

UNSHACKLED

Genre: Western, Action/Adventure

A small-town preacher travels through dangerous territory to oversee his brother's funeral, setting the stage for an unlikely showdown with the dead man's killer.

FADE IN:

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

The year is 1882. Open on a classic western saloon in a small town called Powder Canyon. The exterior is quiet with a man smoking a cigarette alone on the porch. There are several horses tied to the post out front as their owners drink and play cards inside. It is bright and lively, full of weary people enjoying strong drinks.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

The bar is large and packed with travelers and locals; all working class people leading ordinary lives.

A piano player tickles the ivories in the corner while men flirt with women and enjoy the company of the house escorts. There are several tables with groups of men playing cards.

A table sits in the far corner of the room with five men playing poker. It is not a tense game, but money is involved. The men are clearly friends.

Three of the men show their cards, revealing that a younger man wins the small pot in the middle of the table on a pair of jacks. JOE, an old coal miner, ribs the youngster, ANDY.

JOE

(playfully)

Awww hell Andy, you've won three times tonight with them jacks of yours. How many of them you got up those sleeves?

ANDY

Enough to keep beatin' you old timer.

JOE

Deal the cards again, Chet.

(points a shaky finger at

Andy)

I'm keeping my eye on you this time.

CURTIS, also old and weathered, speaks up.

CURTIS

Joe, you ain't got one good eye left between the two of em'.

The group laughs together as a woman, MILLY, approaches the table. She is middle aged, though weathered beyond her years. She speaks poorly.

MILLY

Do y'all mind if I join?

The men glance at the empty chair that she rests her hand on.

The man in the far corner at the table, WILLIAM MITCHELL, looks up at her. He is in his early forties, has a bit of a beer belly, and shows sure signs of balding.

WILLIAM

Poker isn't much of a lady's game.

Milly smiles, showing her yellowing and missing teeth.

MILLY

I ain't never been called no lady
before.

The men at the table have no rebuttal as she takes her hat and off, hangs it on her chair, and sits.

Bodies and chairs shuffle uncomfortably as she settles in. The dealer, CHET, speaks while he deals out another hand.

CHET

Big and small blinds are set at a
dime and a nickel, dealer chip to
you ma'am.

Milly nods her head and picks up her cards. CHANGE dances on the table, making a JINGLE as the men throw in their blinds.

Milly follows suit when it comes to her turn. She glances at William across the table, repeatedly.

Chet flips a stack of three cards before spreading them in the center of the table.

William taps the table to check, but Joe raises the bet as he shoves a stack of coins into the middle of the table.

Andy and Curtis count their change, then do the same.

Milly and William toss their cards into the discard pile to fold their hands. William taps his fingers on the table absentmindedly to the LIVELY TUNE PLAYING in the background.

Chet places the fourth card on the table.

MILLY
(to William)
Say, you look familiar, where you
from?

William's fingers come to an abrupt halt.

WILLIAM
(flatly)
I live about a half mile from town.

MILLY
You ever been through Arizona?

WILLIAM
Arizona's a big place, anywhere
specific you're thinking of?

Joe interrupts:

JOE
I'm all in.

He pushes his money to the center.

CURTIS
Call.

Curtis also pushes a small stack to the middle.

Andy tosses his cards to Chet, who puts them in the burn
pile.

MILLY
I've only been to a small town
right on the border, I think it was
called... Red Hill Creek? Or
somethin' like that?

At the mention of Red Hill Creek William's brow is furrowed.
He looks Milly dead in the eye.

WILLIAM
I think you have me mistaken for
someone else.

The other men at the table feel the tension as they glance
between the two.

Chet folds the cards nervously in his hands.

MILLY
Maybe so.

Just as Milly finishes speaking, Joe erupts with joy.

JOE
WOOO HOO! It don't take no good
eyes to see that I got your money
ol' Curt!

The table, except for William and Milly, laugh in an attempt to ease the tension.

Curtis stands up.

CURTIS
I need another drink.

JOE
Grab me one and tell Marla they're
on me.

Curtis smacks Joe on the shoulder and walks to the bar.

A long beat of uncomfortable silence.

MILLY
It's just that you look mighty
familiar.

William is clearly aggravated as he grabs his cash and puts it in his pockets. He picks up his coat and hat from the back of his chair as he stands.

WILLIAM
Well fellas, I think it is high
time that I retire.
(to Chet)
Thanks Chet.

He counts out some change in his hand and sets it in front of Chet as a tip.

Chet nods in thanks as he swipes the change from the table.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Sorry to disappoint you, ma'am.
Boys.

William tips his hat to the table as they all murmur a goodbye.

Milly waits to speak until William is out of ear shot.

MILLY
I reckon I should apologize for
pushing too hard. Fellas.

She tips her hat and follows William outside.

EXT. THE SALOON-NIGHT

William approaches his horse, which is tied to the rail out front.

Milly stands on the porch while William is down below.

MILLY

'scuse me, sir. I didn't mean to
offend you. You just reminded me of
someone--

William cuts her off without looking up from the bit straps that he is adjusting.

WILLIAM

Even if I was once the man that you
are thinking of, I assure you that
he is dead and gone. Now if you
insist on digging up graves, we
bury our dead livestock about 150
yards back behind the butcher's
shop. You are welcome to dig there.

William walks to the side of his horse and adjusts his stirrups.

MILLY

Willy Mayhem Mitch --

William stops suddenly and walks quickly toward Milly, interrupting her.

WILLIAM

(in a hushed tone)
DO NOT SAY THAT NAME. I have spent
too long running from the ghost
that I created to have some harlot
conjure it up again.

Milly's demeanor changes to a more confident position.

MILLY

So you are the man that the legend
describes.

Milly makes a circular motion with her hand, and a gang of men emerges from the shadows, seven strong, surrounding William. They all have their guns drawn and pointed at him.

William looks around at the men with a scowl.

WILLIAM
(to Milly, flatly)
What the hell is this?

MILLY
It appears to be your reckoning.

One of the men unties William's horse, along with the other horses that are tied up, and leads them out of harm's way.

WILLIAM
And you're the Angel of Death?

MILLY
No. Even the Angel of Death answers
to God.

William slowly moves his hand to his pistol.

WILLIAM
You'll answer to him someday.

POP, POP - Without warning, William draws his PISTOL and shoots two of the men in the blink of an eye. As he turns to shoot Milly, who now has her gun drawn, SHOTS ring out as he is filled with lead from her and the others.

William's lifeless body falls to the ground. His right arm is extended, still gripping his gun.

After the dust settles, Milly hops off the porch, and walks toward the body.

The toe of her boot dips into the growing puddle of blood beneath the corpse.

She signals to the men to bring her horse.

MILLY
The day I meet God...

Milly bends down and uses the barrel of her gun to move William's sleeve up his forearm.

A branded figure on the skin of his wrist is revealed. It is a capital "M" written in calligraphy.

MILLY (CONT'D)
He'll thank me.

One of Milly's gang brings her horse next to her.

She nods to her men and climbs onto her horse.

They begin to pick up the body and load it onto Milly's mustang behind her.

Milly turns to the bar and sees a crowd of people in the door and at the windows, staring. She addresses them:

MILLY (CONT'D)
(cheerily)
Would anyone be kind enough to
point me in the direction of the
butcher's shop?

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

We see a train of horses from afar, illuminated by several lanterns.

There is nothing around them until they come to a stop next to several rotting carcasses of cattle, now illuminated by their lanterns.

CLOSE ON -- FLIES BUZZING in a swarm around the carcasses, feasting on the flesh of the dead beasts. Some have been picked fresh by vultures, but there is a cow that is mostly still intact.

One of the cow's eyes has been somewhat untouched, which now rests almost as if it is looking up at the riders.

DEAD COW P.O.V: Milly looks down at the corpse in disgust. She pushes William's lifeless body on top of the head of the decaying animal.

EXT. WESTERN SKYLINE - MORNING

The outline of a lone rider in the distance travels across the red skyline at dawn.

The rider, DEPUTY JOSHUA HAMLIN, is a young man. He is dark skinned, of average height and build, and wears a clean, professional outfit (though, without his badge).

EXT. A MOUNTAIN - LATE MORNING

Hamlin comes to a halt on an overlook on his way down the mountain path.

OVER THE SHOULDER: There is a small ranch-style home in the distance.

BANG, BANG, BANG - GUNSHOTS ECHO from the house, piercing the serenity.

Hamlin's face shows concern before he continues down the trail with haste.

EXT. MARTIN'S RANCH - DAY

Hamlin approaches the ranch on his horse, but dismounts quietly while checking the property for danger.

POP, POP - There are another several, quick GUNSHOTS coming from behind the house.

He draws his pistol in warranted paranoia.

A DOG on the porch that went unnoticed by Hamlin rises, BARKS, and lets out a LONG SNARL. Quick FOOTSTEPS are heard coming from inside the house, accompanied by a man's voice.

MARTIN

DAISY. That'll be enough old girl-

A man emerges from the home while reprimanding the dog. The man, MARTIN MITCHELL, is middle aged, thin, and wears a well kept beard. He is dressed in modest clothing, though not tattered or torn like a working man.

Martin looks up to see Hamlin by his horse with his gun drawn.

Immediate tension fills the air as both are caught off guard.

HAMLIN

(with purpose)

Do you live here, sir?

Martin wears a focused, unwavering look.

MARTIN

(calmly)

I do.

HAMLIN

What's your name?

MARTIN

Martin Mitchell.

Hamlin glances at the DOG, which has started GROWLING again.

HAMLIN

Will your dog attack me, Mr.
Mitchell?

MARTIN

Only if I tell her to.

Deputy Hamlin relaxes and holsters his gun, content with the proof of Martin's identity.

The dog stops growling, seeming to sense that Hamlin is no longer hostile toward Martin.

HAMLIN

Mr. Mitchell, my name is Joshua
Hamlin, I'm a United States deputy.

Martin relaxes, content with Hamlin's explanation. He approaches the deputy with his hand extended.

MARTIN

(friendly, neighborly)
Please, call me Martin.

The two shake hands.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You look tired, Deputy. Join me
inside for a cup of coffee?

Hamlin hesitates at first, but concedes.

HAMLIN

...sure, sure. Thank you.

The pair turn and head to the house.

Hamlin ties up his horse as Martin goes inside to prepare the coffee.

INT. MARTIN'S RANCH - DAY

The home is decorated tastefully with several Christian paintings and crosses throughout. It has an adequate amount of furniture for a single man, though not a family.

Martin is standing at the stove, pouring coffee into a tin cup. He turns around as Hamlin enters the house.

HAMLIN

I apologize for my apprehension,
Martin, but I was afraid I might
not be the only one coming to see
you, and I heard the gun shots...

Hamlin takes a seat at the table as Martin sets a cup of
coffee in front of him.

MARTIN

(chuckles)

No apology necessary. I'm not much
of a good shot with a pistol, but
the noise at least scares off the
critters coming to rob me of my
feed.

Martin sets his own cup down and takes a seat across from
Hamlin.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

So, Deputy. What can I do for you?

The deputy shifts nervously in his chair before speaking,
unsure of how to begin.

Martin reaches for the sugar bowl on the table.

HAMLIN

... Are you related to a man named
William Mitchell?

Martin cracks a smile. He is not surprised, but somewhat
curious. He shovels two spoon fulls of sugar into his cup as
he speaks.

MARTIN

Oh dear, what has my brother done
now. Sugar?

Martin offers the spoon to add sugar to his coffee.

HAMLIN

No, thank you. It's not so much
what he's done as much as what was
done to him.

Hamlin pauses again as Martin looks at him while stirring his
coffee in silence.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)

...Willy was shot down two nights
ago outside a bar in my town.

Martin's eyes move from Hamlin's face to the coffee that he stirs in front of him. He does not speak.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)

(slow, measured sentences)

He spoke fondly of you and
mentioned that you were a preacher,
so the town folks and I thought
that perhaps you may be interested
in officiating, or, at least
attending the funeral.

Martin's eyes stay fixed on his coffee, which he continues to stir.

MARTIN

Were they caught?

HAMLIN

(uneasy)

No, no sir they were not. It was a
gang, maybe seven or eight strong
with guns. And, though we were
unaware, there was a legal bounty
on your brother. Old, but legal.

Martin's eyes begin to fill with tears, though his voice nor his face show sadness. He looks up at Hamlin with misty eyes.

MARTIN

I have a sermon to deliver tomorrow
morning, and a meal to attend at
the church. I will set out
immediately after. You are welcome
to stay as long as necessary before
your trip home.

Martin stands up with his coffee and begins to turn around. He pauses as the deputy speaks.

HAMLIN

Martin, I have an obligation to
tell you that some consider the
road to Powder Canyon to be a
fool's journey. It is not long -
only three days and two nights,
depending on the rider - but it is
treacherous in the land and the
company. You have a life,
responsibilities here. No one is
asking or expecting you to risk
those.

MARTIN

I will see my brother laid to rest,
or be buried beside him.

HAMLIN

Strength in numbers. I leave with
you.

Martin nods silently. He takes his cup to the sink and walks out the back door.

The deputy is left sitting alone.

Martin stands on the back porch in the doorway with his head bowed and hand covering his eyes.

The MUSIC of an ORGAN being played to the tune of "*Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*" fades into the picture of Martin in the doorway.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The organ music continues as the choir launches into the song's final verse. We see the choir being lead by a hefty woman, MRS. BETH, who also signals to the congregation to sing with them.

Everyone is standing.

Martin is in the front row on the far end of the pew with his weathered Bible in hand. He is wearing his church clothes, looking much more like a pastor than he did the previous day.

CHOIR

*... Prone to wander Lord I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love,
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal
it, seal it for thy courts above.*

As the song concludes, Martin makes his way back onto the stage to end the service.

Mrs. Beth signals for the choir and the congregation to be seated.

MARTIN

Thank you for that beautiful hymn,
Mrs. Beth.

Mrs. Beth nods and takes her seat.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I didn't want to end today's service on a somber note, mostly because I don't want any of you to forget today's important message of forgiveness; not that most folks were paying much attention anyway.

The crowd reacts with laughter. Martin smiles.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Especially you, little Edward.

A small boy in the third pew, Edward, blushes as Martin points him out.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I caught you slip into a holy slumber not but ten minutes after I started.

The congregation laughs again as Edward's father tussles his hair.

Martin composes himself.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(somber, but confident)

Yesterday morning I learned that my dear brother, Willy, was called home by the Lord just a few days ago.

The faces in the crowd turn from smiles to concern.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I will be traveling to Powder Canyon to officiate the funeral and see to his belongings.

The congregation mumbles as concern paints the faces in the crowd. Martin clears his throat.

The crowd quiets.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

In my stead I am leaving Miss Tellis in charge of church matters.

He nods toward a young woman seated in the front row, presumably MISS TELLIS.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
(in a cheerier tone)
Now, please don't let me be the
cause of any more shuffling feet or
growling bellies. Go with the
Lord's blessing.

Children immediately jump up and scamper out as grown folks stand and gather their things. Some approach Martin with concerned faces, all offering their condolences and sympathy.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Martin and Hamlin stroll through the crowd. Martin greets people, offering a warm smile and hearty handshake.

HAMLIN
You put on a very brave face in
such a trying time.

MARTIN
I am a father to these people in
one way or another. They may not
realize it, but they expect me to
be steadfast and firm.

Martin smiles and nods at Miss Tellis as she passes by with a large basket of biscuits.

Hamlin notices her, and is clearly struck by her beauty. His head and eyes follow her as she goes by.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
Despite what worldly afflictions I
may face.

Martin notices that Hamlin is looking at Miss Tellis when he responds.

HAMLIN
Sure.

A smile cracks Martin's face as he gestures to Hamlin to follow.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

We join Martin and Hamlin at one of several long tables with benches on either side. It is very much a family style meal with everyone in town attending. Miss Tellis is seated across from Martin. She speaks well in a clean, crisp voice while tending to the children sitting on either side of her.

MISS TELLIS

Martin says you're a deputy?

Hamlin is shy, and perhaps a little awkward in his responses. He is clearly not a ladies' man or womanizer.

HAMLIN

Yes ma'am, in a small town called Powder Canyon. It's not much, really.

MISS TELLIS

I'm sure you live a very exciting life.

HAMLIN

Oh, I wouldn't say that...

A long beat...

MISS TELLIS

... Deputy, though none of us have ventured into the mountain pass, even from our early age we've heard the tales of hardship that beset those who have.

Martin's eyes move from his food to Miss Tellis. Hamlin continues to eat, keeping his eyes fixed on his plate.

MISS TELLIS (CONT'D)

Is it how they say it is?

Hamlin does not look up, speaking between bites of food.

HAMLIN

I suppose that depends on what people are saying.

Miss Tellis speaks with her eyes fixed on Hamlin as though he is the only human within sight.

MISS TELLIS

(gravely)

That danger hides around every corner, and violence in every shadow. And that the law has been chewed up and spit out so many times that men who try walk the path with honor are doomed by their own righteousness.

Another long beat...

HAMLIN

(matter-of-factly)

Though my journey here was mostly uneventful, I think it would be foolish to expect the same on the way back.

Miss Tellis' gaze does not move from Hamlin. She wears a patient look of curiosity.

Hamlin looks up to see her unwavering eyes. He puts his utensils down and wipes his mouth before continuing.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)

It is understood that most travelling in this direction - away from the big cities - are looking for work or another way to making a living. They are poor and have little to offer. Going back toward the cities are those who have merchandise to sell and trade, or money to spend. If we find trouble, or trouble finds us, it will be on our way to Powder Canyon.

Miss Tellis looks away to grab a fork from one of the kids who is poking the child next to him. She sets it back on the table.

Martin looks up after the lull in conversation and mercifully jumps in, introducing a lighter tone.

MARTIN

Aided by prayer and the deputy, I have faith that our crossing will be nothing short of a Sunday afternoon ride through West River meadow. We may even enjoy ourselves.

A thin smile escapes Miss Tellis lips.

Hamlin goes back to his food without responding to Martin's optimism.

Miss Tellis gathers plates and rises to leave.

MISS TELLIS

(to Hamlin)

Deputy, it was very nice meeting you.

(MORE)

MISS TELLIS (CONT'D)

I expect you'll both stop by the church before you leave so that we can outfit you properly before you go.

Miss Tellis corrals the children and walks away, leaving Hamlin and Martin at the table.

EXT. CHURCH REAR - DAY

Miss Tellis is handing Hamlin blankets and water when Martin approaches with his horse in tow.

Hamlin's arms are filling up as she continues to set things on top of the pile, eventually covering his face.

HAMLIN

Really, it'll only be a few days at most, you've done too much.

MISS TELLIS

Nonsense, we'll not be having anyone starve or go cold for our lack of hospitality.

Martin joins the group. He has changed back into his work clothes that he was wearing the day before, plus a long coat and a silver necklace. The necklace has a thin silver chain which supports a white diamond inset in a silver border.

MARTIN

But you might break the backs of our horses. Thank you, Miss Tellis, you've done plenty.

Miss Tellis nods and stops handing things to Hamlin. She turns and goes inside the church.

Hamlin turns and begins loading his horse.

Martin grabs some of the water and blankets to divide the weight.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Miss Tellis is a fine woman.
Perhaps a bit overzealous, but a fine woman indeed.

Martin and Hamlin both finish packing their belongings.

The duo climb on top of their horses.

HAMLIN

She very well could be the last
friendly face we see for some time.

The pair share a grave look before Miss Tellis comes back out
of the church.

She approaches Martin's horse and grabs his leg in a firm,
almost desperate grip.

MISS TELLIS

I know there's no convincing you
not to go. Just remember that this
town won't be whole without you.
Now you come back quick and in one
piece now, you understand?

Martin nods and reaches down to grab her hand. He holds her
hand with both of his.

MARTIN

Take care while I'm gone.

She nods and moves to Hamlin's side.

She has a large bowie knife in a leather sheath that she
pulls from the back of her gown and hands to him.

MISS TELLIS

This was my grandfather's. He
always said it was lucky, and I
figure it can't hurt to have a
little luck on your side when you
head through the mountains.

HAMLIN

I can't take this.

MISS TELLIS

Sure you can. You can give it back
to me when you return.

Miss Tellis backs away with a mischievous smile on her face
before she turns around and goes back in the church.

Hamlin looks at the knife before he looks over at Martin, who
is smiling with wide eyes.

Hamlin raises an aggressive finger as he points at Martin.

HAMLIN

Now don't you start.

Martin simply begins riding off with his hands held in the air in surrender, still smiling.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

The WIND WHISTLES through the serene mountain landscape, giving way only to the many TICKS and CHIRPS of INSECTS.

A small fire burns in the distance; a small oasis of light in a world of darkness.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

A small campfire glows, illuminating Martin and Deputy Hamlin as they sit on opposite sides of the fire. Martin reads a small, very thick Bible, while Hamlin whittles away at a stick. After a moment, Martin removes his round reading glasses, closes his Bible, and slips it into his inner left breast pocket.

Hamlin's eyes glance at Martin as he moves, but his knife never stops working on the stick in his hands. He looks back down before speaking.

HAMLIN

That's a very pretty necklace.

MARTIN

Thank you.

Martin grabs the pendant and runs his fingers over the diamond.

HAMLIN

Does it mean something?

MARTIN

It's a birthstone.

HAMLIN

You're a father?

MARTIN

Some rocks are left better unturned.

A beat.

HAMLIN

It would be wise to keep it hidden while we travel. Outlaws can see a shimmer from miles off.

MARTIN

Thank you.

HAMLIN

I'd strap on your gun belt too. If
even just for the look.

Martin nods and keeps the necklace around his neck, but tucks it into his shirt so that it is hidden. He begins looking through his bag and sets his gun belt next to where he intends to sleep.

Martin is prepping his bed for sleep, but pauses to speak with Hamlin.

MARTIN

Do you have a church in Powder
Canyon?

HAMLIN

(chuckles)

We have a small building that
doubles as a school for the
children. Not much of a church,
really.

MARTIN

Churches are made of people, not
bricks and mortar.

Hamlin opens his mouth to speak, but is cut off by a long
HOWL coming from somewhere not too far off into the distance.

The HOWLING is suddenly cut short by the SCREECH of a what
sounds like a LARGE CAT; perhaps a mountain lion.

A beat passes as both men look toward the noise, waiting for
more activity.

There is none.

HAMLIN

Seem like it's getting closer to
you?

MARTIN

(shrugs)

Hard to tell.

Hamlin goes back to his work on the piece of wood in his
hands.

HAMLIN

Did you mean what you said about forgiveness?

MARTIN

Of course.

Hamlin looks up before continuing. He sets his tools down and speaks candidly.

HAMLIN

I think it's better that I tell you before we arrive. The woman that killed your brother --

Martin looks up with a furrowed brow, surprised.

MARTIN

-- Woman?

HAMLIN

Yes sir, it was a woman who lead the gang that shot down your kin. See, the Marshall had to be wired to confirm the legality and identification of the bounty to be collected, so there's a mighty good chance that they'll still be in town tomorrow, awaiting his arrival.

Martin ponders this news for a moment before responding.

MARTIN

Do you fear violence?

HAMLIN

I do not fear violence, but I do fear for the innocent forced to taste the blood of another man's battle.

MARTIN

Are those who ignore murder any less guilty than those who commit it?

Hamlin stares at Martin across the fire, unsure of what his stance is on the matter.

He says nothing.

Martin gets back to making his bed and laying down to get some sleep.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 Relax, Deputy, get some rest and
 leave your mind at ease.

Hamlin looks slightly relieved at Martin's reassurance, which turns to annoyance and aggravation when he continues.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
 No amount of worry has ever brought
 rain in a drought, nor withheld it
 during a flood.

Hamlin looks at Martin across the fire, who is now laying down with his back turned.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - MORNING

The campfire is burning with a rabbit on a spit cooking over it as Hamlin sleeps beside it in silence. Martin is awake, reading from his Bible.

Hamlin wakes up and wipes the sleep from his eyes, then notices the spit over the fire.

HAMLIN
 How'd you catch that?

Martin does not look up as he answers.

MARTIN
 The Lord provides.

Hamlin gets up to go take a leak. He removes his gun belt, sets it next to his pack.

HAMLIN
 Keep your ears open.

Martin nods.

Hamlin turns and walks away from the fire.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

Hamlin approaches a spot on the opposite side of a large outcropping of rocks. As he finds a spot he is content with, he unbuttons his pants and takes his relief.

He scans the hillside as the stream of liquid splashes against the hard ground. The hill is littered with rocks and boulders alike, probably housing many critters in the vast amount of crevices.

As Hamlin buttons his pants, he spots something moving among the rocks, not more than 15 yards down the hillside.

He freezes.

A long tail squirms in anticipation, barely visible behind a larger boulder.

Hamlin slowly reaches toward his side with his right hand, only to grasp at thin air where his gun normally rests.

Behind a rock the pinned-back ears of a large mountain cat, tensed and ready to move, are visible.

White, foaming saliva drips from its mouth onto the jagged rock underneath its large head.

Hamlin's breaths are short bursts. He stands as still as a granite statue with eyes the size of pool balls...

A beat.

The CAT makes its move, propelling itself toward Hamlin from its powerful haunches and letting out a loud SNARL.

Hamlin fumbles to reach for Miss Tellis' knife from his belt on the opposite side of his body.

KAPOW!

A BULLET rips through the rear haunch of the animal, throwing it's rear slightly off of it's intended course, but not stopping it.

In a final act, the cat lunges toward it's prey.

Hamlin throws his arms up for protection.

KAPOW!

A second BULLET strikes the beast between the head and neck, leaving it's lifeless body to slam into Hamlin, causing him to fall backwards with the animal on top of him.

A beat.

FOOTSTEPS approach Hamlin, who is writhing on the ground in agony.

He looks up to see a young woman, GRETCHEN, probably in her mid-twenties. At some point she could have made a beautiful housewife, but her weathered face shows that she has been on a long and dusty road.

She lays her rifle on the ground as she kneels next to him.

Hamlin is surprised for a brief moment. He tries to push the beast off of himself, but grimaces in pain and grabs his right shoulder.

Gretchen pushes the mountain lion off of Hamlin, which reveals that he was struck by one of the cat's large, razor-sharp claws during its attack.

The wound is large, clearly showing four deep gashes into Hamlin's biceps area on his right arm.

GRETCHEN

Big bastard gotcha pretty good.

MARTIN'S FOOTSTEPS come skidding to a stop on the gravel after he comes running around the corner of the outcropping. His hand is on his gun, but it is not drawn.

Gretchen turns, not surprised by his presence.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Preacher?

Martin nods with wide eyes as he takes his hand off his gun.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Need somethin' to clean the wound.

Martin nods and runs back to camp.

HAMLIN

(labored)

How bad?

Gretchen tears the remainder of Hamlin's ragged sleeve from his shirt and wraps it around his arm as a makeshift bandage.

GRETCHEN

All the way to the bone it seems.

Gretchen ties the knot and cinches it down hard to stop the bleeding.

Hamlin grunts in pain and turns away in a grimace.

Gretchen picks up her Winchester rifle and pulls the lever to load another round into the chamber. She looks around cautiously with furrowed brow.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Just you and the preacher?

Hamlin is now sweating profusely.

HAMLIN

Yes. I'm a deputy by way of Powder Canyon.

Hamlin begins to stand, using his good arm to help himself up.

Gretchen rises with him.

Martin comes back around the rocks with a cloth and unmarked bottle.

GRETCHEN

You should get back to your camp,
stayin' here is beggin' for
trouble.

Martin nods and helps Hamlin the rest of the way up. They begin walking back toward their camp.

Gretchen watches for a moment as both men have their backs turned to her.

She bites her lip in hard consideration.

Her thumb rubs the hammer of her rifle.

A beat...

Martin turns.

MARTIN

Please, grab your horse and join us
for breakfast. It can't taste any
worse than that looks.

Martin points to the dead cat, which has blood mixed with white, foaming saliva hanging from its mouth.

Martin turns back toward camp as he and Hamlin continue walking.

Gretchen slowly puts her gun down and eventually follows the pair, glancing around the rocks in paranoia.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - MORNING

Gretchen wastes no time tearing into her portion of the rabbit that Martin cooked.

Hamlin now has a clean, white bandage wrapped around his injured arm.

HAMLIN
How long have you been following us?

Gretchen swallows a big gulp of water and opens her mouth to answer, but Martin cuts her off.

MARTIN
About a half day after we left town. Right at the base of the mountain.

Gretchen nods in agreement.

HAMLIN
Did you intend to rob us?

Gretchen does not answer, but her eyes do shift to Hamlin as she takes another bite.

MARTIN
Deputy, the lady did save your life.

HAMLIN
I'd still like to know why she was there.

Gretchen speaks through half-chewed bites.

GRETCHEN
You believe in miracles?

Hamlin frowns.

Martin cracks a smile.

MARTIN
Miss, errrrmm...

GRETCHEN
Gretchen. Just Gretchen. Please.

MARTIN
Very well, Gretchen. What do you do?

GRETCHEN
(between hungry bites)
I'm a legal bounty hunter.

HAMLIN

Not much of a woman's living.

GRETCHEN

Not much of a living for anyone these days. Since Wyatt Earp and Garrett been tracking down outlaws like dogs, business ain't been very good for us law abiding folk.

A beat as Martin and Hamlin share a glance.

HAMLIN

Where are you headed to now?

GRETCHEN

I got no plan but surviving.

MARTIN

You know, with the deputy injured, I'd be willing to pay a skilled gunslinger as a body guard if you'll escort us through to Powder Canyon.

Gretchen stops eating mid-bite and looks up.

GRETCHEN

How much is it worth to you?

MARTIN

I figure it'll be about another day's work, plus hazard pay if it's called for. I'll give you five dollars now and ten when we arrive. Fifteen if we run into trouble.

Hamlin tries to cut in, but Gretchen cuts him off.

HAMLIN

Now Martin, I think that I can still --

GRETCHEN

20 when we arrive and 30 if I come to any harm. Assuming we both live of course.

MARTIN

Strength in numbers, Deputy.
(to Gretchen)
Deal.

Martin stands up and begins to roll up his bed.

Gretchen sets down her food and begins to tend to her horse.

Hamlin stares into the fire.

EXT. WIDE MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The trio travel together, all on separate horses. They converse to pass the time, though Gretchen is on high alert, always looking around and paying close attention. Martin and Gretchen ride in front, while Hamlin takes up the rear.

GRETCHEN

Why are y'all traveling to Powder Canyon anyway?

MARTIN

A couple of days ago my brother was killed, and we thought it right that I officiate the funeral, tend to his belongings.

GRETCHEN

(a flat tone, more out of obligation than sympathy)
I'm sorry. Must have been a hell of a brother for you to travel this road to see him laid down.

MARTIN

He was to me. Imperfect as he was.

GRETCHEN

You're being awful coy.

MARTIN

(resigned)
My brother went by the name Willy Mitchell. In his younger days he lived six shots at a time and paid no mind for what came before or after.

GRETCHEN

Your brother was Willy Mayhem Mitchell?

Hamlin looks puzzled in the background.

HAMLIN

Does that name mean something to you?

GRETCHEN

I grew up in a small town in Arizona, maybe 30 miles from another town called Red Hill Creek. Legend has it that Willy Mayhem got accused of cheating at a card game, and he killed every man and woman in that saloon with naught but his peacemaker.

Martin keeps his eyes straight forward, not responding.

Hamlin is craning forward to hear more.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

He fled town after he turned the bar into a tomb. Willy Mayhem became a ghost even before the bodies went cold.

Martin still says nothing. Hamlin settles into his saddle, blown away by the tale.

HAMLIN

Martin, is it true?

Martin still says nothing.

GRETCHEN

One night my daddy was talking to my momma in the next room over. He said that death can follow a man; but Willy Mayhem Mitchell was the kind to shackle it and drag it behind him.

After a long beat, Martin finally speaks.

MARTIN

It sounds like your father was a fine story teller.

HAMLIN

That doesn't sound like the William Mitchell that I knew. He never hurt a soul in Powder Canyon. We all loved him like family.

Martin turns around to Hamlin and gives him a nod of thanks.

MARTIN

Your kind words are much app-

POP, POP, POP - GUNSHOTS send bullets raining down on the trio from higher up the mountain.

Gretchen rapidly turns her horse to see if they can go back, but there are several men on horses already gaining on them.

GRETCHEN

Keep going! We have to keep going!

The trio jam their spurs into their horses and take off with their STEEDS letting out GRUNTS of pain. The trail narrows to the point that they are forced to be single file.

BANG, ZIP - Gretchen has her PISTOL out, shooting wildly at men who are hiding in the rocks on the hillsides above.

The trio weave in and out of the rocky terrain. Their horses hooves pounding the ground in desperation, just hoping that their speed will get them out of harm's way.

A bullet finds its mark in Hamlin's right shoulder.

HAMLIN

(in pain)

Aaahh!

He doubles over, barely maintaining control of his horse as they press on.

The GUNFIRE continues as Martin turns to see that Hamlin has fallen behind. Martin yells over the GUNFIRE as he forces his horse off the trail, motioning for Hamlin to go in front of him.

MARTIN

Deputy, go! I'll bring the rear!

Hamlin is in no place to argue, and rides past Martin.

Gretchen stops to wait for the others and gets off several good SHOTS from atop her horse.

Multiple men in the hills fall from their rocky perches while others duck as the rocks spray them with collateral damage after BULLETS PING off of them.

The path widens again as they reach the bottom of the mountain.

Gretchen moves to the side to let the others pass.

As Martin flies by, Gretchen takes her time and aims at the first of the three pursuing riders, now enjoying the advantage of their pursuers being on the narrow trail.

BANG! She SHOOTs, killing the first rider. She aims again.

BANG! She SHOOTs, killing the second rider.

The third rider has already turned and tries to ride back up into the hills. Gretchen pulls the rifle from her saddle bag and takes aim...

KAPOW!

THTUNK - The hollow sound of the BULLET burying itself just under the man's left shoulder blade. He jerks forward from the impact, but continues to ride out of sight.

Gretchen rests her rifle on her thigh, watches for a moment, then rides on to catch up with the others.

EXT. FLAT, ROCKY AREA - NIGHT

A very small campfire burns. Martin begins tearing up a cloth to make a sling for Hamlin.

Gretchen digs through her bag and pulls out a bottle of whiskey.

GRETCHEN

I'm no doctor, but I think that'll
help.

She hands him the bottle and he pours it on his injured shoulder. He shudders in pain.

Martin begins tying the sling behind him.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Hell, I meant to drink it.

Martin stifles laughter as he pulls the knot tight.

He reaches down to grab Miss Tellis' knife from Hamlin's belt.

Hamlin notices and winces as he moves to make it more accessible.

Martin cuts the excess cloth from the sling and motions to hand it back. Hamlin raises his hand in surrender:

HAMLIN

(sarcastically)

Keep it. I don't think I can handle
any more good luck.

Martin stabs the knife into the ground next to Hamlin's leg.

MARTIN

Have a little faith, Deputy. You
could have been killed.

Hamlin moves the knife back into it's sheath.

Martin walks away with a smirk on his face and begins digging
through his bag.

He looks at Martin with a comically serious face.

HAMLIN

(deadly serious)

Preacher, don't take this the wrong
way, but your optimism is really
starting to annoy the hell out of
me.

Gretchen bursts out with laughter and playfully punches
Hamlin's left arm.

Hamlin looks at her with a mix of anger and surprise as she
laughs loudly OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. SALOON PORCH - NIGHT

Milly sits on the porch, smoking a pipe. There are TWO MEN
conversing on the other side, but Milly is alone.

The third rider - the same that Gretchen shot in the back
earlier in the day - rides in slowly, slumped over on his
horse. The men on the other side of the porch see him and
rush out to grab him.

Milly watches intently.

They help him off his horse and he collapses into their arms.
They carry him to the doctor's office, down the road from the
saloon.

Two men make their way back to the saloon porch as the others
carry the man to the doctor's.

MILLY

What happened?

1ST MAN

He'd been shot. Probably won't make
it through the night.

2ND MAN

He mumbled something about the pass
in the mountains. Spittin' up so
much blood I could hardly make out
what he said.

Milly smokes her pipe, seeming disinterested.

MILLY

Imbecile probably shot himself.

2ND MAN

Doubt it. Bullet hole was in his
back.

The 1st Man speaks quietly to his buddy, but Milly overhears.

1ST MAN

Ain't no pride in shootin' a man in
the back.

Milly chuckles to herself and puffs on her pipe.

EXT. TRIO'S FIRE - NIGHT

Gretchen and Hamlin sit on opposite sides of the small
campfire.

Gretchen cleans her pistols while Hamlin cleans blood out of
his shirt, which he has changed out of. The CRACKLE of the
FIRE is the only noise filling the quiet night until Hamlin
speaks.

HAMLIN

Arizona?

Gretchen doesn't look up as she answers.

GRETCHEN

Yes, sir.

HAMLIN

Hm. Family?

GRETCHEN

Some. After my daddy left my momma
raised me pretty much alone. Don't
know much about the rest. Never met
'em.

HAMLIN

Your mother sounds like a strong
woman.

GRETCHEN

Yeah, a smart one too.

Hamlin nods his head in acknowledgement.

Gretchen looks up for the first time to glance at Hamlin working on his blood stained shirt.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Smart enough to teach me that
rubbin' a stain'll only make it
harder to get out later.

Hamlin looks at his work, dumbfounded.

SNAP - A STICK BREAKS behind Hamlin. Gretchen instinctively grabs her gun.

Martin approaches with a dim lantern in one hand and a handful of leaves in the other. He hands them to Hamlin.

MARTIN

You're in luck, Deputy. Grind these
up and rub the juice on your wound,
it should dull the pain a bit.

Martin unrolls his sleeping apparatus and lays down with a grunt. It has been a long day. He adjusts his hat to sit over his eyes while he sleeps.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

You know that rubbing that stain is
only going to make it worse.

Hamlin's face turns to one of impatience.

Gretchen smiles to herself.

EXT. WOODS - ESTABLISHING - MORNING

A peaceful woodland landscape is accompanied by the CHIRPS of BIRDS and RUSTLING of LEAVES in a warm breeze.

EXT. TRIO'S FIRE - MORNING

The ashes of the fire let off a small stream of smoke, though no flame survived the night.

Gretchen is the first to stir. She rolls over and sits up to survey the scene.

Martin has not moved from where he laid the night before.

Hamlin is still propped up with his head bowed in a peaceful slumber.

Gretchen stands to stretch out, facing away from the fire.

Martin hears her and moves his hat to see Gretchen facing the opposite direction with her hands raised to the sky in a satisfying morning stretch. He puts his hat back over his eyes and resumes his peaceful rest.

Gretchen turns around and puts on her gun belt and hat. She then takes a look around to survey for danger, and walks away from the camp site.

EXT. POOLED STREAM - MORNING

Gretchen approaches a body of water that has been created by a shelf within a stream. It is not small but not large, maybe 15 yards in diameter by four or five feet deep. The water is clear and inviting.

Gretchen bends down and cups water in her hands, then splashes it on her face. Dirty water runs down her neck and hands, revealing how thick the layer of grime had been.

Gretchen stands again and looks around, tempted by how refreshing the water was on her face. After a thorough scan in all directions she takes off her coat and her thick flannel shirt.

From a distance we see her take off her boots and pants. She only wears an undershirt and almost knee length underwear as she wades into the serene water.

EXT. TRIO'S FIRE - MORNING

Martin and Hamlin are awakened by HOOTING AND HOLLERING coming from the same direction that Gretchen walked in.

Martin shoots up, knowing that Gretchen may be in harms way.

Hamlin is unsure of what is going on.

MARTIN
(calmly, but with haste)
Stay here.

Before Hamlin can respond, Martin is already strapping on his belt and heading swiftly toward the noises.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Martin walks slowly and quietly now that he is closer to the group. His gun has never left its holster.

He pauses for a moment from behind a rock and squints to see if there is any trouble.

He sees FOUR MALE RIDERS, all on horses, turned toward the stream. One of the riders shifts to the side, which reveals Gretchen stranded in the middle of the pond.

She is crouching with the water up to her mouth so that the men cannot see her body in its indecent state.

EXT. STREAM - SAME TIME

RIDER 1

Now come on out now, Missy! We got
lots of warm clothes and blankets
for ya!

RIDER 2

Yeah and I got somethin' else for
ya that'll keep ya warm too!

The riders all laugh at her expense while she gives an angry, piercing stare.

Martin comes storming up behind the riders.

Two of them draw guns on him, but he walks past like they aren't even there.

RIDER 1

Hey! Hey you! Stop walkin'!

Martin ignores the man and strolls angrily into the water, not pausing to remove any articles of clothing. The bottom of his long coat floats behind him as he gets deeper into the pool.

RIDER 1 (CONT'D)

I said stop walkin'!

Martin comes to Gretchen and removes his coat. He holds it out for her to cover up with, which she does as she stands.

BANG!

The same rider that yelled at Martin fires his GUN into the air, discontent with being ignored.

Martin simply leads Gretchen out of the water by the shoulders, paying him no mind.

RIDER 1 (CONT'D)
Well ain't that a sweet sight to
behold.

Martin attempts to lead Gretchen from the half circle of men, but they cut him off.

He looks at the rider that has been talking.

MARTIN
What do you want?

RIDER 1
Well I'll take the girl if you're
offerin'. You can even keep her
clothes.

Snickers come from the other riders.

Martin steps in front of Gretchen in defiance.

MARTIN
No deal.

Gretchen grabs Martin's gun from his holster and aims it at the talkative rider in the blink of an eye.

The standoff instantly becomes tense.

After a moment of silence, Martin puts his hand on the gun, slowly lowering it and taking it from her.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
There will be no blood shed today.

RIDER 1
If I can't get the woman then I'll
at least need enough money to get a
girl in town. You know, as a
replacement.

Martin holds the rider in a harsh stare as he removes his wristwatch and tosses it to the rider.

MARTIN
It's worth more than enough to
satisfy your desires.

The rider studies the watch, content with its value.

RIDER 1

I suppose my men'd need something
to keep them busy too.

Martin takes off the necklace that was hidden by his
clothing. He tosses it to the rider.

RIDER 1 (CONT'D)

And I'll take whatever she's got in
her pile of clothes over yonder.

He motions to her bundle of clothing next to the water's
edge.

Gretchen opens her mouth to speak, but Martin cuts her off.
He speaks in a calm, flat tone.

MARTIN

You'll take no more from her than
you already have.

The riders again shift uncomfortably in the tense silence. A
Third rider speaks up.

RIDER 3

Come on, Charlie. Let's get on.

The first rider reluctantly agrees. He holsters his gun,
turns his horse, and rides off. His cohorts follow.

Martin and Gretchen are left alone until Martin walks away,
leaving Gretchen to dress herself.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The trio rides at a leisurely pace to keep Hamlin from too
much pain. Powder Canyon is now in sight.

GRETCHEN

Why didn't you want me to kill
them?

MARTIN

(sigh)
I suppose I'm just sick of people
dying.

GRETCHEN

How much do I owe you for the
jewelry?

MARTIN

Nothing. They were priceless.

Hamlin looks at Martin with an expression of surprise.

GRETCHEN

Maybe in your hands they were. In
his they're far from it.

MARTIN

Well, if you find him then you can
pay top dollar for both.

Gretchen frowns, but says nothing.

The trio is now close enough to town to be able to read the "WELCOME TO POWDER CANYON" sign posted just inside the city limit. It is old and faded, but still easily read. Behind the sign is a small town (almost a "one-road" town, but not quite), with shops lining both sides of the main road.

People scurry across the road as they go about their day, being careful to avoid passing wagons and riders. Some folks have donned formal wear - clearly travellers on their way to more extravagant destinations - while most dress like the working class.

HAMLIN

It's not much, but it's home.

GRETCHEN

I'd have a drink in the Devil's
parlor if it meant gettin' off that
mountain. This place is a sight for
sore eyes if you ask me.

MARTIN

And sore bodies, I'm sure.

Hamlin rubs his aching shoulder at the thought of his pains.

Martin looks over at Hamlin and speaks in a tone of sincerity.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Welcome home, Deputy.

Hamlin makes eye contact and nods with a hint of a smile.

The trio ride on in peace.

EXT. SALOON PORCH - DAY

Milly approaches the saloon porch once again, and ties up her horse at the rail. While she is shuffling through her saddle bag for her wallet, she sees the trio ride into town.

Several men come from the surrounding buildings and greet them, helping the deputy off his horse and shaking the others' hands. Everyone wears expressions of excitement and thankfulness. Some even hug the deputy, despite his injuries.

After the small crowd settles, Martin, Gretchen, and a guide set off toward the hotel, while Hamlin is ushered into the doctor's office.

Milly watches intently as Martin and Gretchen walk by the saloon with their horses in tow. As they get a little further down the street, the guide motions toward the hotel, and Martin and Gretchen tie up their horses before heading inside.

Martin motions for Gretchen to enter first. She concedes.

Just before Martin enters the door, he turns around to look at Milly.

The two hold each other's gaze...

Martin turns and goes inside.

Milly scratches her head nonchalantly and goes back to digging through her saddle bags.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Gretchen and Martin open the door to a nicely decorated room. There is one bed, an armoire, and two armchairs with a small table in between.

Martin enters and sits in one of the chairs as he begins sorting through his bag.

Gretchen wanders the room, opening the armoire, and looking out the windows.

GRETCHEN
(nonchalantly)
Are you going to kill them?

Martin does not seem surprised by the question, as he doesn't even look up.

MARTIN
Why do you ask?

GRETCHEN
I just figure you shouldn't get
your hands dirty if someone is
already rolling in the mud.

MARTIN
Someone like you?

Gretchen shrugs in response.

GRETCHEN
Couldn't hurt to have someone
watchin' your back.

Martin gets up from his chair and walks toward the door. On his way he stops to hand Gretchen the money she has earned thus far. She begins counting.

MARTIN
You don't have to sell me on your
worth, Gretchen. Five dollars a day
until I leave town.

Gretchen nods in agreement.

GRETCHEN
Yes sir.

Martin begins to walk toward the door, but pauses.

MARTIN
I'm paying you to keep me safe.
That's all.

GRETCHEN
You know, morals won't save you in
a gunfight.

MARTIN
Isn't that why I hired you?

Martin walks out the door, and Gretchen pockets her money before following.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Martin and Gretchen approach the doctor's office to check in with the deputy.

As they walk up to the door, they step aside to let two men carry a body wrapped in a canvas bag out of the building.

They watch as the men pass by.

A STERN VOICE is heard coming from inside, reprimanding. The pair share a glance before entering.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE- SAME TIME

Hamlin is now being bandaged by the doctor.

The bullet that was in his shoulder sits in a small dish to the side.

The man Hamlin is being reprimanded by turns out to be the US Marshal, ISAAH BARNES, who was wired to handle the bounty situation. He is a large, tall man, who takes the role of alpha male too seriously.

BARNES

(angrily)

Leaving your town without a law man after one of your own was murdered? That's your idea of keeping the peace?

HAMLIN

(shyly, unprepared)

It was a legal bounty, sir. She had all the correct paperwork. The town folks and I had a meeting and we all decided --

BARNES

The opinion of the town folk does not matter. You are here to make the decisions that they are incapable of. And this, frankly, was a bad one.

Hamlin looks to Martin and Gretchen who have been waiting silently in the background.

HAMLIN

Martin, Gretchen, this is US Marshal Barnes. Marshal, the brother of the deceased.

Martin and Gretchen shake the Marshal's hand.

BARNES

(in a normal tone)

I'm sorry for your loss. Hopefully we can get this situation cleared up quickly.

MARTIN

Thank you, Marshal.

The Marshal tips his hat to Martin and Gretchen before walking past them toward the door.

He turns around before exiting.

BARNES
(to Hamlin)
Deputy, control your town, or I
will.

He exits the building.

There is a moment of an awkward silence as the doctor fits Hamlin with a sling and ties it up.

HAMLIN
Thanks, Doc.

The doctor nods and begins cleaning up his mess.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)
Martin, Reverend Rose is expecting
you at the church this afternoon to
make funeral arrangements.

MARTIN
Much appreciated. Get some rest,
Deputy. You've at least earned that
much.

Martin tips his hat, turns and walks out the door.

Hamlin watches with scrutinizing eyes as he puts his hat on his head.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Martin is already speaking with REVEREND ROSE at the front of the church.

Gretchen smokes by a window, blowing the smoke outside.

The reverend is a small, soft spoken man. He is older and balding, and is holding a list as he speaks.

REVEREND ROSE
(softly)
I already talked to the carpenter
about William's casket. He assures
me that it will be of the highest
quality and ready by tomorrow, free
of charge.

MARTIN
Please, let me pay for something.
You've all done so much.

REVEREND ROSE
I'm sorry, Martin, but your money
is no good here. We all owed
William more than we could ever
repay.

While they speak, Milly enters the door in the back of the church.

Gretchen notices immediately and moves her hand to her gun.

Martin sees this out of the corner of his eye, and looks to the door to see why. He sees Milly.

MARTIN
I'm happy to hear that he was so
loved during his time here.

REVEREND ROSE
He was part of our family, and
while you're here, you are too.
Anything you need, let us know.

MARTIN
Thank you, Reverend. For
everything.

The reverend nods and shuffles off, leaving Martin and Milly staring at each other.

Martin gives Gretchen a reassuring nod as he walks toward Milly.

Gretchen straightens up and moves in the same direction, keeping her distance. There are several other people in the front of the church working. They stop and watch in tense silence.

Martin stops beside Milly, keeping his head straight forward. He speaks very softly so only Milly can hear. She listens, looks at Gretchen for a moment, then nods her head.

The pair exit the church together.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Martin and Milly walk side by side in silence with Gretchen not far behind.

Some townsfolk see them walking together and whisper to each other, while others suspect danger and scurry away in fear.

The deputy's office is almost directly across from the saloon. The Marshal sees the pair walk in the saloon from the porch and grabs his shotgun.

He follows.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Martin and Milly sit at an empty table close to a corner of the saloon.

Gretchen takes a seat at the table behind them, ready for trouble.

She sees the Marshal kick a man out of his seat on the porch so that he can sit outside the window and keep an eye on the trio inside.

Martin and Milly begin their conversation after a moment of silence.

MILLY

You know, preacher, this is my first time talking to the next of kin of someone that I collected on. I'm not really sure how this is all supposed to go.

A WAITRESS approaches the table.

WAITRESS

Would y'all like something to drink?

GRETCHEN

I'll have a double shot of whiskey, and, for the preacher?

Gretchen looks at Martin, waiting for him to ask for a drink.

MARTIN

Just coffee, please.

The Waitress nods and goes to Gretchen's table.

Gretchen simply raises her hand to send the Waitress away.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Milly? Is it?

MILLY

Yes.

MARTIN

Do you know who I am?

MILLY

I do.

Martin takes a moment to gather his thoughts before continuing.

MARTIN

My brother was a good man.

MILLY

That's not what it said on the wanted poster.

MARTIN

Hard to fit his entire story in a couple of sentences.

MILLY

They fit all the important parts, and how much those parts were worth to the US government.

MARTIN

Lives were not intended to be measured by potential wealth.

MILLY

William Mitchell's sins determined his worth; I was just the one that sold him to the bank.

Milly feigns excitement as she taunts Martin.

MILLY (CONT'D)

Say, we could even go in to business together. I do the collecting and you do the funerals, for a fee of course. We'd be called Milly and Marty's. What do you think, partner?

MARTIN

Have you no sympathy for a grieving brother?

Milly's face turns from fake excitement to very real anger.

MILLY

Sympathy. Pft.

Milly cuts herself off after scoffing at Martin's initial question. She spits onto the floor and wipes her mouth before continuing with malice oozing from her voice.

MILLY (CONT'D)

No, Martin. I have no sympathy for
you. I have no sympathy for any
men.

The Waitress approaches the table and sets down Milly's double and Martin's tray of coffee, sugar and cream.

The two do not break eye contact as the Waitress looks at them and walks away, quickly.

After she leaves, Milly breaks her stare to down her double shot of whiskey.

Martin scoops out two spoonfuls of sugar and dumps them into his coffee. He stirs while he speaks, not looking up.

MARTIN

I assure you that you are not the
only one in this world who has
endured the agony of life. Tomorrow
evening is my brother's funeral. No
blood will be shed before my family
is laid to rest with a proper
burial.

Milly perks up.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

If you are gone by the time I say
my final goodbye, I will not follow
you, and you should pray that we
never meet again.

MILLY

Are you threatening me, Mr.
Preacher?

MARTIN

If you are still here...

Martin takes a drink from his coffee as Milly interjects sarcastically.

MILLY

Should I say a prayer for my soul?

Martin puts his coffee down and looks Milly in the eye.

MARTIN
(dryly)
I wouldn't bother.

Martin stands, counts out change for his coffee and sets it on the table.

He walks away while Milly watches.

Gretchen follows.

EXT. TOWN OUTSKIRTS (DESERT) - DAY

Martin is in a shallow hole, digging the grave for his brother.

Gretchen sits on her horse and watches, bored.

MARTIN
(sarcastically)
Feel free to relax.

GRETCHEN
I was hired as a bodyguard, not a
grave digger.

Martin shoots her an annoyed look. She smirks mischievously.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
Say, what you said in the bar about
the agony of life. Were those just
more of your fancy sayings?

MARTIN
I hired you as a bodyguard, not an
eavesdropper.

A HORSE APPROACHES from behind them.

Gretchen turns, ready to draw her gun, only to see that it is Hamlin. Gretchen tips her hat in greeting.

GRETCHEN
Deputy.

HAMLIN
Gretchen, Martin.

Hamlin is surprised to see Martin digging his brother's grave by himself.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)
You know, there are plenty of
willing hands.

Martin doesn't stop shoveling to answer.

MARTIN
I know.

A beat...

HAMLIN
... I heard that you and Milly had
something of a meeting at the
saloon. I just wanted to make sure
that everything is in order.

MARTIN
Did the Marshal put you up to this?

HAMLIN
He made a suggestion is all.

He stops digging to address the deputy.

MARTIN
Deputy Hamlin, you are a fine peace
officer, and a finer man. The
people of your town trust and
respect you. I would encourage you
not to second guess yourself,
especially in these trying times.

HAMLIN
The Marshall and I don't think much
alike, but we agree on one thing;
keeping Powder Canyon whole. If you
aim to do something, I'm asking
that you do it elsewhere.

MARTIN
Understood.

Hamlin tips his hat and turns around to ride back to town.

Martin and Gretchen share a look before Martin gets back to
digging.

EXT. STABLE - ESTABLISHING - DUSK

The stable is lit by lanterns as the sun begins to set. They
sway slightly in the night breeze as a door hinge CREAKS in
the background.

INT. STABLE - DUSK

Milly enters and meanders through the stable until she approaches the stall holding her beautiful mustang. She greets her horse with a warm smile and a gentle touch.

MILLY
Howdy ol' girl. I got something for
ya.

Milly shuffles through her bag and finally pulls out a jar of pickles. The horse begins shoving the jar with it's large nose.

MILLY (CONT'D)
Now calm down ol' girl, I'll get
you some.

Milly opens the jar and begins feeding the horse pickles, which the horse gobbles down one after another.

Reverend Rose and Gretchen enter the stable at the far end and walk in Milly's direction. They speak to each other, but not loud enough to make out what they are saying. They pause a couple of stalls down from Milly, where Gretchen's horse is housed.

The two shake hands, and Gretchen goes to tending to her steed.

Reverend Rose approaches Milly.

REVEREND ROSE
Beautiful animal, what do you call
her?

MILLY
(flatly)
She ain't got a name.

REVEREND ROSE
You never named her?

MILLY
(annoyed, aggressive)
I got no right to namin' her
because she ain't property.

Gretchen overhears this and glances, but does not get involved. She continues to eavesdrop while brushing her horse.

REVEREND ROSE
(tentative)
You paid for her... yes?

Milly is quickly losing her patience.

MILLY
(annoyed)
This horse and me are partners. We
help each other. Whether it's the
feed or my charm that keeps her
around, I don't know; she don't
talk much.

Milly pauses as she turns back to the horse and resumes
petting her gently on the nose.

MILLY (CONT'D)
(calmly)
Yes, I paid handsomely, but I
didn't buy the horse, I just bought
her freedom.

REVEREND ROSE
That's a very noble way to look at
it. Why is she locked up now?

MILLY
Protection.

After a pause the reverend speaks in a sad tone.

REVEREND ROSE
Your ideas are noble. My fear is
what you've endured, as these sorts
of ideas rarely come to be without
a struggle to form them.

The reverend is giving Milly a look of compassion when she
looks at him to meet his gaze.

They are interrupted by the bellowing voice of the Marshal.

BARNES
Careful, Reverend. She's a cold
hearted wench. She'll probably kill
you where you stand for a slip of
the tongue.

REVEREND ROSE
Oh, I don't think so.

The reverend offers Milly a warm smile before shuffling off.

Gretchen nods to the reverend on his way past, and she puts her brush down and follows him out, leaving Milly and Barnes alone.

MILLY

I believe our business has been settled.

BARNES

Not all of it. I'm here to warn you against any further violence. This town has been through enough.

MILLY

I ain't no criminal. I don't see other innocent folks being shown the badge.

BARNES

You're only innocent as long as I say you are.

MILLY

I got witnesses to say otherwise.

BARNES

And who will they believe? A marshal, or a whore and her filthy gang of rejects who murdered a man in cold blood.

MILLY

You know damn well that I ain't no murderer.

Barnes starts to walk away while he speaks.

BARNES

I'd appreciate it if you'd help me keep it that way.

Barnes turns and exits the stable. Milly is left alone.

She pets her beloved animal as she thinks for a beat.

Milly looks in the direction that the Marshal exited the stable. She wears a cutting look of hatred as she takes a deep breath, and let's out an angry, hot breath.

INT. BANKER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Martin enters the banker's office to go over William's will and figure out what to do with his belongings.

The BANKER, a round man with thick, round glasses, sits and motions for Martin to do the same on the other side of his large desk.

BANKER

Well, if there's any good news that came out of this, it's that Willy took great care to be prepared in case of this tragedy.

The banker spreads out several sheets of paper and begins going over them.

BANKER (CONT'D)

Now, he owned the house and livestock free and clear. He was very specific in his will that you will take over any of his open accounts and belongings.

The Banker pulls out another piece of paper full of small print with a dotted line at the bottom.

BANKER (CONT'D)

Once you sign on this line, you are the legal owner of his estate.

The Banker puts the page down in front of Martin and hands him a pen, but pulls it away when he remembers something.

BANKER (CONT'D)

I should mention before you sign, William did co-sign several bank loans for folks in town. You would be inheriting those as well, should they be unable to repay them.

MARTIN

Loans for what?

BANKER

Horses, feed, building materials for housing repairs; that sort of thing. Some folks around here have been hurting pretty badly at times.

MARTIN

Would the bank take Willy's cattle to cover the debts?

BANKER

We'd have to send someone out to do an inspection, but I have no doubt that would more than cover the loans.

The Banker hands Martin the pen to sign the paper in front of him. Martin signs.

BANKER (CONT'D)

You know, I hate to tempt fate by making such a suggestion, but now that you are in control of William's estate, it could be wise to pen a will while you're here. Word is that the mountain road did not treat you well, and I fear for what could happen upon your return.

MARTIN

What do I need to do?

The banker shuffles around in his desk drawer and pulls out a folder. He flips through it, looking for the correct document.

BANKER

Ah, here we are. Just write who the proprietor or proprietors will be for what property on these lines, and sign at the bottom.

Martin begins to write as the Banker continues.

BANKER (CONT'D)

It's not as detailed as it should be, but it'll do for now.

Martin finishes writing and hands him the document while standing up to leave.

EXT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Martin is outside the house with two other men, and several cattle standing nearby. He finishes signing the paperwork, shakes their hands, and they ride off, leaving him alone with his horse.

He heads inside the house for the first time.

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Martin opens the door slowly and peers inside. His slow FOOTSTEPS on the CREAKING FLOORBOARDS ECHO through the empty house. The home is obviously inhabited by an unmarried man. The walls are bare, showing no indication of culture or sentiment.

He comes to the main living area where there is a single rocking chair and a dining room table with two chairs at either end.

Martin sits in the rocking chair, puts his head back, and closes his eyes. He rocks backward -KLINK, KLINK -causing the curved leg to knock over a BOTTLE of whiskey on the floor that he was unaware of.

Martin looks down and picks up the bottle before it rolls out of reach.

He studies it before popping the cork, smelling it, and eventually raising it to his lips to take a drink. The bottle comes to rest on his leg while he stares at the floor, lost in thought.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOTEL ROOM (RED HILL CREEK) - NIGHT

Who we have known as Martin up to this point, comes bursting through the door of a dark room while hurriedly rolling his sleeves down.

There is a man laying in the bed asleep (who we have known as William up to this point). Martin is clearly intoxicated, but also breathing short, hard breaths in a panic. He shakes the sleeping man awake.

MARTIN

Martin! Wake up!

William turns over and tries to calm him down while also trying to wake up.

WILLIAM

Willy, calm down, just calm down.
What's wrong? What happened?

Martin stumbles through his sentences. He has tears running down his face.

He speaks poorly compared to how we have seen him up to this point.

MARTIN

(rushed, emotional)

Oh Marty, I messed up bad this time. I really messed up bad. They said I cheated at the game and they was gonna kill me if I didn't give them their money back, but I didn't cheat Willy, I swear I didn't.

WILLIAM

Alright, I believe you. What then?

MARTIN

One of 'em pulled his gun on me and I wasn't even thinking when I pulled mine...

Martin breaks down in tears as William begins to grasp the severity of the situation. He raises his voice.

WILLIAM

(stern)

What Willy, what did you do?

Martin looks William in the eyes.

MARTIN

I killed 'em.

WILLIAM

If they pulled their guns on you then you had a right to kill em'. It'll be alright.

MARTIN

No. Not just them. I killed them all. Everywhere I looked I saw people pulling out guns and runnin'. I don't know what came over me. Everyone's dead.

William is in shock for a beat before coming to.

He springs up and gets dressed while Martin stays on the bed, blabbering on.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(lost in his own words)

Suzette will never look at me again. She'll never want to be with me after this. I'll never see my child. What am I gonna do?

William latches on his gun belt and speaks quickly. They can hear MEN come inside the motel, YELLING to search for Martin.

William jams a chair under the doorknob to slow them down.

WILLIAM

(with haste)

Did anyone that you didn't kill see
your face?

MARTIN

I don't know, I don't think so.

WILLIAM

Here's what you're gonna do. You're
gonna stay here and hide. I'm gonna
go out that window and get the hell
outta town.

William forcefully picks Martin up off the bed by his shirt.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Meet me at Pat McCormick's cabin in
three days. You understand?

Martin nods his head slowly, looking at the floor. William shakes him forcefully.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Do you understand?

MARTIN

Yes. I, I understand.

William drags Martin to the closet and shoves him inside.

WILLIAM

Keep quiet. Three days.

William closes the door and heads toward the window.

The door is kicked in, SHATTERING the CHAIR that William placed against it.

The men look and see the bags on the floor, and the side of William's face in the open window before he leaps off the roof.

POSSE LEADER

Head him off around back!

One man goes out the window after William as the rest of the group dashes out the way they came in.

We see from the window of the empty room that William is on his horse speeding away into the night with a posse of men heading after him.

We then see that the closet door has been opened, and it is empty.

INT. PAT MCCORMICK'S CABIN - DAY

Martin is sitting alone at the table eating. He hears a HORSE APPROACH, grabs his gun, and heads outside.

EXT. PAT MCCORMICK'S CABIN - DAY

William rides up and Martin rushes out to meet him.

William looks exhausted as Martin helps him down off his horse and inside the house.

INT. PAT MCCORMICK'S CABIN - DAY

William and Martin are seated at the table. William is shoveling food into his mouth and chugging water as if he hasn't eaten in the three days he was running. There is a wanted poster in front of William with his name on it.

We see the calligraphy "M" that is branded on Martin's arm as he is smoking a cigarette.

MARTIN

Nobody got a good look at our
faces, but somebody remembered my
name and they sketched something up
that looks a little like you.

William's eyes move from his food to the poster as he continues to eat.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Now it's in the papers in the
territory that Mayhem Mitchell is
to blame for robberies and murders
all over.

William speaks with his mouth full.

WILLIAM

Well, you have done a lot of
robbin' and murderin'.

MARTIN

Marty, you don't have to do this. I can handle running. Maybe you should stay and take care of Suzie and the baby. I did this, I can-

William slams his fist down on the table and stops eating.

WILLIAM

(angrily)

-- We're not gonna talk about this anymore. You're gonna go straight and live like nothing ever happened. You've got a wife, a child coming. What have I got? A job driving cattle? No, not even that anymore.

William pauses to shove his food around his plate while he thinks.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

No. From now on your name is Martin Mitchell, and mine is Willy "Mayhem."

William's finger rests on the wanted poster after he finishes speaking. He looks down and reads the bottom of the poster which says, "WANTED for the Red Hill Creek MASSACRE. Goes by Willy Mitchell, carries a peacemaker, and has an 'M' on his right forearm."

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

...and you had your sleeves rolled up.

EXT. CABIN REAR - DAY

A smoldering cattle brand in the shape of an "M" is heating in the coals of a fire.

Martin removes it and walks over to William, who is seated next to the cabin with a mostly empty bottle of liquor in hand.

MARTIN

You sure?

William is very drunk, but nods regretfully, knowing the pain that is to come.

Martin moves the brand toward his arm and William holds up his hand to stop.

He stops, and William chugs the rest of the whiskey, nods his head, holds out his arm, and closes his eyes.

From a distance we hear William's SCREAMS as the BRAND SIZZLES on his skin.

CRREEAAK - A DOOR opens, which is accompanied by FOOTSTEPS.

PRESENT - INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Martin moves his hand to his gun, fearing the worst.

GRETCHEN
Martin? You here?

Martin relaxes as Gretchen comes around the corner and sees him sitting in the chair with bottle in hand.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
Bad time to take up drinking.

Martin stands up and moves toward Gretchen.

He hands her the bottle and begins to wander through the house, looking for anything of importance.

Gretchen gives Martin a looks of curiosity before setting the bottle on the table and peering out the window.

EXT. WILLIAM'S GRAVE - ESTABLISHING - DUSK

There is a small crowd of people gathered for William's funeral, all dressed in the appropriate black attire.

People speak quietly and shake the hands of neighbors as they await the proceedings.

BESIDE THE GRAVE

Everyone is now seated as Martin addresses the group with his Bible in hand.

MARTIN
I want to thank all of you for your
kind words throughout my time here
in your lovely town. I can see why
William chose this place to let his
wandering heart rest.
(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

While I'm sure that he did not plan for it to be his final resting place at this time, I have no doubt that he is smiling down on us now, glad to be surrounded by his friends and loved ones.

The crowd smiles and nods in agreement with Martin's remarks.

Out of the corner of his eye, Martin spots Milly and two of her men approaching on foot, leading their horses. He continues despite their unnerving presence.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

And while Willy has left us with heavy hearts, they are not heavy from sadness or grief. They are heavy because they are full of the love and care that Willy gave every day, to everyone.

Martin opens his Bible and turns to where his marker is kept. He pauses, rethinking what he was going to share.

Gretchen is keeping a close eye on Milly while Martin speaks.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I was going to share a passage in closing, but, frankly, I think that Willy would have considered it tacky.

The crowd murmurs and chuckles at Martin's remark.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

So, instead, please bow your heads and close your eyes while we pray.

The crowd shuffles while closing their eyes and bowing their heads. Everyone does so, save Gretchen and Milly.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Our blessed God, our Heavenly Father, we praise you and thank you for the blessings that you heap upon us, even in this dark day of remembrance. Thank you for Willy, and the light that he brought to each of our lives. Despite what papers or wanted posters say, we, those that knew him, know that he was the best of us.

The crowd nods their heads in agreement. Some wipe tears from their closed eyes.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Please remind us, Lord, that you never give us more grief than we can bare. And when we are angry, even so angry that we are moved to action, help us remember your scripture in which you tell us that all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Several "AMENS" come from the crowd.

Martin opens his eyes to see Milly staring at him.

Gretchen glances back and forth anxiously.

Her gloved hand slowly massages the wooden grip on her holstered pistol.

Martin looks Milly dead in the eye while he speaks.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Keep in our memory that you will rule again, and that we, the righteous, will rejoice when he sees vengeance, and he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked.

Gretchen wraps her hand around her gun, placing her thumb on the hammer.

She looks at Milly through narrowed eyelids.

Milly slowly reaches inside her overcoat. Her hand pauses, hidden.

A beat.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Lord, we pray all this in your Great Name, Amen.

Everyone raises their heads and opens their eyes.

Martin breaks eye contact with Milly and turns to prepare to lower the casket into the grave behind him.

A woman from the front row, presumably the choir director, gets up and reads from a hymnal as she sings "*COME THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING*".

Gretchen glances to see Martin vulnerable with his back turned.

Milly begins to withdraw her hand from her coat.

Gretchen pulls the hammer back with her thumb while lifting the pistol out of it's holster.

A beat.

Milly pulls her hand from her jacket...

CLICK - The cylinder of Gretchen's GUN comes to it's resting place, primed for use...

TINK...

Milly flips open the FLASK she retrieved from inside her coat.

Upon seeing the flask, Gretchen relaxes and slowly lets the hammer down on her pistol while placing it back into it's holster.

Milly flashes a mischievous smile in Gretchen's direction, holds her flask in the air in a facetious 'cheers' motion, and takes a long swig.

The rows of people begin to rise as several men come up to help lower William's casket into the hole.

Martin takes his place on the far side before they begin.

The rope works through the hands of the men as they lower the heavy casket into the ground.

Milly and her crew watch from the back of the crowd.

CHOIR DIRECTOR
(singing, continuous)
*O that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see thy lovely face,
Clothed then in blood washed
linen...*

The casket comes to rest, and Martin looks up to see Milly still watching.

A beat.

CHOIR DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
*How I'll sing thy sovereign grace.
 Come my Lord no longer tarry...*

Milly nods her head, tips her hat, and turns to leave.

Martin returns the nod.

Milly mounts up and rides back toward town.

CHOIR DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
*Take my ransomed soul away; send
 thine Angels now to carry, me to
 realms of endless day.*

The the crowd files by the grave, tossing flowers and keepsakes on top of the casket.

Gretchen's grip on her gun loosens, and she moves her coat back over her gun belt.

EXT. WILLIAM'S GRAVE - LATER THAT EVENING

Martin and two other men are filling in William's grave while humming/singing "AMAZING GRACE". The deputy approaches.

HAMLIN
 I'm sorry I couldn't attend,
 Martin. The Marshal - well - it's
 not important.

MARTIN
 I understand. Boys, let's let the
 deputy pay his respects.

The two men nod, set down their shovels, and walk away, giving the two some privacy.

HAMLIN
 I hear that you gave a very nice
 eulogy.

MARTIN
 I'm glad that his friends found it
 fitting.

HAMLIN
 Mhm. I also heard that Milly was
 here. No doubt to stir up trouble.

MARTIN
 Is this from the Marshal again?

HAMLIN

(stern, serious in tone)
No, Martin, this is from me. If
there's violence here then I'll
choose whichever side I need to for
my town to stay whole. Whether
that's with you or the Marshall or
on my own, I can't say just yet. I
do know that Milly got her money
this morning, which leaves me to
wonder why she's still here.

Martin grabs a shovel and starts filling in the hole again.

MARTIN

Only the Lord knows what tomorrow
brings. I'll be keeping my head
down for my time here.

HAMLIN

Thank you. Not that it's any of my
business, but I think you're making
Willy damn proud.

MARTIN

Maybe.

Hamlin turns to leave, but he stops when Martin calls out.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Oh, they're hosting a bit of a send
off for Willy tonight at the
saloon. Probably just a reason to
get good and drunk. You're welcome
to stop by.

HAMLIN

Wouldn't look very good to be
getting piss drunk with the current
situation and all, but much
appreciated.

Martin tips his hat and Hamlin rides off.

Martin continues to fill the grave with the other men. Their
humming of "AMAZING GRACE" picks up where it left off.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Martin is seated at a table by himself, looking a bit more
loose than he has before. He is no longer dressed in his
funeral clothes, and looks quite normal. The bar is alive
with music and a crowd.

There is a large group-dance going on in the middle of the bar, with everyone singing and dancing together in celebration of Willy's life.

Gretchen approaches Martin with two pints and two shots of whiskey. She sets them down and Martin grabs one of each.

Gretchen raises her shot for a private toast.

GRETCHEN

For Willy.

Martin raises his glass in agreement before taking his shot. He grimaces from the taste, no longer used to the bite of liquor. Gretchen is amused.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Haha! I never thought I'd see the day that I shoot whiskey with a preacher.

Martin shrugs.

MARTIN

Desperate times.

GRETCHEN

Desperate times indeed. You sent your brother off to the pearly gates how the Lord would've done, but from what I hear, it seems like you're doing it how Willy would have wanted now.

Martin smiles as Gretchen motions to the bartender for another round.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Say, what verse was too tacky to read at the funeral?

MARTIN

Am I converting you?

GRETCHEN

I ain't that drunk.

Martin chuckles before getting serious again.

MARTIN

Deuteronomy Chapter 32, verse 35:
 "To me belongeth vengeance and
 Recompense;
 (MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

their foot shall slide in due time:
for the day of their calamity is at
hand, and the things that shall
come upon them make haste."

Gretchen is surprised by the harshness of the verse as she takes a drink.

GRETCHEN

Whew. Don't remember that one being
in Sunday school.

Martin smiles.

Gretchen takes yet another long swig.

MARTIN

You know, I can't pay you for being
a bodyguard if you're drunk.

GRETCHEN

Stop your worryin'. I talked to the
boys at the front about keeping
Milly and her gang away for the
night.

The Waitress brings over another round of shots.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Besides, you're not drinking with
an employee tonight, you're
drinking with a friend.

She hands Martin the second shot, which he reluctantly takes.
They drink together.

THUNK - Gretchen slams her SHOT GLASS back down on the table
with authority.

INT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

Hamlin is seated comfortably at his desk with a book in hand
as the Marshal stares out the window at the bar down the
street. He is obviously uneasy.

BARNES

(stern)

I don't like it. Too many drunk
folks gettin' riled up on liquor
with death fresh on the mind.

HAMLIN

It's a celebration of life, not death.

Barnes scoffs at this notion as he wanders back and forth between windows.

BARNES

How come you haven't disarmed this town?

HAMLIN

Never had a reason to. Besides, if some law breakers came into this town with intent to do harm, they wouldn't much listen to the rules anyway.

Barnes stands silently, not responding.

Hamlin looks up from his book to see if he is still waiting for something.

BARNES

This celebration of life goes much longer and I'll be shuttin' it down myself. Every hour this continues is that much closer to disaster.

Hamlin scowls in silence, knowing that there is no point in arguing.

INT. SALOON - LATER THAT EVENING

Martin is now looking decently drunk in the same spot that he was in before. His pint is about halfway gone, and he has a full shot in front of him.

Gretchen makes her way back from a dart game and assumes her position seated across the table. She yells back at the men playfully as she sits down:

GRETCHEN

Yeah well maybe I'll start throwing with my good arm if you can win a game!

She laughs and takes a seat, but stifles her laughter when she sees Martin looking gloomy and alone.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

What's stuck in your craw there Marty?

Martin snaps out of his trance and grabs his beer.

MARTIN

Nothing.

GRETCHEN

I can tell you're a preacher
because you ain't much good at
lyin'.

Martin chuckles at this comment.

MARTIN

I'd forgotten how liquor unlocks
parts of the mind.

GRETCHEN

(laughs)
And tongue for most... Well... that
and your undergarments.

Gretchen realizes that Martin is not amused by her jokes and matches his grim mood.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

(concerned)
What's on your mind?

Martin shuffles uncomfortably in his seat before speaking.

MARTIN

I killed Willy.

GRETCHEN

I reckon I'm not sure what you
mean.

MARTIN

Willy's only sin was trying to save
a sinner.

GRETCHEN

Dammit, Martin. Stop speaking in
riddles and say something I'll
understand.

MARTIN

Willy was in Red Hill Creek when
all of those people were killed,
but he didn't kill them.

Gretchen sits silently, still unsure of what Martin is talking about. She has a look of curiosity painted on her face.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

I did.

GRETCHEN

You mean like you said a prayer or
gave him liquor or something,
right?

Martin picks up his shot and prepares to take it.

MARTIN

The man came up behind me, grabbed
my shoulder...

He pauses to take his shot, which turns into a flashback to
the night at Red Hill Creek.

FLASHBACK - INT. BAR (RED HILL CREEK) - NIGHT

Martin is standing at the bar.

It is a small saloon with maybe 15 or 20 other people inside.
He sets down his empty shot glass and wipes his mouth with
the back of his wrist.

A hand lands firmly on his shoulder and spins him around.

MARTIN (V.O.)

Accused me of cheating at the table
where I took all of his money.

Martin has a calm but angry look while the man accosts him.

PRESENT - INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Martin looks down and rubs his glass of beer nervously.

MARTIN

He drew on me.

The jubilation of the party gives way to silence as we return
to the flashback.

FLASHBACK - INT. BAR (RED HILL CREEK) - NIGHT

Martin draws his GUN with blinding speed - BANG, BANG -
killing the man who had his gun drawn.

The harsh reality of the gunshot rings throughout the bar.

After a moment of shock in the saloon, men begin standing and drawing their guns.

GUNFIRE rings out as black powder smoke fills the air.

PRESENT

Martin takes a drink from his glass and clears his throat. His eyes fix on the glass in front of him.

FLASHBACK

He feathers the hammer with his left hand in a crisp, smooth motion, felling man after man. The GUNSHOTS ring out, accompanied only by the THUDS of BODIES hitting the floor and CHAIRS being SHUFFLED and BROKEN.

Martin moves behind a large support pillar to reload his gun.

CLINK CLINK TINK - The EMPTY SHELLS fall to the ground at his feet before he shoves fresh cartridges in their place.

THWAP, THWAP - BULLETS are buried into the front of the post behind which he has found refuge.

He steps out from the pillar with his gun raised and blazing.

CLOSE ON: Martin's face red with anger, teeth clenched, and veins bulging from his neck as he unleashes hell in the bar.

PRESENT

Martin's eyes haven't moved from his glass.

MARTIN

And then... it was over.

FLASHBACK

The bar is silent. Several men are bleeding out on the floor, coming to terms with their impending death.

Martin's face slowly turns from anger to understanding as he observes the aftermath of his own work.

DOGS BARK in the background from outside the bar. He can hear MEN YELLING and FOOTSTEPS coming down the road.

As his adrenaline fueled breathing slows, he takes one last look before stepping over a body and stumbling out the front door.

PRESENT - INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Gretchen sits silently. Her brows are raised as she listens intently.

MARTIN

That was the day that I became
Martin Mitchell, and killed
Willy... And why I have to avenge
him.

Gretchen leans back in her chair to absorb the new situation that this information has brought with it.

A long beat

Gretchen leans forward and speaks calmly.

GRETCHEN

Your brother was grown, and he made
his choice. Nobody can outrun their
sins. You hid from em' for a long
time, but your brother's paid your
debt. Leave this town and live in
peace.

MARTIN

I can't live knowing that I let her
walk away.

GRETCHEN

You can, and you should. A good man
wouldn't let Willy's sacrifice go
to waste.

MARTIN

I never claimed to be a good man.

GRETCHEN

You're a preacher for goodness
sake! What would your Bible say to
do? I know you ain't reading that
Book all the time for nothing.

MARTIN

I read the Bible because it holds
the weaknesses of good men.

GRETCHEN

Bullshit. You can sit here and tell me that you're the devil himself and I won't believe it. You helped me when I was in need. I don't care what you say Mitchell. You are not weak, but you are good.

Martin sits in silence with no response, staring at his drink.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

And I think you'd be a damn fool to go stirring up violence... But, if you're set on it, I won't let you do it alone.

MARTIN

I can't let you do that.

Gretchen whips out her pistol and slams it on the table in front of Martin with the barrel pointing toward her.

GRETCHEN

Then you'll have to kill me now.

CLICK - She pulls the HAMMER back and sits back in her chair, staring Martin dead in the eyes.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

It's your job to bring people to Jesus, right? I suppose he doesn't much care how you get 'em there.

Martin puts his hand on the gun and slowly releases the hammer to avoid firing it. He slides it back across the table to Gretchen.

MARTIN

That's enough foolish talk for one night.

Gretchen nods and places the gun back in its holster.

Marshal Barnes enters the saloon with shotgun in hand; his voice bellowing through the hall.

BARNES

Alright folks! Party's done and over with. Time to head home.

The crowd largely ignores Barnes, as a drunk, OLD MAN approaches him with a shot in his hand. He is older, small and wiry.

OLD MAN

Hey law man, you wanna drink?

Barnes ignores the man, looking over his head at the crowd who is not moving quickly enough for his taste.

BARNES

I said the party's over! Now move out, on the double!

The Old Man's drink splashes onto Barnes' face.

The Old Man laughs uproariously as he turns around and yells at his friends.

OLD MAN

I told y'all I'd do it if I saw him tonight! I ain't no-

The Old Man is cut off as the Marshal grabs him by the neck, picks him up, and slams him down through the table next to him, sending splinters flying.

The Old Man is knocked out, laying motionless in the wreckage of the table.

Barnes looks up at the crowd who is in shocked silence.

A beat.

They all begin to leave in a hurry, fearing for their own safety.

A couple of men pick up the Old Man on their way out.

Martin and Gretchen are still seated after everyone files out. Barnes approaches.

BARNES

I'm sorry to have to end your night like that.

MARTIN

A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.

BARNES

Glad you understand. Goodnight.

Barnes tips his hat and exits the saloon.

The pair are left alone for a moment before Martin gets up and prepares to leave.

MARTIN

Meet me here tomorrow at half past three.

Gretchen nods in silence as Martin walks away.

EXT. GENERAL STORE PORCH - DAY

Milly is sitting on the porch chewing on a piece of grass. She watches intently as Martin exits Hamlin's office across the street.

Martin and Hamlin shake hands.

Gretchen is leaning against the wall with a cigarette in her mouth when he exits, and she joins Martin as he walks away.

The pair walk together across the road from Milly.

MARTIN

I thought I told you three o'clock.

GRETCHEN

Half past, actually. You're still a bad liar.

Martin chuckles and shakes his head.

A man, one of Milly's cohorts, HENCHMAN2, steps in front of the pair. They stop.

HENCHMAN2

Miss Milly politely requests an audience with you in the saloon, Mr. Preacher.

Martin looks across the road and makes eye contact with Milly. Martin nods.

Milly stands and strolls toward the saloon, which is a couple of buildings down.

The pair walk in the same direction. No one is in an apparent rush.

As Gretchen begins to follow, the henchman reaches out and grabs her arm.

HENCHMAN2 (CONT'D)

She didn't say nothin' about you goin' --

Gretchen whips around in the blink of an eye, now holding her gun to his chin.

HENCHMAN2 (CONT'D)

(shaky)

I suppose she won't mind.

She holsters her gun and walks with Martin, who paused to wait for her.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Gretchen and Martin enter the saloon and see Milly already at the bar. Martin nods to Gretchen, who takes a seat on the left side of the bar, a couple of tables away.

Martin approaches the bar and stands next to Milly, looking straight ahead.

The bartender puts down two beers in front of the pair.

Martin reaches in his pocket to get some money.

MILLY

Already paid.

Martin looks at her before taking a sip. He looks forward again as he speaks.

MARTIN

Thanks.

MILLY

Thank Willy, he bought it.

Milly takes a long drink while Martin pushes his drink away and composes himself before speaking.

MARTIN

You should have left.

MILLY

I suppose I just don't like doing what I'm told.

MARTIN

Is that it? Just a blind rebel?

MILLY

You have no idea what I am.

MARTIN

Maybe not. But I know what you've done, and that much cannot be ignored.

A beat.

MILLY

I'll take no pleasure in killing a preacher.

MARTIN

Then why do it?

MILLY

Because I have an inkling that you just might try to kill me.

MARTIN

Woman's intuition?

MILLY

Man's nature.

Martin reaches in his pocket and pulls out some change, which he puts in front of Milly for the drink. She finishes her beer.

MARTIN

There's no reason for these innocent people to get hurt.

MILLY

No one is innocent, but I think, being a preacher, you probably know that.

Milly motions to the bar tender and he begins to clear the bar.

As he walks from table to table the few people that are there scramble out.

He approaches Gretchen's table but she simply points her gun at him to send him off.

Martin walks to the far end of the bar on the left side of the room, and Milly walks to the right. Their FOOTSTEPS ECHOING through the silence.

Gretchen doesn't move from her seat.

The bartender leaves out the back door behind the bar.

Martin and Milly face each other in a classic Western standoff.

Before they can draw, Milly puts her fingers in her mouth and lets out a loud whistle.

A group of men, seven or eight strong, file in from the upstairs balcony and the front door.

Martin watches without a reaction as they come to rest on Milly's side of the room, behind her.

Gretchen stands, holsters her gun, and moves beside Martin in an attempt to make it a more fair fight.

MILLY (CONT'D)

Miss, I have no quarrel with you,
but if you intend to stand with a
man intent on killing me...

Gretchen does not respond, but keeps her gaze on Milly's men.

The eyes of Milly's posse shift around the room.

FLOORBOARDS CREAK and GROAN under the shifting weight of the anxious men.

Hands slowly move toward hips...

A beat...

One of Milly's henchman draws his gun.

BANG - Martin draws in the blink of an eye, *SHOOTING* the man dead before he could even raise his gun. There is a stunned silence in the room as the lifeless *BODY* hits the floor with a *THUD*.

A moment later, Milly's men begin drawing their pistols in unison.

Martin *FIRES* three more *ROUNDS*, dropping three more of her henchman.

Milly and Gretchen use this time to flip tables and take cover. Both have their guns drawn and prepare to fight.

Milly's men send a hail storm of bullets toward Martin, who dives behind the corner of the bar.

THUNK THUNK THUNK - *BULLETS SLAM* into the wood, sending splinters from the wooden bar flying into the air.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Marshal Barnes is on the far side of the room, packing his bags to leave.

Hamlin is seated at his desk, reading, as they hear the GUNSHOTS from the bar.

They both stop what they are doing and look at each other before grabbing shotguns and running toward the saloon.

INT. SALOON - SAME TIME

Martin is on the ground with his back against the bar as he reloads from cover. The floor is now littered with splinters and used shells.

GUNSHOTS sound as BULLETS HIT the corner of the bar sporadically as he grits his teeth.

We see from his bloody pant leg that he has sustained a gunshot to the thigh, though just a heavy graze.

Martin finishes reloading and makes eye contact with Gretchen, who nods.

They both rise in unison and FIRE several SHOTS. They duck back into cover immediately.

Two more of Milly's men fall, and she is left with only three remaining, plus herself.

Her brow is furrowed as she shoots angry looks to her men behind her.

She looks behind the bar from her cover and sees the bartender hiding in the doorway with gun in hand. She makes an aggressive motion toward Martin.

He nods.

Martin stands and lets more BULLETS FLY toward the table that Milly is hiding behind.

KATHUNK THUNK - She jerks her head back to avoid the SPLINTERING WOOD.

The bartender swings from the back door and points his gun directly at Martin, only a few feet away.

POW POW - He FIRES at the same time that a bullet from Gretchen's gun strikes him, jerking him to the right when he fires.

The LAMP that is hanging on the wall next to Martin EXPLODES from the bartender's bullet, which narrowly missed Martin's head. The glass shards and oil fly into the side of Martin's face, sending him spinning to the ground.

The bartender also falls behind the bar, presumably dead from Gretchen's shot.

Martin's body lies motionless.

Milly peeks out from behind her cover to see Martin in a vulnerable state, and she is delighted. She begins to stand, forgetting that Gretchen still intends to fight.

KAPOW!

A SHOTGUN BLAST cuts through the air, sending Milly back behind her table.

The Marshal is in the doorway with his shotgun pointed in the air, barrel smoking. Debris falls from the ceiling.

Hamlin stands behind him.

BARNES

That's enough! Throw down your guns
and come out!

No one does as he says. Milly yells in his direction.

MILLY

No shortage of men trying to tell
me what to do!

BARNES

This is not a man speaking! It's
the law.

While everyone is distracted by the Marshal...

BANG!

Barnes falls to the ground, dead.

TINK TINK TINK--A SHELL RATTLES to the floor as Milly slides a fresh cartridge into her gun's cylinder.

Martin stirs on the ground.

MILLY

(cackling)
Well then I guess the law is dead!

Hamlin is wide-eyed, still standing in the doorway.

Milly's henchman pops out from cover and takes aim at Hamlin.

BANG!

He dives to Martin's side of the room. The wall where Hamlin was just moments before is splintered.

Martin is now on his knees, rising.

Milly looks up to see him rise, and her look of jubilation turns to a scowl. She yells to her cohorts:

MILLY (CONT'D)
Let's finish this! I'm tired of
this Godforsaken town.

Martin recovers from his shock and moves back behind the bar with haste.

We see his face dripping with blood, oil and small shards of glass as he reloads his gun once more.

MARTIN
(under heavy breath)
God hasn't forsaken it yet.

Milly snarls and grits her teeth before whistling once more.

The last of her men come out of the woodwork; double the number from before. Some stay on the balcony of the second floor, many join Milly on her side of the bar, and others wait in the windows outside.

The trio are now cornered and greatly outnumbered.

Chaos ensues.

Martin begins FIRING while bobbing up and down.

He sees a man try to flank Hamlin through the window - *POP POP* - and drops him.

Hamlin flashes him a thankful look.

Gretchen FIRES while moving behind a pillar, and drops a man who makes a bold charge toward Martin.

Hamlin SHOOTS blindly from an overturned table.

Milly and her men let loose a hailstorm of BULLETS, which SPLINTER the inside of the bar, leaving debris on the floor and in the air. A thick layer of gun smoke sits in the saloon, growing with each shot fired.

Gretchen and Martin reload at the same time as Gretchen yells out over the GUNFIRE:

GRETCHEN
We gotta move, Marty!

Martin rises and flips haphazardly over the bar. The GUNSHOTS follow his motion, but none land.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)
Gotta look where you're shootin',
Deputy!

Hamlin gets off of his ass and uses Miss Tellis' knife to cut the sling that prohibited him from shooting properly. He grits his teeth and crouches at the ready.

Martin looks around from the floor behind the bar and spots a stack of bar rags and matches.

One of Milly's men comes down the stairs and has a clear shot at Martin behind the bar.

KAPOW - His body is lifted against the wall by Hamlin's SHOTGUN ROUND, leaving his lifeless carcass to tumble down the stairs.

Just after, a MOLOTOV COCKTAIL comes flying out from behind the bar.

It SMASHES into the middle of Milly's men, spreading the fire quickly.

Several men stand up to avoid the flames.

MILLY
(to men)
Stay down!

Milly calmly pulls her loose clothing away from the flames and pats out the small flame that clung to her jacket.

MARTIN
(to Hamlin and Gretchen)
Come on!

Martin rises at the same time as the panicked men, and he SHOOTS them one by one.

Gretchen and Hamlin dart toward the bar and jump over while Milly's men are distracted. They hightail it out the back door.

Milly lets several SHOTS off toward them as they flee, but none land. Milly rises, now fuming.

MILLY
Go! Get after them!

She forcefully shoves her men toward the front and back doors.

MILLY (CONT'D)
Circle around back. You two, go out
the front.

One man is comically trying to pat out the flame that is traveling up his pants.

Milly wastes no time, SHOOTING him dead before exiting the front door and going the opposite direction of her men.

EXT. SALOON REAR - DAY

Martin, Gretchen and Hamlin all stumble out behind the bar into a storage/waste area. There are crates stacked along with piles of large canvas bags, and several stacks of barrels.

Martin is limping from his gunshot wound while carrying the shotgun that the bartender dropped, along with a handful of shells from behind the bar.

Gretchen and the deputy begin to run away, but Martin leans on a stack of feed bags with no intention of leaving.

Gretchen sees this and comes back.

Hamlin looks back but continues to run away.

GRETCHEN
Come on. There are too many. We
have to go.

MARTIN
I'm tired of running and hiding.

GRETCHEN
It's not running, it's living to
fight another day.

Martin looks up at Gretchen while handing her the shotgun and shells. He chuckles as he references what she said when they first met.

MARTIN

The truth is, I've been dragging
death behind me for so long that
I've actually come to feel lonely
without it.

As he finishes speaking, men begin to burst from the back door.

Martin shoves Gretchen forcefully behind a stack of crates before he fells the oncoming men with several quick SHOTS.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Stay down!

Men also come from the alleyway beside the saloon, and even SHOOT from windows above the first level.

Martin empties his gun and ducks behind the stack of feed bags that he was leaning on.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Gun!

Gretchen pulls her pistol out and they both toss their guns to each other across the open gap.

Gretchen begins reloading his gun while Martin rises and SHOOTS with blinding speed.

The man that he shoots falls out of the window, landing on the already growing stack of bodies outside the back door.

Martin is forced to one knee as he is struck by another bullet in the same leg. He continues to FIRE until his gun runs out and he rolls back behind the feed bags.

He tosses his gun back to Gretchen, and Gretchen tosses him back his loaded pistol. He holsters it and looks at the shotgun.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Gun!

Gretchen tosses the double barrelled shotgun in the air.

Martin rises, steps out of cover, grabs and shoulders the gun in one smooth motion. KAPOW KAPOW - He pulls both triggers quickly, sending men flying backward.

Gretchen watches in awe as Martin fights.

He SHOOTS wildly, but is now becoming overwhelmed.

A man pops out of a neighboring window with a RIFLE and FIRES, catching Martin in the left shoulder.

Martin is cocking his gun with one hand now, still faster than expected.

He takes another bullet to his right arm. He tries to continue to fire, but is hardly able.

He is struck in the other leg, bringing him to his knees again.

Gretchen watches, her face showing helplessness and agony.

Milly enters the rear of the building from the opposite alleyway, completely alone. She raises her gun toward Martin, who has almost moved behind the feed bags again.

She has him dead to rights as he tries to reload.

She moves closer, trying to get as close as possible before shooting.

BANG! - A GUNSHOT rips her shooting arm away from her body, sending her spinning to the ground.

Hamlin is seen standing with his shotgun trained on her with his barrel smoking.

The GUNSHOTS CEASE completely as Milly lays against a pile of bags in shock, staring at what is left of her ragged flesh that was her arm just moments before.

Milly's men see her on the ground and realize that the fight is over, and they are now all wanted criminals. They turn heel and scamper off, eager to leave town.

Gretchen, Hamlin and Martin are left alone with Milly.

Hamlin and Gretchen rush to Martin, who is barely conscious, leaning against the stack of bags. Half of his face is now swollen and covered in blood.

GRETCHEN

Help! We need a doctor!

She looks around to see everyone in town running to the saloon, fighting the fire. No one responds to her calls.

Martin puts his hand on her arm to get her attention, then presses his finger against his lips.

He speaks with labored breath, quietly.

MARTIN

Help me to her.

Hamlin and Gretchen help him stand and almost drag him to Milly.

As they approach she looks up, holding what is left of her arm, but no longer in shock. She is pale with blood loss, most of it being in a pool around her.

Martin comes to rest in front of her, and raises his pistol.

MILLY

Who are you?

Martin takes his left arm off of Gretchen's shoulders and stands on his own.

He pulls up his sleeve to reveal the "M" brand on his arm.

She chuckles at the sight.

MILLY (CONT'D)

Never thought I'd be killed by a
ghost, much less the ghost of a
man.

Her smirk turns to sorrow as Martin keeps his gun aimed at her.

A beat.

Martin grabs Gretchen's bloodied hand with his own, and guides it to his right hand, in which he holds his peacemaker. He transfers the gun from his hand to Gretchen's, keeping it trained on Milly the entire time.

Once the gun is in her hand, Martin and Milly make eye contact.

She gives a sincere nod of thanks.

Milly looks Gretchen in the eyes.

Gretchen holds her gaze.

She FIRES.

Men and women are still fighting the fire out front as Hamlin and Gretchen pull Martin back to where he fell originally.

Gretchen starts to tear away the clothing around his wounds, but he stops her again.

She looks at him, and he motions as if he has a secret to tell her.

She leans in to listen, but instead of speaking, he grabs Gretchen's holstered gun.

She looks down, confused.

He turns the gun toward himself in his hands, and once again brings Gretchen's hand to the pistol.

She shakes her head and holds back emotion when she realizes what she wants him to do.

GRETCHEN
No, I, I couldn't.

Martin is fading fast.

He nods to Hamlin, who is standing behind Gretchen, watching.

Hamlin nods back.

Martin gives Gretchen a sorrowful look and a slow nod, puts his hand over Gretchen's on the gun, and places the barrel on his chest.

The GUN FIRES.

Hamlin looks for a moment before turning and trotting off to help the fire brigade.

Gretchen holsters her gun and places Martin's in his lap, then covers it with his hands. A tear rolls down her cheek as she leans in and touches his cheek to hers, giving a quick kiss as a final goodbye.

She turns and heads off to help with the fire, but pauses after a few steps and turns back to look at Martin.

She approaches and kneels down to him once more.

Her hands move to Martin's inner left breast pocket, and she pulls out his Bible. She then lifts his hands and places it on top of the gun, before resting his hands back on top of the two objects.

She rises and departs, leaving us to study the final conflicted image of the real Willy "Mayhem" Mitchell.

EXT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Gretchen rides up to the jailhouse and dismounts. Her horse is draped in her gear, making it seem that she is heading out of town. She ties up and walks to the open door.

INT. JAILHOUSE - DAY

Hamlin is seated at his desk doing paperwork.

Gretchen pauses at the door to knock on the frame before entering.

Hamlin looks up and welcomes her.

GRETCHEN
You wanted to see me?

HAMLIN
Yes, please, sit.

He sits back down with papers in hand.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)
(let's out a sigh)
You doing OK?

GRETCHEN
I'll survive.

HAMLIN
I don't doubt that... I don't know how to go about being sensitive on this subject. Martin told me what happened at Red Hill Creek. Being that you killed Martin, you are entitled to the bounty on William Mitchell.

Hamlin reaches behind his desk and pulls out a thick envelope of money and puts it in front of Gretchen.

Gretchen is wide eyed as she picks it up and flips through the bills.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)
There wasn't much else to be dealt with for Milly. It was mostly just the money, some clothes, guns, ammunition. Oddly, two full jars of pickles. I guess we all have our vices.

Gretchen speaks without looking up.

GRETCHEN
The horse.

HAMLIN
Hm?

GRETCHEN
They were for her horse.

HAMLIN
Oh...

GRETCHEN
What's to come of the animal?

HAMLIN
The bank will assume ownership and
put it up for auction.

GRETCHEN
I'd like to buy her outright.

HAMLIN
You'll have to take that up with
the bank.

Gretchen stands abruptly to leave.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)
Before you go, one more thing.

Gretchen sits back down.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)
I could use a steady hand around
here, and you've proven yourself
more than capable.

Hamlin pulls out a star shaped deputy badge and sets it on
the desk in front of Gretchen.

She puts the envelope in her bag and picks up the badge,
which she stares at in silence, pondering.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)
What's on your mind?

GRETCHEN
Is it difficult being a law man?

HAMLIN
Sometimes.

GRETCHEN

It's just, how do you know who you're supposed to be protecting? People kill each other every day, sometimes it's legal, sometimes it ain't. I met a preacher that prayed and drank and murdered in the same week. I met a lady that killed all kinds of men, but didn't do anything wrong until she shot down one wearin' a badge? It seems like everybody around here just goes about their business like nothing ever happened. Am I the only one that doesn't know what the hell is going on?

HAMLIN

Being the law isn't easy. I'd be lying if I said I haven't lost sleep over trying to figure out the right thing to do. Not every question has an easy answer. It's up to us to figure out the best, most fair solution. It ain't always easy, but it ain't always hard either.

There is a long pause before Hamlin speaks again.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)

(light hearted)

Plus, we'll pay you.

The pair share a chuckle before Hamlin goes on.

HAMLIN (CONT'D)

Gretchen, I wouldn't offer you the job if I didn't think you were the right woman for it. Your gunslingin' is impressive and all, but I want you here because of your head and your heart, not your steel. Think about it. Keep the badge while you mull it over. See how it feels.

The banker knocks on the frame of the open front door. He is carrying a document case with a large leather strap wrapped around it.

BANKER

Is this a bad time?

HAMLIN

Good as any, come in.

The Banker shuffles in and sets the case on the desk. He shuffles through the papers in the case.

BANKER

I'm glad I caught you before you left town...

Gretchen and Hamlin share a perplexed glance.

The Banker pulls out loose pieces of paper and studies them.

BANKER (CONT'D)

Ah. Here we are. This may come as a surprise, but you are both mentioned in the will of the deceased; one Martin Mitchell.

The Banker hands each of them one of the papers. They both study them.

BANKER (CONT'D)

It seems that you both made a strong impression on the man in your short time together.

GRETCHEN

...The house? He gave me his house?

BANKER

His brother's house, yes. It's yours to sell, live in; whatever you choose. Deputy, it looks like you'll be making that trip through the mountain road after all, at least to deal with his - or rather - your estate.

Hamlin is also taken aback, unsure of what to say.

The pair study the paperwork in stunned silence.

EXT. WILLIAM'S GRAVE - DUSK

Gretchen and Hamlin ride up to Willy's old house. The outside has been cleaned and tidied up.

Gretchen is riding her own horse and has Milly's old horse in tow. They dismount, tie up, and go inside.

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DUSK

The pair enter the home, now even emptier than before. The rocking chair remains, but the bottle of booze is gone.

Hamlin checks the back room and behind the house for squatters before he comes back through and heads toward the door.

HAMLIN

If there were any squatters here,
they at least cleaned up nicely.

GRETCHEN

You're leavin' town?

Hamlin nods.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

You gonna make it back?

HAMLIN

I don't know.

A beat.

GRETCHEN

(nervous, shy)

I suppose I could keep an eye on
the place for ya, at least until
you get back.

HAMLIN

Much appreciated.

Hamlin tips his hat and walks out the door with a smirk.

Gretchen is left alone.

She walks to the window above the sink and looks out at the open prairie. There is a hill at the base of a mountain not too far off that shows greenery against the desert backdrop.

Gretchen takes a deep breath and lets it out before letting a smile creep into the corners of her mouth.

A slow, orchestral version of "*Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*" begins PLAYING.

EXT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DUSK

Gretchen heads outside and takes her saddle and saddle bags off of her horse.

She then unties Milly's horse from the post, takes the harness off its head and bit out of its mouth, and leaves the equipment draped on the railing before heading back inside.

She emerges with the rocking chair from the living room and places it on the porch. She sits and relaxes, getting used to her new home.

Milly's horse begins to sniff the ground and slowly wander in the direction of the green hill in the distance. She is in no rush. Gretchen pays it no mind.

INT. MARTIN'S CHURCH - DAY

"Come Thou Fount" continues PLAYING over the scene.

Miss Tellis is off to the right on the rear of the stage standing with a Bible in hand while the choir and choir director lead the church in song. She sings along.

We cannot hear what they are singing, but most have smiles on their faces.

The choir director, Mrs. Beth, is facing the congregation and moving her arms to direct them. All eyes, including the choir, are fixed on her.

We see through the window at the rear of the church that Hamlin approaches on his horse.

Miss Tellis notices from the front, and a wide, excited smile overtakes her soft face.

Hamlin dismounts and ties his own horse to the post. He then walks out of sight and comes back with Martin's horse, which is carrying Martin's belongings.

Miss Tellis' face slowly turns to crestfallen as she realizes that Martin is not with him. Her eyes well up with tears.

Hamlin appears in the door of the church. He has a sad, sympathetic look as he makes eye contact with Miss Tellis from the back of the church. He nods in silent greeting.

Miss Tellis stops singing, returns the nod and cracks a brave smile, holding back tears.

Hamlin reaches down to his belt and removes Miss Tellis' knife. He then reaches into his inner breast pocket and removes Martin's bloodstained Bible. He sets both of them down on the table at the back of church beside offering plates and communion supplies.

Miss Tellis blinks away a tear.

Hamlin looks at her once more before turning and walking out of the Church. He takes a seat on one of the benches just outside the entrance and bows his head.

Miss Tellis gathers herself, wipes the tear from her face, puts on a smile, and continues singing.

EXT. GRASSY HILL - DUSK

Milly's horse slowly climbs the hill.

When she reaches the top, she puts her head down and enjoys the lush grass.

She is content.

The MUSIC FADES, giving way to the SOUNDS of CRICKETS and a soft wind.

FADE OUT.