

A
MAGNIFICENT DEATH
FROM A
SHATTERED HAND

by
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Raw Studios Draft

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`BLACK SCREEN AND TITLE

The willing, destiny guides them. The unwilling, destiny drags them.

-Seneca

BLACKNESS:

RISING UP from UNDER the ground, revealing

EXT. DESERT - DAY

WIDE. Mountains. The sun beats mercilessly down on a
TWISTED, OLD TREE in the middle of the wasteland.

From the crook of a gnarled limb, a man HANGS FROM THE
NECK on a CHEAP, FRAYED ROPE.

This is JONAS BARNES, late 30's, sun beaten and scruffy,
skin chapped from the elements, lips dry and cracked.

The WIND BLOWS, rocking the hanged man. The tree limb
CREAKS under the pressure and bows a little.

BOOT TOES scrape the top of an empty WHISKEY BOTTLE,
sitting upright in the dirt just below him. Seeking to
ease some of the weight from their owner.

The noose LOOSENS a touch as Jonas' toes find purchase.

A LIZARD scuttles across the ground, then hops onto a
bundle of odds and ends strewn unceremoniously at the
base of the tree.

The toes SLIP from the bottle. The bottle tips, falls.
Jonas' boots dangle.

The rope between Jonas and the branch starts to FRAY.

A TUMBLEWEED rolls past. The SOUNDS OF THE DESERT are
deafening in the absence of anything else.

The fraying rope loosens more fibers as the wind rocks
Jonas' body back and forth.

The Lizard crawls onto a BATTERED CANTEEN and sits,
basking in the sun.

Finally the ROPE SNAPS and Jonas drops to the ground like
a wet sack of clothes.

The Lizard watches Jonas' body for signs of life.

Jonas COUGHS gently, then SUCKS IN AIR.

His eyes open slowly as the crust around the edges cracks.

He painfully rolls onto his back, stares up at the rope that marked him for death-- the NOOSE still around his neck.

His hands have been TIED loosely behind his back.

Curling his legs, he manages to work his hands over his boots. It takes a minute, but he gets his arms in front of him.

He gnaws at the thick rope with his teeth - no use.

He eyes his saddle bags and drags himself slowly over to them. Collapses on it, exhausted.

His hands, sunburned and dirty, reach out for the canteen. The Lizard scuttles off.

He rolls onto his back again and brings it to his lips.

Nothing.

The empty, teasing thing falls from his hands and rolls into the dirt. The Lizard hops back onto the canteen.

Jonas and the Lizard eye each other for a long silent beat.

Jonas' hands SHOOT OUT FAST and grabs for the Lizard but the Lizard DARTS AWAY into the dirt.

The Lizard watches Jonas with interest. Hops back onto the canteen, like he knows this dying man is no threat.

They eye each other again. IN A FLASH Jonas snatches the Lizard in one leathery claw. It squirms in his hand.

Jonas tears the squirming thing apart and drinks its blood.

He drops the dried remains of the reptile to the ground and wipes the blood from his lips.

He slowly turns to his supplies and rummages through them.

Everything is gone.

He gingerly sits up and stares into the distance. The heat shimmer melts the horizon line. There's nothing around for miles. Maybe death would have been better.

His eyes find a SET OF FOOTPRINTS in the sand. Then another. And two more sets.

EXT. DESERT - LATE AFTERNOON

Moving with almost superhuman effort, Jonas stumbles across the scorching landscape, tracking the prints.

He licks his cracked lips, but there is no moisture on his tongue. His eyes squint in the blinding sun and dry breeze.

He reaches a dune, falling to his knees at the foot of it, nearly dead.

Vultures circle with casual anticipation overhead.

He pulls himself up through the shifting sand and arrives at the top of the dune. He stays low as he squints in the distance.

JONAS' POV:

A hundred yards out, THREE DIRTY MEN, (MINERS) and one DARK HAIRED WOMAN sit around a makeshift camp, building a fire. A PACK MULE is tied off, not far away.

Jonas allows his head to drop onto the sand.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The THREE MEN. Illuminated by the flickering fire, sipping something warm from tin cups, laughing.

The woman, CATHERINE (27), sits apart from them, bundled against the cold and staring off into the darkness.

One of the men stands, walks up next to Catherine, and urinates near her. She turns away.

We see she's TIED UP.

The pissing man turns to his pals, smiles a toothless grin.

NEW ANGLE ON: Jonas. Watching from the shadows.

EXT. CAMP - LATER

Everyone is asleep. The campfire burns lower.

Jonas appears and silently crabs up behind one of the men, asleep between a stack of brown sac blankets.

CLOSE: the Miners pantleg has ridden up, revealing a BOOT KNIFE.

Jonas reaches slowly, eyeing the MINER, snoring fitfully.

He teases the knife from the SNORING MINERS boot.

Sets to sawing the rope between his wrists. It takes a minute.

Now he crawls within an inch of the SNORING MINER and spots a LENGTH OF THE SAME FRAYED ROPE sitting next to the man's bundle of supplies.

He grabs the rope and uncoils it.

He slowly slips it around the neck of the Snoring Miner and YANKS BACK HARD.

The man awakens, eyes widen in shock when the man digests who it is in front of him.

As Jonas tightens the rope hard and the man gags...

EXT. HANGING TREE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The THREE MINERS surround Jonas with guns drawn, around the tree that he will eventually be hanging from.

One of them leads the Pack Mule along, Catherine atop it. She is BOUND AT THE WRISTS. TEARS streak her dirty face.

SNORING MINER

Hello friend.

Jonas watches them intently, his hand lowers slowly towards his bag.

The Snoring Bandit kicks Jonas against the tree.

SNORING MINER (CONT'D)

You best hinder yourself, boy.

He cocks the revolver.

SNORING MINER (CONT'D)
Where is your horse?

JONAS
It died.

SNORING MINER
Your pistola?

JONAS
I don't own one.

The Bandits laugh. One miner PLUCKS Jonas' HAT from his head, puts it on himself.

SNORING MINER
A sheep among lions.

Jonas is silent.

SNORING MINER (CONT'D)
Be certain. We are lions and we
are hungry.

Snoring Bandit cocks the revolver, points the barrel at Jonas' head.

SNORING MINER (CONT'D)
Your money.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

The Snoring Miner's hands reach up to the rope and flick uselessly at the cord.

Jonas yanks even harder and the man stops his struggling. His hands drop and the man goes limp, dead.

Jonas lets go of the rope, leaving it etched into the man's throat.

The girl, Catherine, stares at him.

He looks over at the TWO OTHER MEN-- still asleep.

He gets up and moves over to the SLEEPY MINER, who is resting fitfully with his mouth open.

He eyes the REVOLVER at the man's hip and teases it quietly out of its holster.

EXT. HANGING TREE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Jonas stares back at the bastard bandits.

The Sleepy Miner steps up.

SNORING MINER
Maybe he's stupid.

SLEEPY MINER
No, he gets our meaning.

Sleepy Miner removes A BULLET from his gunbelt. He shows it to Jonas.

SLEEPY MINER (CONT'D)
You know what this is?

JONAS
A bullet.

SLEEPY MINER
It costs money. Ten cents. Is your life worth ten cents?

JONAS
No.

SLEEPY MINER
No. Don't think it is.

Jonas starts to turn away and *CRACK!* Sleepy Miner drops him to one knee with a nasty punch to the chin. Sleepy Miner boots Jonas in the chest and he falls back in the dirt with a *THUD*.

SLEEPY MINER (CONT'D)
I reckon we'll hang you instead.

Catherine reacts with horror.

The Snoring Miner uncoils the rope at his side.

The Sleepy Miner kicks dirt in Jonas's face.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Jonas slides the barrel into the Sleepy Miner's mouth and COCKS the gun.

His eyes blink open with surprise and raw fear.

SLEEPY MINER
 (garbled over barrel)
 What the--

We see his hand move to his holster-- EMPTY.

Jonas pulls the trigger, BLOWING HIS HEAD OFF.

The THIRD MINER sits up, suddenly wide awake. He spots Jonas and reaches for the RIFLE at his side, cocks it in one quick motion and SHOOTs at Jonas.

Jonas dives behind a LARGE ROCK as a bullet chips the stone. Jonas breathes, leans out with his gun and BLAM! Another bullet splinters rock near his face.

The Sonofabitch can shoot.

EXT. HANGING TREE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The Third Miner PUNCHES JONAS in the face and laughs as the other two hoist him up by the noose around his neck.

Catherine watches from atop the Pack Mule. She is CRYING.

Jonas struggles and gags on the end of the rope.

SLEEPY MINER
 Should we yank down on his legs or what?

THIRD MINER
 No, let him hang loose a while. He'll be hanging there for hours before it gets to him.

Third Miner pulls a BOTTLE OF WHISKEY from his bag, finishes it off, and carefully sets the bottle upright beneath Jonas' feet.

THIRD MINER (CONT'D)
 Hair a' the dog, Sheep? To ease your sufferin'.

The men laugh.

THIRD MINER (CONT'D)
 Grab what you can drag.

Jonas chokes as they grab up his SADDLEBAGS. He toes the bottle, trying to balance himself on it. A LIZARD scuttles forward-- curious.

The Third Miner FINDS A FOLDED PIECE OF PARCHMENT and slips it into his own bag. They lead Catherine and the mule away.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Jonas waits. Listens. There is no sound. He puts his finger on the trigger, fortifies himself, leans out from behind the rock.

The THIRD MINER has leapt on the PACK MULE with his rifle. He swings around and Jonas fires TWICE. The Miner falls, gripping his chest.

After a beat, the PACK MULE keels over, also dead.

JONAS

Swell...

Jonas stands, surveys the carnage he has wrought-- shaken.

There is MOTION to his left and he swings the barrel over to bear down on Catherine. She's hog-tied and trying to get free.

CATHERINE

Please..

Jonas grabs the nearest CANTEEN, rips the top off and drowns in the contents, finishes it and tosses it aside.

He starts rifling the saddlebags on the ground with focus, emptying out bags and searching the pockets of the dead men.

He finds a folded piece of PARCHMENT PAPER in the shirt pocket of the Third Miner.

He pauses here and looks at it. Satisfied, he stuffs it into his pocket.

He finds a few plates of half-eaten BAKED BEANS and BREAD scattered about and digs in like a wild animal.

Catherine watches him, not sure how to feel anymore.

With the plates empty, he wipes his face and lays back on the ground, depleted.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Hello?

-but he's out cold.

EXT. CAMP - MORNING

Catherine AWAKENS to find Jonas standing over her with that BOOT KNIFE in his hand. He has strapped on the miner's GUN BELT and filled his bag with supplies. She cringes in fear.

CATHERINE

You too, huh?

He lowers the old blade and SEVERS THE ROPE binding her feet, but leaves her hands tied.

She rubs her sore legs and watches him walks away into the morning sun, saddle bags over his shoulder.

On his way out of camp he grabs his HAT from a dead Miner. He leaves behind the old sacs, SHOVELS, and gear.

EXT. A RIDGE - MORNING

Jonas stands on a nearby hill, refortified. He stares into the distance. He frowns, consults the parchment paper. He scans the horizon, then takes off walking.

EXT. A RIDGE - LATER

Catherine appears where he stood. Her bare feet are cut and bleeding, her dress is torn, her face and neck are dirty. She looks into the distance for Jonas, takes off after him.

EXT. DESERT - NOON

Jonas walks in the scorching sun. Catherine, hands still tied, follows ten steps behind him.

He looks back at her and she STOPS. She continues moving as soon as he does. He looks back again and she freezes. He calls over his shoulder.

JONAS

You following me?

CATHERINE

Of course. What else is there?

(beat)

Where - where are we?

Catherine approaches Jonas, closing the gap now.

JONAS

Town's thataway. Go on, now. You'll find the river.

CATHERINE

Please. I was kidnapped. Those men...

Jonas walks off.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I won't make it anywhere on my own.

He continues on. She waits a moment, then follows.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE - LATE AFTERNOON

THREE MANHUNTERS ON HORSEBACK appear, winding their way through the rocky mountainside.

The leader is an older gentleman, REED MARKHAM. He is powerfully built, and used to being the boss.

The middle man is INDIO, an INDIAN with an ageless, deeply lined face and worn farmhand clothing.

The third member is more boy than man. This is CAL MARKHAM (20s), Mr. Markham's son. He WEARS AN EYE PATCH over a BLOODY BANDAGE.

The trio comes upon a CLIFF and stops, overseeing the land before them.

The desert expands around them endlessly.

Mr. Markham makes a noise and the horses start up again in unison, heading down the path.

EXT. DESERT - AN HOUR LATER - LATE AFTERNOON

The Manhunters pass by the tree that tried to hang Jonas.

Mr. Markham spots something on the ground and rears the horses back. Everyone stops.

MR. MARKHAM

Indio.

Indio dismounts and approaches SETS OF FOOTPRINTS belonging to Jonas and the miners. He studies them.

Cal watches anxiously.

CAL

We should have brought more guns.

MR. MARKHAM

Hush now.

Indio BENDS DOWN and takes out a HIDDEN PAIR OF GLASSES that he slips on quickly. He examines the prints and just as quickly slips the glasses off and out of sight.

Indio stands and points where the prints lead.

INDIO

Four. And one mule. Carrying weight, maybe.

MR. MARKHAM

How many men did you say there were, Cal?

CAL

A good amount. Four or five of them. They took me from behind so I can't rightly be sure.

Markham is staring at the frayed ROPE still hanging from the tree. Indio follows his gaze.

INDIO

They wouldn't drag her all the way out here just to hang her...

MR. MARKHAM

Let's make some time before dark.

Indio jumps back up onto his horse and they ride off into the distance, following the tracks.

EXT. DESERT - SAME TIME - LATE AFTERNOON

Catherine walks behind Jonas.

CATHERINE

Hey. Do you mind cutting me loose here?

Jonas doesn't answer.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

When I have to piss do you want to hold my skirt up for me?

Jonas pauses. He takes out his knife and cuts the rope on her wrists. She looks him in the eyes.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Thanks. My name's Catherine. Most people call me Cat.

They hold each other's gaze for a moment. Catherine licks her lips. Jonas reaches in his bag, takes out a canteen. Looks like he's regretting even this small connection.

She takes it, drinks it down thirstily.

JONAS

Don't drink so fast. Make yourself sick.

She stops herself, hands it back to him.

CATHERINE

I'd do anything for a river or lake to get cleaned up in.

When Jonas looks away, something catches his eye. She follows his gaze. In the middle distance it looks like the figure of a WOMAN KNEELING.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Is she praying?

EXT. DESERT - LATE AFTERNOON

Jonas and Catherine approach the Woman from behind. Jonas pulls out his revolver, moves around her slowly, sees her face. She's Indian-- and dead. There's a shattered clay water jug next to her on the ground.

CATHERINE

Shoshone.

After a beat, they see MOVEMENT under the Woman's bunched up skirt. Jonas and Catherine's eyes bounce off each other.

Jonas bends down, lifts the Woman's skirt with the barrel of his revolver, revealing...

A BABY, just a few months old. Laying calmly in the shade of its dead Mother's legs.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Oh Lord.

Jonas blanches at the smell. Catherine moves in, drops to her knees, gently removes the Baby from between the Indian Woman's legs. The Baby is strangely calm.

JONAS
Should be dead already.

CATHERINE
Like you.

Their eyes meet. Then Catherine reaches for the canteen.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
For him, the Baby.

The Baby has dirt on it. She takes a long scarf from around the Indian's shoulders, wraps the Baby in it, runs water over its little body, gently rubbing away the grit.

Jonas turns to the Woman. Sees something he didn't before: a bullet hole in her head near the crown. A clean entry, very little blood.

Jonas does a 360 scan of the horizon line. As he does, the Woman's body tips forward. She hits the ground face first and sends up a cloud of dust.

JONAS
Maybe we should leave it.

CATHERINE
What?

JONAS
Maybe it belongs to someone.

CATHERINE
It belonged to her, that much is clear.
And it'll die out here.

Catherine gives him a DIRTY LOOK and storms off, holding her prize.

JONAS
Swell...

The exit wound on the back of the woman's head is the size of a mason jar cap. Jonas pulls her shawl over her face to cover her from the elements.

He tips his hat respectfully and turns back to see Catherine in the distance, holding the baby.

He whistles, and she stops and turns back.

Jonas points to the left and starts walking in that direction.

She waits a moment, then follows with their new member.

EXT. CAMP - SUNSET

Markham, Indio and Cal arrive at the camp where Jonas paid back the Miners.

The trio dismount and examine the two corpses. Indio pulls up the strangled Miner's shirt, presses his fingers against his chest, waits a moment, looks over at Markham.

INDIO

Last night. Ten hours ago, a little more.

Markham turns to Cal, who looks shocked at the sight of the man with half his head blown off. Markham sees his expression.

MARKHAM

Was he one of the men, Cal?

Cal looks up with his good eye.

CAL

Kinda hard to tell when the guy doesn't have a face.

Markham frowns.

MARKHAM

Lookit here then, boy.

Cal walks over to the man by his father and stares at the dead face.

EXT. THE MARKHAM RANCH - DAY (**FLASHBACK**)

A rambling three-story Victorian lords over a sweeping manicured plain. Two outlying barns and three corrals fill in the landscape around it. The acreage is fronted by a flowing river with willow trees running along one side.

Cal wanders through the trees, looking for his sister.

CAL

Catherine? Cat, I'm sorry.

(wipes his brow)

I di'n mean to hit ya, now come on, now.

He pushes through the thick willow branches as -

Catherine SCREAMS in the distance and it echoes through the woods.

CATHERINE (O.S.)

CAL!!

He rushes through the brambles wildly and comes upon a clearing.

There is a river running through it and across the shore Cal can see Catherine RUNNING from two men.

CAL

Hey!

One of the men looks over, it's the Snoring Miner.

Cal reaches for his revolver, but a RIFLE-BUTT COMES DOWN ON HIS EYE, smashing it in.

Cal drops to the ground, stunned, holding his bloody eye.

EXT. CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON - AS BEFORE (PRESENT)

Cal, scratching under his eye patch, walks over to the remains of the Snoring Miner, squats down and looks at his face.

CAL

Yeah. This is them.

MARKHAM

So where's my daughter...

Cal focuses his frustration on the Snoring Miner, pulls out his gun-

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

(hard, stops Cal cold)

Cal. Pull the supplies off the horses.
We'll make camp here.

CAL

Here? But--

MARKHAM

Mind what I say. Go.

Cal's face tightens, he slides his gun hard into his holster, heads toward the horses, where Indio is checking his horse's bit. As Cal begins pulling bags off the horse...

INDIO

(quietly)

My people believe that if you remove a dead man's eyes, his spirit won't be able to find his way home.

Cal looks at Indio, then at the strangled Miner's corpse.

CAL

He ain't Indian and neither am I.

INDIO

Doesn't mean anything to you, but it will to his spirit.

Cal fingers his weapon. Indio indicates a sturdy jagged stick on the ground.

INDIO (CONT'D)

A stick. It's quiet.

Indio walks away from the boy and slips his glasses out. He scans the horizon and SPOTS TWO TRACKS heading over a hill.

Cal looks toward his father, grabs up the stick.

MARKHAM

What do you think?

Indio joins Markham forty feet away, where he looks at the tracks. He points them out as he makes his glasses disappear.

INDIO

Two pairs, heading South.

MARKHAM

About what happened.

Cal glances up to make sure his Father's not looking, DRIVES THE STICK deep into the Miner's eye.

INDIO

After the kidnapping, they bring Miss Catherine here...

MARKHAM

To their leader. The man behind the
idea, no doubt.

INDIO

Their leader, yes.

MARKHAM

And he bushwhacked them.

INDIO

I think yes, Mr. Markham.

MARKHAM

And now he's got her all too himself...

Markham raises his eyes and follows his daughter's prints
into the distance. He turns back to Cal, who is
unpacking the horses.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Let's fork leather, Cal. They got half
a day on us. And pack those shovels.
We'll need them.

And as Cal glares at his Father...

EXT. DESERT - SAME TIME - SUNSET

Catherine and Jonas walk. The baby makes uncomfortable,
grunting sounds.

CATHERINE

Someone's hungry.

He looks over at her, glances down at the Baby.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

He's not the only one.

Without stopping Jonas removes a dried piece of jerky
from his leather bag.

She looks at it with disgust.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

What is *that*?

JONAS

Ain't seen cured beef before?

CATHERINE

Don't expect us to be *eating* that... A woman and a baby ought'nt to live like animals... A man ought to be able to find something *proper* for a woman and a baby -

Jonas sighs.

EXT. LOW VALLEY - NIGHT

Half a COOKED RABBIT turns on a spit over a fire. Catherine pinches tiny bits of moist meat from the bone and feeds the Baby.

Jonas' bloody knife lays on a rock near the skin of the rabbit. He cuts himself a leg and studies the parchment.

We hear the trickling of a RIVER nearby.

CATHERINE

Needs mother's milk. I'll get him back to Consuelo, she'll fix him. He's going to be a strong one, this baby. Gonna be a little heartbreaker, too with that smile.

She wipes the Baby's mouth. They lock eyes a beat. Jonas holds up the parchment, it's a crude MAP. Handmade. He points to a spot near some squiggly lines.

JONAS

Think there's some kind of town East of here, upriver? I'll drop you and the child off there and get on.

CATHERINE

Well, that's hospitable of you to volunteer. I don't much look forward to going back, to acknowledge the corn.

JONAS

Well. I'll drop you somewhere. But you don't wanna go on with me.

CATHERINE

What makes you so sure?

JONAS

(re: the map)

Country is crawling with Shoshone and outlaws who'd rape you just for the amusement of it.

CATHERINE
(quietly)
I'm sure I had enough of that.

Beat.

JONAS
How did you end up with them?

CATHERINE
...My Father. He's Reed Markham?

JONAS
Don't know the man.

CATHERINE
(surprised)
You're one of the few, he owns half the territory. Those men, worked his copper mines, said they were going to ransom me.

JONAS
Your father owns mines?

CATHERINE
He owns a lot of things. They said their friends died in the mines and that my father owed them money. I think they aimed to make me suffer for his sins.

JONAS
Sounds like a true story.

CATHERINE
Yes it does. My father - *Mr. Markham* - that's what he has me call him - *Mr. Markham*. *Mr. Markham* wouldn't pay for the bootstraps he used to pull himself up with, if he didn't have to. They would have thought twice if they knew what kind of man my father is.

JONAS
What kind of man is that?

CATHERINE
He may not know the difference between people and things, but he doesn't like to part with either.

They are quiet a moment. He lifts the map to study it. She gestures.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

May I?

Jonas hesitates.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You're holding it upside down.

She takes the map and turns it for him.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

See now? These mean mountains, running Eastward. River runs here.

Jonas studies her.

JONAS

Oh?

CATHERINE

Mr. Markham has a tracker, Indio. He taught me all about how to read land. This looks like a canyon or valley.

JONAS

Thank you.

CATHERINE

I can see how you'd get confused. That is some crude hands made that drawing. What's this mean, here? 33? 3E?

Cat points to the 'X'. Under it is a marking resembling a '3' and an 'Σ'. Jonas shrugs, he doesn't know. There is a drawing of the SUN setting between TWO PEAKS. A RAY points from the sun to the 'X'.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Looks like some kind of code?

JONAS

Probably... I dunno.

CATHERINE

How'd you come by it?

JONAS

It's a long story.

Catherine stares at him playfully.

CATHERINE

That's good, 'cuz I ain't sleepy.

He stares at her.

EXT. THE BARNES FARM - NIGHT FALL (FLASHBACK)

A sad, run-down farm. The house at its center is small and neglected. An old horse grazes alone in a field. A large weatherbeaten barn sits off to the side.

JONAS (V.O.)
I'd been called home from San Francisco.
Seems my old man was setting to dying.
But he was taking his time about it.

AT THE WELL

Jonas works the pump at the well. Finally, water trickles into a pail. He is well dressed and clean, worlds away from how we've come to know him.

INT. BARNES HOUSE - KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER - NIGHTFALL

Jonas stands by a COFFEE POT, heating it up on an old stove. He stares out the window, reflective.

He looks at a TELEGRAM on the counter: ADDRESSEE: JONAS BARNES JONAS HOPE YOUR FATHER PULLING THROUGH. STOP TWO DAYS TO RETURN OR WE WILL BE FORCED TO REPLACE YOU. END SENDER: Hendershot Dry Goods

He picks it up and stares at it.

INT. PRESTON BARNES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jonas walks over the creaking floors with a steaming cup of coffee.

PRESTON BARNES (O.S.)
Jonas?! Where are you boy?

Jonas moves to the bedside of a sickly old man, rail thin from consumption. Lying on top of the neatly made bed, dressed in his Sunday Best suit, which is worn, and moth eaten -- is PRESTON BARNES.

JONAS
What's this? It ain't Sundiy.

Preston's hands shake as he takes the cup from Jonas. He sips, instantly SPITS THE COFFEE BACK OUT on his chin.

PRESTON BARNES

What's 'is?

JONAS

Put a touch 'a whiskey, Dad, to help ease the pain.

Preston's voice is a near-death gravelly whisper.

PRESTON BARNES

I gots to go sober, boy! A man has to meet his maker pure and keen as the day he left him.

(a whisper)

'If we confess our sins, HE is faithful and just to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' John 1:9.

JONAS

If you believe it.

PRESTON BARNES

Every young sinner says the same. And in sooth, wisdom is wasted on the dying...

JONAS

You ain't gonna die, Pa. Not today.

PRESTON BARNES

Waste of money if I didn't. My headstone's in the grass by your Dear Mother's grave. Had it carved up just after Harvest. Still owe two dollars on it yet... never reckoned I'd know a man would take a loan on a headstone, but 'tain't my affair.

His Father's yellow-gray eyes try to bring Jonas into focus.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

You. You could settle here now that I'm going. Though I know - you were never much for hard work.

Jonas just stares at him.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

You won't get much for the house, but the land is good. And don't be hiring no niggers to work it.

JONAS

I don't mind hard work - I just was never cut for farming.

PRESTON BARNES

Or much else.

(coughs)

Only good thing about your Mother dyin' is she ain't here to see the nothing you've made of your life. No wife. No young.

JONAS

Ain't found one nice as her yet.

PRESTON BARNES

Whatever you looking for, God musta' hid it from the eyes of mortal men!

JONAS

I was just looking to be different from you, is all.

PRESTON BARNES

You have succeeded. I tried. Tried beatin' the sense into you, because talkin' was as good as unto a mule.

Jonas looks at him.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

You were any more of a Man, you'd of killed me by now. Prob'ly just waitin' till I die so you can spit on my grave.

JONAS

That's how I spend my days, Pa.

Preston's face melts into contrition.

PRESTON BARNES

I'm sorry. I'm bein' dry gulched by Satan's whisperin'... and the Reaper's breath. Here at the end.

Preston inhales, gathers his strength for this...

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

I know why you never come, Jonas.

JONAS

It's ok, Pa. You don't have to.

PRESTON BARNES

Yes, I do.

Jonas is quietly amused by this.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

Got somethin' I have to tell you, Jonas.
Before you go back to stockin' yer
shelves...

JONAS

You want to confess something I'll go to
town and get the preacher.

Jonas tries to escape but Preston's voice stops him.

PRESTON BARNES

Preacher Andrews got shot dead by Eldon
Lotz, caught him tryin' to do sumthin'
funny with his Wife.

Preston looks at the ceiling like a man who hopes God is
out of earshot.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

Three things, really. But they're all
connected to one thing. Sit.

Jonas sits in an old straight back chair by the bed.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

(beat)

It was a treachery. A hold up, gone real
bad...

JONAS

(surprised)

You were robbed?

Preston shakes his head bitterly.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

A YOUNG PRESTON BARNES (22) sits at a table playing cards
with a startlingly handsome guy in his early-twenties -
CHARLIE ABADDON.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)

When I was a young buck, much younger
than you are now, I was lookin' to stake
my claim in the world... and I met a man
named Charlie Abaddon over a deck'a
cards.

(MORE)

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
More we drank, the more we got along.
Man made you feel ten feet tall just by
being around him. Abaddon hadda gang a
fools he run with...

Abaddon and Preston laugh and knock back shots of whiskey
with TWO OTHER GAMBLERS.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT (**FLASHBACK**)

Young Preston and Abaddon drink with FOUR MEN around a
roaring campfire. Abaddon stands, whiskey bottle in
hand, quiets the group with a gesture, begins talking.

We don't hear what he's saying, but we see lust in the
eyes of the men as they listen.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
...And I wanted to be one of 'em. I was
far from the Church door in those days.
One night, Charlie Abaddon proposes a way
for us to get before the wind. Says he's
been planning a robbery for a time, all
he needs is extra guns to square it away.
Maybe it was the liquor, but it sounded
like easy pickin' - which should have
been all the warning we needed.

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE SNAKE CANYON - DAY (**FLASHBACK**)

Abaddon's Men, duded-out and on horseback, are on top of
a sharp, sloping ridge peering into the Canyon.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
The coaches had to pass through Snake
Canyon, which was perfect for an ambush.

A quarter mile back, TWO STAGECOACHES race in single file
along a dirt road, leaving plumes of dust in their wake.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
They was loaded with some rich man's
money and gold to start a new town.
Abaddon said it was a bad place - Injun
territory, but they was no other way
through to the South. Many a white man
had met a bloody end there, so the
coaches would be well guarded...

The six men look at each other and nod. NOW. The sound
of THUNDERING HOOVES takes us to-

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - MOMENTS LATER (**FLASHBACK**)

The six Men race across the dusty canyon floor toward the blazing stagecoaches as they open fire.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
Abaddon told us the drivers and guards
inside were former prisoners.

CLOSE SHOTS OF THE STAGECOACH DRIVERS - two on each coach. Brutal leathery faces lined with lives of murder, alcoholism, and incarceration. They whip the horses hard to gain speed...

The DRIVERS realize they can't outrun the men and grab their rifles and fire back with everything they have.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
These men had nothing to lose and were
willing to die for what they were
protecting.

Bullets rip into the coaches, and the drivers bravely return fire, determined to hold off Abaddon's men descending in a hail of bullets.

One of Abaddon's Men FLIPS off his horse with a bullet to the neck.

Three of Abaddon's Men charge up beside one of the speeding stagecoaches.

A SPENCER RIFLE pokes through the canvas window covering of the stagecoach, firing BLIND.

The men FIRE willy-nilly into the canvas body panels at the GUARDS SUPPOSEDLY WITHIN.

One of the Drivers jumps on top of the coach as it slams over the pitted road...

And SHOOTs one of Abaddon's men in the head, killing him instantly.

The Driver catches a HAIL OF BULLETS and spins off the top of the stagecoach and flips into the dirt head first.

One of Abaddon's Men JUMPS from his horse into the DRIVER'S BOX at a full gallop.

He whips out a knife and STABS the SECOND DRIVER in the neck and THROWS HIM forward under the tongue of the coach

And when the COACH BEHIND hits the Driver's body it FLIPS UP INTO THE AIR AND SLAMS DOWN ON ITS SIDE and skids to a stop in a cloud of dust.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
We didn't realize why they fought so hard
till it was too late...

The Guy who stabbed the driver in the neck reins in the stagecoach horses and brings it to a stop.

The Four remaining Men dismount and move to the wagons, guns drawn.

They are *SHOCKED* when a BOY (5) in his Sunday Best jumps out of the flipped wagon and races away, never once looking at them out of shock and fear.

The Three Men turn to Abaddon with confusion and venom in their eyes.

Young Preston moves to the flipped stagecoach, and lifts the canvas flap. His eyes widen in horror.

PRESTON'S POV: A sea of blood. From THREE DEAD GIRLS. TWO DEAD BOYS. A DEAD WOMAN. Bodies riddled with bullets. One of the women clutches that Spencer rifle.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
That's when I found them.

Young Preston backs away, sickened and stunned, turns to the second wagon, sees one of Abaddon's men vomit because of what he's just seen inside.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
All dead. That's why they'd fought so hard. Why the coaches were so well fortified...

Abaddon carelessly lifts and tosses a DEAD WOMAN out of the way to get to the money stored under the seats.

Young Preston covers his mouth.

INT. PRESTON BARNES' BEDROOM - AS BEFORE (**PRESENT**)

Jonas can't reconcile this nightmarish story with his bible-toting Father.

PRESTON BARNES
Abaddon was right about the money, but wrong about everything else.

His Father looks more ill than before. Drudging up this hideous memory has gutted him.

JONAS

You didn't know there were kids in there...

PRESTON BARNES

That was just the beginning.

JONAS

That's enough. You should rest.

PRESTON BARNES

No rest. My spirit's been pinned under the weight of that stolen gold for too long. Never could wrestle myself from under it. Doctors call it consumption. Nicer name for it, I guess.

A beat of silence. A clock ticks in the house.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

...It was near a hundred thousand dollars, split four ways.

EXT. DESERT - LATE AFTERNOON (**FLASHBACK**)

One of the Men shoots Abaddon in the face point blank.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)

Three ways actually. One of the fools killed Charlie Abaddon, which was fitting.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - SCENE OF THE CRIME - MASS GRAVE - NIGHT (**FLASHBACK**)

The covered WAGONS BURN in the background, illuminating the sweaty faces of the three men as they cover a mass grave to bury the bodies. The victim's innocent faces disappear under shovels of soil...

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)

Seeing their faces was like serving time in hell.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - PUEBLO - NIGHT (**FLASHBACK**)

The men exit the ancient walls of an old Indian pueblo, nestled into the canyon wall.

Roofless, most of its crumbled maze of walls are still standing. The dilapidated pueblo is made from stone and mud.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
Then we hid the gold. We couldn't take it with us, but we couldn't let it go neither.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - LATER THE SAME NIGHT - (**FLASHBACK**)

The Three Men draw a map on parchment paper with a stick of charcoal next to a fire. We see their illuminated, conflicted faces.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
So we made a map. Nobody wanted to carry it, a'course - it was bad juju. But we drew straws and...

The map is finished now. HANDS pass it from man to man, and finally to young Preston. PUSH IN. His eyes look up in fear and conflict.

PRESTON BARNES (V.O.)
...the map ended up with me.

INT. PRESTON BARNES' BEDROOM - AS BEFORE (**PRESENT**)

Preston looks at Jonas with pure regret.

PRESTON BARNES
I came home, met your dear Mother. She's the one shepherded me to God...

Preston's eyes flick to a DAGUERREOTYPE OF ZELLA BARNES on the wall under a cross, taken when she was thirty-years-old. A beautiful woman with mortally sad eyes, holding a BIBLE against her chest.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)
...and I went about making my amends with the Almighty and Glorious Lord.

Something shifts in Preston, a fear grips his dying body.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)
But that map haunted me. It ran through my guts like a black snake - made me an ornery cuss on Friday and a frightened teet-sucker on Sunday.
(MORE)

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

She said I was a drunkard, though I was sober half the time. Through the years, the map and it's damned treasure slowly ate at me, until it possessed me completely. I fought it with church time, but I could never confess it... I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity...

Preston trails off as Jonas' expression darkens and freezes.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

Your Mother. She knew all along what I was hidin'. Took her eight years, but she found it in the end.

JONAS

I was about eight when she --

PRESTON BARNES

(bitterly)

She hid it from me, or destroyed it... I don't know which. That's why...she and I fought... I didn't mean to hurt her...

Preston closes his eyes and tries to breathe.

JONAS

Go on. You want God to greet you?

Something is rising in Jonas...

PRESTON BARNES

We'd been through three dry seasons. I needed the money, for us, for this place. For *YOU*. That same day we sent you to the schoolhouse with pants was full 'a holes, we couldn't afford new ones.

(he's back there in his mind)

All our problems would be done if she'd just give me that god forsaken map!

FLASHBACK - THIRTY YEARS BEFORE

INT. THE BARNES FARM - KITCHEN

YOUNG PRESTON and YOUNG ZELLA yell at each other... voices distant echoes from the past.

Preston rips through rooms of the house, a furious cyclone overturning tables, clearing bookshelves, tearing through drawers and flipping beds, and he blasts into-

THE MAIN ROOM

Where Zella stands in front of the wood burning stove in the center of the room... Preston's face contorted in rage...

Preston (silently) SCREAMS... his RAGE EXPLODES and Preston SHOVES her hard and as she falls backwards toward the hard iron corner of the stove we go-

JONAS (V.O.)

NO!

INT. PRESTON BARNES' BEDROOM - AS BEFORE - (**PRESENT**)

Jonas can't listen anymore. He reaches under the bed and finds a HIDDEN HALF-FULL BOTTLE OF WHISKEY there. He uncorks and takes a swig, the bottle shakes in his hand.

PRESTON BARNES

You ain't been tested like I have...

(solemn)

You don't know what you're capable of yet.

Jonas stares hard at this man, stranger to him than ever.

JONAS

So that's your sin. My own mother.

Preston reaches out for the bottle with a withered paw.

PRESTON BARNES

I had love for that woman. There's something else.

JONAS

No.

Jonas holds it away. Preston grabs Jonas by the wrist.

PRESTON BARNES

You must know this, Jonas.

JONAS

No. No that's *enough* I said.

PRESTON BARNES

I'm not your real daddy.

Jonas unconsciously pulls away.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)
I'm not your father, boy. But I am
...the reason you exist.

Jonas stares, rocked on his heels. He tries to speak but nothing comes out. Tries again and-

JONAS
Who... who's my father then?

Preston tries desperately to get the words out, like this will complete his confession...

A long slow dry breath wheezes out of Preston's body. His chest stops moving. His mouth hangs wide open.

Preston is dead.

Jonas stares. Can't move. Forgets to breathe.

The sound of a SHOVEL BITING INTO the earth takes us to-

EXT. THE BARNES FARM - MAGIC HOUR

Jonas finishes filling in a grave. He wipes sweat off his brow, takes a long pull of whiskey, stares down at the newly planted gravestone with PRESTON BARNES etched into it and the epitaph: *"I SHALL BE RELEASED"*

He looks down at the gravestone of his mother, Zella Barnes, a few feet away.

Jonas scans the grass. Sees a huge rock. Moves to it. He walks back to Preston's gravestone, raises the rock over his head and SMASHES it down on the gravestone with every ounce of strength he has, and turns it to rubble.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Sunlight streams through the kitchen window onto a pair of dirty boots. We follow the boots up to find Jonas laying flat on the floor in the same position he passed out in.

The bottle of whiskey is empty and laying on its side.

HARD KNOCKING at the door wakes him. Takes a beat to remember where he is. More knocking and-

JONAS
Yeah, hold on.

Jonas sits up, closes his eyes to the bright sun. Sinks into his hangover. Takes a breath and uses the edge of the dirty sink to pull himself up...

INT. BARNES HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Jonas opens it. Two grim MEN in dark suits stand there.

SUIT # 1
You Preston Barnes' Son?

A question that brings yesterday hurling back at him.

JONAS
Who's askin'?

SUIT # 2
We're from the bank.

SUIT # 1
And we have some papers here.

SUIT # 2
Not pleasant I'm afraid.

SUIT # 1
Sorry about your loss, by the way.

Suit # 2 hands a sheath of papers to Jonas.

SUIT # 2
Losses.

The suits turn away and head back to their horses.

JONAS
(calls out re: Preston)
How'd you know already?

SUIT # 1
It's our business to know.

EXT. BARNES FARM - MAGIC HOUR

Jonas stands at the edge of a field. His tired eyes drift over the farmhouse. The wind pulls at the eaves and the roof sags under the weight of itself. Rusting farm equipment leans against the side of the outhouse.

His eyes follow the remains of the fence lining the property. The rotted wood and rusted barbed wire dot the perimeter like debris. A LIZARD runs along the fence.

The SUN IS SETTING in the valley and the landscape is painted in reds and purples and golds. The Barnes Farm is a blight on an otherwise beautiful piece of land.

EXT. BARNES HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

CLOSE on the TELEGRAM - on FIRE - turning to ash.

Jonas is drunk. He stares at the daguerreotype of his mother by candlelight. He takes a pull of whiskey, stares back at the image.

JONAS
Why didn't you tell me?

We see papers the Bankers gave him on the porch by his boots. In official inked handwriting bold words jump out: *THIRTY DAYS TO CLEAR BANK DEBT OR TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP*. They are stamped with an official seal.

Jonas is still staring at the picture of his Mother.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Tell me now...tell me now...

Jonas says this over and over in a low possessed whisper, like he believes it's possible that she can.

He turns, unsteady from liquor, and walks into the house-

INT. PRESTON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jonas walks in. His drunken eyes scan the room. He turns to the bed where Preston died. Then to an armoire in the corner of the room and his eyes lock on it.

MOMENTS LATER

Jonas has contents of the armoire spread out on the floor. His mother's DRESSES are still hanging inside. He picks up a DIARY from the floor, opens to a random page:

ZELLA'S V/O READS THE ENTRIES THROUGHOUT:

It is a very inviting field, and planted with the best berries, it would have a value of \$30 to \$50 per acre.

And another:

What Preston knew and did not tell me, these are not matters of the heart so much as matters of right and wrong. God help me. I hate him.

He turns to another random page.

Cold again today. I feel I am all alone here.

And another:

I live only to see little Jonas' face. He is the only comfort I have in this world. Miraculous that something so joyful could come from so much pain...

And one more:

I will take my secret to my grave... before I give Preston what he wants, which is right for all he's done...

Jonas stares at her words as something bubbles up in his booze-drenched mind.

EXT. BARNES FARM - NIGHT

Jonas stands in SILHOUETTE over his Mother's GRAVE, uses a shovel to balance himself. He stares at her headstone, heart and mind under siege.

He raises the shovel and brings it down hard. The instant it cuts into the soil we-

EXT. BARNES FARM - SUNRISE

Deep purples rake the sky. Jonas has dug up Zella's coffin. He has a torch for light planted in the ground next to it.

He tosses his shovel aside and slides in next to her coffin. He pries the lid with a steel bar and the coffin CRACKS open.

Jonas takes a deep breath, dreading what he's about to see. He slowly lifts the lid.

He stares at the cadaverous remains of his mother. Her once beautiful face has melted into the bones of her skull. Jonas' eyes dart to a cracked LEATHER BOUND BIBLE in her skeletal hands.

He uncurls her gnarled bony fingers from the bible, leans against the wall of the grave and opens it.

Pages drop and flutter over his Mother's dead body.

He runs his fingers along a seam on the inside cover.

He feels something. And as he gently slides out a piece of PARCHMENT PAPER from the inside cover we go back to-

EXT. JONAS AND CATHERINE'S CAMP - NIGHT - (PRESENT)

Catherine's demeanor has darkened from hearing Jonas' story.

She stares at him in silence. Not sure what to say. She unconsciously lays the map on the ground - as though she can feel its shadows.

She looks at Jonas with empathy.

CATHERINE

You need the money to pay off the debt on your father's farm.

JONAS

I don't know who my father is. But there's debt. Don't know if I should keep that damn farm or not.

(lifting map)

I don't even know if there's any real money there.

CATHERINE

Then why go?

JONAS

You ever feel there's something that... you needed to do?

She glances at the Baby, then back to Jonas.

CATHERINE

I think I know what that feels like.

JONAS

Well I never have. Not until now.

The flames of the fire illuminate their faces. They hear a night owl nearby. Catherine indicates the frayed NOOSE around his neck.

CATHERINE

You want that for sentimental reasons, or can I take it off?

His hand goes to it - he'd forgotten it. She squats near him. It takes a beat for her to loosen the knot. She slips it off his neck and tosses it on the fire.

She stays near Jonas. They feel each other's energy.

EXT. MARKHAM GANG - DESERT - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Markham, Indio and Cal ride through the night, making up for lost time. Markham is meditative, Indio is watchful and Cal tries to keep his eyes open.

EXT. JONAS AND CATHERINE'S CAMP - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

A chorus of desert crickets and the intermittent warble of night owl fill the night silence.

Jonas' sleeping face is illuminated by the weak flames of the dying fire and the silvery half moon in the night sky. His hand rests on his revolver.

His eyes blink open. He listens for a moment-- slowly turns toward Catherine.

She's gone. He sits bolt upright. Sees the Baby asleep, swaddled next to Catherine's blankets.

Jonas stands, picks up his gun. Walks to the edge of the camp. He hears the RIVER flowing softly in the darkness.

We walk with him through sparse waist-high shrubs in the night silence.

He hears water splashing. He moves silently toward some boulders, peeks around them.

He sees Catherine, petticoat round her waist, squatting in the water, washing herself.

CLOSER ON CATHERINE

She finishes, stands with her back to him. Unsnaps her corset. She gently tosses it to the empty shore and bends down and rinses her armpits, neck and face.

She suddenly stops. Turns and GASPS when Jonas is right on the shore like he appeared out of thin air.

They stare at each other. Jonas gazes at her body. He moves to her, walks right into the water.

When he's three feet away he stops. She moves to him. She takes his hand and puts it to her naked breast.

They stare in each other's eyes, examine each other. Then they kiss, hard. Hungrily.

Jonas bends her back, toward the water, as she rapidly undoes his belt and takes down his pants.

As they get to it right there on the rocks in the water and lose themselves in the pain and pleasure of it we-

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. DESERT - SUNRISE

The rising sun turns the dark ground pale-gold.

A jackrabbit looks up, nervous eyes darting.

A hawk banks off a light wind.

Dewdrops in the rib of a barrel cactus reflect the morning sun.

The sound of horse hooves pounding earth and the rub of saddle leather takes us to-

EXT. DESERT - LATER - DAY

Markham, Cal and Indio on horseback. They pass the dead Shoshone woman, still beneath the shawl where Catherine and Jonas left her.

Cal stares. Markham looks at Indio, silently communicates.

Indio nods and climbs off his horse.

He peels back the shawl. Looks at her face. Examines the ground around the Indian, trying to turn the mixed up footprints into a story he can tell.

He rolls her over, sees the wound in the back of her head, looks up at Markham.

INDIO
Rifle. And days old.

MARKHAM
That muddies the water.

CAL
Why, because the wound is old and the tracks are new?

Markham just looks at his son without answering. And as Indio climbs on his horse...

EXT. LOW HILLS - HIGH NOON

The sun pounds down on Catherine and Jonas as they walk. Baby is covered in a makeshift shawl. Jonas is tireless and driven. Catherine is exhausted.

CATHERINE

Jonas? You know, I could pay off your debt for you.

He doesn't look at her, just keeps walking.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

There's reward money, I'm sure. I could telegraph my Father and say you rescued me, which you did. We could turn around right now.

There's conflict in his eyes as he walks.

JONAS

Like I said, there's something I gotta do.

CATHERINE

Haven't you ever thought about settling down?

JONAS

Sometime.

Catherine's face falls.

CATHERINE

Can we stop soon?

He pauses, looks at her. Her forehead is beaded with sweat. He wipes some off with his thumb, looks in her eyes - gestures toward a rock formation in the distance.

JONAS

There's shade up there.

EXT. JONAS AND CATHERINE'S OLD CAMP - DAY

Indio, Cal and Markham dismount at the deserted camp where Catherine, Jonas and the Baby spent the night.

CAL

Damn it! Why are we always two steps behind this guy?

MARKHAM

They're on foot. We'll get our scalp today.

Cal bends down by the dead fire. Sees two strands of his sister's dark hair. He picks them up and examines them.

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - DAY

Catherine watches Jonas. There is something open and wistful in her eyes.

He sets out a blanket for her and the baby to rest on in a cool concave shaded area of the rock formation. He sets out his canteen on the blanket for them as well.

He looks up, catches her watching. They lock eyes.

She sets the Baby down.

CATHERINE

I've been thinking.

JONAS

Should I be frightened?

She smiles at that. So does he.

CATHERINE

You don't have to do any of this.
Whatever your dad did, it's dead and buried, along with him.

JONAS

Maybe.

CATHERINE

Sometimes, God sets before you just the thing you need, at just the right moment.
But it's not always easy to see.

JONAS

You don't give up, do ya?

They smile, but it's weighted with sadness.

CATHERINE

I spent the last ten years praying I
wouldn't end up like my mother, a lonely
ghost trapped in a big empty house.

(a memory runs through her)

And Cal...

(MORE)

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

He always caught the worst of it. I don't know why that man hates him so.

JONAS

You can never do right in some men's eyes...

She stands up, looks up to the blue sky.

CATHERINE

When those Men kidnapped me, I thought I was going to die.

Jonas looks in her eyes.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

But in truth, it was God, setting me free... I feel... like anything can happen now. A whole story, yet to be written.

They move to each other.

JONAS

I'll come back for you. After. I promise.

He kisses her. It's deep. Catherine opens her eyes.

CATHERINE

Jonas...

Something strains in her voice...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Jonas...

...and makes him turn.

Jonas slowly turns around:

JONAS' POV: Crouching behind a rock, fifteen feet in back of him, A SHOSHONE INDIAN. We see only his intense fiery eyes and his ink black hair.

The Shoshone rises up to his full height in the blazing sun. His skin is the deep brown of worn saddle leather, his moccasins, headband and leather pants are patterned with colorful beads. The blade edge of his tomahawk glints in the sun.

Jonas unholsters his gun.

The Indian's eyes dart to the space between Catherine and Jonas. THE BABY swaddled in the shade.

SHOSHONE
Gojadii niigai daach'inii.

And as if on command, the Baby begins to cry. The Shoshone takes a step toward Jonas, slowly raises the tomahawk.

CATHERINE
The baby. He wants it.

Jonas takes a step aside, to clear a path to the Baby, gun low.

The Shoshone has murder in his eyes as he takes another step toward Jonas, not the baby. Jonas raises his gun.

JONAS
Stop!

CATHERINE
We found him! We didn't take him!

Baby is screaming now. The Shoshone takes one more step toward Jonas, raising the tomahawk, ever so slowly.

Jonas COCKS his weapon.

SHOSHONE
Mitawin! Kte! Mitawin kte!

He's six feet away now...

CATHERINE
Don't shoot him Jonas!

The Baby wails louder and louder.

SHOSHONE
Ik aa'ye iidenka ashii nadndaal.
Shiiyii'ii!

The Shoshone comes closer.

JONAS
Stop you Sonofabitch.

Catherine bolts back, grabs the swaddled Baby. The Shoshone takes another step toward Jonas.

Catherine is offering up the wailing Baby to him now...

CATHERINE

Take your baby! We found him!

The Shoshone gets closer. The Baby wails. Jonas feels the trigger against his forefinger...

Catherine begins to sing. Softly. A Native American Spirit Song. She doesn't know the meaning of the words, but the tune is calming, melancholy.

The Shoshone stops cold. The Baby stops crying. Catherine gently offers the Baby, singing softly.

The Shoshone lowers his tomahawk as his eyes shift from anger to sadness.

Jonas lowers his Colt.

He slowly reaches out to take the Baby from Catherine.

Just as his fingers make contact we hear *CRACK!* a gunshot in the distance followed by a slug *CRUSHING* into BONE.

TIME STOPS. The Shoshone stares into Jonas' eyes, as a wet round entry wound on his forehead trickles blood.

ANOTHER BULLET WHIZZES by Jonas' ear, *peeeowwws* off the rocks behind them as the Shoshone crumbles before Jonas.

Jonas leaps to Catherine, pulls her and the screaming Baby to the ground...

EXT. BOULDERS - CONTINUOUS

Three boulders with a perfect view to the shaded area of the rock formation. Markham lowers his RIFLE at the same time Indio lowers his telescope.

CAL

You get 'em, Mr. Markham?

MARKHAM

One. He's selling her to the Redskins. Babies, too.

He shakes his head.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Foolish for me to try from here.

(the reason)

He's keeping her close.

CAL
You're the best shooter in this whole
damn territory. Remember that contest
where you-

MARKHAM
(cuts Cal off, to Indio)
-let's move in from the other side.

They turn on their horses and-

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

They've moved behind a big rock. Catherine is frightened.

CATHERINE
Who's shooting?

The Baby cries. Jonas glares at it, worried. Catherine
tries harder to calm it down.

JONAS
Follow me.

He leads her off the rocks -- they run across a clearing
to the protection of a riverbank twenty-five yards away.

EXT. THE MEN ON HORSEBACK - CONTINUOUS

Ride up the rocks to the shaded area. The Shoshone lies
in a pool of blood. The Men dismount. Markham takes his
rifle from his saddle, checks the bullets in his
revolver. Cal mirrors his Father's moves.

Indio squats near the Shoshone, closes his opened eyes.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Jonas, Catherine and the Baby are tucked beneath the lip
of the riverbank; the edge is dotted with sagebrush.

She's desperately trying to get the Baby to stop crying.
The river runs slowly behind them.

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

The three men hunker down in a gap in the rock formation.
They look down toward the riverbank. There is no
movement.

Markham brings up his rifle, looks down the sight. Cal follows suit.

MARKHAM
(without looking up)
Cal, put your rifle down.

CAL
Why?

MARKHAM
Cat's down there.

CAL
I know that.

Markham turns to Cal with a look that says, "do it." Cal is pissed, but he lowers his rifle...

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Jonas ever-so-slowly raises his head and BLAM! a bullet nicks the lip of the riverbank near his face and sprays dust. The Baby wails loudly.

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

Cal looks at his Father.

CAL
You get him?

Markham doesn't answer.

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Peering up, Jonas sees movement and fires as we go to-

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE

-as a bullet TAKES OFF MARKHAM'S FOREFINGER. He drops his rifle, turns, crouches down into the crevice, wraps the bleeding stump with his sweat-stained bandana.

MARKHAM
Damn it all to hell.

Cal stares at his Father's bloody finger in the dirt.

Markham looks at Indio and gestures. Indio scrambles away...

MARKHAM (CONT'D)
We just want the girl!

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Catherine's eyes dart nervously. She recognizes that voice.

CATHERINE
Oh, God. That's my father.

JONAS
(disbelief)
He wouldn't be shooting this close to you.

CATHERINE
(nods)
My father takes his shooting very seriously.

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS - CONTINUOUS

Indio inches along, low to the ground like a crab, and moving stealthily.

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Jonas looks down river for cover. The water is low. If they make it across... Cat tries to quiet the Baby.

JONAS
(realizing)
He thinks I kidnapped you.

CATHERINE
FATHE-- MR. MARKHAM!

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

Catherine's words are garbled, lost in echo. Markham responds to his daughters voice, if not the words.

MARKHAM
CATHERINE!

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Cat starts to stand. Jonas stops her.

JONAS
Don't! It's too far they might mistake
you.

She STANDS. Jonas yanks her down as A BULLET RICOCHETS
OFF A ROCK where her head was.

EXT. ROCK FORMATIONS - CONTINUOUS

Indio aims his smoking pistol between some rocks.

He takes off his GLASSES, rubs them, re-affixes them to
his face. Continues DOWNWARD.

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

CATHERINE
Run Jonas, it's your only chance. If
they see you run away...

Jonas looks down the river, then at Catherine.

JONAS
I'll find you.

They share a world of emotion in a three second glance.

Jonas turns, moves along the rocky riverbank next to the
water. He's twenty feet away from Catherine now.
He makes a break for it, across the river.

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE - SAME TIME

-Cal grabs up his Father's rifle, aims and starts firing
wild shots before his Father can react as we go-

EXT. RIVER - SAME TIME

Jonas is HIT in the shoulder by one of Cal's bullets-- he
falls on the rocks at the edge of the slow running river.

CATHERINE (O.S.)
Jonas!

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE - SAME TIME

Cal is in a bizarre state of excitement as he stares down the sight toward the riverbank.

CAL

I got that sonofabitch!

Markham looks up at him as Cal takes aim again.

CAL (CONT'D)

(bitter pride)

And you weren't gonna let me shoot.

EXT. RIVER - SAME TIME

Jonas climbs to his feet, sees movement in the corner of his eye: Catherine. Running to him. He screams-

JONAS

NO!

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE - SAME TIME

-at the exact moment Cal sees movement and instinctively pulls the trigger and we HARD CUT TO-

EXT. RIVER - SAME TIME

-as CATHERINE IS HIT IN THE BACK by Cal's bullet. She flies forward onto her knees, clutching the Baby protectively with one hand. The BABY FALLS SILENT.

Catherine looks up at Jonas with shocked eyes. HOLD THIS.

EXT. ROCK FORMATION CREVICE - SAME TIME

Cal looks up from his rifle, realizing. Quickly and nervously he puts his father's rifle right back where he found it. Sits down next to his father.

Markham turns to Cal as he's wrapping the stump where his finger was. He sees part of his finger on the ground nearby and ignores it.

MARKHAM

(turning around)

You finish him?

It takes every cell in Cal's body to say these words in a way that won't betray the emotion ripping through him.

CAL

I'm not sure.

EXT. RIVER - SAME TIME

Jonas' looks up from Catherine's body, his face tightened in rage, and FIRES three shots in a row at the rock formation, then moves to Catherine and crouches down.

She's on her side now.

She rolls on her back and does something strange- she gently strokes the Baby over and over...

Jonas hovers over her, blood fanning out from his shoulder over his chest. She looks up at him.

CATHERINE

Is he hit?

Her eyes are filled with dread. The Baby isn't moving.

Jonas runs his hand between the makeshift sling. The Baby stares up at him, silent, wide eyed.

JONAS

He's okay, Catherine.

CATHERINE

I thought, 'cause he went so quiet.

Jonas stares at Catherine's face. She's breathing in quick short gasps now.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Jonas?

He looks in her eyes.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Jonas...

Her voice is a whisper. He leans closer to hear. The word comes out weak and soft...

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Run...

He watches as the last breath slowly pours out of her.

Jonas fights back emotion as he stares at her angelic face. Then he hears BOOTS on watery rocks...

He grabs the Baby, who STARTS TO CRY AGAIN. Jonas tucks the Baby to his chest, and moves in a crouch down river.

ANGLE ON

INDIO-- with his gun drawn, moving over the rocks, following the sound of the crying Baby.

INDIO'S POV: moving away from the river's edge to the middle, to get a better view.

Indio sees Catherine on the ground first, then Jonas hurrying away twenty yards beyond...

Indio takes aim and fires. The bullet hisses past Jonas.

Jonas spins and squeezes off TWO QUICK ROUNDS - one RICOCHETS off the rocks and catches Indio in the thigh and fells him. Jonas disappears down the riverbed.

A MINUTE LATER...

Markham and Cal appear, guns drawn, and move toward Indio. Markham hasn't seen Catherine yet.

MARKHAM

Where'd he get you?

Markham reaches Indio, bends down, pulls a handkerchief out of his jeans.

INDIO

Sir...

Markham tries to press it to the wound, doesn't understand why Indio pushes his hand away.

INDIO (CONT'D)

Sir...

Indio's expression stops Markham cold. Markham looks to Cal. His eyes ooze dread, locked on something down river.

Markham turns, sees Catherine's body flat on the rocks.

Markham stands.

He slowly walks over the rocks in a trance to her. Her eyes are open and lifeless.

Markham drops to his knees, gently closes her eyes. He hears Cal's boots on the rocks approaching, raises his hand to stop him from coming.

Cal stops, stands there, irresolute. He looks at Indio, then back toward his father.

CAL

Why? Why would he shoot Catherine?

MARKHAM

Because... He's a filthy coward dog. And he's going to die like one.

Relief floods Cal's face. Relief and guilt and pain and fear.

Markham rolls her body over to see the wound in her back. Then again to examine the gaping exit wound in her chest.

His expression shifts.

CAL (O.S.)

Mr. Markham...shouldn't we get after him?

Markham stands. Turns to Cal. Walks toward him. Cal feels more fear with each step his father takes.

Markham reaches Cal, rests his hand on his shoulder as he looks into his eyes, so close Cal feels his breath.

MARKHAM

We'll get him, son. Sure as fire burns in hell, we'll get him.

(gently)

Let's put Catherine in the ground first, Cal. Then we'll settle his hash.

Cal shakes his head, then takes off down the riverbed with his pistol out in the direction Jonas ran off...

CAL

You killed my sister! You killed my sister! You murderin' coward dog!

Cal stops. He SLAPS HIMSELF in the face. Again. Again.

EXT. DESERT SCRUB - THREE HOURS LATER - LATE AFTERNOON

VERY WIDE: Jonas walks along weakly with the Baby. Mountains in the background. He stops to catch his breath and peers up at the sky. Three BUZZARDS circle overhead.

EXT. DESERT - HOUR LATER - MAGIC HOUR

Jonas walks with the Baby wrapped to his chest with his shirt. The Baby has Jonas' caked blood on him.

He looks down at the Baby's eyes. They seem to give him strength. Jonas nods, and continues on...

EXT. RIVERBANK - MAGIC HOUR

Catherine lies beside the freshly dug grave. Markham brushes away some leaves and dirt from Cat's clothing. Fixes her hair.

Then gently, he lifts her up and lays her down, carefully to her final rest.

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Jonas chews dried beef as he walks, pinches some from his mouth and brings it to the Baby's mouth. Just like Catherine would have done.

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Torchlight illuminates Catherine's vigil. The three men stand solemnly, staring into the ground, staring at the blackness, as Indio recites an Indian Spirit Song. The same song he had taught Catherine.

Cal begins to cry. It is pitiful crying.

EXT. A HILL - NIGHTFALL

Jonas crests a hill, exhausted, spots a SMALL ADOBE HACIENDA in the distance, with warm light within.

CLOSE on Jonas. He sighs with relief. As he walks, FLAMES creep up from the bottom of frame, licking his face. They overtake him.

EXT. MARKHAM CAMP - NIGHT

A FIRE ROARS in the center of the small camp. Indio stares in the flames, nursing his tourniquet.

Cal sits across from him, a wired ball of guilt and fear. He sees his Father standing over Catherine's grave twenty feet away, hammering a makeshift cross into the dirt.

Cal watches him a long beat, gets up and walks over. He stands as near as he can bear.

CAL

You should take some grub, Mr. Markham.

Markham shakes his head. Long silence.

Cal looks to his sister's grave. Markham stares at him a beat, sees the campfire shining in Cal's eyes, sees them grow wet. Markham walks off.

Cal watches his father leave, then kneels by the grave.

He takes a knife from his belt. Rolls up his sleeve. Looks behind him to make sure nobody is coming, then cuts the knife into his flesh.

CAL (CONT'D)

(pained, tremulous)

I'm so sorry, Cat. I'm sorry. I'm
sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm
sorry...

And as he presses the blade deeper we go to-

EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAY (**FLASHBACK**)

Catherine is walking through the forest, humming to herself.

She comes around a corner and spots Cal and A MEXICAN BOY - a farmhand.

Cal is caressing the boy's face. Catherine's eyes widen. Cal and the Boy lean in to KISS.

CATHERINE

Calvin Markham!

Cal and the Boy jump away from each other. They turn to find Catherine watching them, shocked.

The Boy runs off.

Cal is PISSED. He storms over to her.

CAL

What did you see?

He grabs her by the arm.

CAL (CONT'D)
What did you see!?

CATHERINE
I saw you about to kiss that boy.

Catherine pulls away.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
What's got into you? You know what
father'll do--?!

CAL
You saw nothing. You hear me?

She is suddenly scared of her brother.

CATHERINE
Cal, I--

Cal SLAPS HER hard.

CAL
You saw nothing!

She doesn't recognize this boy as her brother anymore.
Catherine turns and RUNS AWAY.

SLO-MO AS SHE DISAPPEARS into the trees, like a ghost.

Cal sighs.

CAL (CONT'D)
God damn it!

He turns back the way the Mexican Boy fled, but sees no
one.

He takes his HAT off and rubs his temples. Then he SLAPS
HIMSELF.

CAL (CONT'D)
Damn it.

He puts his hat back on.

CAL (CONT'D)
Catherine, wait.

He follows her trail.

EXT. THE MARKHAM RANCH - FIELD - MINUTE LATER -

Catherine races through a field down from the trees near the edge of the river.

A MINUTE LATER

Cal wanders through the trees down by the river, looking for his sister.

CAL
Catherine? Cat, I'm sorry.
(wipes his brow)
I didn't mean to hit you, now come on,
now.

He pushes through the thick willow branches as we go-

EXT. THIRTY FEET UPRIVER - SAME TIME -

Catherine rinsing her face in the river... does not see the reflection of the HATTED FIGURE behind her in the water...

She WHIPS ROUND the instant SNORING MINER lunges at her, she spins out of the way and BOLTS up the river bank into the FIELD that leads to the house. She screams:

CATHERINE
CAL!!

FIELD:

THIRD MINER blasts out from a stand of trees on a horse and nearly runs her down. He tries to LASSO her with a length of ROPE, misses.

She TRIPS in the grass as Snoring Miner RACES at her and Third Miner whips his horse around.

Catherine sees an opening between the two Men and BOLTS but SLEEPY MINER appears out of nowhere on *his* horse and BOXES her in.

Snoring Miner races at her and GRABS her and THROWS her down as Third Miner's LASSO catches her around the shoulders and the moment she SCREAMS we go-

EXT. MARKHAM CAMP - NIGHT (**PRESENT**)

Cal stares at his Sister's grave as BLOOD runs off his arm from his self-inflicted cut. His head falls slack between his knees.

INT. HACIENDA - NIGHT

HUMBERTO, a peasant who believes life's secrets have purposefully eluded him, and wife ROSAMARIA, a little on the hefty side, eat a humble dinner in silence at a small table. Their house is one large room.

A VIOLENT KNOCK at the door startles them. Humberto stands, pulls A REVOLVER out of a drawer, approaches the door.

HUMBERTO

Quien es?

Humberto and Rosamaria exchange a look. Humberto cocks his gun, slowly opens the door.

Jonas falls on his knees into the house, exhausted.

INT. HACIENDA - MINUTES LATER

Humberto holds the Baby, feeds him MILK out of a CUP.

He walks over to Jonas, who is laying on the TABLE, and hands him a BOTTLE.

Jonas swigs its brown liquor and looks up at Rosamarie, who stands over him with a pair of RUSTY PLIERS.

Jonas nods and Rosamarie GOES DIGGING IN THE WOUND for the bullet.

Jonas bites down on a LEATHER STRAP to muffle his screams and temper the pain.

Humberto rocks the Baby in his arms in the far part of the room, away from the sound of Jonas' pain.

Rosamarie licks his lips, concentrating. She moves the pliers around, trying to be as gentle as possible.

She finds the bullet, yanks the bloody pliers out of the wound, holds the gnarled slug up like a prize. She drops it to the floor with a BANG.

INT. HACIENDA - LATER

Jonas, shoulder bandaged, eats stew greedily from a wooden bowl as Humberto and Rosamaria watch.

The Baby sleeps on Rosamaria's lap.

Jonas finishes the stew and sits back. Humberto holds up a jug of wine and Jonas nods.

HUMBERTO
Shoulder feeling better, Sir?

Jonas nods again. Humberto smiles, revealing two GOLD capped teeth.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
May I ask how you came to be, ah ...in these circumstances?

JONAS
Three men. They... attacked me and ...my wife. They killed her, but me and my baby boy escaped.

Rosamaria examines the Baby's face, looks at Jonas.

ROSAMARIA
Your wife was Indian?

JONAS
(Beat)
Shoshone.

HUMBERTO
(to his wife)
Silencio.
(to Jonas)
Which men?

JONAS
Bandits. They took my money.

HUMBERTO
(eyes light up with interest)
How much money?

ROSAMARIA
(to Jonas)
He's obsessed by money.

HUMBERTO
Callete perra sucia.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
Shut up you dirty bitch.

She ignores Humberto, says this flirtatiously to Jonas.

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)
Your baby will need a new mother.

Humberto shoots her a nasty look.

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)
(off Humberto)
He couldn't make me one of these because
his horses are weak.

HUMBERTO
Cállate!

Rosamaria smiles with satisfaction, leaves the table with the Baby.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
I can take you into town in the morning.

JONAS
Much obliged, sir.

HUMBERTO
I am a Mexican. You are the sir. But
tonight you sleep on the floor.

INT. HACIENDA - LATER

Jonas is dead asleep on the floor. The Baby sleeps in a basket of blankets near Rosamaria's bed.

Humberto sits by the dinner table, watching Jonas sleep.

He looks over at the leather bag Jonas brought with him.

He moves to it quietly and drops to one knee, rifles through it silently, shoots nervous glances at Jonas to make sure he's sleeping.

Humberto finds the map and unfolds it. The sound of-

ROSAMARIA (O.S.)
Que haces?

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

She scares the shit out of him. He stands and ushers her across the room, shows her the map. She doesn't understand.

HUMBERTO
Look. Es importante.

He stares at it.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
Quien es?

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
What is it?

ROSAMARIE
Es un mapa, idiota.

ROSAMARIE (CONT'D)
It's a map, idiot.

He snatches it back.

ROSAMARIE
So? What good is a map of Snake Canyon?

HUMBERTO
For treasure! See? The 'X'. And I know
this area. We're rich.

ROSAMARIE
Tesoro. Pero es de el,
Humbe.

ROSAMARIE (CONT'D)
Treasure. But it's his,
Humberto.

HUMBERTO
Bueno, ahora es mio.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
Well, now it belongs to me.

ROSAMARIE
Pero el no te lo dio.

ROSAMARIE (CONT'D)
But he didn't give it to
you.

HUMBERTO
Bueno, amor, por eso me lo
tengo que cojer.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
That's why I'll have to
take it, my love.

Humberto walks over to the drawer and takes out a
revolver. Rosamaria covers her mouth, shocked.

HUMBERTO
Llevate el nino.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
Take the boy outside.

Rosamaria rushes over to the Baby and scoops him up.
Opens the front door and steps OUTSIDE, closing it
quietly behind her.

Humberto folds the map, slips it into his pocket.

He approaches the stranger and cocks the gun quietly.

HUMBERTO
Perdoname Senor Jesus.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
Forgive me, Jesus.

He crosses himself and raises the pistol.

Jonas' eyes blink open. Humberto stares in shock. From
under his blanket, Jonas BLOWS HUMBERTO'S GUN HAND APART
with a single shot.

Humberto SCREAMS, grips his wrist as blood shoots from his ruined hand.

Jonas throws his blankets off, revealing a smoking gun,

EXT. HACIENDA - CONTINUOUS

Rosamaria turns to the house, hearing the screams.

She realizes that it's Humberto's wail and no one else, because it strings together Spanish curses.

ROSAMARIA
Dios mio, protege es
idiota.

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)
My God, protect that idiot.

INT. HACIENDA - CONTINUOUS

Jonas kicks Humberto over and digs the parchment out of the screaming man's pocket.

He slips his gun back into its holster and grabs his saddlebags.

EXT. HACIENDA STABLE - NIGHT

Jonas finishes saddling Humberto's horse with his bags.

As he readies to leave, Rosamaria comes to the back doorway with the Baby in her arms.

Jonas looks at the Baby, then to her again.

A trade has been made. They NOD in farewell.

Jonas throws a foot into the stirrup, but the old nag circles him, causing Jonas to FALL.

He finally climbs onto the horse. He makes a clicking sound with his tongue. The horse doesn't move.

JONAS
Giddy-up.

Nothing.

ROSAMARIA
Pepe, anda!

The horse, PEPE, BUCKS WILDLY and takes off into the night. Jonas bounces along on the saddle...

INT. HACIENDA - PRE-DAWN

The Baby plays on the floor as Rosamaria STITCHES UP the remainder of Humberto's hand. Humberto slugs back liquor.

ROSAMARIA
Cómo se quiere, Sabes?

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)
How will you, you know?

She glances at his unit, gestures with her hand so he knows she means "*how will you masturbate?*" She smiles.

HUMBERTO
Tu perra.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
You bitch.

ROSAMARIA
Es una pregunta justa, si?

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)
It is a fair question, yes?

HUMBERTO
Callate por el amor de
Christo!

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
Shut up, for the love of
Christ!

The FRONT DOOR is KICKED OPEN! MARKHAM stands in the doorway. Cal on one side and Indio on the other.

Markham steps inside as his eyes find Jonas' blankets in the corner.

CAL
Where is he?

MARKHAM
Cal. Be polite.

Humberto's eyes look from Markham's wrapped hand to his own wound.

HUMBERTO
Are you the men who killed his wife?

CAL
His *Wife*?

MARKHAM
(sits at table)
Sit. Por favor.
(to Rosamarie)
Perdón la intrusión, señora.

Humberto sits at the humble table, adjusting his pants.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)
(points to the wound)
He gave you that?

Humberto nods. Si.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

We have something in common. How long ago?

HUMBERTO

Three or four hours. He stole my horse.
(to the room)
I know where he is headed. He tell me.

CAL

Tell us.

HUMBERTO

Take me with and I will show you. I have some things to make even.

CAL

I don't want no one-handed bean eater slowing us. Let me beat it out of him.

Humberto looks at Cal without any fear.

HUMBERTO

With respect, if I still had my hand, I believe it would want to pick up my gun and shoot you.

In a blur Cal reaches for his revolver and-

MARKHAM

Stop it, boy.

Cal freezes. All eyes on Humberto.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Show us.

EXT. HACIENDA - EARLY MORNING

Humberto draws directions with a stick in the dirt. He finishes drawing an S-shaped line in the dirt.

HUMBERTO

Is in the middle of the winding part of Snake Canyon. Very old Indian Pueblo. Shoshone use it now as a burial ground. Sweet Medicine. Sacred. Muy potente.

Markham looks to Indio, who nods.

INDIO

Anasazi rest there. Ancient ones. Many
Pahuks. Stone mounds where nahu-rac live.
Animal spirits.

MARKHAM

Snake Canyon. I haven't heard that name
in quite a while.

HUMBERTO

He is loco to go there. The Indians
don't like people playing with their
ghosts. Why are you after this man?

CAL

He killed my -- !

MARKHAM

Cal.

(to Humberto)

That's our business, amigo.

HUMBERTO

(draws some more in the dirt)

He'll go in from the mouth and walk in.
We will come in from the top and head him
off.

(beat)

I know how we can get there first, and be
waiting for him.

He looks up at Markham and Indio.

MARKHAM

Get your bag.

HUMBERTO

Si, Senor.

He turns and walks toward the hacienda, then turns back-

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

Sir, it occurs to me, my horse was
stolen. He was loco, but my only one...

MARKHAM

You'll ride with Cal.

HUMBERTO

(gold caps gleaming)

Muy Bueno.

He heads inside. CAL silently stews.

INT. HACIENDA - CONTINUOUS

Rosamaria, holding the Baby, watches him prepare.

ROSAMARIA

Te vas a matar.

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)

You'll get yourself killed.

Humberto straps on his gunbelt.

HUMBERTO

Regreso un millonario.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

I'll return a millionaire.

ROSAMARIA

No me regreses en una
bolsa.

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)

Don't come back to me in a
bag.

She and the Baby walk to the window and stare out. They watch Humberto join the Manhunters and head off into the distance.

ROSAMARIA

Dios mio, proteger es
idiota.

ROSAMARIA (CONT'D)

My God, protect that idiot.

EXT. DESERT - LATE AFTERNOON

Jonas rides Humberto's horse. Suddenly the horse starts bucking. Jonas rides it out and gets control of it.

JONAS

(under his breath)

Crazy Sonofabitch.

He reins it in and they stop. Jonas looks at his map. Then off into the direction toward some low hills in the distance.

He looks to his left. Then to his right. Back at the map.

He's not sure which way to go, so he simply makes a choice.

EXT. DESERT - LATE AFTERNOON - WIDE SHOT

The landscape stretches into the far distance where we see Markham, Cal & Humberto, and Indio. They look tiny in this wide open expanse.

CLOSER...

Humberto rides behind Cal, and Cal hates it. Markham and Indio follow. Humberto speaks quietly so only Cal hears.

HUMBERTO

It is nice being the lead horse, si?

We get the feeling Humberto has been talking to Cal quite a bit. Cal does not answer.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

And yet, your father has asked you to share your horse. So being the leader tastes bitter instead of sweet, si?

Cal is getting angry. Markham and Indio don't even know he is speaking to Cal.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

We have to wonder why he did not ask the Indian to share, for you are his son, no? Strange. Very strange.

Cal reins in his horse. Turns around in his saddle.

CAL

(explodes)

Can you tell this half-nigger sonofabitch to shut his hole!?

Markham pulls up next to them on his horse. Humberto looks at Markham.

HUMBERTO

Sir, I merely said his horse is holding up well. He's a fine rider, your son is.

And off Cal's look of turmoil...

EXT. THE PLAINS - SUNSET

Jonas rides Humberto's pain in the ass horse as the sun drops low behind some HILLS in the distance.

The horse starts swinging his head and snorting. He finally gets the horse settled.

He studies the map. Looks to the hills and then back. Can't tell if the drawing on the map signifies hills.

He rides toward the hills. As he gets closer he hears something: a GUITAR. And a woman's voice, singing. Jonas heads toward the sound.

EXT. THE HILLS - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER - NIGHT

Jonas approaches in silence. Following the sound of the music. Then it stops. Then he hears WOMEN'S VOICES.

He guides Humberto's horse over a low hill, revealing:

THREE WOMEN, sitting around a campfire. TURA, a weathered looking prostitute, LORI, a pretty, young innocent girl with a guitar. And SUSAN, a wired-up woman with crazy eyes.

They all wear dirty DRESSES and cowboy boots.

Tura runs her hand over Lori's shoulder, and Lori leans away uncomfortably.

Humberto's horse SUDDENLY WHINNIES AND SNORTS. Susan jumps to her feet, gun aimed.

The horse rears up AND BUCKS JONAS OFF. Jonas sits on his ass in the dirt.

SUSAN

Identify yourself, stranger!

Holds up his empty hands.

JONAS

I'm not looking for trouble, just trying to find the canyon?

(removes map from pocket)

It's either East or West of here, thought you might point me in the right direction.

Tura looks at Jonas on the ground.

TURA

Susan dear, be a lady now. We have a *man* in our presence...

Susan lowers her gun.

TURA (CONT'D)

How'd you find us, stranger?

JONAS

Heard that pretty guitar.

SUSAN

I told you not to play that damn thing!

Jonas stands, dusts himself off.

LORI
(off Jonas)
He looks okay.

SUSAN
Who said you could utter!

Susan grabs up Lori's guitar, tosses it on the fire.
Lori is heartbroken.

TURA
Susan!

Tura reaches in the fire and grabs Lori's guitar out of the flames before it becomes kindling.

SUSAN
You stop protecting her! I know she's trying to butter you.

LORI
No I'm not.

Tura moves to Susan, gently strokes her hair.

TURA
I'm sorry honey.
(looks at Jonas, to Susan)
He's alright, sweetie.

Susan is pleased by the touch of Tura's hand. Jonas is not quite sure what he's walked into.

SUSAN
Looks like a horse thief to me. A milker fuckin' horse thief.

Tura and Lori laugh at that.

TURA
Something to drink, horse thief?

Jonas nods. Tura makes eye contact with Lori.

TURA (CONT'D)
The good stuff, dear.

Lori nods, shuffles in a bag for a CLEAR BOTTLE, pours Jonas a cup, hands it to him.

Her HAND SHAKES a little. Jonas sees this. Takes the cup as the women exchange a subtle glance.

JONAS
Thank you, Miss..?

LORI
No Miss. Just Lori.

TURA
Where you from, stranger?

JONAS
Around. You?

TURA
Around also. We must be neighbors. I'm
Tura. Heard the name?

Jonas shakes his head. Sips from his cup. They all stand
in silence a long strange beat. Jonas looks at the cup
suspiciously.

JONAS
What is this?

TURA
Little corn liquor. Better'n belly wash.

Susan cackles.

JONAS
Where you all headed?

SUSAN
Why do you care?

Jonas shrugs.

JONAS
Just talking.

Tura notices the shoulder wound.

TURA
That looks nasty, stranger.

Jonas shakes his head, COUGHS.

JONAS
Farming accident.

SUSAN
Have a shoot-out with your crop, did you?

JONAS
Something like that.

SUSAN

...The name 'Arch Stanton' mean anything to you?

JONAS

Don't know the man.

Tura pats him on the back, WINKS to Susan.

TURA

See, he don't know the man.

SUSAN

Told ya, he'll have guys crawling all over the place, clear to Arizona.

Jonas clears his throat, COUGHS.

JONAS

Maybe... I should be going.

Jonas knows something isn't right, squeezes his eyes closed and opens them, trying to clear his head.

TURA

You'd take care the company you keep, stranger, you knew the evil that bastard done. Just ask poor little Lori here.

And as Jonas waits for Tura to elaborate we-

FLASHBACK

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lori is cowering on the bed as a drunk man named ARCH STANTON stands before her, unbuckling his pants.

He is skinny and sweaty, but dressed like a classy man. Her eyes drift down to his machinery.

LORI

Please...please don't...I've never done it...

ARCH STANTON

Don't you worry none, my little soiled dove. It don't really hurt that much before it starts to feel real good.

Lori gulps.

LORI
I don't think I'm ready.

ARCH STANTON
Oh, you ready. Or I can throw you out in the street with the rest of the lowlifes and plague-ridden abandons? Little girl like you, no mama, no daddy. Here you have a future, a home; out there you're meat for fucking and nothing else.

(grabs her chin)
Don't get any ideas in that drug-addled brain of yours that you're pretty, because you most certainly are not. You are dirty and nasty and good for just a quick fuck. You get me? You listening, ya' devil breasted mattress thatcher?

Lori nods. A single tear runs down her cheek.

He pushes her back on the bed and mounts her. Then goes completely still when he feels the cold barrel of a gun on his skull and hears it COCK.

WIDER REVEALING: Tura.

TURA
Git off her, Arch.

Arch freezes.

ARCH STANTON
Is that my little Tura?

She doesn't answer. Arch smiles.

ARCH STANTON (CONT'D)
Girl who spent her life gettin' pinned like a porcupine may not have the stomach to pull a trigger. Different bit 'a business altogether.

BOOM! Tura pulls the trigger and Arch literally LAUNCHES off Lori to the floor. Bloody chunks of his brain stick to the wall as we go to-

EXT. HILLS - NIGHT **PRESENT**

Jonas stares at them.

TURA
How much you gettin' paid to take us in?

JONAS
I never heard of no Arch Stanton.

LORI
Maybe he's just lost.

TURA/SUSAN
Shut it.

TURA
Markham hire you?

That gets his attention.

JONAS
...Markham?

SUSAN
I knew that devil would have guys
crawling the desert for our hides.

He leans like a man who's had too much whiskey, then
bends over, drops the cup, rests his hands on his knees.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
You okay, stranger?

JONAS
Whud's Markham... do with Arch Stanton?

TURA
(shakes her head, smiles)
You're good. You're real good. Suze,
ain't he good?

Jonas fights to keep his eyes open. He looks up at them.

SUSAN
Maybe its something you drank?

JONAS' POV: there are SIX of them as his VISION FLUTTERS

He reaches for his gun, but when he fumbles it out of the
holster it flops to the ground.

Susan walks up to him, and PUNCHES him in the face and
knocks him to the ground.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
That was better'n gettin' my pussy shined
by a lizard tongue!

Tura walks over to him. He's out cold.

TURA
Sleep tight, stranger.

EXT. MARKHAM CAMP - NIGHT

Markham and Indio sit by the fire. Markham stares into the flames.

ANGLE ON: Humberto. Twenty feet away. Looking at Cal who sits on a rock out on the perimeter of the camp.

Markham's face tightens. He looks up to the skies.

MARKHAM
She was so beautiful... Best thing I ever made... We used to stay up late together and try to count shooting stars. The way she looked at me...made me feel like I was good, or could be. That was a long while ago...
(then)
Kind of man shoots a woman in the back?

Cal has heard his Father's words - tortured by them.

Humberto gets up, walks quietly towards Cal.

He sees Cal rolling up his sleeve. Cal has a knife in his hand. Humberto stares, fascinated by the parallel scabs he sees on Cal's arm.

Cal feels a presence, rolls down his sleeve and conceals his knife in one swift motion. Humberto walks to him.

HUMBERTO
Why are you crying, senor?

CAL
I'm not crying.

HUMBERTO
Your face is wet.

CAL
Well maybe 'cuz that fucker killed my sister!

HUMBERTO
Is that why you maim your flesh?

CAL
I'd kill you soon as I'd piss on you.

HUMBERTO
(flashes his gold teeth)
And then you'd have nobody here who
respects you.

Cal's eyes, darkening.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
You *need* to kill this man, yes? It is
weighing on you.

Cal is suddenly paranoid.

CAL
What would you know about it?

Cal just stares. And Humberto allows him to breathe...

HUMBERTO
An eye for an eye, yes?
(however)
They will not let you have the honor.
Your father, he will want the privilege.
But, if you and I were to go ahead...

Cal's eyes dim with the truth of Humberto's words.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
Do you know why this man is going to
Sweet Medicine? What he is after?

CAL
What's he after? Did he tell you?

HUMBERTO
Everyone has secrets, no?

CAL
You tell me, or I'll cut your dick off in
your sleep.

HUMBERTO
(stands)
Think, my friend. If we were to go
ahead, you would get to kill this man.
Alone. Your father would be so proud.

CAL
Go away from me.

HUMBERTO
Why do you have so much respect for a man
who has none for you?

Cal's face tightens into a confused mask of shame and anger. Humberto walks away...

EXT. HILLS - SUNRISE

Jonas lays flat on the ground, spread eagle, BOUND at the wrists and ankles to four STAKES pounded into the ground at all four extremities.

His eyes slowly open.

JONAS POV:

THE SUN. BLAZING. CRUEL. It warbles in and out of focus. Then a SHADOW falls over it, slowly eclipsing the blaze.

A DARK FIGURE. A MAN. The man leans closer, looming over Jonas' face. It's Preston.

TWO SHOT: Preston's face hovers over Jonas's, as if he were suspended right above him.

PRESTON BARNES

Dislocate your thumb. You'd be able to get a hand free.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Why don't we have little Lori do it.

WIDE: TURA stands above Jonas, BOWIE KNIFE in hand. The apparition is gone.

Jonas tries to get his bearings. Clear his head.

JONAS

(groggy)

Untie me.

Lori looks at the knife in Tura's hand, then Jonas, then Susan.

LORI

Why me?

Jonas covertly begins struggling with the rope around his left wrist.

SUSAN

You're the reason why we're here.

Tura hands the knife to Lori. Jonas appeals to her.

JONAS
I ain't no bounty hunter.

TURA
Hurry up and slit his throat. Then we
can eat breakfast.

Susan cackles with witchy laughter. Lori looks at the
knife in her hand, then Jonas.

LORI
He could have shot us before we ever saw
him.

CLOSE on Jonas' LEFT HAND: straining against the ropes.
We hear a SNAP of bone, as Jonas' thumb dislocates.

SUSAN
Sure enough, if that damn horse hadn't'a
thrown the sack'a shit.

JONAS
(to Susan)
I wish I woulda, you dumb harlot.

SUSAN
What's that? I ain't your mama!

Susan rips the knife from Lori's hand and jumps on Jonas
and straddles him as she presses the knife to his throat.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
(screams)
I'm gonna fuck the shit outta you!

JONAS
Whhorr.

SUSAN
What?

JONAS
Shre...phs...

SUSAN
The hell you call me, boy?

Susan leans forward to Jonas' lips.

Jonas HEAD BUTTS HER IN THE FACE, fracturing her nose.

She stumbles backward and trips and lands in the
smoldering ashes of the fire and SCREECHES in agony.

Jonas rips his hand free. He fights back the pain, unties his other hand.

Tura scrambles for her gun.

Jonas crawls to his gun belt and grabs it.

Tura SHOOTs and misses and

Jonas FIRES right through the holster, shoots Tura in the meat of her thigh -- she HOWLS IN PAIN and twists into a heap on the ground.

JONAS

Drop that fucking pistol.

She drops it. He cuts the rope round his ankles with his boot knife and moves to Tura and kicks her gun away as Lori pulls Susan out of the red hot cinders.

Humberto's horse REARS UP, whinnying madly, as it strains against the reins tying it to a tree or post.

Jonas points his gun at Tura as she lays in the dirt...

JONAS (CONT'D)

What does Arch Stanton have to do with Markham?

...Tura's panicked eyes flick between Jonas' gun barrel and his eyes.

TURA

You really don't know.

He cocks his gun and she begins...

TURA (CONT'D)

Markham owns Shinbone, a mining town, and Stanton ran the saloon and cathouse there.

JONAS

Where's my map?

FOOTSTEPS behind Jonas: He pivots to see Susan FLYING at him skin smoldering, eyes RAGING, and knife raised for the kill-

Jonas raises his gun at the last second. *BLAM!* SHOOTs HER IN THE NECK.

Humberto's horse finally BREAKS his lead and it BOLTS AWAY.

JONAS (CONT'D)

Swell...

He looks back down at Tura...

JONAS (CONT'D)

I said, where's my map?

LORI (O.C.)

It's here!

He turns. Lori trembles with fear, holds out the map.

He slides it in his pocket, looks in Lori's eyes.

JONAS

Thank you.

Tura is in shock as she stares at Susan, dead on the ground. Lori goes to her, holds her, comforting.

TURA

You killed my little Susan.

JONAS

Yeah.

And as Jonas gathers his things...

JONAS (CONT'D)

(To Lori)

They's some people lookin' for me...
might not be far behind.

He walks away from the mess, the girls watch him in a trance.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Manhunters continue their quest, closing the gap.
Cal and Humberto ride ahead, Markham and Indio hang back.

MARKHAM

How's the leg?

Indio nods, stoic.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

I wonder where this man was headed with
my girl...

INDIO

We see soon...if the Mexican is honest.

They ride for a beat. Humberto points from behind Cal on their horse.

HUMBERTO
The mouth of the canyon is East, over those hills. We ride Western way, and meet the canyon where it switches back.

Indio pulls his horse alongside Markham.

INDIO
Cal's twisted inside.

MR. MARKHAM
I hadn't noticed.

Markham has. Then -

INDIO
He cries in his sleep.

Markham absorbs this. Then -

INDIO (CONT'D)
Why chase this man into Snake Canyon?

MARKHAM
I aim to punish someone.

INDIO
Sweet Medicine... is watered with much blood. And demons too. You are my brother. But I have fear in my heart.

Indio stops. Markham turns.

INDIO (CONT'D)
Reed. May be the killer... has been punished enough. What good is more death?

Markham looks over at Cal, then back at Indio.

MARKHAM
There are fates worse than death. You can turn around, Indio. Go home. I'm going to Sweet Medicine.

After a moment. Indio follows.

EXT. DESERT PLAIN - DAY - HOURS LATER

Jonas walks in the rising heat, exhausted and thirsty. His bags are GONE - run off with Humberto's horse.

Jonas looks up and sees that the vultures are still tailing him.

A Gila Monster crawls in the sunbaked sand on it's own quest. Pauses as Jonas walks by. The Gila Monster looks at him. Their eyes lock.

JONAS

You too, huh?

He continues walking, over a rise and then, spread out before him, a few miles away, is the majestic SNAKE CANYON.

It winds through gigantic abutments, switching back on itself many times, a veritable maze of canyon wall, buttes and steep crevices.

Jonas stares in awe. Far in the distance, a lone DARK FIGURE sits in the flats in front of the mouth of the CANYON.

A black horse stands nearby, hitched to a kind of darkly ornate COACH, the sort used by gypsies or traveling medicine men.

Jonas touches the handle of his pistol for comfort and walks on through the dry sweltering heat.

EXT. DESERT PLAIN - CLOSER - DAY

THE FIGURE, dressed in dusty black with a regal black hat, comes into view. The Man sits on the ground on a SMALL INDIAN BLANKET.

He rolls a LARGE GOLD COIN over his knuckles meditatively, intent on a game of Solitaire. He is a weathered man, 50 or 60. People call him SARTANA.

As Jonas stops in front of the man, Sartana's knuckling coin FREEZES, then DROPS to the blanket spread before him.

Sartana has yet to look up.

SARTANA

Find the coin, if you please.

He holds up the ACE OF SPADES and places it flat over the coin. Throws two other random cards down and mixes them around, deftly keeping the coin under the card.

Jonas looks at the three cards laying in the dust, points to the one on the left side. Sartana flips it; QUEEN OF SPADES, no coin.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

One more.

Jonas points to one of the two remaining.

Sartana flips it and reveals the TWO OF HEARTS. He then turns the last one: it's the THREE OF CLUBS. Still no coin. Sartana slides the ACE out of his sleeve, and the GOLD COIN drops into his palm. Jonas NODS.

JONAS

I could really do with some of your water.

SARTANA

Water in the desert, a precious commodity. What'll you give *me*, stranger? That pistol? Those boots?

Jonas blinks.

JONAS

I suppose...I suppose the river's not that far.

SARTANA

Tell ya what, I'll flip you for it. Heads, water's free. Tails, you walk the three miles to the river and refill my canteens.

Jonas hesitates. But he is thirsty.

JONAS

Fine.

The gold coin FLIPS high in the air, mingles with the Sun, and returns to Sartana. TAILS. Jonas sighs.

SARTANA

First thing I was taught...was know more than the other Buckaroo.

Sartana flips the coin over: BOTH SIDES ARE TAILS.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Leave nothing to Fate. By the illusion of choice, we carve our own destiny.

Jonas clocks a RIFLE, a COLT revolver and a BUCK KNIFE laid out next to Sartana.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

People call me Sartana.

JONAS

Jonas. I'll think twice about sitting down to a game of poker with you.

SARTANA

I never gamble. It's a sure means to a quick end. As to water...

Sartana looks at a nest of CACTI, nearby in the sand. One is LIGHT GREEN and one is a PURPLISH color.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Look here.

He breaks one of the small green cacti out of the sand. Cleans the barbs away.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

They always travel together. The blue one, Shaman's say it will remind you what the face of God looks like. You've heard of Peyote?

Jonas nods.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Similar. But his sister can save a man dying of thirst. ...Or is it the other way around?

He smiles. He breaks the green cactus open and hands it to Jonas. Succulent water oozes from its flesh.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Things a man should know if he's to go wandering through the desert alone. And without a horse?

JONAS

It - it ran off on me.

Jonas goes to drink - Sartana stops him.

SARTANA

Wait.

Sartana stands and whistles. His horse moseys over. He takes a canteen from his saddle bag, hands it to Jonas.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Save the cactus drinking for when you really need it.

Jonas drinks. Observes an edge of paper poking out from Sartana's bag. Sartana slips it out: A BOUNTY POSTER with a crude sketch of THREE WOMEN: Tura, Lori and Susan.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Three of the damndest little cunt's you've ever seen.

JONAS

They what brung you out here?

Sartana hands Jonas the poster.

SARTANA

Haven't seen them, have you?

JONAS

(shakes his head)

May I ask...who hired you to find them?

SARTANA

I hunt bounty, and sell to the highest bidder. Men usually. Sometimes women. In the desert, life has no value. But death of course brings five hundred dollars a head.

JONAS

Don't know how you'd ever find anybody way out here.

SARTANA

People are predictable. 'Specially law breakers. The canyon yonder is the fastest way to the Southern Territories. These little ladies are probably headed down Mexico way.

Sartana eyes this man in front of him, his bloody crusted bandages.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

May I ask who gave you that nasty wound?

JONAS

It's a long story.

SARTANA

You can tell it while I patch you up properly.

Sartana moves to the back of his wagon, disappears inside.

Jonas slides his map out and looks at it - then at the mouth of the distant canyon.

Sartana comes back with a salve of some kind in a tin, and some rags, which he rips into strips.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

What's that you got there?

JONAS

A map.

SARTANA

That I can guess. What kind of map?

JONAS

Just a map.

SARTANA

May I?

Jonas doesn't hand it over. Sartana grins warmly.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Might this map have something to do with how you've scraped yourself up so badly?

He stares at Sartana a good long beat, then his horse.

JONAS

In a roundabout way, I suppose. I ran into a small posse back yonder, out looking for a landowners daughter, who was kidnapped...and uh...

SARTANA

They took you for one of the kidnappers?

JONAS

Even worse, they thought I was the one killed her.

SARTANA

So she's no longer of the living.

JONAS

In truth I was the one who found her. Relieved the real outlaws, you might say, of their quarry. But they didn't know that - there was a bit of a tussle, and uh... they killed her.

SARTANA

The outlaws?

JONAS

The posse. An accident. Girl's father was among them. I hate to think...

SARTANA

I see. But the map...

JONAS

The map's what brung me out, that's all. 'Twas my father's. It's an old map, of ill-gotten gains, according to his story. Lot of death around it. But old gains, like I said. I thought...

SARTANA

You thought the story would turn out diff'rently for you.

JONAS

The old man's passed on, and I thought, if his story was half true, there might be a few wrongs yet to be righted. At the very least, I thought I might learn a thing or two.

SARTANA

The sins of the father...

JONAS

Shall be visited upon the son, a thousand times.

SARTANA

"The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous Buckaroo will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him." Ezekiel, somethin' somethin'.

Jonas nods. He likes this man.

JONAS

Whatever the bounty is on the whores, I'll double it twice if you take me inside the Canyon.

SARTANA

You don't strike me as a well-heeled man...

JONAS

The risk is, this map leads nowhere.

SARTANA

What is the nature of these ill-gotten gains?

JONAS

Gold.

SARTANA

How much?

JONAS

Much.

Sartana rolls the coin on his knuckles, meditatively.

SARTANA

Well now... getting inside Snake Canyon is an easy job for a man. Getting out with all your parts attached, that's quite another matter. Indians roost up in there. Mountain lions. Dangerous territory. Hell of a place to bury gold.

JONAS

One man can't do it alone.

SARTANA

I ask myself- is this treasure worth..?

JONAS

Ten percent finders fee.

(then)

Twenty. Plus the six thousand.

Sartana smiles.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - CLIFF - DAY

The Manhunter's move along at a good clip over the plains, with Cal and Humberto's horse in the lead.

Suddenly, Cal rears his horse and comes to a quick stop. The land drops away below him; a CLIFF. Markham and Indio pull up beside him, revealing

SNAKE CANYON spread out below them. It's massive, twisting vista curling out to the horizon and beyond. The three horses stand on the lip of the jagged limestone cliffs.

HUMBERTO

Wherever he is, it will be slow going down there.

MARKHAM

How far?

HUMBERTO

Not far. About one more hour, sir. Then we make our way down to wait.

Markham turns his horse to the west.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

Sir, from here on, the way is twisted. It might be better if I...

Markham gestures.

MARKHAM

Cal. Change up with Humberto. He will guide us in from here.

CAL

BU-! Mr. Markham! He can guide us sure well from where he is!

MARKHAM

Cal.

Cal turns in his saddle, dead-eyes Humberto for a long beat. Then quickly jumps off the horse, fury in his movement. Humberto scoots forward demurely.

HUMBERTO

Very comfortable up here.

And Cal mounts the horse again, in back of Humberto.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON MOUTH - HIGH NOON

Sartana and Jonas ride side by side on top of the gypsy wagon, moving steadily at an easy GALLOP.

PULL BACK: until we are high and wide behind them as they enter the MOUTH of Snake Canyon. It's sheer limestone walls swallow up the tiny figures.

EXT. CLIFFS ABOVE SNAKE CANYON - MARKHAM POSSE - NOON

Humberto and Cal in the lead, the posse moves cautiously over a rocky trail atop the cliffs.

Faces dirty with dust and dry from heat. They pause, look down in the Canyon.

The river runs thinner here. Reduced to a STREAM.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - AFTERNOON

Sartana's wagon gallops over the hard packed earth of the wide canyon floor. Marking good time.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON MOUTH - SAME TIME

HORSES HOOVES clop over hard earth. WAGON TRACKS mark a path in the sand. PAN UP and around the horse to reveal:

TURA rides Humberto's horse. LORI is TIED DOWN on the back of the horse. Tura is ill with revenge.

TURA

How deep in the canyon?

LORI

I dunno. Please, Tura, it hurts.

TURA

Good. I'm gonna git your dick lovin' mind right.

She whips Humberto's horse and it breaks into a run. Then she gives Lori a whip as well for good measure...

LORI

Ohh!

EXT. THE CLIFF ABOVE SNAKE CANYON - AFTERNOON

We might recognize this terrain from PRESTON'S STAGECOACH ROBBERY. Not the exact place, but the feel of the area.

CAL

So where's this shortcut?

Humberto nervously scans the ridge for an opening.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - AFTERNOON

Sartana's wagon rounds a bend in the canyon, still at a good clip.

Jonas looks up the canyon walls, to the rocky ridge forming a false horizon halfway up the sky.

EXT. CLIFF ABOVE SNAKE CANYON - AFTERNOON

The Markham posse moves along the cliff. Markham and Indio look at Humberto with waning confidence.

HUMBERTO

Wait.

They stop. Humberto climbs off Cal's horse, walks twenty feet ahead, peers over the edge, sees a thin ribbon of trail winding down the canyon wall.

He turns and flashes a relieved gold toothed smile.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Ahead, there is a curve in the canyon that is so sharp you cannot see around it. Sartana brings the wagon to a trot as they round it.

SARTANA

Let's have a look at that map, now.

Jonas hands it over. Sartana studies it for a beat. He nods, knowingly... hands it back.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Tell me more about the Woman.

*

JONAS

Not much to tell. I didn't know her long, but I feel like I knew her, somehow. She was held captive for ransom, but she said she felt like she was set free from something.

SARTANA

But they killed her.

JONAS

And they think it's me done it.

SARTANA

But that's not what pains you. It is her. The loss of her.

As they move deeper into the Canyon, the jagged limestone cliffs become more sheer.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

It took me time to understand that loss
can set you free. And once set free, a
man is more powerful.

A BLACKBIRD is startled from his roost. In one fluid
movement, Sartana raises his gun, tracks and FIRES.

The bird drops from the sky.

They ride in silence a moment. Jonas looks at water
running over the rocks. The river reduced to a STREAM.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON TRAIL - AFTERNOON

Markham's posse moves downward, over the thin rocky
trail. They are still high enough to see the canyon
floor, stretching a couple of bends back.

Markham TURNS in his saddle, sees a tiny movement.

SARTANA'S WAGON trots round a bend, a good five hundred
yards and two bends behind.

MARKHAM

Indio.

Indio turns.

INDIO

A coach? Travelers, perhaps.

Indio turns back.

MARKHAM

Indio. Your glasses, old friend. Put them
on.

Indio stops, removes his glasses from his shirt pocket,
and humbly puts them on. Busted.

Indio takes a long hard look, turns back to his boss.

INDIO

Sir.

He nods.

MARKHAM

I thought maybe so.

INDIO

With Sartana.

MARKHAM

Well, hell...

Markham WHISTLES sharply. Humberto turns.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Make time, Mexican!

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BUTTE - MINUTES LATER

Markham and the men take cover behind a BUTTE rising up from the canyon floor. The canyon is narrower here, forming a natural funnel.

MARKHAM

We wait here. Good vantage point.

The men quickly start unpacking their RIFLES. A hundred yards back the way they came is a BEND in the canyon.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Cal. Shells.

Cal unpacks a box of SHELLS and Markham starts chambering rounds. Not far off from the butte is a set of BOULDERS near the opposite wall.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Cal, give Indio your rifle. Indio, take the Mex and set up behind those boulders there.

CAL

Why can't I have my rifle?

MARKHAM

You stay with me.

Cal hands it over and Indio grabs some shells and heads over, Humberto behind.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BEND - MINUTES LATER

Jonas and Sartana ride around the second BEND in the canyon, into a widened expanse.

The river has dug a RAVINE into the canyon floor here, forming a 30 foot LEDGE to the stream below.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BUTTE - CONTINUOUS

Markham and his men ready their weapons.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BEND - CONTINUOUS

Sartana eyes the BUTTE a hundred yards ahead. Pulls the wagon to a STOP.

JONAS

We stoppin'?

Sartana glances up the canyon wall. Jonas' eyes find the TRAIL in the cliff that winds down into the Canyon.

SARTANA

Little voice inside told me to.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BOULDERS - CONTINUOUS

Fifty feet away from Markham, Humberto and Indio hunker behind a set of boulders. Indio removes his GLASSES and affixes them to his face.

HUMBERTO

An Indian wearing glasses?

Indio stiffens. He slowly turns to Humberto, chambering a round with a distinct CA-CHINK.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

(deferential)

Is good.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BEND - CONTINUOUS

Sartana guides the wagon off the path towards the left Canyon wall, away from the ravine.

JONAS

Who?

SARTANA

That remains to be found out, now don't it?

He stops, removes an unfolding BRASS TELESCOPE from his saddle bag.

TELESCOPE POV: moving along the set of BOULDERS. Then over to the BUTTE.

No movement, until a RIFLE BARREL appears, sliding out from a crevice in the butte. MARKHAM appears behind the gun, for a moment, then is gone.

Sartana lowers his scope, slides it into his bag.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

They mean to box us in. Follow me.

Sartana leads Jonas to the rear of the wagon, unhitches the small door.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Are you a man of weapons?

JONAS

Not especially.

Sartana deftly removes an old, worn looking WINCHESTER RIFLE from between a roll of blankets.

SARTANA

For distance, a rifle is a steady partner.

Jonas takes the rifle. Sartana points toward a jetty of boulders paralleling the ravine.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

That set of boulders, there. Stay low. If you hear a shot, don't let it spook you. It'd take a good bit of luck to hit you from off there.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BUTTE - LATE AFTERNOON

Cal and Markham peer from the butte across the canyon.

CAL

There!

POV: a small FIGURE runs out from behind the wagon.

Markham raises his rifle and waits for a shot.

MARKHAM

I want him alive!

INDIO tracks the figure across the desert, FIRES.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BEND - SAME TIME

Jonas runs fast across the expanse as a SHOT kicks up dust in front of him. He DUCKS behind the boulders near the RAVINE.

BEHIND THE WAGON:

Sartana quietly slips his pistol out of his holster.

Jonas looks at Sartana and Sartana nods. He readies his pistol. Jonas turns back, aims the rifle but -

BLAM! THE RIFLE IS SHOT FROM JONAS' GRIP. It skitters away in the sand.

Sartana's smoking pistol is aimed in Jonas' direction.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BUTTE - CONTINUOUS

Markham DUCKS back behind the butte. He trades a glance with Indio, across the way.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BEND - CONTINUOUS

Jonas' shocked expression. He quickly recovers and reaches for his pistol. Sartana stops him with a gesture of his gun.

SARTANA

Uh-uh...

(then, YELLING)

HOLD YOUR FIRE!

Jonas watches as Sartana steps out from behind the wagon, covering Jonas with his gun.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Toss me that cannon, Buckaroo.

Jonas does. Sartana picks it up, slides it into his belt.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

I found that old Winchester 73 in the dirt, few months back. The action is all rusted out - didn't want ya to blow your face off. But that little voice told me that it may come in handy yet. Always listen to the little voice.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BUTTE - CONTINUOUS

Markham steps out from his position behind the butte.

MARKHAM

Gentlemen, let's go introduce ourselves
proper to this stranger.

The others follow suit and head out with Markham.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - BEND - CONTINUOUS

Sartana's just a few feet away.

SARTANA

Take off your gun belt.

Jonas does.

JONAS

What are you doing?

SARTANA

I am a scorpion. You are a frog.

Jonas looks up at him, puzzled.

With a swift KICK to the HEAD, Sartana knocks Jonas flat.

Sartana picks up the gun-belt, holds it over his head as
he turns towards Markham.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

THIS FELLOW IS UNARMED!

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Sartana walks out to greet Markham et al.

MARKHAM

I'd recognize that old Moline wagon just
about any damn place. Even Snake Canyon.

Humberto and Cal, behind Markham, are more interested in
Jonas, who is stirring on the ground.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

You old Piker. I thought you were roping
us three Calico Queens?

SARTANA

Been in the desert so long I knowed all the lizards by their first names.

MARKHAM

Where in God's good earth were you headed with this chiseler?

SARTANA

He enlisted my aid in traversing the canyon for the Southern Territories. This pass has a reputation.

MARKHAM

But why? Where's he headed?

SARTANA

Never thought to ask. But I pegged him as someone you'd be eager to jaw with.

Humberto walks between them, looks at Markham.

HUMBERTO

(points to stump)

Sir, I would like the first opportunity.

CAL

That bastard killed my sister!

Across the canyon, Jonas gets to his knees. Cal unsnaps his holster, DRAWS his gun.

MARKHAM

He's unarmed, Cal. Wait.

The boy starts FIRING WILDLY at Jonas, who hits the dirt again.

CAL

Bastard's gotta die!

Cal rushes by the men, stiff arming his pistol, still SHOOTING pell-mell-

-and the BUTT OF MARKHAM'S RIFLE SMASHES into Cal's temple with a horrible CRUNCH. Cal goes down.

Indio, Sartana and Humberto look at Markham in awe.

MARKHAM

That boy will learn to mind me.

SARTANA

Impetuousness of youth...

Cal rolls onto his hands and knees, looks for his gun on the ground. Indio picks it up, saving the boy from further harm.

Markham walks over to his son, who is sitting on the ground, in a daze. Offers him a hand up.

Humberto walks stealthily towards Jonas, who puts his hands in the air, still dazed and on his knees. The Mexican shoves Jonas over with his BOOT.

HUMBERTO
I am watching him!
(to Jonas)
Today, maybe *I* am the sir.

Humberto searches Jonas's pocket and finds the parchment. He slips it into his pocket quickly and stands.

Indio sees him.

INDIO
What was that?

HUMBERTO
Nothing. You saw nothing.

Indio turns to Markham.

INDIO
He took something from the man.

Markham eyes Humberto suspiciously.

HUMBERTO
(smiles)
It belonged to me, sir.

They fail to notice Jonas rolling onto his back.

MR. MARKHAM
(To Humberto)
Hand it over.

Humberto shakes his head.

HUMBERTO
It's nothing, sir.

Jonas starts CRAWLING SLOWLY toward the edge of the ravine.

Indio presses the barrel of his pistol to Humberto's cheek.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)
 Okay, if you insist.

Humberto digs the parchment out and hands it to Markham.
 He opens it and examines it.

Cal, stands up, looks at his father in anguish.

CAL
 Why'd you do that to me?

Jonas is about to ROLL himself off the edge of the RAVINE
 - SARTANA sees this:

SARTANA
 Ho!

Indio stops him with a boot to the back. Markham hands
 the MAP to Indio, who studies it.

MARKHAM
 (to Humberto and Cal)
 Pick him up.

CAL
 Why don't we kill this sonofabitch right
 now, for what he done to Cat!

MARKHAM
 I said pick him up.

They do. Jonas slumps between them. Markham grabs
 Jonas' face, studies it.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)
 So what are you besides a kidnapper?
 Trader? Sell whites to the Redskin?

JONAS
 I work in a Dry Goods store.

Markham reacts.

MARKHAM
 Tell me about the map.

JONAS
 I didn't kill your daughter.

Quick flash of fear on Cal's face.

JONAS (CONT'D)
 One of you reckless fools did it.

CAL
Shut your face, LIAR!

Cal turns and throws a CRUSHING BLOW to Jonas' mouth and Jonas folds.

MARKHAM
Cal!

JONAS
I tried to save her.

CAL
He's full of bullshit!

MARKHAM
Tell me about the map, son.

On Indio, studying the MAP. CLOSE on the INDIAN SYMBOLS as he runs a finger over them, reading.

INDIO
(quietly)
"Sun Sets"... "Lion Dies."

Markham lifts Jonas' head up by the hair,

MARKHAM
Tell me.

JONAS
(mumbling through pain and blood)
My...My father's map. I took it from him.

MARKHAM
For what purpose? What are you after?

JONAS
A family matter. None of your concern.

Markham looks at Humberto and Cal: *raise him up again.*

Cal SMASHES another punch to Jonas' chin and a lasso of bloody saliva sails from his mouth through the air.

MARKHAM
Family matters are very much my concern, mister. Family is everything. Your father, who is he?

JONAS
He's dead.

MARKHAM

Mine also. It's been known to happen.
What was his name?

JONAS

Barnes. Preston Barnes.

This name stops Markham cold. The others are lost.

MARKHAM

Preston Barnes...is your father.

Jonas' expression is unreadable.

INDIO

(reading)

..."Eagle Rises."

MARKHAM

This map. Where does it lead?

JONAS

Don't know.

MARKHAM

Gold. It leads to gold. Does it not?
Around hereabouts?

Markham can tell, from the look in Jonas' eyes, that he has hit the mark.

Jonas is barely conscious, such dead weight, it's hard for Humberto and Cal to hold him up.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Your mother is Zella Barnes.

It takes all Jonas' energy to lift his head. And make eye contact with Markham. Their eyes lock for a long beat.

JONAS

You knew my Mother?

MARKHAM

I knew them both.

Markham signals to Cal and Humberto to drop him. They do.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

When I was a young man, much younger than you, I made an investment in a prospector I took a liking to - I sold everything I had and staked the man the money for supplies to hunt for gold in the California mountains. He struck it rich in the first month. I took that money, dug out of the mountainside with my very own hands - and eventually staked another gentleman who had found copper. Only this was not a few hunnered dollars for shovels and a mining pan - this was *one hunnered thousand dollars* - to build an entire mining town. Coppertown, about a hundred miles South of Snake Canyon, have you heard of it?

JONAS

Can't say I have.

MARKHAM

Because it doesn't exist. I hired two wagons to carry the gold through this very canyon.

SARTANA

I've heard of that robbery.

MARKHAM

Yes it was quite popular.

SARTANA

But I hear it wasn't so much a robbery as a massacre. People thought it was Injuns.

MARKHAM

The wagons also carried my partners family. His wife, three children, some nieces and nephews. And my wife as well. Pregnant with our first child.

Cal blanches, looks at his Father.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Not you Cal. This was before I met your mother. This was my first wife. Abilene. I lost my first wife and my first fortune, all in one bloody afternoon, right here, in this God forsaken Canyon.

JONAS

Preston...was one of the men. He told me.

MARKHAM

And you are his Son.

JONAS

No...I'm not that man's son.

MARKHAM

(smiles)

Why would I believe that. You've inherited his bull-headedness. And his unwillingness to concede to his betters.

JONAS

Why didn't you kill him. Done us both a favor.

MARKHAM

There are worse things than death. As you will come to find. Hold his arm.

Cal KICKS Jonas in the face, knocking him back.
Humberto's BOOT presses Jonas' arm to the dirt, pinning it.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Do you believe in God? I'm not sure if I do, anymore, but I do believe in fate.

Markham removes his gun from his holster. Aims it at Jonas' broken hand.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

And to Preston Barnes, I assigned a fate worse than death.

SHOOTs HIM through the palm of his hand and Jonas SCREAMS in pain.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Do you understand me, boy? Sometimes a crime is so hideous, men pay for it through *generations* of hurt.

Markham looks to Cal.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Do you see what I mean now, son?

CAL

Yes, Mr. Markham.

Markham turns, walking away.

MARKHAM

Take your time.

Indio lowers his head in SHAME.

Humberto kicks Jonas in the face again. Cal draws his knife.

HUMBERTO

A tu madre, gringo puta!

CAL

Hold him.

Humberto holds Jonas' arms behind him.

CAL (CONT'D)

You're gonna love this.

Cal tears open Jonas' shirt. He runs his blade across Jonas' chest, CUTTING him slowly. He then presses the blade directly toward Jonas's EYE.

THUNDERING HOOVES ON EARTH makes everyone turn to: TURA. COMING RIGHT AT THEM. A gun in each hand.

HUMBERTO

That's my horse.

Tura starts FIRING. Indio pulls his REVOLVER and BLAM BLAM BLAM a bullet rips into INDIO'S CHEST.

His GLASSES fall off. He hits the ground, coughing blood, frantically feeling for his glasses in the dirt.

MARKHAM

Indio!

Seconds later, Tura stampedes by the men and TRAMPLES INDIO to a pulp under the hooves.

Tura turns, 40 yards away. Lori still HOG-TIED to the back of the horse.

TURA

I got a few more beans in the wheels and
I aim to make 'em count!

Tura WHIPS the horse and they start GALLOPING towards the men for a second pass.

Markham, unmoving, lifts his rifle with one hand.

Tura fires, screaming an insane banshee war cry.

Markham holds. Tura gets closer. Closer.

Markham SHOOTS Tura in the head and blows her off the horse. One shot.

The horse rises up on it's hind legs and whinnies madly, turns tail and flees with TURA BOUNCING behind like a rag doll - foot STUCK in a stirrup.

Markham takes aim at the horse, but MISSES as Humberto's horse runs out of range.

MARKHAM

That's five hunnered less to pay you,
Sartana.

Markham turns. SARTANA IS GONE. Around the bend in the melee, heading deeper into the canyon.

Markham turns to Cal.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Now I wonder where he's off to.

Cal nods. Turns to Jonas - HE IS GONE.

CAL

What the hell?

They race to the EDGE OF THE RAVINE and look down. A thirty or forty foot drop.

JONAS LAYS AT THE BOTTOM, unmoving. Looking as dead as a man can look.

They are quiet for a moment.

MR. MARKHAM

I wasn't quite finished yet.

They step back from the edge and stand around, mulling over everything that happened.

Markham pries the parchment from the fingers of the bloody pulp that was Indio.

MR. MARKHAM (CONT'D)

This was why, Indio old friend. This was
why. Let's go.

Cal picks up his gun, returns it to it's rightful place. Markham turns to Humberto. Eyes him coldly.

MARKHAM

You.

Humberto looks up, worried and cowering.

HUMBERTO

The man told me nothing. I was guessing.

CAL

We've got the map, now. We don't need you.

Markham stares into Humberto's eyes. Weighing his fate. Then:

MARKHAM

Load Indio up on his horse so we can get a move on. We'll bury him proper at Sweet Medicine.

HUMBERTO

Yes, sir. Thank you sir.

MARKHAM

It's better than leaving him here.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - DAY

Jonas lays flat on his back and dead to the world.

He COUGHS GENTLY, alive but barely. He opens a SWOLLEN EYE and forces himself to sit up.

Jonas coughs again, getting used to life again. He leans against a rock and shivers from the pain.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - DAY

Jonas appears around a bend, looking like a wraith from hell itself.

He uses a twisted stick as a cane as he limps along the dry riverbed. His shoulder is bleeding again, and he has dried blood caked around his nostrils and lips.

WIDE: Jonas is trapped in the canyon walls. The shadows grow long in the canyon, vanquishing the light like the cover closing on a coffin.

He stops. Scans the canyon walls to find a trail out, but the gloom makes it impossible. He turns and continues limping forward.

And up ahead, ONLY BLACK. It looks like a mouth that will swallow him whole.

EXT. RIVERBED - CONTINUOUS

Lori. Still tied to Humberto's horse, but almost free. Her arms are badly bruised from hours of trying to untie the ropes.

When she gets the rope loose she slides off the horse and hits the ground with a thud.

LORI

Ouch.

She starts to weep. Humberto's horse stands there, unconcerned.

EXT. TRAIL ABOVE SNAKE CANYON - LATE AFTERNOON

Markham posse. Humberto now rides Indio's horse, with Indio tied down behind. The men are silent as their eyes scan the canyon below. Humberto suddenly raises his hand and stops, looks down into the majestic canyon floor.

HUMBERTO

The less time we spend down there, the better. Indians. But it is faster.

Markham looks at Indio and Cal's horses.

CAL

We should get across lots or that goddamn bunko artist will take whatever's there.

MARKHAM

Humberto, how far in would you say?

HUMBERTO

I have never been this deep into the canyon before? If we move, I think before nightfall.

MARKHAM

Let's burn the breeze.

They move out onto the canyon floor and gallop away.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - RIVERBED - LATE AFTERNOON

Jonas limps along. We move in close on his face. See his parched lips, his cracked skin.

His eyes look wild and delirious.

He sees a group of SMALL CACTUS across the riverbed. Limpes over the rocks to it and stares at it. It's the little green cactus that Sartana had shown him. He sees another one.

Purple.

Looks back and forth between them.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - RIVERBED

Jonas sits in the shade, demolished purple cactus in front of him. Jonas wipes his mouth with his dirty bloody sleeve.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - RIVERBED - LATER

Jonas limps along fast, as though the pain no longer hinders him, dripping with sweat as he makes time and he-
STOPS IN HIS TRACKS.

THE DEAD SHOSONE WOMAN sits in the middle of the dry riverbed. Head down, black hair covering her face.

He slowly looks up. With dread. Something stirs from under the Shoshone woman's skirt.

Thirty feet away he sees HIS MOTHER when she was young. Stock still, clutching a Bible in her hands.

From under the Shosone woman's skirt crawls: THE LIZARD. HUGE. SIX FEET LONG. STARING AT JONAS WITH VENGEFUL EYES.

A FIERCE WIND KICKS UP. The Bible pages fall out and swirl around Young Zella, flutter up and fill the sky...

The Shoshone Woman SLOWLY lifts her head, revealing through black hair

ZELLA BARNES' CORPSE, flesh sunken into bone.

The pages SWIRL around Young Zella, until she DISAPPEARS, her CLOTHES CARRIED OFF by the great WIND.

One of the pages from the bible blows into his face and covers his eyes. When he tears it away, everything is gone and the Shoshone Woman has been replaced by

A HEADSTONE. HUGE. Like a monolith.

He moves closer to the headstone, reads the words:

PRESTON BARNES

**"NOT YOUR
REAL DADDY"**

A BLACK SNAKE slithering from behind it over the rocks.

The snake slithers toward him and

THE GROUND ERUPTS BENEATH THE HEADSTONE - PRESTON BARNES DISGORGES HIMSELF from the Earth.

He points to the ground in front of him.

PRESTON BARNES (CONT'D)

Dig. Dig, boy. Dig!

The BLACK SNAKE STIFFENS - becomes the handle of a SHOVEL.

Jonas grabs the shovel and starts to dig, furiously.

Dirt and rock flies over his shoulder as Jonas digs with manic intensity. Suddenly he stops - looks down:

WATER. The shallow grave is filling with water. He leans over the water. Stares into it.

His reflection. Is not. There. His face is just a vague mask of skin. He brings his hand up to it. His hand is distinct but his face is not.

JONAS

Who...

Jonas begins pulling at the skin around his jawline. He pulls it. And pulls it. The skin starts to rip. We hear the sound of epidermis tearing away as a horrifying mask of blood is revealed in the reflection of the water.

He wipes away the blood, revealing:

MARKHAM. Jonas begins to weep. VOICES from the past fill the canyon air:

VOICES

You killed my mother I'll come back for
 you reason you exist what you're looking
 for is right in front of you set free a
 man is more powerful what you're looking
 for God must've hid it should be dead
 already I'm the reason you exist...

And HORSE HOOVES GALLOPING over rocks. Jonas looks up:

THE SHOSHONE INDIAN RACES TOWARDS HIM, TOMAHAWK RAISED.
 Jonas wipes blood from his eyes and the figure morphs:

CATHERINE races toward him on the horse. She raises a gun
 and starts FIRING, over and over. Jonas hits the dirt.

Catherine charges closer. And CLOSER. Then STOPS:

She blocks the sun, becomes a silhouette. He hears her
 voice...

CATHERINE

Jonas!

He's a afraid to answer - his mind is so twisted.
 Through his parched mouth he manages to say:

JONAS

Catherine.

Beat.

VOICE

I'm not Catherine.

JONAS

Mama?

Lori guides Humberto's horse around so Jonas is not in
 the shade and she's not backlit. We see that it's Lori.

LORI

It's Lori.

A GUN glints off of the side of the horse's pack.

LORI (CONT'D)

The girl with the guitar?

From Lori's POV, Jonas looks insane. Eyes blood shot.
 His wounded hand caked with blood. His clothes are
 either shredded or covered in dried blood.

LORI (CONT'D)
 (horrified)
 What have they done to you?

And then Jonas falls back in the dirt and passes out.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - RIVERBED - MAGIC HOUR

Jonas lays on the ground in the shade, head in Lori's lap. She pours water over his lips, happy to be in the sudden position of helping him.

EXT. ADOBE RUINS - MAGIC HOUR

Markham et al ride around a bend by the setting sun. Before them, set against the canyon wall, an ancient ADOBE RUIN still stands. A roofless maze of crumbling walls made from stone and mud.

MARKHAM
 Sweet Medicine.

Ancient Indian PETROGLYPH's are carved into the canyon rock above the adobe walls. The front of the ruin is dotted with weird PILES OF ROCK -grave sites eerily decorated with animal skulls, and ancient Indian SYMBOLS. The whole of the place is ominous, foreboding.

The canyon walls here are littered with rocky trails, evidence of Indian activity.

CAL
 Dark soon.

HUMBERTO
 I will make torches and--

MARKHAM
 No fire. You'll have this place crawling with Shoshone.

CAL
 So how are we going to find the--

MR. MARKHAM
 We're not. Not tonight. We'll make camp, bury Indio. We'll get some rest and start fresh in the morning. This place'll be here tomorrow.

CAL
 But Sartana--

MARKHAM

Is no fool. He's here somewhere. And I doubt he's found what we're after yet. No, there's nothing either of us can do till morning.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON - MAGIC HOUR

MONTAGE

As Lori leans over him to bandage his SHATTERED HAND he stares at her beautiful breasts.

She cleans his cuts and wounds.

He eats dried beef and pork.

He checks the cylinder of the GUN - it's EMPTY.

He practices grabbing the gun with his bad hand.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - INDIO'S GRAVE - NIGHTFALL

Markham unpacks the horses and makes camp a distance from the stone mounds.

Cal and Humberto are digging a shallow grave nearer to the mounds.

CAL

I don't like all this buryin'.

HUMBERTO

Can you smell it, sir?

Cal throws him a look, questioning.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

Gold, amigo. It's in the walls.

CAL

Dunno about the walls, but somewhere.

HUMBERTO

I can see why you did not turn against your Father. I only wonder why he turned against you.

Cal looks at him.

HUMBERTO (CONT'D)

We make our move together, sir. When the time comes. I will have your back.

Cal jams his shovel into the earth.

CAL

You think I'm gonna let a berry pickin' greaseback come between me and my blood, well sir, you got another thing comin' don'tcha. That is *our gold*, and I'd just as soon gut you and leave you for the critters to dine on. And you say one more thing about my father, I'll kill you where you stand. Got that, shit-heel?

Cal thrusts his shovel into Humberto's hand and pounds off towards Markham, hitching his britches.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON TRAIL - NIGHT

Jonas and Lori ride Humberto's horse. They emerge from the shadows of the trail into the moonlight.

He whips Humberto's horse and it bolts off as we go-

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - CAMP - NIGHT - LATER

MARKHAM stands at the edge of the fireless camp, rifle in hand, LISTENING to the night sounds by MOONLIGHT.

Humberto crouches not far off, also listening.

Cal approaches his father from behind.

MARKHAM

(quietly)

Shoshone warriors keep watch on this place; they look after their forefathers. Considered a sacred duty. One thing about the Redskin: he respects his heritage.

CAL

You think- you think Sartana would slit our throats for the gold?

MARKHAM

(shakes his head)

He's a slippery old snake but he's not stupid.

(MORE)

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

No, what we don't want is to do the work and then have Sartana shoot us for our trouble. I'll have to settle his hash sooner or later...

CAL

All the same, one of us has to stand guard. I'll take first shift - you get some sleep.

Markham looks at his son with something like pride.

MARKHAM

This country might make a man of you yet, boy.

HUMBERTO

Sir? Sirs. Humberto won't be dreaming tonight. You two get some rest. I will stand guard, all night.

Cal gives Humberto a look. Markham smiles.

MARKHAM

Come on Cal, let the Mex take first watch. Let's bed down.

(To Humberto)

You get sleepy, or you hear somethin' you wake us up. Those eyes close, they won't ever open again.

Humberto nods-- he gets it. Markham and Cal walk to their bedrolls. As Cal passes Humberto:

CAL

And don't be having any ideas.

HUMBERTO

Tomorrow, we three be kings, yes?

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - CAMP - NIGHT - LATER

Markham and Cal are asleep. Humberto eyes them warily. Then he slowly removes his SHIRT and quietly TEARS it into strips to wrap around a STICK--

Fashioning a TORCH.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Closer on the walls of the ADOBE RUIN, standing silent under the moonlight.

HUMBERTO runs into frame, brandishing his makeshift torch, now BURNING. He disappears into the opening.

INT./EXT. ADOBE RUIN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He sets off into the maze, torch low, searching the ruins for gold.

The place is a debris-filled maze.

Humberto turns a corner and comes upon SADDLE BAGS and a BED ROLL.

HUMBERTO

Quien es...?

Suddenly, COLD STEEL presses against his NECK.

He turns slowly and finds SARTANA, holding a LONG BLADE to his throat... Sartana SMILES.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - CAMP - DAWN

Cal shakes his father awake.

CAL

Mr. Markham!

Markham wakes with a start. Cal gestures to where Humberto was camped out the night before - gone.

INT./EXT. ADOBE RUIN - MORNING

WIDE. Cal and Markham stand at the mouth of the ruin, wary eyed.

They enter and start wandering through the ruins, guns drawn...

CAL

That little baseborn jellybucket. We shouldn't'a let him--

They turn a corner and FREEZE.

In front of them HUMBERTO IS STRUNG UP on the wall, gagged, and GUTTED.

Bloody entrails fall about his boots.

CAL (CONT'D)
Jesus. You think Indians-

Markham shakes his head.

MARKHAM
I do not.

Markham strides out of the maze of ruins back to the mouth and turns, calls out to the Canyon:

MARKHAM (CONT'D)
SARTANA! LET'S GET IT OVER WITH!

Sartana emerges from hiding behind the men, REVOLVER aimed at their backs. Cal turns--

CAL
Lookit!

Markham ducks instinctively as a SHOT rips into the adobe wall behind him.

Sartana pulls back behind a rock mound. Markham and Cal move for cover behind the adobe walls.

CAL FIRES TWICE, hitting the rocks. Sartana returns fire.

MARKHAM
Goddamn it, Sartana! What the hell are you shooting at?

Markham FIRES.

SARTANA
You got the map?

MARKHAM
You don't know shit from wild honey - that map don't tell us anything! If we knowed where it was, you think we'd be standing here with our thumbs in our ass?!

SARTANA
Well then what good are you to me, pig licker?

Sartana FIRES.

MARKHAM
It'll take you a week to search this whole place abisselfa.
(MORE)

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

By then the Indians will have eaten your liver for breakfast.

Markham FIRES.

SARTANA

But not before I have eaten yours.

MARKHAM

We can step out now and settle it with blood. You might be fast, but it's gonna take more 'n a bullet to keep my hands from around your neck. What's it gonna be?

SARTANA

Half.

Cal shakes his head.

CAL

No sir! That's *our* gold. Rightfully--

Markham raises a hand to silence Cal.

MARKHAM

(to Sartana)

Half's square by me. I'd given up the ghost of that stake half a lifetime ago. So truce?

Sartana steps out from behind the rocks.

SARTANA

I had ya dead to rights from the moment the Sun woke up.

He holsters his gun. Markham and Cal step out. They holster guns.

MARKHAM

I swear you're mean enough to eat off the same plate with a snake.

SARTANA

And you're ugly enough to back a buzzard off a gut wagon. But if there's one thing that makes a man nicer, and prettier, it's gold. So lead on, boss.

MARKHAM

Let's get to it before the Shoshone decide to bury another chief.

SARTANA

I been thinking...

(gestures to the rock graves)

The Indians never disturb these rocks
once they buried their dead.

CAL

How's that?

MARKHAM

(nods)

So, it would be wisest to have hidden the
gold under one of these Indian graves.

CAL

Gotta be a hunnered of 'em.

SARTANA

See the symbols? Each one different. If
you look on the map - all we got to do is
find a match.

MARKHAM

(holding map)

Why's there three of 'em, then?

SARTANA

To confuse the hell out of you. It's
buried under one or maybe all three.

Markham shrugs.

MARKHAM

Seems to be the way...I'll have a poke at
these ruins, see if there's anything.

SARTANA

I'll take the Southern side.

MARKHAM

Then Cal, why don't you take the North
side...we'll meet in the middle.

Sartana smiles as he walks out. Markham nods at Cal.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Keep an eye on that skunk. He finds
somethin', you holler, pronto.

Markham WINKS. Cal nods and follows as Markham disappears
into the darkness of the adobe ruins.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - ROCK GRAVES - MOMENTS LATER

Cal moves to the center of the rock mounds, watches Sartana disappear around some mounds to the South.

He KICKS OVER an INDIAN ROCK GRAVE, and exposes a RATTLESNAKE. He jumps away.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - ROCK GRAVES - CONTINUOUS

At the southern end of the mounds, Sartana KICKS OVER a pile of rocks finding nothing but dirt.

He looks away and spots HUMBERTO'S HORSE standing quietly by some BOULDERS some fifty yards away -- with LORI slumped over the rear of the horse, TIED to the saddle.

SARTANA

Well, well, well...

Sartana shakes his head as he grins and walks over.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

All trussed up and no place to go, huh?
Must be my lucky day.

As Sartana approaches the horse, he can only see her legs and backside; her head and arms hang over the other side.

SARTANA (CONT'D)

Think I'll just leave you right there and
slit your throat, let'cha bleed out and
lighten the load a little for this old
horse.

He gives her ass a little slap and as he rounds the horse -- he sees her hands are UNTIED, and she's got a GUN aimed right between Sartana's legs... His grin fades.

Jonas oozes out of the shadows, from behind a BOULDER, and casually strolls over to Sartana, who slowly lifts his hands high.

Jonas wears his KNIFE at his waist, through his belt.

JONAS

The scorpion asked the frog for a ride
across the river. And the frog said, "How
do I know you won't sting me?"

SARTANA

And the scorpion said, "That would be
foolish, for then we both would die."

Lori COCKS her pistol.

JONAS
Keep 'em high, now.

Jonas reaches for Sartana's gunbelt, DISARMS him. Jonas levels Sartana's gun on him as Lori climbs off the horse.

JONAS (CONT'D)
The scorpion climbed on the frogs back, and halfway across the river, well, he stung that frog. Frog said, "You fuckin' traitor, now we're both gonna die. Why'd you do that?"

SARTANA
And the scorpion replied, "Because, dear frog, I am a scorpion."

Jonas nods.

JONAS
So tell me, Sartana, which one are you now? The Scorpion, or the Frog?

SARTANA
I'm just an old bounty hunter, set in his ways. Old habits are hard to break.

JONAS
Tell ya what...

Jonas reaches into Sartana's coat pocket and extracts his DOUBLE-SIDED COIN.

JONAS (CONT'D)
I'll flip you for it.

Jonas flips the coin in the air. Sartana instinctively looks up after the coin and as he does:

Jonas pulls his KNIFE in one swift motion and SLASHES Sartana's exposed neck.

The BLOOD GUSHES.

The tricky coin flips into the dirt; TAILS.

A second later Sartana drops beside it, clutching his throat, gasping.

LOW ANGLE: Jonas stands over Sartana. He returns his knife to his BOOT.

Sartana dies. Jonas turns to Lori and she hands him her gun. He pushes it back into her hand. He checks the cylinder of Sartana's pistol. Three bullets.

JONAS (CONT'D)
I want'cha to stay here, behind these
rocks. Wait for me.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - ROCK GRAVES - MOMENTS LATER

Cal, yards away, is blissfully unaware, knocking over the rock piles, exposing the long-dead Indian Chiefs.

JONAS (O.S.)
I didn't kill your sister.

Cal spins around to find Jonas leveling his gun at him.

JONAS (CONT'D)
But I think I know who did.

CAL
You're alive.

JONAS
Toss me your pistol. Real gentle.

Cal slowly un-holsters his gun and tosses it to the dirt.

JONAS (CONT'D)
Thing like that, must be terrible to live
with.

CAL
It was a damn sight easier thing to live
with when you were dead.

JONAS
I think her father has a right to know
the truth. Who's gonna tell him? Me or
you?

CAL
You don't know my father. He'd kill me.

JONAS
I know it was an accident. But lying
ain't gonna make it right, or bring her
back. Live like a man.

CAL
Between livin' with a lie, or dyin' for
the truth - I'll pick livin' thank you.

Cal eyes something behind Jonas.

CAL (CONT'D)

And don't you try to twist it around,
girl killer!

Jonas spins around to find MARKHAM, aiming his REVOLVER.

Cal JUMPS FORWARD, using the distraction to TACKLE JONAS.

Jonas loses the gun and they start a real knock-down,
drag-out fight.

They knock over the piles of burial rocks - desecrating
the grave mounds as they rampage through the graveyard,
trading fists.

Cal and Jonas PLOW into a PARTICULARLY LARGE mound of
rocks. One slab tumbles from it - carved into it is an
Indian SYMBOL looking like 3Σ...

Cal picks up one of the rocks and moves to hit Jonas with
it but Jonas KICKS HIM OFF, falls to the dirt.

Cal lands hard on his back and he rolls over to stand but
comes face to face with CANVAS SACKS, previously hidden
under the stones that have been knocked away.

Jonas gets to his feet and turns to fight, but finds Cal
entranced.

Cal TEARS OPEN the sacks and GOLD COINS spill from them.
He turns to Markham.

CAL (CONT'D)

Here. Look!
(looks at Jonas, then
Markham)
Shoot. Shoot him!

But Markham LOWERS his gun. Cal grabs up a ROCK in anger,
SWINGING it at Jonas' head. Jonas ducks, swings and
KNOCKS Cal out cold. The boy's rumpled body lands hard
on the sacks.

Jonas jumps toward his gun, but Markham stands right next
to it, gun drawn. He kicks it away.

MARKHAM

You are one tough mother. You really are
your father's son. Reminds me of someone.

JONAS

I told you--

MARKHAM

I *know* boy. I think you asked me how I knew your mother? Maybe it's time I told you.

The mention of his mother shifts something in Jonas.

EXT. A FIELD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A YOUNGER MARKHAM. Taking an axe to one of Young Preston's accomplices while TWO OF MARKHAM'S MEN watch.

MARKHAM (V.O.)

When I lost my fortune, not to mention my first wife, I fell into sort of a dark haze. I didn't take too kindly to the folks around me.

He chops off the Man's hand at the wrist. As he raises it again we go-

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Young Markham stands above another accomplice. On his knees pleading for his life.

MARKHAM (V.O.)

It didn't take long to hunt up the ones responsible. Liquor being what it is, and men being what they are...

Young Markham puts the barrel of his gun to the guy's forehead and the instant the GUN FIRES we are in-

INT. THE BARNES FARM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Young Preston is tied by the wrists, arms up, hanging by a rope thrown over a BEAM near the ceiling.

MARKHAM (V.O.) (CON'T)

The third man was, like you said - Preston Barnes. And since both the other men had told me Preston had a map, I didn't kill him right away.

Markham has Young Zella by the hair and holds a knife to her neck.

MARKHAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He swore that he lost it. Then he swore that he burned it. He swore a lot of things, that night.

Markham bends Zella over the stove in the center of the room. Her hands are BOUND behind her back.

YOUNG MARKHAM

(to Preston)

See I know the difference. Between what's rightfully mine, and what's rightfully yours. That's what separates us from the animals, and keeps things orderly.

He rips her dress open, pulls it up.

YOUNG MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Men don't like having what's rightfully theirs taken from them. Do they? How far are you willing to take this, Preston?

He lays a hand on her behind. Young Preston is seething in pain and hate.

YOUNG MARKHAM (CONT'D)

You can give me back what's mine -- or I will take *everything* what belongs to you. We've got all night.

As Young Markham SLOWLY rapes Zella he looks at Young Preston with cool emotionless eyes.

MARKHAM (V.O.)

I was a young man then. Full of grit and venom and sand. Thing about Preston, I'll give him this- he was just as stubborn as I was.

Young Preston weeps with in anguish, drowning in the hell that lies between greed and truth.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - ROCK GRAVES - (**PRESENT**)

MARKHAM

We took from each other the things that mattered most. It was a crueler thing to leave him alive than kill him. And I was a cruel man in those evil born yesterdays.

As this story goes on, CAL ROUSES.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

I went on to pick up the broken pieces of my life, and I left your mother, and the man known as Preston Barnes to do the same. Do you catch my meaning, son?

Jonas stares at this man in shock. The weight of what he's being told settling on him.

JONAS

He-- he told me, one drunken night, that she...that my mother had never touched him... hadn't for years and years. Part of what made him so ornery... But I never thought...

MARKHAM

You can see now why Preston may not have been 'fatherly' to you growing up. Every time he looked at your face, it was a reminder of his own selfish heart, and the blackness men are capable of... I'm your real daddy.

Cal reacts, behind Jonas. CRAWLS toward his pistol.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

It's my blood boiling through you. I'm the one put that toughness in your soul and that bile in your guts. I'm the reason you exist. And all you done to get here, back to this place where that no-account worm Preston Barnes done his worst deeds, all you done is prove to me that you're a real Markham. Welcome home, son.

CAL REACHES HIS PISTOL and grabs it up behind Jonas. He FIRES; Jonas leaps away, lands in the dirt when--

MARKHAM casually turns and FIRES into CAL, wounding him.

CAL

Ahh!

Jonas turns, sees Cal DROP the gun.

MARKHAM

God's a funny fellow. Always tilling the field.

CAL

What did you do?! Look what you did!

MARKHAM

Just like you were Preston Barnes's burden - this one was given unto me as a reminder of the weakness of men's hearts, and the dissipation that occurs when a boy is overindulged.

CAL

You shot me!

MARKHAM

And you killed my daughter.

Cal looks aghast.

CAL

I...what?

MARKHAM

You don't have the sand to admit it.

CAL

No, I-- He! He shot her. He shot her, Mr. Markham, not me--

Markham FIRES - Cal's hit in the ARM.

CAL (CONT'D)

AOOW!

MARKHAM

Say it.

CAL

Mr. Markham please--!

MARKHAM

You're not worthy of the name.

Markham shoots him again.

CAL

NO! CHRIST PLEASE I DIDN'T - HIM! WHY WONT YOU SHOOT HIM??! WHY?!

MARKHAM

What's the worst that can happen boy? The world isn't goin' to end. IS IT. The truth!

Cal is apoplectic. Wheezing, whining.

CAL

Why won't you just believe me?

JONAS

Markham, wait--

MARKHAM

Because, dear boy of little headmeat, I know the difference. Between a pistol, and a rifle wound. A rifle wound is always larger. Small entry - and a nice big exit wound - right where her heart was. That defines a rifle shot. My rifle. Which you grabbed up and pointed and pulled the trigger and blew your sisters heart out of her chest now say it you mewling little cunt. Say it!

Cal THROWS UP, involuntarily spasms. He spits bile.

CAL

Oh Jesum Crow.

He looks at his father.

CAL (CONT'D)

Yes I did it. I shot her but I didn't mean it. I pulled the trigger and I couldn't believe it. Catherine! Little Cat. I killed her!

(to Jonas)

I wanted it to be you.

Cal looks relieved. Like a man who's had to piss all day, and finally let go.

CAL (CONT'D)

(to Markham)

I'm sorry.

MARKHAM

That's better.

MARKHAM SHOOTS CAL in the chest once. Cal, stunned, looks at his father.

CAL

Dad...

MARKHAM

You don't have the blood.

Cal collapses. He dies clutching his heart.

Jonas is still sitting in the dirt, reeling from everything he's seen and heard.

JONAS

You knew. All along you knew the truth,
and you still came after me. Why?

MARKHAM

At first, it was only to get at you for
takin' my girl. Then it occurred to me,
you probably weren't even with those men.

JONAS

I didn't take her. I was just after my
map.

Jonas looks to the sun, *setting now between two peaks.*

MARKHAM

You see son, all this; it was destiny
paving both our roads to come together,
just like this, right now. You're more my
son than this one ever was. It should
have been you - you and Catherine at my
side.

Jonas' face tells all. He looks sickened.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

We've both walked through fire - and
everything that wasn't pure has finally
been burned away. I'll teach you
everything I know, about land, and
mining, and money - this test has forged
you your true name, Son. Markham.

Jonas nods. Markham glows with the last rays of the
setting sun.

Markham reaches out - offering a hand to pull Jonas up
from the ground. He sees Jonas' bandaged, bloody hand and
offers his other hand.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

Come on, now.

Jonas reaches out with his good hand. And as Markham
leans in to pull Jonas up, Jonas' bloody hand goes to his
boot and grips his KNIFE.

Jonas rises, pulling Markham to him and GUTTING HIM with
the knife.

The sun sets.

Markham freezes, stunned. Jonas reaches into Markham's
holster and disarms the man, knife still firmly planted.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

(gasps)

Magnificent. That's just what I would'a done. Just like your daddy.

JONAS

Don't know the man.

Lori joins Jonas as Markham drops to his knees.

MARKHAM

My blood. My own blood...

EXT. ADOBE RUIN CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

Jonas And Lori finish packing the GOLD and supplies into Sartana's WAGON.

In the background, we can see that they've tried to fix the rock graves as best they could.

Cal, Indio and Humberto's horses have been tied nearby - an offering to the Indians.

And in front of the adobe ruin, hog-tied to a STAKE in the ground, lies MARKHAM, bleeding into the dirt.

MARKHAM

(dying)

Don't leave me here like an animal.

JONAS

I don't think the animals would have anything to do with you. But the Shoshone...well...

CLOSE on Markham. Looking up.

Like wraiths or apparitions, INDIAN WARRIORS APPEAR amongst the rocks, here and there. They dot the canyon walls along rocky trails, some with ritually ornate SPEARS, others with BOWS taut with ARROWS.

They are silent, stalwart watchers.

MARKHAM

No. God. Please.

Jonas mounts MARKHAM'S BLACK HORSE. Lori takes the reigns on the wagon. Jonas begins leading Sartana's horse and wagon away.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)
PLEASE! YOU'RE MY SON! MY BLOOD!
DOESN'T THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU!?

They continue walking away with Markham yelling in the background.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)
Jonas!

EXT. SNAKE CANYON FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jonas and Lori, aware also of the Warriors. They slow their pace, wary. Lori is petrified.

JONAS
Don't stop.

They continue on, looking left and right.

EXT. SNAKE CANYON WALLS - CONTINUOUS

The silent warriors line both sides of the canyon, SILHOUETTED against the sky like sentinels.

EXT. ADOBE RUIN - CONTINUOUS

Markham is silent. He looks from warrior to warrior, who return his gaze.

MARKHAM
(quietly)
Well come on then, you Indian
sonsabitches.

An ARROW slams into Markham's chest. Markham screams in pain. Another arrow slams into his thigh.

Jonas turns as another arrow whistles through the air, hitting Markham in the side. Lori turns to Jonas.

LORI
Jonas...

Jonas stops.

Aww, hell.

Jonas pulls Markham's RIFLE from the wagon. He takes careful aim, and FIRES.

The merciful bullet slams into Markham's head, killing him instantly.

Lori turns away, closing her eyes.

Jonas puts the rifle away and looks up at the Indian warriors. They make no move, seeming to understand who should pass and who should die.

One of them nods, imperceptibly.

Jonas and Lori ride away from the ruins.

EXT. HIGHLANDS - MAGIC HOUR

In the back of Sartana's wagon, Jonas is finishing the drawing of a MAP. He hands it to Lori.

JONAS

Here she is. This means mountains. You have any trouble, just find the river and follow it to here. Her name's Rosamaria. Half of it goes to her, for the baby. No need to tell her who it's from. I think she'll know. And be mindful of who you ask for help along the way.

LORI

I will.

Lori climbs up onto the wagon. Jonas walks to the back, pulls out a rifle and six-gun, and some ammo. He reaches into one sack of GOLD, and pulls out ONE GOLD COIN.

He hands her the pistol and Markham's RIFLE.

JONAS

Mostly for show. But hold her with confidence - that's all it'll take for most folks. But don't be afraid to pull the trigger.

LORI

I won't.

JONAS

The other half's for you. Do good things with it.

LORI

I will.

JONAS

I know it.

LORI

You don't want any of it?

JONAS

It was never mine to take. Full of bad
blood for me.

Jonas mounts Markham's horse with ease.

LORI

Where will you go?

He holds up that gold coin. Turns it over: this one is
honest- with a Heads and a Tails.

JONAS

Heads is West. Tails East.

Jonas flips the coin. It mingles with the sun and returns
to Jonas' hand.

He looks at it and nods.

Lori smiles and heads off across the plains, to the left.

Jonas turns and rides off in the other direction, toward
the far-off, majestic mountains.

CRANE UP as the two orphans travel across the plain,
headed for parts unknown.

