"GODLESS"

Part IV

Written by
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EXT. THE LA BELLE SILVER MINE - DAY

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...

INT. MINE - SAME

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
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.

EXT. MAGDALENA’S - SAME

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.

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

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.

**CU**

**NINGHAM**

You here about the Marshal?

**INT. UNDERTAKER’S OFFICE - MORNING**

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

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.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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.

EXT. ALICE’S CABIN - SAME

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...

EXT. LA BELLE - THE SHANTIES - NIGHT

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...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - MARY-AGNES

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?
Mary-Agnes watches as Callie crosses the arroyo from the shanties and starts their way. She waves.

MARY-AGNES
Yeah, well, we best both get inside before the rain hits.

And with that Mary-Agnes walks off leaving Callie standing in the dark street as the RAIN STARTS TO FALL.

INT. ALICE’S CABIN – NIGHT

Awake. She listens to the RAIN FALLING. The rain sound getting LOUDER as we...

CUT TO ALICE – ONLY THE SOUND OF THE RAIN OVER...

As, a dozen years before, in that YELLOW DRESS, she fights to keep her head above a TORRENT OF WATER, SCREAMS and we...

CUT BACK TO ALICE IN HER CABIN

Listening to the RAIN FALL. We then--

CUT TO ALICE – IN SILENCE

Lying on her side, sound asleep. PULLING BACK TO REVEAL:

A GLADE

Surrounded by tall trees. In the middle of it Alice lies curled up amidst the ferns and ground cover, in that now filthy yellow dress. A LOW FOG HANGS AROUND THE EDGES.

A dozen FIGURES in BUFFALO HORNED HELMETS pass along the edge of the glade in silence. A small group of COMANCHEs on their way somewhere, they don’t yet see her. They lead a train of WHITE PEOPLE -- captured women and children.

But she stirs, sits up and now all of the figures stop as one. They all turn towards the sound, their black-painted faces standing out in the morning mist.

PUSHING IN ON ALICE as she remembers where she is, takes stock of herself.

She shakily gets to her feet, hears a HORSE WHINNY, barely turns her head when THEY’RE ALL INSTANTLY ON HER.

One of them grabs hold of Alice by the hair and jerks her head so far back, she stares straight up, her eyes rolled back to the whites.
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.

EXT. PAIUTE CAMP – DUSK

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 IYOVILI 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 -- IYOVILI’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.
ANNA
We best get back.

McNue nods, watches as Iyovi leads Alice into a lodge and then turns his horse and we--

CUT BACK TO ALICE - PRESENT

Lying there awake, staring at BILL MCNUE’S COAT hanging on the wall.

CUT TO BILL MCNUE LOOKING DOWN AT US - BRIGHT SUNLIGHT

THE CRACKED SPECTACLES on his face as he studies something.

EXT. BALD KNOB - DAY

As McNue crawls around in the dirt trying to read the trail. The once capable man we just saw drop a half-dozen Comanches now on all fours.

A BEE buzzes his face. He brushes it away and sits up. Follows its flight path to where he sees THE OLD INDIAN SITTING ON HIS HORSE. The DOG sitting beside him.

The Indian SNATCHES THE BEE OUT OF THE AIR and opens his palm and studies it.

INDIAN
They’re moving south. But they keep to the river, so even with thirty horses, they’re still hard to follow.

McNue frowns, gets up and grabs his canteen from his horse.

MCNUE
You following me?

INDIAN
No.

MCNUE
Just happen to be goin’ my way?

The Indian sets the bee free, looks thoughtfully at McNue. McNue shakes his head, climbs back onto his horse and takes off. The Indian watches him a moment, then slowly follows.

EXT. LA BELLE - MORNING

RAIN FALLS as a LONE RIDER -- his head ducked, covered by a poncho, topped by a bowler hat -- rides through the downpour to the saloon.
EXT. LA BELLE SHERIFF’S OFFICE – MORNING

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?

EXT. ALICE’S RANCH – LATER

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.

EXT. COLORADO PLAIN – DAY

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.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

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...

INT. HOUSE - SAME

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.

GRIFFIN’S POVs - PEOPLE

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.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

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

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

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.

CUT TO IYOGI
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...

ROY’S POV – A YOUNG ELK
Feeding. Unaware.
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’.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

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.

INT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

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.
EXT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

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.

INT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

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)
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.

I can do it. You keep near that fire.

LILA
Preacher.

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

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.

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

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.

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--

IYOVI
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.

EXT. MOUNTAINS – NIGHT

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...

EXT. ANOTHER CAMP - NIGHT

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!

(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.

IYOVISING OVER...
EXT. CAMP - MORNING

As the grown-up Roy opens his eyes. Sees the fire going, a pot of coffee in the middle of it. Iyovi on the other side, working on something, singing.

Roy nods to her, reaches for the coffee pot and freezes as Iyovi now itches her nose with the back of A BLOODY HAND HOLDING A KNIFE. Roy leans over the fire and sees that--

--She’s got a dead buck at her feet. She’s halfway through skinning him. There’s a bullet hole through one eye. Roy nods, can only say--

ROY

Good shootin’.

EXT. LABELLE - MORNING

As Mary-Agnes carries a covered plate of food down the street. She sees A WOMAN and ONE OF LOGAN’S MEN in the doorway of a shanty, kissing good-bye after spending an evening together.

As the man moves away, Mary-Agnes sees the woman’s blouse is open. The man goes by, tipping his hat to Mary-Agnes who, of course, ignores him.

EXT. WHITEY’S SHACK - MORNING

Mary-Agnes walks to Whitey’s place and knocks on the door.

MARY-AGNES

Whitey? You in there? Brought you some breakfast--

INT. WHITEY’S SHACK - SAME

She opens the door and steps inside the empty shack. She sets the plate down on the table and looks around. She notices the little MUSIC BOX beside his bed. She walks over and opens it, listens thoughtfully a moment.

She’s turning to go when she notices A SMALL ATOMIZER BOTTLE OF AUBURN LIQUID sitting on a little shelf. She picks it up, sprays a bit on her palm. She takes a whiff of the cologne--

MARY-AGNES

Oh, fer cryin’ out loud.

INT. ASA LEOPOLD’S STORE - MORNING

Asa stocks the shelves from a ladder while Sarah Doyle walks arm in arm with another one of Logan’s Security Men...
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.

EXT. LA BELLE STREET - SAME

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?
(them)
Never mind. I know who they belong to.
(them, 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.

INT. SHERIFF’S OFFICE - SAME

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.

EXT. LA BELLE STREET - SAME

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.

EXT. STREAM - BLACKDOM - DAY

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 unhookes 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.
EXT. BLACKDOM - UP THE HILL

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.

WHITEY

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.
Whitey looks down at the girl lying on the ground sobbing.

ROY
Why don’t you ride along with us?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK

As McNue canters across the field to the black house. He rides up and takes in the KEEP OUT! and SICKNESS! signs.

The door is OPEN, but no sound comes from inside. He dismounts and ties his horse to the post.

INT. FARMHOUSE - SAME

As McNue moves into the doorway and peers into the house. IT’S EMPTY. Not a soul. The back door is open. McNue sees something out there and now heads outside. As he does, we BOOM UP OVER THE HOUSE TO REVEAL A DOZEN GRAVES OUT BACK. All freshly dug.

McNue stands there staring at them, at one in particular, the one with the RIBBON TIED TO THE MARKER, blowing gently in the breeze as we HEAR LAUGHTER OVER...

INT. ALICE’S CABIN - DUSK

Alice, Roy, Iyovi, Truckee and Whitey sit at the table finishing up what looks like it was a feast. Roy looks Truckee’s way, watches him tearing at a piece of meat.

ROY
You can’t shoot ‘em, but you can eat ‘em?

The boy shrugs. Roy shakes his head. He looks at Iyovi.

ROY (CONT’D)
Woman put a rimfire slug into the eye of a buck, probably a hundred yards out. That’s somethin’.

Alice repeats what Roy just said in Paiute. Iyovi looks at Roy, her face full of her usual scowl as she speaks. Then--

ROY (CONT’D)
What’d she say?

ALICE
She says she was aiming for the other eye.
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.

EXT. ALICE’S RANCH – DUSK

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.
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.

INT. BARN – NIGHT

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.

EXT. LUCY COLE’S HOUSE – DAY

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...

EXT. TREE-FILLED CANYON - DAY

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
Is Floyd right? Are you following me?

MCNUE
I am.

GRIFFIN
You the law?

And now McNue lets his coat fall open. Griffin nods.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
While I admire your ginger, sir, sometimes men want me to kill 'em, so they can die attached to some purpose.

(then)
That what you want? You want me to kill you, turn you into a bedtime story?

MCNUE
I'd prefer to kill you first.

GRIFFIN
You won't kill me, friend.

MCNUE
Not today, I won't.

GRIFFIN
Not ever. I seen how it happens. And the law ain't gonna be what blows out my spark.

MCNUE
If you say so.

GRIFFIN
I know so. And now you do, too.

He now looks off. His men all turn and look off the same way. And now so does McNue.

THE OLD INDIAN

Silhouetted, above the river, sitting on his horse. Watching. The mutt sitting there beside him.

GRIFFIN

Watches him back a moment. He finally looks at McNue another long moment, puts his gun away, as fast as he pulled it.
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