrel of water and brings it to one of the miserable souls.

GRIFFIN

What's your name child?

When she turns, we see her once lovely face is covered in the same horrible sores. Griffin is instantly taken with her.

WOMAN

Lila.

GRIFFIN

How long you been here, Lila?

WOMAN/LILA

Well, I brought my mama and papa here a month ago, then my sister, maybe a week later. Then I come.

GRIFFIN

Your people all gone?
(she nods)
So you giving comfort to these folks all on your own?

LILA

Doctor can't keep up.

GRIFFIN

And where be he?

She nods to a man lying in the corner, shaking. As sick as anybody else in this place.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

There a town nearby?

LILA

There was.

GRIFFIN

All of 'em got the pox?

LILA

Most everybody. We buried nine just last week.

She indicates a YOUNG MAN in the corner, staring stupidly up at the ceiling. Flies buzzing all around him.

LILA (CONT'D)
Sammy passed yesterday, but I don't got the strength to move him out.

She indicates a woman either dead or out cold.

LILA (CONT'D)
There was a little girl, came in two days ago with her mama, but I can't find her now.

Griffin nods, looks around once more, then starts out.

LILA (CONT'D)
Could you at least say a prayer for us, Pastor, before you go.

GRIFFIN
(pauses)
I ain't leaving you, child.

27

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

27

As Griffin steps outside and thinks a moment.

DONNIE
I reckon maybe we should burn this place down, put them poor folks out of their misery.

Griffin looks at him.

GRIFFIN
That's what you'd do, is it, son?

DONNIE
Be the Christian thing. Stop the pox 'fore anybody else gets it.

Griffin sees Daryl nodding in agreement.

GRIFFIN
Why not just shoot 'em?

DARYL
Well, I'd probably do that first, so they don't feel no fire on 'em.

Griffin looks up at Gatz, the man still on his horse.

GRIFFIN

Take the boys ahead, make camp at the river. I'm gonna stay here a little while.

GATZ

You go back into that sick house, Frank, there's a good chance you don't come out.

Griffin looks at his men and smiles.

GRIFFIN

Don't worry none about me. I ain't gonna die a no smallpox.

GATZ

What if it's worse 'n that? Could be lepers in there.

GRIFFIN

I ain't gonna die a no *leprosy* neither. I already done seen what's gonna get me and it ain't no sickness of *any* kind. Go on now.
(turns to go back in)
I'll be back around suppertime.

DONNIE

(starts to mount up)
I could sure eat somethin'.

Griffin grabs Donnie with his good arm and unhorses him with one good tug. Looks at Daryl--

GRIFFIN

Not you two.
(they look at him)
You two stay here with me.

28 **EXT. BLACKDOM - DAY**

28

Everybody's out working in the rocky near fallow field. They pause as Roy, Truckee and Iyovi pass by the little hamlet on their way up into the mountains.

29 **EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY**

29

As Roy follows a trail through the trees. Truckee rides behind him. Iyovi brings up the rear. CHANTING.

Roy glances back at her scowling face, forces himself to smile, then turns to the boy...

ROY
The hell's Granny goin' on about
back there?

TRUCKEE
She's singing her hunting song.

ROY
Well, she's gonna scare away all
the damn game.

Roy stops his horse and gets down. Truckee watches as he
pulls the rifle from its scabbard.

ROY (CONT'D)
We're looking for an elk or a dry
doe, one that don't have no fawns.

TRUCKEE
You mean, they might have babies in
'em?

ROY
Sometimes they do. Get off of your
horse and picket him over here.

Truckee thinks about that sad fact as he now slides off his
horse, leads him to where Roy ties his horse to some scrub
oak. Iyovi stands there sniffing the air around her.

ROY (CONT'D)
I think let's stay up on the ridge.
Keep ourselves up-sun and downwind
from whatever's hidn' below.

Roy then watches as Iyovi turns and walks off in the *opposite*
direction he just proposed.

ROY (CONT'D)
Or we can go that way.

30 **CUT TO IYOVI**

30

Moving silently through the trees. Roy and Truckee not far
behind. Truckee stumbles and Roy catches him. Iyovi turns,
gives them both a dirty look.

They continue on until Iyovi finally stops at a fallen tree.
She motions for Roy to come up alongside her. He does, looks
off and nods...

31 **ROY'S POV - A YOUNG ELK**

31

Feeding. Unaware.

32

ROY

32

Pulls Truckee up alongside, crouches down, smiles...

ROY

Just look at him. He's got the deep red of summer. His neck still ain't thick, and he ain't in the rut yet.

He motions for Truckee to lie down in front of the dead tree. They both crouch down behind it. Roy lays the rifle over the trunk, then motions for Truckee to take it.

Truckee hesitates then gets behind the Henry, nestles the butt into his small shoulder. Roy whispers in his ear...

ROY (CONT'D)

Aim for just above the front flank, where the heart is. We don't wanna go traipsin' through the woods after a wounded animal.

The boy shifts his weight and sights the buck.

ROY (CONT'D)

Take a breath and hold it.
(Truckee does)
That's it. When you're ready, just squeeze the trigger real slow...

The boy stares down the barrel at the beautiful buck. The animal's head raises up slightly as it sniffs the air.

ROY (CONT'D)

Better do it now, son.

But the boy doesn't shoot. He remains frozen with his eyes locked on that handsome buck, his finger now easing off the trigger.

The animal bolts into the trees. Truckee stares after it, afraid now to look at Roy.

His Grandmother shakes her head in disgust, then moves on. Roy smiles at the boy, gently takes the rifle back.

ROY (CONT'D)

Maybe we should do some fishin'.

33

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

33

The Devlin twins chop firewood. Both of them grumbling with the effort...

DONNIE

Don't see why we gotta stay here,
risk gettin' ourselves eaten up by
some horrible disease. Ain't fair.

DARYL

Maybe you hadn't opened your damn
mouth about shootin' 'em all.

DONNIE

You don't think that's what *he's*
gonna do?

Donnie peers inside the window.

DONNIE (CONT'D)

He's gonna let 'em think he's here
to minister, but me an' you both
know, soon as he gets tired of it,
he's gonna save 'em.

Donnie makes his hand into the shape of a gun and puts it to
the window...

DONNIE (CONT'D)

Pow! I save you, sir. And *Pow,* I
save you, ma'am.

They start laughing.

34

INT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

34

Griffin helps Lila wash the sick. He's got them all lined up
now around the fire. The center of the room has been swept
clean. The dead man now lies covered near the door.

GRIFFIN

We can wash these folks for now,
but we're gonna have to boil all
their clothes. Blankets, too.

He dips a cloth into a metal bucket that hangs over the fire
when he hears the Devlin twins LAUGHING outside. He stands.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

S'cuse me.

He starts to go, then pauses to look at her...

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

You should clean yourself as well.

He rolls the now empty barrel towards the door.

35

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

35

As the Devlin brothers kick at the wood pile.

DARYL

That's enough chopping. Let's git.
I'm hungry.

They both turn to see Griffin standing there. He rolls the barrel at them with his foot.

GRIFFIN

I need you to go down to that creek
we passed and fill that up.

DONNIE

Yes, sir.

GRIFFIN

Then I need you to start diggin'
some graves. Some of them folks
ain't gonna last past supper.

DARYL

Speakin' a supper.

Griffin just looks at him, then--

GRIFFIN

You can probably find some shovels
in the barn.

DARYL

And if'n we don't find any?

GRIFFIN

Use your hands.

36

INT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

36

As Griffin comes back inside, pauses when he sees Lila in the dark washing herself. She ties her hair up with a RIBBON, and something in the gesture -- both despite and because of her situation -- is both sad and beautiful.

We see the shadow pass through Griffin. But there's another part of him that fights it.

She sees him looking and he quickly turns away.

GRIFFIN

I see you have stock out back. They
don't look like they been lately
fed. I'll tend to 'em.

(MORE)

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
 And if it's alright with you, I'll
 kill one or two of your chickens,
 so you can make a broth for these
 folks.

He starts to drag the covered body out with his good arm. She covers herself with a blanket and comes to help him.

 GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
 I can do it. You keep near that
 fire.

 LILA
 Preacher.

He sees how she's looking at him from the fire.

 LILA (CONT'D)
 It's been a long time since anyone
 has shown any kindness around here.
 (then)
 I won't forget you. Even in my
 afterdays.

He nods and gets out of there before that other part of him shows itself.

37

EXT. RIVER - DAY

37

As Roy leads Truckee and Iyovi to the bank. He looks across the river--

 ROY
 There's a nice pool on the other
 side, over by them boulders.

Roy walks his horse a few feet in and scans the water.

 ROY (CONT'D)
 Looks like it gets deep pretty
 quick. Better stay behind me.

They slowly start across. Truckee's not so sure, but he keeps his eyes pinned to the back of Roy's head. As they reach the middle of the stream, their horses now in water up to their flanks, Roy suddenly stops, holds up his hand, motioning for Truckee and Iyovi to do the same.

As Roy stares at something in the water, we BOOM UP AND OVER him TILTING DOWN from high up now so that we can see...

...A SUBMERGED STAGECOACH LYING ON ITS SIDE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREAM. Roy picks his way towards the coach.

ROY (CONT'D)
Stay right there.

Roy leaves his horse standing in the deep water and climbs onto the side of the coach. He looks down through the cut-out.

TRUCKEE
How long you think it's been here?

ROY
(looking inside)
A while I'd say... since the Spring
run-off at least.

Piled inside are the SKELETAL REMAINS OF THREE PEOPLE, still in their clothes. He turns and sees the bones of TWO HORSES, still in their traces, just under the surface of the water.

ROY (CONT'D)
They tried to cross too soon after
the melt, thought they could do it
down here, where it wasn't as wide.
(looking at the bodies)
But they was wrong.

Roy looks down in the coach once more and opens the door, reaches down and pulls up a small STRONG BOX.

He opens the box and pulls out a small canvas bag, dry as a bone, the words "U.S. MAIL" stamped onto the side.

He then opens up the bag and pulls out a handful of letters and ponders them.

Roy replaces them, then ties the MAIL BAG to the back of his saddle and climbs back on his horse. We hear A HOLLER and he looks off at--

38 **IYOVI** 38

Who's just caught a fish with her bare hands. She dances about in the stream, SLAPS THE FISH AGAINST A ROCK.

ROY
Interesting woman, your granny.

39 **EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT** 39

Iyovi sits by the fire smoking. Roy watches as the boy gives the horses grain, hugs his animal and comes back to the fire.

ROY
You gonna bloat him out, make him
fat you keep feedin' him like that.

TRUCKEE
Cinder's like me. He can eat a lot.

ROY
Cinder?

TRUCKEE
On account of his blackness.

Roy watches him now stroke the animal. The kid turns, sees
Roy watching him and smiles. Roy turns away.

ROY
Fetch me my book, will ya?

Truckee goes over, reaches into the saddle bag for the primer
Roy had been reading from, pauses, reaches in again and pulls
out THE WOODEN GUN. He looks at Roy. Roy hesitates, then--

ROY (CONT'D)
Someone made that for me, I wasn't
much older'n you.

Truckee slides over closer to him. Tries to wheel the gun
around his finger and drops it.

TRUCKEE
Can you show me some tricks?

ROY
I don't know any tricks.

TRUCKEE
I saw you when you shot that snake.
Way you reached over your shoulder,
pulled the gun outta the holster--

ROY
That wasn't no trick. I wasn't
thinkin' then. I was just doin'.

The boy just keeps looking at him. Roy looks across the fire
to see Iyovi watching with her impassive eyes. Roy takes the
wooden gun from the boy--

ROY (CONT'D)
World doesn't need another
gunfighter.

--and shoves it back into the saddle bag. Roy takes the book as Truckee leans back and closes his eyes. Roy watches him a moment, enjoys the quiet, stares into the fire as we hear--

JIM (V.O.)

Was a train robber once upon a time
named Black Jack Ketchum...

40

EXT. ANOTHER CAMP - NIGHT

40

Young Roy sits at a small fire, mesmerized as his big brother spins a yarn. Uncle Dunchee's prized horse picketed nearby.

JIM

Was a giant fella. Had to go nearly seven feet and some three hundred pounds. Was so big the hangman had to build an extra tall scaffold to make sure his feet didn't hit the ground when they dropped him. A big crowd come from miles around to watch him die including me and Pa.

ROY

Where was I?

JIM

Not even born yet. I was but four or five myself.

ROY

Too bad. I ain't never seen a hanging before.

JIM

And I hope to God you never do. Anyway, they haul big Black Jack Ketchum up there on that gallows and he looks out at the crowd and he says, *Whip up, boys, I'd like to eat dinner in hell.*

ROY

He did not...

JIM

Swear to God. And then when they pull the black hood over his head, and the hangman asks him if he's ready'n such. You know what ol' Jack says?

(Roy shakes his head)

Let her go!

(then)

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

Well, she went all right. And when Black Jack dropped, that extra few feet was just enough to jerk his damn head right off his shoulders.

ROY

It did not...

JIM

I seen it with my own eyes-- it rolled right onto the platform, a big grin still on his face. It's something I ain't ever gonna forget.

ROY

(thinking about it)
And now I ain't neither...

Jim ruffles Roy's hair when they HEAR A TWIG SNAP, and Jim fumbles for the rifle. They watch as A FIGURE makes its way through the trees towards their fire. Jim levers the rifle...

JIM

Stop right there fucker!! Come any closer and I'll blast your Goddamn fuckin' face!

ROY

And he'll fuckin' do it, too, you stupid son-of-a-whore!

Jim gives his brother a look. The figure keeps coming and Jim raises the rifle--

WOMAN'S VOICE

Don't shoot!

And now both boys watch as A NUN emerges into the firelight. She's tall, looks to be in her thirties somewhere. She's as startled to see them as they are to see her.

NUN

Well now.

JIM

I'm sorry, ma'am. We thought you was some sorta jackal or criminal type, come to take advantage.

NUN

Well, you were right to think that. It can be rather dangerous around here. I myself have been raped twice in these very trees.

JIM

Really?

NUN

That's not exactly the kinda thing one brags on for the fun of it. My name's Lucy Cole. And what do I call you two?

JIM

I'm Jim Goode. And this is my brother, Roy.

Both boys just stare back at her. She smiles at Roy.

JIM (CONT'D)

I think he's a little astonished.

LUCY

As am I. From that excited burst of top-quality cussing, I thought for sure I'd be face to face with a pair of deviant lowlifes. You mind telling me what you two gentlemen are doing out here?

JIM

We're on our way to California.

LUCY

Are you now.

JIM

Yes, ma'am. We're gonna start a ranch out there.

LUCY

Where you comin' from?

JIM

Moses. New Mexico.

LUCY

I know where Moses is. It's right next to Old Moses. Sweet little town. In fact, I live there. Or I should say, *here*.

The two boys look at each other.

ROY

I tolda we was goin' in a circle.

JIM

Well, it was dark. How was I supposed to know?

ROY

I knew. Horse prob'ly knew, too.

LUCY

Forgive me for saying so, but you two seem to be traveling rather light for such a long journey.

JIM

We're just gettin' started.

LUCY

I see.

JIM

Are you on foot, ma'am?

LUCY

Please, call me Lucy. And though I do possess a wagon and a beast to pull it, tonight when we saw your fire, we didn't see fit to hitch it seein' as you two were so close by.

JIM

We?

And now they hear VOICES and a moment later A YOUNG GIRL and A LITTLE BOY push through the scrub to the fire. The boy, no more than six, carries a stick.

LUCY

It's alright, Joseph. Seems we're not under attack after all.

The young girl, closer to Jim's age than Roy's, is staring at Jim, making him nervous.

LUCY (CONT'D)

You boys hungry? I got some sow belly and biscuits on the stove.

JIM

You camped nearby?

LUCY

Not far. Why don't you take lead of
that beautiful horse and follow us.

Roy and Jim exchange a look.

LUCY (CONT'D)

It's alright. Long as you behave,
Joseph won't hurt you.

They get to their feet, take the horse and follow the nun and the two kids. As she uncrosses her arms to walk, Jim catches a glimpse of AN OLD PISTOL she had been hiding in her big sleeves, just in case. She sees him looking, smiles.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Force of habit.

And now she laughs at her own joke and leads the group...

LUCY (CONT'D)

Onward my little Christian
soldiers.

They HEAR MORE VOICES ahead and move into a moonlit clearing barely a hundred feet from where they camped. At the edge of the clearing is a cabin, lit up with lanterns and candles. A CHILD'S FACE in each of the windows. SEVERAL MORE KIDS stand on the porch waiting.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Everyone, these two fine gentlemen
are Roy and Jim. They're gonna be
joining us for supper. And maybe,
if we're nice enough...

She smiles at them.

LUCY (CONT'D)

...they'll stay for breakfast.

And suddenly Roy and Jim are surrounded like two young pied pipers by a dozen children who sweep the brothers up to the cabin. All friendly faces, all trying to talk to them.

Roy looks around at the moonlit stream at the edge of the property, at the rope swing and that sweet cabin. For the first time in a long time, the boy smiles.

IYOVI SINGING OVER...

SARAH

I could sure use a pretty hair
brush like that one...

Mary-Agnes opens the door, sticks her head in the store.

MARY-AGNES

Any a you seen Whitey?

ASA

You try the Sheriff's office?

She looks at Sarah who turns away, continues her *shopping*
with the security man...

SARAH

Or maybe one or two of those sweet
little clips...

As Mary-Agnes walks out, A.T. Grigg comes in.

GRIGG

Good morning to you... ma'am.

Mary-Agnes looks him over, but doesn't have the time to ask
him who he is. Grigg tips his hat to Sarah and Logan's man,
then walks over to Asa on the ladder.

GRIGG (CONT'D)

Morning, sir.

Asa looks down at Grigg who smiles.

GRIGG (CONT'D)

I'll take some tobacco, some of
that delicious-looking licorice,
and one of them lovely blankets.
Hotel bedding's a little thin.

He watches as Asa, glad for any kind of customer, goes to it.

GRIGG (CONT'D)

May I ask, how long have you lived
here, sir?

ASA

Since right after they brought up
the first ore twelve years ago.

GRIGG

I bet you could tell some stories.

Asa climbs down from the ladder.

ASA

Oh, I could certainly tell you
some.

46 **EXT. LA BELLE STREET - SAME**

46

As Mary Agnes walks down the street to the Sheriff's office. She steps up onto the porch eyes John Doe sitting out front shining several pairs of boots. He smiles at her.

MARY-AGNES

Whose feet those belong to?

(then)

Never mind. I know who they belong
to.

(then, looks at him)

I ask you something?

(he looks up)

Where all do you live?

He just smiles at her, keeps on buffing the boots.

47 **INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME**

47

As Mary-Agnes comes inside, sees that Logan and several more of his men have made themselves right at home. They sit at the desks with their stockinged feet up while Charlotte and two other very young women serve them breakfast.

WOMAN

How are them eggs?

LOGAN'S MAN

Delicious.

WOMAN

Another biscuit?

LOGAN'S MAN

Please.

Mary Agnes clears her throat, then--

MARY-AGNES

I'm looking for Whitey.

They just look back at her.

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)

The damn Deputy.

LOGAN

We ain't seen the boy around. But
then we ain't really had much use
for him neither.

Logan grabs hold of Charlotte as she passes--

LOGAN (CONT'D)

C'mere, pretty thing...

--and pulls her into his lap.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Why you're light as a feather,
ain't'cha?

Charlotte smiles, flattered, but pulls away.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Where you goin'?

CHARLOTTE

I got chores at home.

LOGAN

(winks at his men)

Let a man help you with some of
those.

Logan starts to follow her out. He stops when he sees Mary-
Agnes giving a look.

MARY-AGNES

Y'all seem to have made yourselves
right at home.

LOGAN

That was the arrangement, wasn't
it?

He gently pushes her aside and walks out after Charlotte.

48

EXT. LA BELLE STREET - SAME

48

As Mary-Agnes leaves the Sheriff's office, looks off to where
Callie is ushering in the few kids into the "school." And now
Callie's coming her way. It's too late to avoid her. Callie
takes her hand, smiles--

CALLIE

Where have you been?

MARY-AGNES
 (pulls her hand back)
 Busy lookin' after Bill's kids.

CALLIE
 You want me to come over tonight,
 keep you company?

MARY-AGNES
 I don't think Bill would feel so
 good about us in his place.

CALLIE
 (smiles)
 Never stopped you before.

MARY-AGNES
 (turns to go)
 I gotta be going. Whitey's gone
 missing.

CALLIE
 What are you mad at?

MARY-AGNES
 I'm not mad.

CALLIE
 What are you then?

MARY-AGNES
 Look, you want company, go spend
 some time with your little Fritz
 bitch.

Callie looks stricken. Collects herself.

CALLIE
 What is it you think you know?

MARY-AGNES
 It's not what I think I know, it's
 what I *seen*.

One of the kids sticks her head out of the school house.

GIRL
 Miss Dunne? Everybody's in their
 seat.

CALLIE
 Be right there, sweetie.

She then looks sadly at Mary-Agnes.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
I guess I been caught out then.

MARY-AGNES
I'd say so. Though I should've
expected it. Given what you are.

Callie looks at her a moment, devastated. Speechless.

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)
Your pupils are waitin' on you.

And with that Mary-Agnes turns and walks off.

49

EXT. STREAM - BLACKDOM - DAY

49

Whitey and Louise, each carrying an empty water bucket, lead a MULE down to a small stream. More empty water buckets hang on either side of the animal while a BELL clangs from around its neck. Whitey winces at the sound, grabs hold of the bell.

WHITEY
I can't figure how someone with
such delicate ears can tolerate
such a racket.

LOUISE
Delicate ears?

WHITEY
I'd think you'd wanna protect 'em.
Owin' to how musical they are and
everything.

LOUISE
Ain't my ears that are musical.
It's my hands...

She holds them up and wiggles her fingers.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
They just do what they wanna do.

She moves them close to Whitey who stands frozen as she then runs them through his hair.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
You need a bath.

WHITEY
I keep hearin' that.

LOUISE
Best you heed it, you ever gonna
seduce me.

WHITEY
S'cuse me?

LOUISE
Oh, I know your type, Whitey.

WHITEY
My type?

LOUISE
Boy like you's liable to get a girl
in the usual fix and then bolt.

WHITEY
That's me in a nutshell.

They share a smile as they reach the stream. Whitey unhooks the buckets from the mule and they begin filling them. The mule shifts and the bell sounds--

WHITEY (CONT'D)
You still haven't told me what that
bell's for?

LOUISE
Ol' Samson's blind, and sometimes
he wanders off in the nighttime. He
don't wear the bell, we can't ever
find him.

WHITEY
Blind?

LOUISE
They'd keep the mules down in the
mine and never bring 'em up for a
whole year. They live down there in
the dark. After a year, they bring
them up, put a few layers of cloth
over their eyes until they got used
to the light. They'd gradually thin
out the dressing until they could
stand it. A lot 'em couldn't take
the sun and went blind. Samson was
one of those. My daddy got him real
cheap.

Whitey looks at the mule with new respect.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Hey.

(he turns to her)

You're not so bad looking, you know.

WHITEY

Thank you. Neither are you. So bad looking.

She leans over and gives him a soft kiss.

LOUISE

How was that?

WHITEY

Pretty much like I imagined it. Maybe better.

LOUISE

So you been imagining it?

She laughs. Then--

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Take off your britches.

WHITEY

S'cuse me?

LOUISE

I'm gonna give you a bath.

WHITEY

Oh, no, you ain't.

LOUISE

Oh, yes, I am.

She gives him a hard shove and he falls back into the creek.

WHITEY

Hey, Girl!

She wades in after him and tries to pull them off. He grabs her and the two of them get to wrestling right there in the water. Both of them laughing. Though she's getting the best of him when--

VOICE

LOUISE.

They stop what they're doing, turn to see her father, Elias Hobbs, standing at the water's edge. Though he's clearly not in any way happy, the man doesn't yell.

ELIAS

Both a you get on out of there.

The two kids awkwardly scramble to the bank. He stares at his daughter as he speaks to Whitey:

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Son, you best be on your way now.

WHITEY

Sir--

LOUISE

Daddy--

ELIAS

Now.

LOUISE

Daddy--

And he slaps her. Not hard. But hard enough to still the crickets and make that part of New Mexico go dead quiet.

ELIAS

You don't wanna be speakin' right now.

And now he turns to a shaking Whitey.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

And you wanna be gettin' on your way.

Whitey gives Louise a look, she nods, and he starts off as Elias calls after him.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

I see you back here, it ain't gonna be *you* I lay a hand on, understand?

WHITEY

Yes, sir.

Whitey looks back at Louise as Elias hauls her to her feet and starts dragging her off towards the house.

50 **EXT. BLACKDOM - UP THE HILL**

50

Where Whitey's left his horse. He starts to get on when he hears LOUISE CRY OUT. He looks down the hill at the house. Elias has his daughter bent over his knee, her dress hiked up so he can whip her bare ass with a quirt--

Louise's mother pleads with Elias, but the man's in another place and ignores her, at one point even lashes the quirt the mother's way to keep her back. The other Blackdom residents watch from their doorways.

51 **WHITEY**

51

Watches in horror as the man strikes his daughter--

 WHITEY
 (quietly)
 No, sir.

Keeping low, he goes to his horse and pulls his RIFLE from the scabbard.

 WHITEY (CONT'D)
 (louder)
 No... sir.

He then lays down and gets Elias Hobbs in his gunsight.

 WHITEY (CONT'D)
 No sir no sir no sir.

His finger begins to squeeze the trigger. When he HEARS A HORSE nicker and squints off at--

--Roy, Truckee and Iyovi on their horses, the dressed buck tied down behind the old woman's saddle. They ride up.

 ROY
 You alright, son?

 WHITEY
 Just resting.

Roy looks down looks down the hill as Whitey quickly puts his rifle away. He watches as Elias Hobbs lets his daughter slide to the ground, goes inside and slams the door.

 ROY
 We just heading back in.

 WHITEY
 Me, too.

They all have a chuckle at that, save Whitey who's lost in thought. He sees them all looking his way, pushes away from the table.

WHITEY

I should probably be gettin' back before that Logan fella moves into my house.

ALICE

You hardly ate anything. Would you like to take some with you for later?

WHITEY

That's alright, ma'am. Thank you, though. Good-night all.

He gets up and trips, his elsewhere mind leading him astray as he stumbles out the door. Roy exchanges a look with the others, gets up and follows him.

55

EXT. ALICE'S RANCH - DUSK

55

As Roy follows Whitey outside, stands quietly as the boy gathers his horse. He looks back at Roy.

WHITEY

You saw what was goin' on out there.

Roy just looks back at him. Of course, he did.

WHITEY (CONT'D)

I surely would have made quite a mess for myself, you hadn't come along.

ROY

(shrugs)
Who's to say?

Whitey nods a moment, Roy making it easy. He climbs up on his horse. Thinks a moment, then--

WHITEY

A newspaperman from Taos rode into town yesterday. Fella named Grigg.

This gets Roy looking up at him.

WHITEY (CONT'D)

He got it in his head that Bill McNue had captured Roy Goode.

ROY

(beat)

What all gave him that idea?

WHITEY

I don't know. But he brought with him a wanted poster and passed it around.

ROY

Did he.

WHITEY

Was a funny likeness. Nobody in town had ever seen him before.

ROY

Nobody?

WHITEY

Well, nobody there in the saloon, that is.

Roy waits. Whitey looks at him.

WHITEY (CONT'D)

And I ain't never seen him neither. That man looked angry. Fierce. Not at all the kinda man would ever stop a feller from hurtin' hisself. He looked more like the one be doin' the hurtin'.

Whitey turns as Alice steps out of the house.

WHITEY (CONT'D)

Thank you again Miss Fletcher for that fine meal.

ALICE

You're most welcome.

WHITEY

(looks at Roy)

And thank you, too.

(then)

Mr. Ward.

And with that he gets on his horse and rides off. Alice walks over to Roy.

ALICE

Sounds like you had quite a trip.

ROY

It was.

Roy looks at Alice standing there. There's probably a lot going through his mind at that moment, but all he says is:

ROY (CONT'D)

I think I best get some sleep. That old woman wore me out.

ALICE

G'night, then.

ROY

G'night.

She watches him head into the barn, then turns and watches as the last bit of the sun goes down.

56 **INT. BARN - NIGHT**

56

As Roy comes in and sits down on the pallet. He takes the school primer out of his saddle bag, puts a finger on the page and starts to read.

SISTER LUCY (V.O.)

I'm so proud of you, Roy.

57 **EXT. LUCY COLE'S HOUSE - DAY**

57

KIDS play in and around the house. Some work in the garden or feed livestock. Roy helps a couple of young kids curry comb a horse. Lucy standing nearby, watching.

SISTER LUCY

You've been a big help to me these last few months.

ROY

I like it here.

SISTER LUCY

Well, I'm glad to hear it. You know you're welcome to stay with us as long as you like.

Roy starts to thank her when he sees JIM FINISH SADDLING THEIR HORSE, Dunchee's rifle already in the scabbard. Jim then ties a bedroll to the back.

Roy drops the brush, starts walking that way.

SISTER LUCY (CONT'D)

Roy.

He ignores her. Walks straight over to his brother.

ROY
Where we goin'? California?

Jim doesn't answer. Roy turns for the house--

ROY (CONT'D)
I'll go get a blanket and come with you.

JIM
You ain't goin' nowhere.

Roy looks like he's been shot. Jim glances at Lucy, then--

JIM (CONT'D)
You're gonna stay right here in Moses, wait for me to come back.

ROY
Like hell I will. I'm comin' with you.

LUCY
Roy--

And now the woman holds onto the boy.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Listen to your brother. He means what's best for you.

ROY
You can't leave me here!

Roy squirms in Lucy's grip. Lucy nods to Jim to get up on the horse.

LUCY
Go on then.

She hangs to the struggling Roy as Jim gets on the horse, looks down at his brother, tears in his own eyes.

JIM
You wait for me right here, unnerstand?

ROY
You leave me here and I ain't never talkin' to you again.

JIM

Come on now, Roy. It ain't as bad as all that. It's nice here. Them kids look up to you. I'll be back soon as I get work.

(leans down to shake hands)

I promise.

Roy ignores his proffered hand, just glares at Jim. Lucy nods once more to Jim who now turns his horse away...

JIM (CONT'D)

You just wait for me now. You don't go *nowhere*. Unnerstand? You just wait right here with Sister Lucy. Okay, little brother?

ROY

I ain't got no brother!
(then)
You go on then!

Jim nods sadly, takes in Roy one more time, then starts off.

Roy stands firm, glaring like he could give a shit as his brother rides up the rise of the hill. It's when Jim gets to the top of that rise when Roy gives up, loses all hold of himself and starts screaming--

ROY (CONT'D)

JIMMY!

Lucy holds on tight as young Roy bucks and squirms in her grip, the boy blinded by tears and screaming as his older brother disappears over the rise, the young Roy's SCREAMS ECHOING OVER...

58

EXT. TREE-FILLED CANYON - DAY

58

Bill McNue rides through the canyon, stops his horse at a watering hole. He gets off, lets the horse drink and lays down on his belly and has himself one at the same time.

The two watch each other drink a moment. Then McNue finally sits up, glances at the sun and looks down, sees NO SHADOW.

MCNUE

Oh, fer cryin' out loud...

He gets up grabs his canteen from the saddle, is kneeling to refill it when he sees ANOTHER man a few yards upstream wade into the water and start to fill *his* canteen.

The man looks over and sees McNue standing there, straightens up and McNue notices THE SNAKE slithering from under his coat and around his neck. Amos Green smiles at him.

AMOS GREEN
Afternoon, mister.

MCNUE
Afternoon.

AMOS GREEN
You just as a quiet as a clerk over there.

MCNUE
Didn't see you neither.

AMOS GREEN
Well who can blame us for pickin' the same beautiful spot?

And now McNue sees that there are many more men just around the bend, no more fifty feet away from him. Including Frank Griffin who comes out of some private reverie atop his horse and nods to McNue.

McNue instinctively keeps himself turned away, pulls his coat closed so as to cover up the SILVER STAR pinned to his shirt.

Griffin studies him. McNue sees Dyer Howe with all of his knives, the Devlin twins, Bud Ledbetter, Gatz Brown, Bill Chick, another twenty men around them as they all come down to water their horses and go through the math of whether or not Bill McNue's a threat.

ALONZO
Catch a chill?

MCNUE
Beg pardon?

ALONZO
You got that coat bunched tight like it's Christmas.

MCNUE
I'm just hiding a big rifle.

And now Griffin gives McNue a longer look. They all do. Then McNue smiles and EVERYBODY STARTS LAUGHING. Except for Frank Griffin who keeps still and quiet. The sun at Griffin's back, McNue has to squint to see him.

BUDD LEDBETTER

Where you headed?

McNue watches as another rider now heads up the middle of the stream from the direction McNue just came from. Floyd Wilson.

MCNUE

Well, I was thinking of exploring Wyoming, trying my luck on one of them big spreads up there.

BILL CHICK

You a hand?

MCNUE

Foreman.

BILL CHICK

Well, Mr. Foreman I hope you're better at ranchin' than you are at explorin'. You're goin' in the wrong direction.

MCNUE

Am I?

BILL CHICK

Wyoming's thataway, ain't it?

MCNUE

Is it? Huh. Well, that sure does explain a lot.

He watches as now Floyd Wilson dismounts, nods his way.

FLOYD

Afternoon.

McNue nods, watches as Floyd casually pats McNue's horse.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Looks like he's been rid hard.

MCNUE

He has.

Floyd picks up a hoof and looks at it.

FLOYD

You the gent's been following us?

MCNUE

If that's so, it ain't on purpose.

Floyd looks at him, looks past him at Griffin

GRIFFIN

Do we know each other, sir?

McNue turns around and squints up at him.

MCNUE

I don't think so. What's your name?

Griffin just smiles, studies McNue for a long moment, his face going serious as he does.

MCNUE (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

GRIFFIN

I'm just wondering.

MCNUE

What about?

GRIFFIN

What it was took the life out of your face.

MCNUE

(chuckles)

I been told I lost my shadow.

Griffin doesn't laugh, keeps looking at him.

GRIFFIN

I wonder, was it just the weather like most men, live out this way? Or was it maybe things you seen?

MCNUE

Well, that's a good--

--Griffin's one arm seems to barely twitch and he's got his gun out and pointing at McNue.

GRIFFIN

I think you're not what you say you are. I think you're harder than you let on. Why would you hide yourself like that?

MCNUE

For starters I'm amongst thirty hard men.

GRIFFIN

Good luck to you, sir.

And he turns his horse and the river erupts as the thirty men all follow after him, McNue standing there in the midst of it all as they slowly ride past him up the stream. He waits for a gunshot to the head that never comes.

They finally clear out and the stream once more goes quiet. McNue turns, shaking, looks off after them as we then--

CUT TO BLACK