

The Isolate Thief

by

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EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY - 1865

A GRAY WOLF hovering on the perimeter of a dead wheat field. Paw prints in the snow.

EXT. HOG PEN - DAY

SWINE in a pine lumber pen, ugly as hell and squealing. With no refuge from the cold, they are almost dead. EDMUND HORN JR. is in the pen with them, pouring cornmeal into the side of an oak trough as the few healthy swine race up to him.

Edmund is just over twenty, his clothes hanging off his thin frame and his eyes dark and desperate, sunken deep into his face. It does not take him long to spot the wolf at the forest's edge, an unwelcome visitor only several yards off.

INT. EDMUND'S BEDROOM - DAY

Edmund enters a room with two wood frame beds and a cracked dresser. He finds his rifle case under the bed and opens it, looking down at his father's dusty HAWKEN .54 CAL RIFLE.

EXT. TREES - DAY

Squatting, Edmund's eyes move with the wolf, back and forth, his rifle balanced across his knee. He digs in his pockets and extracts the black powder measure, pouring it down the muzzle of the gun.

Edmund pinches a lead ball tightly between his fingertips, but, before he can load the gun, he drops it, and the ball disappears into the snow.

EDMUND

Damn...damn.

He digs in desperation for the bullet when he spots...

A FIGURE, one hundred yards in the distance, silhouetted under a sprawling oak tree. A man in a black winter coat and broad-brimmed planter's hat working like a bumblebee. He is slapping at the frozen ground with the back end of a shovel.

It is the first person Edmund has set eyes on in a month. There is no instinct in Edmund to call out to the man. He takes a slow and careful aim on the figure with his rifle, watching him through the sight.

Now the hogs are squealing in the distance. Edmund can see that, in the time that he lost his focus, the wolf has gained confidence and ground, moving toward the pen.

With a desperate reach, Edmund's fingers find the lead bullet on the ground. He picks up the rifle and drops the wet ball down into the muzzle, packing it roughly with the ramrod and drawing it to full-cock.

Edmund takes a bead on the wolf, and, with his numb hands shaking, pulls the trigger...

Click. Then a hard sizzle as the powder ignites...

BAM! A burst of flame and black smoke as the gun backfires, collapsing Edmund onto his back.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - THAT MOMENT

FOREST/MOUNTAIN/SUNLIGHT and the silence of an Oregon winter broken by the rippling thunder of a gunshot.

EXT. TREES - DAY

The gray wolf is gone. Nothing but a dark line of pine trees. The figure under the sprawling oak is gone as well. Every living thing has been scared off.

Edmund has not noticed. He is on his back on the ground, his broken rifle mere feet away. His wounded right hand clutching the side of his face. Black powder and red blood coloring the snow.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CAMPSITE - DAY

The remnants of a skirmish deep in the mountain woods. Bloody arms and legs belonging to dead bodies are obscured by the forest trees.

WILLIAM "RED" BAKER, a large redhead suited in a bloodstained Union Infantry jacket, pushes his way through the camp.

RED BAKER
(calling out)
Fiddler...Fiddler.

He finds two men under a pine, one crouching and the other lying against the trunk. The crouched man is bathed in the shadow of the tall tree, his face concealed. This man is FIDDLER JOHN GOOD.

FIDDLER JOHN
What is it?

RED BAKER
Sounded like what might have been
gunfire. Down the mountain.

FIDDLER JOHN
When?

RED BAKER
A moment ago. I heard it and came
right over here and told you.

FIDDLER JOHN
Wasn't him.

Red Baker finds this answer satisfying enough to leave the
two men in peace.

The man lying under the tree, HARDWICK, is whimpering now.
He is old and bare-chested with dried blood across his
stomach, but it is too dark to see his wound.

HARDWICK
Please.

FIDDLER JOHN
Colonel, you are, at this moment,
faced with an inevitability. You
are dying. You will die on this
mountain. The time and the manner
are, as of right now, uncertain,
but die you must, and it must be
here. My Green River hunting knife
is lodged in your gut.

Hardwick is not looking at the man crouched over him, but,
rather, a girl lingering at her horse in the background. She
is watching the exchange from afar. Her name is EMILY MOORE.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Blood is coming out of your fat
stomach and pouring into the
ground. Mixing with the earth.
The scent from your blood and your
insides will saturate these woods.
I can hear the wolves circling now.
Waiting for us to leave so they can
have at you without interruption.

HARDWICK
(struggling)
What do you want?

FIDDLER JOHN

Was this all of your men? Will there be any other Infantry units coming through this part of the mountain?

HARDWICK

No.

Fiddler John takes the man at his word.

FIDDLER JOHN

I'm looking for a man. A gravedigger. Toothless and wretched. Smells of shit. Came through here probably within the last two nights. Goes by the name 'Burial Perry'.

HARDWICK

No. No one come through this way.

Blood is coming up in Hardwick's mouth now, and he can barely talk. Fiddler John is visibly disappointed and gets up, walking away. Leaving the man to die.

Emily, still watching from a distance, steps quietly over to the dying man. He looks at her with an empty stare.

HARDWICK (CONT'D)

Please.

Emily maneuvers silently, removing a Paterson Colt revolver from the hip holster of an UNOBSERVANT GUNMAN and quickly aims and pulls the trigger.

BAM! The gunfire echoes through the woods and, in the blink of an eye, Emily has five pistols pointed at her.

Fiddler John emerges from the crowd of men, unarmed, and, calmly, holds his hand out to Emily. Light breaks the canopy of trees and we can finally see his face, fierce and murderous. She hands him back the Paterson Colt.

He looks over at Hardwick, now dead and limp on the ground. No more pain in his eyes.

FIDDLER JOHN

(to Emily)

Next time you're dead.

He walks away from her.

INT. SUPPLY CELLAR - LATER

Edmund's scarred hand shoved into a bucket of water. The water turns red.

EDMUND (V.O.)
Southern Willamette Outpost Log
Entry 516. First week of the New
Year, Sixty-Five.

Edmund, kneeling in a corner of the dark supply cellar, pulls the cork out of a bottle of whiskey and reads quickly from Charles Dulles' "ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES: A MANUAL" by the light of an oil lamp.

The page marked "GUNSHOT WOUNDS" is propped open and marked with dried blood.

Edmund takes a long pull from the whiskey bottle and then tips the remainder onto his hand, the liquor pouring into the water bucket below.

EDMUND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A different set of handwriting
here. At the end. A different
handwriting, as this should be my
first and my last entry into these
records.

A canister of hartshorn. Edmund applies the white powder as best he can onto his wounds, tears running down his face.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Edmund, with his wounds poorly dressed, sitting in a rocking chair. He has a vague look, defeated, puffing a cigarette.

EDMUND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Major General Edmund James Horn,
retired Pinkerton detective and US
army officer, deceased. Four weeks
I could guess. Pneumonia. Buried
on this spot by his only son,
Edmund Horn Jr.

A WHITE CROSS in the snowy ground at the side of the farmhouse.

EDMUND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The ground was almost too frozen to
dig into.

Edmund watching the trees. Unending isolation.

INT. SUPPLY CELLAR - NIGHT

Edmund is carrying oak barrels into the cellar from the outside trapdoor.

EDMUND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Outpost will be abandoned within the appropriate amount of time, a day or two at most, as conditions have become too harsh. In keeping with original caretaker's intent, all supplies will be kept here, ready and available, for Union officer or soldier in need or any member of the agency.

Edmund loses his footing on the wet stairs and the last barrel topples, brine and meat pouring out onto the dirt floor of the cellar.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Edmund returns the broken rifle back to its case.

EDMUND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I have decided to leave the logbook here as well.

He draws an "X" with the blood from his finger on the top of the pine case and pushes it back under the bed.

EDMUND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I could never presume that anyone will read it, but I will keep it here. Before starting off. As a marker.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund is writing in a journal at his father's desk, dipping his steel pen into a small ink vial.

EDMUND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
E.H. Junior.

CLOSE ON EDMUND'S SIGNATURE. Scribbled on the page.

He turns the book to the front, reading by candlelight: "SOUTHERN WILLAMETTE PASS PINKERTON OUTPOST LOG: MAJ. GEN. EDMUND JAMES HORN". He reads his father's name, and then he returns the journal to a drawer in the desk.

INT. BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

A NOISE inside the house. Edmund's eyes pop open. He keeps himself motionless on the bed, listening in the dark.

Now the hogs in the pen outside are SQUEALING.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MIDNIGHT

Edmund tiptoes into the front room, peering out the window through the ragged curtains. He can see the hogs disturbed and pacing in the pen.

Edmund cranks up the oil lamp, and he spots a long planter's hat sitting on the dinner table.

PERRY (O.S.)
Put the goddamn light out!

Edmund starts, turning about to see a figure in the corner of the room.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Said put that thing out, boy.
'Less you want us both killed.

Hiding in the shadow only feet away is BURIAL PERRY. Perry moves by Edmund and lowers the flame in the lamp, sending the room into darkness. He does not linger beside Edmund, but races by him again, glancing in the doorway of each room.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Where you keepin' the garmits, boy?
Come out with it.

EDMUND
I...

This old man was the figure standing under the oak tree only this morning. His overlarge black coat is full of holes and tears and cinched by a gun holster. Edmund can see that the man has not one tooth in his entire mouth.

PERRY
Wait now...hold it. First things
are gonna be first. We can't get
outta order. Sit down.

The man is agitated. He moves quickly back into a dark corner of the room.

PERRY (CONT'D)
I ain't gonna do nuthin' to ya',
boy.

EDMUND
I don't have any money for you
here.

PERRY
Okay...that's what they call a
'assumption'. Over here now.

Edmund turns to see Perry has a gun on him.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Bring that chair this way. Over
here.

Edmund seats himself in the corner of the room, and Perry
moves behind him.

Perry has a leather haversack slung across his front, and he
reaches in and finds a measure of thick rope. He ties up
Edmund in the wooden chair, his hands behind his back and his
legs together.

EDMUND
You told me you weren't gonna do
nothing to me.

PERRY
You're goddamn right. You'll be
safe with me. I'm a bunny rabbit.

Perry moves across the room and brings back an oil lamp.

EDMUND
You got no cause to tie me up.

PERRY
I don't want no harm to come to
ya'. Me neither.

Perry grabs a handful of Edmund's hair and wrenches Edmund's
head back. Edmund can feel the old man looking into his
mouth, and he can smell his awful breath.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Where's mommy and daddy?

Edmund gags. He can't answer.

PERRY (CONT'D)
I saw this camp about a hundred
yards off. Conducted what it was.
'Outpost' I said to myself. Like
an oasis. Right in the middle of
fuck nowhere.

Perry has his dirty hand inside Edmund's mouth, feeling his
teeth for fillings.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Nuthin'. I figurd. No mountain
boy's got any real valuables. Got
no means. Always checkin' though.

He lets Edmund go, and Edmund cannot help but spit on the
ground.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Garimits, boy.

INT. BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

Perry is perched up on Edmund's bed, shuffling through
clothes in the dresser. He takes them out and sizes them up.

PERRY
These clothes are too fuckin' big.

He finally comes upon on a black Chesterfield coat.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Oh my...

Perry removes his overcoat and holster and puts on the
Chesterfield.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Now this is warmth I tell you what.
Look at you, boy. Dressin' up like
a goddamn lawman.

EDMUND
That's my father's coat.

Edmund, tied up, can see the rifle case under the bed where
Perry is seated.

PERRY
Well, he ain't gonna mind.

EDMUND

He'll mind when he comes back and I tell him what happened to all his clothes.

PERRY

You go right ahead, boy. It ain't your daddy I'm afraid of.

Perry finds a pair of old Wellington boots as well and puts them on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MIDNIGHT

Perry, a dandy in his new garments, moves to the cellar trapdoor.

EDMUND

Hold on.

Perry stops.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Hold on now. You can't leave me like this.

PERRY

You'll be alright, boy. Your daddy'll find ya when he comes back.

Perry opens the trapdoor and makes it halfway down the steps.

EDMUND

I lied. No one's gonna find me. It's just me here. I don't mind you taking those clothes or any bread or liquor you need. But you can't leave me like this. Tied up in this chair.

PERRY

You'll be sweet then?

Edmund does not respond. He feels helpless now, more than ever. Perry walks over and begins to untie him.

PERRY (CONT'D)

You look trustworthy enough.

(mumbles to himself)

Can't leave him here all tied up. Middle of fuck nowhere. That's a goddamn death sentence.

Edmund wiggles his hands loose and begins rubbing his burned wrists.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Now, we're friendly, right? Let's
load up Belle.

Perry moves quickly over to the trapdoor and disappears.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Belle is an old Morgan horse, worn-down and tired, tied up outside the house to the same hitching post as Edmund's mare.

Perry pushes open the cellar door and climbs outside into the cold air. His arms are bursting with supplies taken from the outpost, and he begins to load up the pommel bags. Edmund is in tow.

PERRY
I heard a gunshot this morning, so
they're close by. Won't be more
'an two days at most fore er come
an army of men into these woods.

Edmund's eyes catch Perry's crude branding on his horse. A horrible-looking "P" burned into Belle's hide.

PERRY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Two days is plenty of time, though.
Should be plenty enough.

Perry unties Belle and mounts her.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Listen, boy. It goes without me
speaking it that you ain't seen me.
We ain't crossed paths. The
Fiddler's comin' this way. More
'an anything, I can feel him.

Perry turns to face the black line of trees as a gust of freezing wind comes through the clearing.

PERRY (CONT'D)
He's on his way now. He don't
sleep, so I can't neither.
(Looks down at Edmund)
You don't talk much, do ya boy?

EDMUND
I'm listening.

PERRY

I can respect that. The best I can wish you now is that the rain comin' my way don't fall on you none. But nuthin is guaranteed.

Perry gives him a wide, toothless grin and pulls the reins, making his way into the darkness of the surrounding woods.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - NIGHT

Riders on horseback traveling through a passage in the mountain, their torches casting long shadows behind them.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Red Baker is crouched and watching the long line of torches moving a mile below. He sits with TEN CHARLEY, part Mexican, part Cherokee, and dressed half in an under-sized Union infantry uniform.

RED BAKER

It looks like ghost light.

CHARLEY

What do you think?

RED BAKER

Home Guard.

CHARLEY

We're too far north. That's what Fiddler said.

RED BAKER

What about you then?

Charley can see Fiddler John watching the light as well only a few yards away.

CHARLEY

Maybe a patrol. Maybe the Colonel was lying and it's a second outfit. Don't look like it though. Looks more disorganized.

RED BAKER

Sure.

CHARLEY

Either way. They ain't on our trail. They're movin' away from us.

Red Baker turns around. There is a dark tent set up only feet away.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)

After tonight, we should be alone through this pass until we find him. Then it's a day and a half's travel to Stevens.

RED BAKER

He sure is takin' his sweet time.

Charley turns to the tent as well.

INT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - NIGHT

CALVIN ED, short and sweaty-faced, is kneeling over Emily on a field cot.

CALVIN ED

I swear you do look beautiful. With the moonlight. The moonlight off the tent.

(laughs)

I'm no good with vocabulary.

EMILY

Thank you, C.E.

CALVIN ED

Come on then. Let's have another.

EMILY

We've been in here all night. The other boys are gonna want their turn.

CALVIN ED

They don't mind. You know they don't know you like I do. You and me. We understand each other.

He crawls on top of her. Emily's body is shaking.

EMILY

(afraid)

The Fiddler's gonna be in.

CALVIN ED
Hush up now. Tell me again how
much you love me.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Edmund's empty bedroom. Edmund's rifle case is sitting on his bed. Open and empty.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Edmund slowly wakes up. He is sitting at the dinner table with his head down and his hands clutching the rifle. He lifts his head, looks out through the window, and sees the white cross in the side yard.

He gets up and takes the journal out of the desk drawer, reading his father's handwriting.

MAJ. GEN. HORN (V.O.)
There was a silver-blue fox I
killed near the Snake River. Shot
him. Skinned him. Dressed his
hide with salt. I will give it to
Edmund and spread it on the floor
so that when he gets up in the
morning he can put his feet on it.

A cloud has passed over the farmhouse turning the room dark, and Edmund's eye turns to the bright front window where he can see out across the cold morning, the dead wheat field and the forest beyond.

Looking back at him from a hundred yards in the distance is a single, sprawling oak tree. Dirty snow around the bottom of the trunk.

EXT. OAK TREE - DAY

Edmund unmounts his horse and ties her to the trunk of the tree. He squats over the burial spot.

EDMUND
(to his horse)
What do you think?

He grabs the shovel he loaded and starts his work.

EXT. OAK TREE - LATER

The metal of the shovel piercing into the hard ground. After only a moment, he unearths two satchels covered in dirt and lays them out.

A loud SQUAWK. Edmund looks up to see an enormous black crow sitting in the branches above him. He surveys the area. No other sign of life as far as the eye can see.

He brushes away the dirt and the satchels are CONFEDERATE ARMY KNAPSACKS. The Confederate flag, officer insignia, and regiment number stitched and pressed in the corner of each bag.

He opens the first knapsack and finds: TWENTY DRAWSTRING LEATHER POUCHES. A MATCHBOX. A KNIFE WRAPPED IN CLOTH.

Edmund unwraps the knife from the dirty cloth. Dried blood on the blade and the handle.

The matchbox has the word "Perry" scribbled on top of it, and, inside, teeth. Each one with a gold filling and blood on the root where it was, undoubtedly, torn out.

Every pouch is closed with a drawstring and has block printing pressed into the dark leather that reads "PROPERTY OF OROFINO CREEK MINES". Edmund opens the first one...

GOLD. He does not react to it at first. The coins are dirty. Gold Double Eagles. Lady Liberty and a twenty dollar marking on the front of each coin. Probably fifty coins in each pouch. A gift from the dead Gold Rush.

Edmund opens another. The same. He catches his breath. The second knapsack. He opens it. Nothing but Orofino Creek pouches this time. Four times as many as the first knapsack.

EDMUND

Thank you.

Another piercing SQUAWK.

Edmund ties up the two open pouches just as they were. He moves the second knapsack with the heavier load to the side and works on the first. He puts the knife back and the matchbox.

He throws this first sack back into the hole in the ground and starts to shovel dirt into the hole with his hands.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(to his horse)
Let's keep this one between you and
me.

He is working on his hands and knees. The second Confederate knapsack is lying in the snow at his feet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The coins from the knapsack are spread irresponsibly across Edmund's dinner table. Edmund is slouched in the corner of the room.

There are two DAGUERREOTYPE PORTRAITS hung on the front wall in old frames...

The first, a bust-length shot of Edmund's FATHER in a dark suit. Sober. Prosperous.

The second, a shot of Edmund's MOTHER, calm and serene.

Edmund looks up at her from the ground. She looks back through the dirty glass.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Edmund is on horseback deep in the woods. Sunlight and snow cannot even break the canopy of the trees. He travels slowly along a narrow path.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DUSK

Edmund is digging in a spot hidden between two pines where the ground is soft.

He leaves his shovel and finds the Confederate knapsack stored on his horse. He looks in the knapsack. EMPTY. He throws it into the hole in the ground.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Edmund is laying down beside a small fire in the cold. The smoke from the fire rises through the trees and disappears.

GUNFIRE. Edmund bolts upright. One or more MEN are YELLING. More GUNFIRE.

It seems to be coming from all around him. Commotion in every direction. The forest is so dense here that he cannot see a thing.

He quickly puts out the fire.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - MORNING

By morning Edmund is already gone, but he has not covered his tracks very well. The fire has become a black pock mark in the earth, and his shovel is still sitting propped up against one of the pines.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Fiddler John and his men sit on horseback in front of Edmund's farmhouse.

CHARLEY
Don't look deserted.

FIDDLER JOHN
Sure ain't.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

Fiddler John silhouetted in the open doorway of the house. He inspects the room, noticing the desk in the corner.

The Fiddler opens all the drawers in the desk and comes upon The Outpost Log. He turns quickly through the pages.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Fiddler John opens the bedroom door, looking into the empty room.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

A DEAD HORSE in the shallow riverbed. Slumped on its side, it's a broken mass in the freezing water. Blood still running with the current.

Edmund has caught sight of it and stopped on his route back home. He dismounts and approaches the horse in the river. He runs his fingers along three bullet holes in the neck and head.

Looking upstream, he sees a second HORSE. Lying dead on the forest floor. He moves back out of the river and spots the branded "P" on its back.

EDMUND

Belle...

Belle has similar gunshot wounds, but she is also ripped open. Bloody. Her stomach and side have been taken apart.

Edmund tries to steady himself but cannot, and he throws up on his hands and knees beside the horse.

A GARTER SNAKE is moving slowly around the neck of the horse and off onto the ground toward the bushes nearby. Edmund watches the snake.

In the distance, obscured by the trees, Edmund can see a pack of GRAY WOLVES circling their prey. They have been scared off for a moment, but it will not last long.

Now, the garter snake is slithering around something else near the bushes. Only after Edmund has taken his attention away from the wolves does he see that it is a FOOT.

EXT. BUSHES - DAY

Edmund crawls quickly over on his hands and knees, everything about the situation telling him that it is Perry.

A BOOT. A LEG. He tears the bushes aside.

EMILY. Unconscious. He brushes her hair back and puts his hand against her nose and mouth feeling for breath.

Bruised around her face and forehead, she is dressed not like a lady, but in men's pants and shirt with a long riding coat.

Edmund tosses the snake away and lifts his head to see the gray wolves circling.

EXT. FOREST EDGE - DAY

Edmund is squatting at the forest's edge, watching the new visitors at his farmhouse through the trees. He is staying out of sight and silent, his horse tied up behind him with Emily on its back.

VIEW ON THE FARMHOUSE: They have set up THREE A-FRAME TENTS off of the front yard in the field. It only looks to be three or four men. Smoke rising from a fire near one of the tents. Edmund can hear them laughing and carrying on.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Ten Charley is adjusting the cavalry bridle on his horse when he sees Edmund ride out into the clearing and dismount.

Charley opens his coat and slides his hand over his revolver.

CHARLEY

'Lo there, boy.

Edmund nods, but continues to lead his horse by the reins towards the hitching post. Charley catches sight of the girl.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)

John!

Fiddler John unfolds himself from inside the first tent and approaches. He has a sharp, fierce look that takes Edmund off guard.

FIDDLER JOHN

(eyes on Edmund)

You're a Horn? The junior one?

EDMUND

Yes, sir. Edmund.

FIDDLER JOHN

Edmund, then. We've been expecting you.

Fiddler John smiles and shakes his hand. Edmund spots his Union dress as an officer's, wearing a dark blue greatcoat with epaulettes and an eagle insignia.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

Colonel John Good. Company G, Camp Watson. This is Charley. Where is your warden, son?

EDMUND

In the ground, Colonel. At the side of the yard.

The Fiddler turns his head, taking note of TWO GRAVES WITH WHITE CROSSES at the side of the yard.

FIDDLER JOHN

My condolences.

EDMUND

Colonel, I was out by the riverbed and...

FIDDLER JOHN
Yes. We know this woman. Let's
get her inside. Charley...

CHARLEY
Yes, sir.

Edmund and Charley move to the horse and hoist the girl down.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

Ten Charley and Edmund move through the front door carrying the unconscious girl between them.

As they pass the dinner table, Edmund unknowingly steps on a small pouch on the ground that reads "OROFINO CREEK MINES". No one notices as the pouch gets wedged deep between the floorboards, only showing a small corner.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The two men move into the bedroom.

CHARLEY
Lay her down here. Easy.

Charley and Edmund lay the girl across Edmund's bed.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

Charley moves by Edmund to the head of the bed, examining the patient.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)
I saw the Franklin in the front
room there?

EDMUND
Yes, sir.

CHARLEY
Would you do me a favor and put on
some coffee for the Colonel?

Edmund pauses near the door.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)
(turning)
If you would be kind enough.

Edmund nods, and, turning to the door, almost runs face first into Calvin Ed, who is standing sheepishly in the doorway.

CALVIN ED
Need my help in here?

Calvin Ed's eyes are locked on the girl.

CHARLEY
No. Go help Baker with the
prisoner.

Calvin Ed gives Edmund a hard look and exits.

As he moves away, Edmund notices his rifle case on the dresser. Open and empty. They have already been inside the house.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Edmund has a pot of coffee brewing on the cast-iron stove when he sees Charley emerge alone from the bedroom and move out the front door.

Edmund watches through the window as Charley confers quietly with Fiddler John by the tents.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Fiddler John is perched casually on a camp chair, blacking his cavalry boots. Edmund appears in the front doorway with the coffee.

FIDDLER JOHN
Edmund!

The Fiddler motions for Edmund to come over to him. Edmund hands him a coffee cup and takes a seat.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Coffee?

EDMUND
The closest we get to it. Parched
peas and some wheat.

FIDDLER JOHN
Any coffee beans in it?

EDMUND

Some. Arbuckle's. We don't have much left here, Colonel. Will the girl be alright?

FIDDLER JOHN

She'll be fine, Edmund. I'm sure you've noticed that we have your firearm as well. I apologize. This is just one of our normal safety precautions. Hopefully, it won't inconvenience you too much. No sense having any accidents or misunderstandings.

EDMUND

It's broken, so, no matter.

FIDDLER JOHN

Is it? I'll have C.E. look at it.

In the background, just beyond the Fiddler, Edmund can see the shorter soldier (Calvin Ed) hoisted up on a chair TYING A NOOSE TO A TREE.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

Soon as the man feels a little more able, of course. Rattlesnake bit through his cavalry boot only just last night. Put its hooks right into his left foot and the damn thing would just not let go. Diligent creature, the serpent. Continued upkeep and maintenances on one's footwear, Edmund. Most important thing a man can teach himself, living out in the Lord's far reaches.

EDMUND

Colonel...

FIDDLER JOHN

Edmund, we have what you might call a delicate situation on our hands. I wouldn't dare worry you with all the vile details, but, suffice it to say, we have a prisoner under our guard right now who needs dealing with. He is a dangerous man. A thief. As you and I both know, a thief can be just as poisonous as the most vicious killer.

Fiddler John smiles widely as Edmund's eyes turn to the camp. Charley and Red Baker are pulling Perry out of a tent. His hands and feet are tied.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

Of course, you would not have to be bothered by any of this, Edmund, except that it's over a day's travel out of this pass through the mountain to Fort Stevens, and I deem the matter more urgent than that type of travel will allow. Do you understand?

EDMUND

Yes, sir.

The soldiers remove Perry's hat and put his balding head through the noose.

FIDDLER JOHN

I can only hope that you might be kind enough to grace us with your hospitality and allow us camp in this field for the time allotted to clear up this simple misunderstanding.

EDMUND

Of course, sir.

Edmund can see Charley turn to them from the temporary gallows they have set up across the yard.

CHARLEY

Colonel!

FIDDLER JOHN

(keeping his eyes on
Edmund)

Yes, Charley?

CHARLEY

We're all ready.

FIDDLER JOHN

Thank you.

(to Edmund)

Please join us, Edmund.

EXT. TREE - DAY

Fiddler John and Edmund approach the party waiting for them under the tree. Perry is standing precariously on a wooden chair with his head in the noose.

Only now does Edmund see that none of the uniforms fit the men. The Union dress on each soldier is either too big around the chest and legs or too small around the arms and neck.

Perry sees Edmund walking towards him.

PERRY

Boy! Boy! Thank Jesus! Tell the
Fiddler I had nuthin with me!
Nuthin on me at all! Tell em!

Fiddler John ignores the old man's pleas.

FIDDLER JOHN

(pointing out Calvin Ed)
Edmund, this is C.E. Caldwell from
El Paso.

CALVIN ED

(to Edmund)
Calvin Ed.

Edmund shakes the soldier's hand.

FIDDLER JOHN

(pointing out Red Baker)
And this here is William Red Baker.

RED BAKER

Nice to meet you, Edmund.

EDMUND

You too.

Edmund shakes the man's hand, looking up at his forehead where he has an almost-healed yet conspicuous bullethole wound.

FIDDLER JOHN

And you've met Charley.

Charley nods at Edmund.

PERRY

Well, boy, now that you've met everyone and we're all cordial and mannerly would ya be so kind as to tell these men...

FIDDLER JOHN

(to Perry)

We heard you Perry. Please don't interrupt me again.

Perry's mouth closes. Waiting.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

(to Edmund)

You've seen this man before?

EDMUND

Yes, sir. Two nights ago I found him inside my house.

PERRY

Tell em what it was I'm doin boy!
I'm just lookin' fer food and spirits! I swear, Fiddler!
Flathead has what you lookin fer!

EDMUND

(to Fiddler John)

He's not lying, Colonel. He didn't have anything with him. Nothing that I saw. He was just in need of some bread and some water.

FIDDLER JOHN

And he took nothing from you?

Edmund is not sure which way he should go.

EDMUND

That black Chesterfield he has on.
That was my father's.

PERRY

Wait, please...

Before he can finish, Fiddler John walks over and kicks the chair out from under the old man.

PERRY FALLS BUT HIS NECK DOES NOT BREAK. HE TWISTS AND GAGS.

FIDDLER JOHN

(to Edmund)

This man hanging from your oak tree is 'Burial' Perry Parker. I know him very well, and I am not very fond of him.

Everyone is watching Perry die except Fiddler John.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

I met him a long time ago in Lawrence, Kansas. Digging in the ditches for bodies. He's a grave robber and a thief. Vile and wretched. He has something that belongs to me, and I want it back. He wouldn't have the item on him. It would be buried. Deep in these woods.

PERRY

(strangled gasps)

Okay! Okay! Please!

Fiddler John gives the old man hanging from the tree a hard look and reaches out his hand. Red Baker hands him a revolver. The Fiddler takes a careful aim and squeezes...

BAM! The bullet sails just over Perry's head and cuts the rope in half. Perry collapses in a mass on the ground.

FIDDLER JOHN

(hands back the revolver)

Thank you, Red.

Fiddler John motions to Charley, who grabs a handful of Perry's hair and drags him off to the tents. The other two soldiers follow. Fiddler John turns to Edmund.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry that you had to see that. It was not very pleasant.

Edmund watches Perry as he is dragged off.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

I hope that you will forgive us the intrusion on you. It looks like, in the least, we will be here overnight. My men are happy enough to eat outside at the tents tonight, so we will be of no bother to you.

EDMUND

No. No, I'll have supper ready for
your men in the house.

FIDDLER JOHN

Thank you, Edmund.

Fiddler John turns and moves back to the camp. Edmund's eyes
are fixed on the broken noose lying at his feet in the snow.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

Edmund, pacing back and forth, watches through the window as
Perry leads the soldiers to the sprawling oak tree just
beyond the wheat field.

EDMUND

Don't do it, Perry.

EXT. OAK TREE - THAT MOMENT

The four soldiers are on horseback, and Perry is on foot. He
is tied by the hands to the last rider.

PERRY

This is it, Fiddler. This is where
it was.

FIDDLER JOHN

(to Calvin Ed)

Untie him and give him the shovel.

Calvin Ed dismounts and throws the shovel hard at Perry.

PERRY

(to all the soldiers)

What about Belle? What about my
girl?

CHARLEY

Was that your horse?

PERRY

Yes, sir.

CHARLEY

Last I saw she was fixin' to be
dinner for a pack of wolves.

Perry almost drops the shovel. Tears are glinting in his
eyes.

PERRY

Now, why'd you go an do that? My
poor Belle. She weren't such a bad
girl. Never did no one no harm...

Fiddler John cocks his pistol.

FIDDLER JOHN

Dig.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund watching on pins and needles.

EDMUND'S VIEW: Perry is digging and, after only a moment,
draws one dirt-covered knapsack from the ground. He pauses,
and then he starts to dig deeper.

EXT. OAK TREE - THAT MOMENT

Calvin Ed is on the ground looking inside the Confederate
knapsack.

CALVIN ED

(to Fiddler John)

Looks to be about a quarter of it.
Maybe less.

(holding up the matchbox)

Some teeth.

PERRY

(digging feverishly)

It was all here. I swear it. I
swear that it was.

Charley sidles his horse up to Fiddler John.

CHARLEY

What do you think?

Fiddler John dismounts.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund, watching, knows what is coming before the victim
does.

EDMUND'S VIEW: Perry climbs out of the hole toward the
Fiddler. He kneels in front of him, begging.

Fiddler John has his pistol drawn. Perry, in a last ditch effort, points in the direction of the farmhouse. Pleading. Sweat pouring down his face. Putting all the blame on the only other person that he can think of.

Fiddler John does not look in Edmund's direction. He aims his gun at Perry's head and, calm as day, pulls the trigger.

BAM! White smoke. The thunder of the gunshot echoing through the clearing. Perry crumbles to the ground.

Edmund can hear the hogs in the pen start to SQUEAL again.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

Fiddler John and Charley are making their way back to the camp when they spot Edmund walking out toward them. The three figures meet on the horizon, two on horseback, one on foot.

FIDDLER JOHN

Edmund. There's nothing for you back that way. You come along with us.

EDMUND

Yes, sir. Your business is your business. But that man over there layin' face down in the snow still has some things that belong to me.

CHARLEY

Red'll get 'em for you.

EDMUND

Yes, sir. But I'd just as soon get them myself. Thank you.

FIDDLER JOHN

Alright, Edmund. You go on.

Edmund makes his way past the soldiers.

EXT. OAK TREE - DAY

Red Baker and Calvin Ed, the designated gravediggers, are already knee deep in the ground when Edmund arrives.

RED BAKER

Come to give us a hand, kid? The ground's almost frozen solid.

EDMUND

Winter 'round here is not a good
time for a man to meet his end.
You end up with no place to put
him.

Edmund moves over to Perry's dead body.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

He's gotta get in the ground quick,
though. The stink is gonna bring
the wolves.

CALVIN ED

The Colonel know you're here?

Edmund turns Perry's body over. The life is gone from his
eyes. A bullet hole over his right eye. Blood still pouring
out into the snow.

The soldiers can see it on Edmund's face.

RED BAKER

First one you seen, kid?

EDMUND

No.

Edmund regains himself and removes the Chesterfield coat and
Wellington boots that Perry had on him.

CALVIN ED

It ain't proper to bury a man in no
footwear whatsoever. Man's gotta
have the things he needs going
across.

EDMUND

These belong to me. I wasn't the
one decided to shoot him.

Edmund moves away from the burial site and the soldiers and
looks out across the trees and the mountain beyond.

He feels around in the coat pocket and takes out a handful of
a woman's torn brown hair.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Calvin Ed is standing in the open doorway of the dark room.
His eyes are locked on Emily asleep in the bed.

Emily stirs.

FIDDLER JOHN (O.S.)

C.E.

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Calvin Ed turns from the bedroom to see the other men taking their places at the dinner table.

CALVIN ED

She's stirrin'.

FIDDLER JOHN

Good. I'll have Charley look at her after dinner. Reckon she'll just sleep through the night.

CALVIN ED

She's tossin' about now, Fiddler.

Calvin Ed has forgotten his place. He slinks out of the doorway and closes the door. Edmund brings the plates to the table. Cornmeal with strips of salt pork.

FIDDLER JOHN

Thank you, Edmund.

RED BAKER

Thanks, kid.

Edmund sits at the table with the four soldiers.

FIDDLER JOHN

Edmund, seeing as you've been kind enough to take us into your home this evening, out of the cold, I thought you'd like to do us the honor of saying Grace before the meal.

EDMUND

How do you mean?

FIDDLER JOHN

A blessing for the food.

EDMUND

I'm afraid I don't know any, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN

You don't have to have anything prepared, Edmund.

EDMUND

I know a prayer my father used to say in the late evening when it was just the two of us.

FIDDLER JOHN

Let's have it then.

Edmund looks around as the men wait in silence.

EDMUND

Give us the strength tonight, Good Lord, to set the world at naught so that we might make a cry to thee in this hour of our country's need. Deal not with us according to our sins or our misdeeds, but stretch forth your right hand and be our defense. Have pity on our brothers who are in arms against the authority of the land, and allow them to see the error of their ways. And last, allow us to bear the weight of grief for those we knew and loved, as well as those we did not know, who have passed on into the unknown, who we will remember always in our silences and in our dreams.

FIDDLER JOHN

Amen.

ALL SOLDIERS

Amen.

Red Baker gets up from the table and brings back a whiskey bottle with glasses.

RED BAKER

Goddamn, I'm gonna need a drink after that one.

CALVIN ED

(grabs a glass)
Right over here.

RED BAKER

(handing Edmund a glass)
Here you are kid. Drink up.

Fiddler John watches as Edmund throws back the liquor.

RED BAKER (CONT'D)

You sound like a true-blooded
Federalist sympathizer. Pity on
our such and so forth. Up in arms
against the authority of the land
or whatever the fuck it was.

EDMUND

I got no such leanings, sir.
Either way.

RED BAKER

Is that right?

EDMUND

I don't pretend to know anything
more than I do. The war won't
reach the Pass. We're too remote.

FIDDLER JOHN

You're wrong, Edmund. The war has
reached you. Here we are.
Sitting at your suppertable.

EDMUND

So you are, Colonel.

Red Baker pours the men more whiskey.

CALVIN ED

(to Edmund)

Those two white crosses out the
side yard. I ain't never seen no
one but Mexicans signify their dead
thataway.

CHARLEY

(looks at Calvin Ed)

What the hell did I tell you about
that?

CALVIN ED

I just ain't never seen it. That's
all I'm sayin'.

EDMUND

My father passed and I put him in
the ground same way I saw him do
with my mother. Didn't put much
thought to it.

CALVIN ED

Your daddy brought you all the way out here deep into the mountain to engage in swine husbandry? Don't make much sense.

FIDDLER JOHN

Every man follows his own path.

CALVIN ED

Should be a path that makes a little bit of sense though.

FIDDLER JOHN

Calvin Ed. That whiskey's gone and dissolved your etiquette.

Calvin Ed's smile disappears.

EDMUND

My father was an operative under Allan Pinkerton.

FIDDLER JOHN

Is that so?

EDMUND

We set up this outpost after his retiring. I suppose he just wanted to stay of some use. Can't say that a soul ever came by though.

RED BAKER

(to Edmund)

I saw those gray wolves you was talkin' about, kid. Few more than I wanted to count. They look like they're ready to come up and knock on the door.

CHARLEY

You gotta move the hogs. They're dying anyway.

EDMUND

I got no place for them. Half of them got pneumonia. I'm leaving this place anyhow.

FIDDLER JOHN

We're you going, Edmund?

EDMUND

California, sir.

RED BAKER

Oh, think twice on that one.
California's population is made up
entirely of cocksuckers.

FIDDLER JOHN

The gold rush is dead, Edmund. I
guess you hadn't heard.

EDMUND

I'm not interested in gold, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN

No?

EDMUND

(beat)

No, sir. My father told me about
San Francisco and all the ships
that come in from the Far East.

CHARLEY

The boy is lookin' to travel,
Colonel.

RED BAKER

You gotta be careful of diddlin'
those Orient cooches, Edmund. They
got the cholera.

CALVIN ED

You can't get no cholera diddlin'
no yellow quim.

RED BAKER

Surely can.

EDMUND

It'd only take a few days to kill
and drain the hogs, pack up what I
need and can sell and get out.
That was as far as I had planned
out.

FIDDLER JOHN

Well, we'll help you the best we
can, Edmund. I don't reckon I'd
like to be stuck out here by my
lonesome neither. Nothing to do
but count the stars in the night
sky.

EDMUND

Yes, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN

We'll be outta your fields soon enough and you can be on your way, but, in the meantime, we were hoping you could join us tomorrow on an expedition.

EDMUND

Sir?

FIDDLER JOHN

We got business out in these woods that should take most of the morning and afternoon, and you know this area better than any of us. We would be in debt to you if you could render us your services for the day.

EDMUND

Of course, sir.

Edmund can sense that this is not a request.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Edmund, sleep deprived, is hunched on a chair over the bed. Emily stirs again. He can hear the soldiers rustling out in the front yard.

EXT. GRAVES - MORNING

Fiddler John is standing in a silent vigil over the two graves at the side of the house.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

Charley and Red Baker are at the front of the house saddling up three of the horses. Smoke is still rising from a recently quit fire near the tents. Fiddler John makes his way toward them.

FIDDLER JOHN

We all ready to go?

CHARLEY

All but the boy. His horse isn't saddled up, and I haven't seen him.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Edmund watches with bloodshot eyes as the girl stirs awake.

EMILY

Who are you?

Edmund can only find time to open his mouth.

CHARLEY (O.S.)

Edmund! Let's get going!

Edmund fixes his hat and overcoat and heads to the door.

EDMUND

(turning back to Emily)

Glad to see you're feeling better.

He leaves and shuts the door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

Edmund moves to his horse and mounts her, joining the Fiddler, Charley, and Red Baker. The three soldiers have their WINCHESTER RIFLES out.

RED BAKER

(to Edmund)

You all set to move out?

EDMUND

Where's C.E.?

RED BAKER

Stayin' behind. He's gotta put an indigo poultice on his foot and keep off it. Fer the bite.

EDMUND

Still bothering him?

RED BAKER

Rattlesnake ain't a jokester. He puts his teeth into you and then commits to it. Come on now.

Edmund turns to the camp as Calvin Ed emerges from one of the tents, shirtless, just waking up. Charley lets out a WHISTLE, and the four horsemen disappear into the trees.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The four men are traveling slowly along a forest path with Edmund bringing up the rear.

The Fiddler, at the front, turns to Charley and holsters his rifle.

FIDDLER JOHN

You go on ahead.

The Fiddler slows his horse and waits for Edmund to catch up, moving himself up alongside the boy.

EDMUND

Howdy, Colonel.

FIDDLER JOHN

You're wearin' a worried look this morning.

EDMUND

Am I?

FIDDLER JOHN

Your farmhouse is gonna be just fine. I got Calvin Ed lookin' after it.

EDMUND

I'm worried about the wolves comin' in. And I didn't put the feed in the pen this morning. There's plenty of work that's waitin' for me.

FIDDLER JOHN

How much do you know about tracking? Did your daddy ever teach you anything?

EDMUND

I can't say that I know much, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN

I'm not surprised. I've rarely met too many white men that are at all adept at it. I was just thinkin' since your daddy was a Pinkerton.

EDMUND

He never showed me those ways.

FIDDLER JOHN

For one reason or another, it's a difficult skill to be expert in, unless your an Indian or a Mexican, like Ten Charley up there. He's both. They're just raised with it.

EDMUND

Yes, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN

Keep your eyes to the ground. If you're trailing a man on horseback, as was our Perry, you'll do best in the soft ground.

Edmund watches the ground below. Looking for signs. Not Perry's, but his own.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

Tracking a man on hard or rocky ground can be trouble. Fresh tracks'll show wet where the ground has been turned up. After time in the sun, they'll dry. You can tell how old they are by the bends of the grass and the moisture around the print. Our worry now is the snow. It's been two days now, and the snow will have covered most of his trail. Best we can do is to start where we found him. Go from there.

EDMUND

Yes, sir.

The Fiddler pushes on ahead of him, conferring with Charley at the front.

As they move, Edmund sees the wolves through the trees in the distance moving in the opposite direction toward the house. He looks up, panicked, and sees Red Baker watching as well. Red clings to his Winchester.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Emily Moore is waking up in a room that she does not recognize. She looks around and her eyes land on:

CALVIN ED. Leaning quietly against the wall, watching her. He has a sawed-off, hammerless Colt SHOTGUN beside him on the dresser.

CALVIN ED
Morning Emily.

EXT. MUDDY PASSAGE - DAY

Fiddler John is off his horse, kneeling on the ground over a set of hoofprints. Ten Charley stands over him.

CHARLEY
This horse was at a run. Here.
The gate of the right hoof. About
eight feet apart.

FIDDLER JOHN
Yeah, that's Belle. He was moving
fast through this clearing.

Fiddler John looks out across the trees in the low fog as Red Baker and Edmund arrive on the scene.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
The second set over there is from a
different horse. Smaller, and
mostly likely a little earlier.

EDMUND
Those could've been mine.

The soldiers turn to Edmund.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
I was round this way the day
before. And coming back is when I
found your girl.

CHARLEY
Out hunting?

EDMUND
I didn't have my rifle. Stayed
overnight near the river but the
salmon weren't running.

FIDDLER JOHN
(to the soldiers)
Two sets of tracks here. My guess
is the spot we're looking for is
gonna be through this clearing near
the river where Charley came up on
him. Red, you and Edmund plant
yourselves here and start combing
the ground at the edge of these
pine.

(MORE)

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Charley and I are gonna head down
towards the river. We'll be back
within the hour. Perry leaves a
trail behind him like a slug.

RED BAKER
We're on it, Colonel.

FIDDLER JOHN
(to Charley)
Alright. Let's go.

Fiddler John mounts his horse, and the two men ride off
through the trees.

Red Baker dismounts and motions to Edmund.

RED BAKER
I doubt we're gonna find anything,
kid. He just wants us out of the
way for a time. That's alright by
me.

Edmund approaches Red on his horse.

EDMUND
You saw them. I know you saw them.

RED BAKER
What are you going on about?

EDMUND
I got a pack of wolves moving
toward my pen right now. I gotta
get back.

RED BAKER
Colonel told us to stay put.

EDMUND
You saw them. I know you did.

Red Baker directs his rifle at Edmund.

RED BAKER
Colonel told us to stay put. You
come down here with me. C.E. is
lookin' after your place.

EDMUND

It ain't his burden. It's mine. I don't know what business you men have out here, but it's got nothing to do with me. Let me have your rifle.

Red Baker grips his Winchester.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Your rifle. I need it.

Edmund reaches out his hand, but he gets no help. He turns his horse quickly and rides off in the opposite direction.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Edmund ties his horse up to the hitching post. Inside the farmhouse, he can hear CREAKING.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Charley is leaning over the ashes of an old fire, partially concealed by the snow. This was Edmund's fire only two nights before.

Fiddler John has his eyes on something entirely different. A twin set of pine trees with the earth around them overturned. A shovel leaning against the trees.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

Edmund follows the MUFFLED NOISES inside to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edmund, quiet as a mouse, opens the door. Only feet in front of him, Calvin Ed is on top of Emily, sweating and heaving.

Emily sees Edmund in the doorway and gives him a wide-eyed, panicked look.

Without thinking, Edmund rushes over to the bed and HURLS CALVIN ED ONTO THE FLOOR. Calvin Ed crashes into the wall.

CALVIN ED

What the fuck?

Calvin Ed tries to get his bearings as Emily covers herself with the blanket.

EDMUND
(to Emily)
You alright?

CALVIN ED
What's going on? What the fuck are
you doing, kid?

EDMUND
(to Calvin Ed)
Hold on now...hold on.

Calvin Ed laughs and starts to climb back onto the bed.

CALVIN ED
What's the matter with you? Get
outta the room!

Edmund crawls on top of Calvin Ed like a spider and PUNCHES
HIM, spraying blood onto the floor.

EDMUND
I said hold on!
(to Emily)
You come out here with me...

Emily looks at him, shocked. She's not going anywhere.

Edmund sees the shotgun on the dresser and turns to pick it
up, but, in an instant, Calvin Ed is on him. The man is
twice Edmund's build and meaner than hell.

CALVIN ED LANDS A PUNCH...in the face.

THEN ANOTHER...in the chest.

The sound of ribs cracking. Edmund falls to the floor.

CALVIN ED
Don't you know anything about
civilized society, boy? Never
interrupt a man in the middle of a
screw.

Calvin Ed picks Edmund up and THROWS HIM INTO THE NEXT ROOM.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund lands hard on the ground next to the table, spitting
up blood onto the floor and realizing that this may have been
a bad idea.

EDMUND
Wait...wait.

Calvin Ed is on top of him again, swinging. Edmund is like a wet sack.

CALVIN ED
I guess you still haven't realized
who we are. That cunt in there
belongs to us.

Calvin Ed picks up Edmund and DRAGS HIM OUT THE FRONT DOOR.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - THAT MOMENT

Edmund topples over face-first into the snow.

Calvin Ed lunges at him again but whirls back around as Emily
SLAMS THE FRONT DOOR AND LOCKS IT.

CALVIN ED
(pounding on the door)
Aww, honey! Emily! Come on now!

Calvin Ed cannot make the wooden door move. He walks back to Edmund and leans over him.

CALVIN ED (CONT'D)
See? You're making me lose my hard-
on. Let's see if you can't help me
get it back.

Calvin Ed moves past Edmund toward the tents.

INT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Calvin Ed enters the tent and picks up his REMINGTON
REVOLVER, swinging open the cylinder. It is fully loaded.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Calvin Ed appears out of the tent with the firearm.

CALVIN ED
Truthfully, Edmund, I don't give a
fuck what the Fiddler says about
you. No one has ever laid a hand
on me and kept the hand...

He trails off. Edmund is gone. Just the stains of blood in
the snow where he was curled up on the ground.

The cellar trapdoor SLAMS SHUT.

INT. SUPPLY CELLAR - THAT MOMENT

Edmund locks the outside trapdoor and climbs up to the inside of the house.

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund flings himself into the bedroom and freezes. Emily is in the opposite corner of the room. She has a small DERRINGER pointed at him and a crazed, fearful look in her eyes. Edmund puts his hands up.

In the front room, they can hear Calvin Ed POUNDING on the front door.

EMILY

Who are you?

Edmund sees the sawed-off shotgun sitting only two feet away from him.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I said who are you? Why are you makin' trouble? He's gonna kill us both now.

EDMUND

Hold on..hold on.

Very slowly, Edmund picks up the shotgun and moves out of the room.

INT. FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Calvin Ed is still pounding on the door as Edmund enters.

CALVIN ED (O.S.)

Edmund! Edmund! It's just you and me here! Where are you gonna go?

Calvin Ed is KICKING the door now.

CALVIN ED (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Emily! Emily, honey, I'm coming!

The KICKING is getting more severe.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - THAT MOMENT

Calvin Ed, fed up, draws his rifle and aims it at the door.

BAM! A bullet rips through the wood...

BAM! Another...

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Inside, Edmund sidles himself up to the door, watching the two holes of light coming through the wood. Calvin Ed is going to break through any second...

BAM! Gunfire putting another hole into the wood...

CALVIN ED (O.S.)
Alright now! I'm coming in!

Edmund turns and sees Emily standing across the room. She is like a deer frozen in headlights.

The wood SPLINTERS, and Calvin Ed's boot comes crashing through the front door...

EXT. FRONT PORCH - THAT MOMENT

Calvin Ed is trying to balance himself with his left foot through the wooden door.

CALVIN ED
Fuck...fuck!

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Calvin Ed's black boot stuck in the door...

Edmund turns to Emily. She shakes her head at him, pleading. Edmund turns his head away from the door, covering his eyes with one hand and pointing the shotgun with the other...

BAM! THE SHOTGUN BLAST TEARS CALVIN ED'S FOOT INTO PIECES. Blood and bone showering the room...

Edmund drops the shotgun and rolls over. He can hear Emily SCREAMING inside and Calvin Ed SCREAMING outside...

A THUD, as Calvin Ed's body drops to the ground...

BAM! BAM! BAM! Three bullets from outside rip through the front door. Emily heaves herself back into the bedroom.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - THAT MOMENT

Calvin Ed screaming in pain on the ground. He continues to dry fire his revolver.

He anchors himself and finally rips his foot loose from the door. There is nothing left but blood. He WAILS.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Charley, covered in dirt, hurls the empty Confederate knapsack out of the hole he is standing in.

CHARLEY

Empty.

FIDDLER JOHN

I can see that.

CHARLEY

Think it was Perry or the boy?

FIDDLER JOHN

Can't say. How about we ask him?

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAY

Edmund is curled up by the mangled front door. Smoke is still rising near the hole in the door, but the screaming has stopped.

He picks himself up and listens...

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Edmund, opening the front door, looks down at the stain of blood on the porch. Calvin Ed is not there. His eyes follow a blood trail around the porch to the side yard.

Edmund crawls, following the trail, and finds Calvin Ed dragging himself off the porch on his stomach. He can hear the soft sounds of Calvin Ed crying.

Edmund lays himself down on his back and closes his eyes.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Edmund opens his eyes, coming out of the darkness. The blood on his face has dried up and his eyes are swollen.

A few feet from him, Calvin Ed is passed out on the ground.

Through his swollen eyes, Edmund can see the three soldiers appear out of the forest on horseback. They are blurry in the bright sunlight.

All three of the soldiers stop in dead silence at the sight before them. Edmund closes his eyes again. Darkness.

EXT. TREE - LATER

Fiddler John is loading his revolver, sitting in a chair under a tree. Emily is sitting below him on the ground.

FIDDLER JOHN

You understand what it is I'm asking you?

EMILY

Yes, Fiddler.

FIDDLER JOHN

I'm not asking you about any of this shit.

EMILY

No.

FIDDLER JOHN

So you understand?

EMILY

Yes.

FIDDLER JOHN

I'm not mad at you, sweetheart.

EMILY

I know, Fiddler.

FIDDLER JOHN

So?

EMILY

I was riding alongside Red. He was looking after me.

FIDDLER JOHN

I know about that.

EMILY

You and Charley went up ahead. Like always.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

Red and I heard the gunfire from a distance. It was dark. The horses got all rattled up. In a blink, C.E. was on after you two. Red went up after him. Yelled for me to come with him. But I had trouble crossin' the river in all that black and darkness. My Lucy wouldn't do it.

FIDDLER JOHN

Then what?

EMILY

Then he found me in the middle of the riverbed. Recognized me I guess.

FIDDLER JOHN

Recognized you across the river in the dead of night?

EMILY

I reckon it ain't hard to spot the woman in a band of guerillas.

FIDDLER JOHN

You know I don't care for that word.

EMILY

I know, Fiddler. I'm sorry. He dropped Lucy in the middle of the riverbed there. I was lucky it was shallow enough, but it was freezin' cold. He drug me out. Don't know what he was plannin' on doin'. He left his horse at the side. That's when Charley found us. Put bullets in his mare because I guess that's what first he saw. I went to the ground and I guess I don't remember too much after.

FIDDLER JOHN

After his horse went down, it took us nearly an hour to find him. Snuck off into the night. That's why what I'm askin' is so important.

EMILY

Yes, Fiddler.

FIDDLER JOHN
Did he say anything to you?

EMILY
No, Fiddler.

FIDDLER JOHN
Did he have the militia bags on
him?

EMILY
I think so.

FIDDLER JOHN
He did or he didn't have the bags?

EMILY
He did.

FIDDLER JOHN
How many did he have?

EMILY
It was dark, John.

FIDDLER JOHN
How many did he have? One or two?

EMILY
(lies)
He had them both.

FIDDLER JOHN
He had two Confederate militia
bags?

EMILY
Yes. He had two.

FIDDLER JOHN
On his horse?

EMILY
No.

FIDDLER JOHN
On his person then?

EMILY
Yes.

Fiddler John's expression breaks into a warm smile.

FIDDLER JOHN

Alright, sweetheart. Go on back in the house and get some rest.

EMILY

Thank you, Fiddler.

Fiddler John lights the cigarette he has been rolling and watches her move back toward the camp.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Red Baker has his rifle trained on Edmund. Seated, they both watch as Emily walks by the camp toward the house.

She passes behind Red and looks at Edmund. Edmund reads it as a warning.

INT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - DAY

Fiddler John enters the tent. It looks more like a crude operating room with Charley leaning over Calvin Ed cutting off pieces of burned boot leather from his leg.

CALVIN ED

Fuck.

CHARLEY

Hold still.

CALVIN ED

Don't take off my leg, Charley.

CHARLEY

I won't.

CALVIN ED

Fiddler, tell Charley he don't need to take off my leg.

Calvin Ed is nearly to the point of delirium. Tears stream down his face.

FIDDLER JOHN

We ain't got the saw to take your leg off so quit crying. Eventually it'll have to go though, if the gangrene gets it.

CALVIN ED

It won't Fiddler. I promise.

CHARLEY

Keep quiet.

FIDDLER JOHN

(to Charley)

How is it?

CHARLEY

Lotta boot leather burned into his leg above the stump. Lotta blood.

FIDDLER JOHN

I can see that.

CHARLEY

We're gonna need to take off just above the ankle at least.

FIDDLER JOHN

Looks like it's mostly gone anyway.

CALVIN ED

Fuck. Fuck, it's all mangled.
That fuckin' piece of shit.

Charley pours a measure of ground gunpowder onto a cloth and presses it down into the wound.

CALVIN ED (CONT'D)

You gonna kill 'em for me, Fiddler?
Bring his body in here so I can see.

FIDDLER JOHN

Shutup.

(to Charley)

What about you? What do you think?

CHARLEY

The boy's got the gold. I didn't think so before, but now I do. Plain as day. He buried that knapsack out in the woods because he didn't reckon on us finding it. Panicked and left us when we got on the trail.

FIDDLER JOHN

You think so?

CHARLEY

Yes, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN
Then where is it, Charley?

Charley puts pressure on the wound and Calvin Ed cries out.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
We went through that entire house
before the boy showed up. I see no
places it's been buried or hung.
It ain't up in no goddamn tree. So
let me know if you've seen it.
That way we can get out of this
fucking place.

Calvin Ed is screaming and crying now.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
(to Calvin Ed)
Give me your Winchester.

Calvin Ed looks up, perplexed.

CALVIN ED
You gonna kill 'em now?

FIDDLER JOHN
Give me your Winchester.

CALVIN ED
There. Over by the blankets.

FIDDLER JOHN
Cartridges?

CALVIN ED
Over here.

Fiddler John takes the rifle and the cartridges.

FIDDLER JOHN
(to Calvin Ed)
Your leg is gonna come off or it's
not. Either way, you got no foot
at the bottom of it. You're no use
to me anymore.

He stops before leaving the tent and looks at Charley.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
The whore is lying to me. I want
to know why.

He leaves.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Red Baker is aiming his rifle at Edmund.

EDMUND

How'd you get that bullet hole in
your head?

Red watches Fiddler John leave the tent and move away from
them.

RED BAKER

Was in Lawrence. Few years back.
Jayhawkers came through, raiding my
house. Put a ball through my
temple here. Took my daughter. I
musta been layin' on the ground for
hours in blood 'til I was found.

EDMUND

What happened to your daughter?

No answer. The two men watch as Fiddler John moves in their
direction carrying a heavy bundle wrapped in white, ragged
cloth.

RED BAKER

You shoulda stayed put like I told
you.

EDMUND

What regiment did you say you were
in again?

Red Baker gives Edmund a wide smile. Fiddler John arrives.

FIDDLER JOHN

Red, there's no need to point a
rifle at an unarmed boy.

RED BAKER

(relaxing his weapon)
Yes, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN

Go on and help Charley. They're
gonna need some whiskey from the
cellar.

Red Baker gets up moves back to the house.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

(to Edmund)
You. Come with me.

EXT. HILLS - DAY

Fiddler John and Edmund are crouching under a grove of pine trees that look out onto rolling hills.

FIDDLER JOHN
Beautiful country. I reckon you
don't have it as bad out here as
you think you do.

EDMUND
It's hard to relate.

FIDDLER JOHN
I suppose it is.

Fiddler John lays out the heavy bundle on the ground before them. Inside the cloth lay a number of RIFLES and polished REVOLVERS.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Here they are.

Fiddler John takes out a rolled cigarette and lights it.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Tobacco?

EDMUND
No, sir. What's the armory for?

FIDDLER JOHN
I rounded these up from my men.
Here it is, Edmund.

Fiddler John picks out Edmund's HAWKEN RIFLE and studies it.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Your Hawken St. Louis fifty-four
caliber. Muzzle-loading. Owned by
Major General Edmund Horn, U.S.
Army officer and Pinkerton
operative. Passed on to his boy.
We fixed it up for you.

Fiddler John aims the rifle out over the hills.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
I ain't seen a muzzle-loader like
this in about five years. It's
something. I applaud you for
trying to kill any sort of animal
with it. It's a good thing you
never tried to used it on any men.
(MORE)

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Bullet would've blow clear past
them by a blind country mile, and
you would've been left helpless
trying to reload the damn thing.

EDMUND
I've never been much with a
firearm.

FIDDLER JOHN
Is that right?

Edmund has no response.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
I can't say you've put me in an
easy situation here, Edmund.
There's trouble now with my men
about what you've done.

EDMUND
I figured as much.

FIDDLER JOHN
Do you think your actions, upon
looking back, may have been a hair
drastic?

EDMUND
You weren't there.

FIDDLER JOHN
She's a whore, Edmund. She was
rendering her services. That's
what she does. That's why she's
here. For Calvin Ed to expect
that, well, that's a hell of a
reason for a man to lose his leg.

EDMUND
I didn't know.

FIDDLER JOHN
That's why we're still sitting
here.

Fiddler John holds out the rifle to Edmund.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Here. This is yours.

Edmund takes it and sets it down. The Fiddler picks out a
second rifle.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Now, this one. This is a Sharp's
Model '59 with a slanting breech.
Feel it.

Fiddler John hands Edmund the rifle.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Take an aim out there at the top of
the hill. Through the site. Feel
its weight? More meanness to it.
More commitment. No gumming up the
muzzle. This is a single shot, but
accurate as you need. These are
the shells here. Fifty-two
caliber.

The Fiddler loads the rifle for Edmund and hands it back.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Now, you bring it back to full-cock
and pull the trigger.

BAM! Edmund fires the rifle across the hills.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
You can feel the metal in your
teeth.

Fiddler John takes the rifle back, loads it again, and takes
an aim at the same spot.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
If I'm completely truthful with
you, I can't say that I mind too
much about Calvin Ed. He's an ill-
mannered boy. Got a rudeness in
him that I don't take to. No real
spirit or spine.

EDMUND
Did you kill those soldiers?

FIDDLER JOHN
What soldiers?

EDMUND
Those Union soldiers whose uniforms
your men are wearing.

Fiddler John hands Edmund another rifle.

FIDDLER JOHN

The Model '55 half-stock Colt. Put
your eye to the sighting scope
there at the top.

The rifle has a long sighting scope fixed to the top that
Edmund looks through. He can see the hills closer through
the dirty glass.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

This one's for the sharpshooter.
Like Berdan. Wolves wouldn't
really be a problem for you
anymore. Your arm of vengeance
reaches a little further out.

EDMUND

Yes, sir.

Fiddler John takes the Colt rifle from Edmund and picks out
one last one for him.

FIDDLER JOHN

Now, finally, this one is my
favorite. This is the Yellow Boy.

Fiddler John hands Edmund a long, beautiful rifle with a
brass receiver.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

It's a Winchester and you can put
fifteen cartridges in it. If
you're anything like me, you can
unload every cartridge in about
fifteen seconds as well. Every
rifle too will put a different
sound in your ear. This one
ruptures the bullet different than
the Colt. Different attitude.
It's good to learn the sound. It's
the easiest way to tell what the
other man is using.

EDMUND

Is it loaded?

FIDDLER JOHN

It is.

BAM! BAM! Edmund fires the gun, cocks it, fires it again,
cocks it again.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

We are both orphans, you and I. We both need the same things. The Red Paint Chiricahua attacked my family on the road to Silver City when I was only five years old. My father and mother were both killed and scalped. They were arrogant and foolish and had contempt for the Red Paints. They underestimated them. The Chiricahua took me in and I learned tracking and hunting from them. Lived with them for many years. Then, when I was old enough, I left the Red Paints and came back with men and rifles and killed the ones who took me. I hung them from the tree branches like swine and let the blood drain from their throats down into the earth. This was the way it was destined to be.

Edmund puts the gun down, listening.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

I am sorry to have fed you lies. We are no Union soldiers. I've never belonged to any army, Union or Confederate. Nor do any of my men. I don't at once sidle up to either camp, but, I guess, if I had to make a choice, it would be the confederate state. I don't like the terms bushwacker or jayhawker. Guerilla or militia. I am not part of any organization. I am just a Christian man. We are all here frontiersmen. You and I.

Fiddler John grabs the rifle Edmund is holding and puts it away. He reaches out for a revolver and hands it to Edmund.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

This one is for you. Two pounds.

EDMUND

This is for me?

FIDDLER JOHN

You come with us or you make your own way down to California. Either way, keep it on you. See how that nickel shines in the sunlight.

(MORE)

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
It don't break apart, but the
cylinder comes down out of the
side. Like that. Six rounds.

Edmund tries it on. Loads and fires. BAM! Out across the
field.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
For your hospitality.

EDMUND
I can't accept this.

FIDDLER JOHN
You can. I assure you we have no
shortage in our camp.

EDMUND
Thank you, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN
Thank you.

The Fiddler stands up and looks out, putting his back to
Edmund. Edmund holds the revolver in his tight grip.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
You left your shovel out in the
woods.

EDMUND
Sir?

FIDDLER JOHN
You left your shovel. Leaning up
against a pine out in the woods.
Charley found it.

EDMUND
(thinking quick)
I ain't seen it since Perry came by
that night. I think he put it in
his sack and rode off.

FIDDLER JOHN
Is that right?

EDMUND
I didn't pay it any mind. Haven't
needed it since my father's
passing.

FIDDLER JOHN
Well, we got it back for you. So
now you can dig all you want.
Let's get back.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Edmund is on his knees throwing up into what you might call a toilet, but what is, in reality, a circular hole cut into a wooden bench that drops down into the dirt.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Charley is crouched at the end of the camp when Fiddler John comes up behind him.

FIDDLER JOHN
What's got your eye?

CHARLEY
There.

Charley points out a pair of wolves at the forest edge.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)
How'd it go?

FIDDLER JOHN
I used to have a keener eye for
this kind of thing.

CHARLEY
You still do.

FIDDLER JOHN
He's scared, but that doesn't mean
much.

CHARLEY
You're thinking he'll come with us?

FIDDLER JOHN
If he wants.

Fiddler John looks out closer at the pacing wolves.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
What is it they're up to?

CHARLEY
They're waiting.

Fiddler John gets up to leave.

CHARLEY (CONT'D)

What if it ends up the kid took the money?

FIDDLER JOHN

Then I can't say I won't be a little disappointed.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Red Baker is repairing Edmund's front door. He has a wooden plank cut to fit just over the hole, and he is hammering away when Emily tries to move through the door.

RED BAKER

What are you up to then?

EMILY

Fiddler asked me to give a special present to the boy. As a reward for being so damn brave and all.

RED BAKER

Is that right?

EMILY

Uh-huh.

RED BAKER

Well, shit. Edmund doesn't know what he's in for.

Emily moves inside the house as Red Baker laughs to himself.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Edmund is standing alone by the bed, shuffling through the dresser drawers.

His hands fall upon his father's badge hidden among the clothes. It reads "PINKERTON NATIONAL DETECTIVE AGENCY: WE NEVER SLEEP". He moves it around in his hands, lost in thought.

The door opens and Emily appears silhouetted in the doorway.

EMILY

There's my brave man.

She moves into the room.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Red Baker, kneeling beside the door, smiles to himself as he watches Emily strut into the bedroom, locking the door.

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Emily moves up close to Edmund.

EMILY

The Fiddler sent me in. Says you
deserve a good time.

EDMUND

Well, I....

EMILY

There's no talking your way outta
this one. You are in for it. Come
on. Let's move over to the bed.

Emily takes him by the hand and they sit on the bed.

EMILY (CONT'D)

What's your name again, boy?

EDMUND

Edmund.

EMILY

Edmund. I'm Emily.

She offers her hand and he naively shakes it. She laughs.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Why don't you lay yourself down
here on the bed.

Edmund cannot find the words to object as the woman gently pushes him down on the bed and climbs on top of him.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Here we are. Ain't this a little
better?

EDMUND

Yes, ma'am.

Edmund notices that she has a nervousness in her voice, and she continually glances at the door.

EMILY

Edmund, darling, will that lock hold?

EDMUND

What?

EMILY

The lock on the bedroom door. Will it hold?

EDMUND

I believe it will.

EMILY

We don't have to make a lot of noise, but a little bit here and there. As long as Red saw me come in here with you.

EDMUND

I don't understand.

EMILY

I'm saying we have to make a little noise otherwise they'll know something is up and we're both in trouble.

EDMUND

If you've put us in a bad spot...

EMILY

It would do best right now if you just listen.

Emily lowers her voice.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You have no idea what these men are really like. I can only assume you've already figured out they ain't soldiers unless you're really slow. I've ridden with them since Missouri, and I've seen things that could only be called the Devil's work. They ain't bushwhackers. They ain't part of no war except their own. They've watched men die on both sides and then they come in like vultures taking what they want. They took me from my family before they killed 'em. Every one of 'em. My baby sister.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

My mommy and my daddy. The only way I survive day to day is by giving 'em what they want.

Edmund tries to get up from the bed, but she holds him down.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Now you've got something they want, and we both know what it is. It's the only way out of this mess. You're trapped and so am I.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - THAT MOMENT

Red Baker is hammering in the nails when he hits his thumb and cries out. The nails scatter across the floor.

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Emily continues speaking in desperate whispers.

EMILY

You have the gold. I think I'm the only one who knows for sure, but I can tell the Fiddler is stewing on it. The only reason you're alive right now is because they don't know where you're hiding it, and, when they figure that out, you'll be lucky if they just kill you.

EDMUND

You've got the wrong idea.

EMILY

I lied for you. I don't know why I did it. I don't know whether what you did for me was brave or done out of fear. Don't matter. I got away briefly and saw Perry before they caught him. He told me where he buried those coins. He trusted me. I don't know why. I overheard Charley say they found only one. They found the other empty sack out in the woods. I don't have to think too hard to guess that you dug up the second satchel and are holding on to what was inside.

EDMUND

What made him trust you?

EMILY

I'm a prisoner just like he was.
Just like you are.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Red Baker is on his hands and knees picking up the nails. He finds one of the nails stuck on an object protruding out of the floorboards.

He picks up the object, knowing instantly what it is...

A brown, drawstring pouch with the words "OROFINO CREEK MINES" pressed into the leather.

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund is confessing.

EDMUND

It's in the supply cellar.

EMILY

All of it? In one place?

EDMUND

I put it deep in an oak casket with the meat and salt from one of the hogs. The meat's gone bad. I thought the smell would put 'em off before they even looked in it.

EMILY

Edmund.

Edmund looks up into Emily's eyes. He can see she's been through hell and back.

EMILY (CONT'D)

We have to kill them all.

EDMUND

We can't.

EMILY

We have to kill them all tonight.

EDMUND

How?

EMILY

It's only gonna be another day before all of our options are gone. Even if we get away, they tracked Perry within a few days. If the Fiddler is on your trail, he don't sleep. He barely even eats. It gets under his skin. Those guns on the dresser. They're yours?

EDMUND

I've got the rifle and the Remington.

EMILY

Where do you hide them?

EDMUND

Under the bed.

EMILY

Load up the rifle and put it under the bed. Load up the pistol. Put it in the dresser so you can get to it easy. I got the Derringer. They don't know I have it.

(thinks to herself)

That ain't gonna do it. We need to get more.

(to Edmund)

At dinner tonight, say you gotta check on the hogs. Excuse yourself, and make your way down to Charley's tent. He's got a Winchester in there by his bed. Get it and put it somewhere safe.

EDMUND

I can put it in the pen. In the trough. It'll be dark enough that you can't see.

EMILY

Alright. But you can't take too long.

Edmund stops himself. A feeling of dread pushes in on him.

EDMUND

I can't do it.

EMILY

What do you mean?

EDMUND

I can't do it. Not tonight. I
gotta have time.

EMILY

You're scared. So am I. There's
no time.

EDMUND

(panic)

There's time. I can't do it
tonight.

EMILY

You have to. This is it.

Emily gets herself up, straightens her dress, and moves to
the door.

EDMUND

Wait...

But she's gone, closing the door behind her.

Edmund hands work quickly, loading up the Hawken rifle and
hiding the case under the bed.

EXT. OAK TREE - DUSK

A gray wolf is digging with its paws into the earth, moving
deeper and deeper into Perry's grave. It can smell the dead
body below.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DUSK

A drawer is opened in Edmund's desk. Inside the drawer, the
Outpost Log of Major General Horn.

A hand reaches in and takes it.

EXT. HOG PEN - DUSK

Edmund is on his knees again in the hog pen. He tips the
pinewood trough over and the water comes pouring out into the
ground. The hogs, barely moving now, hardly take notice.

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund enters to find Fiddler John and Red Baker seated at the dinnertable. Fiddler John has his feet up reading, and Red is rolling tobacco into cigarette paper.

FIDDLER JOHN
Might be time to give it up.

EDMUND
What's that?

FIDDLER JOHN
I said might be time to give it up.
That pen's got nothing but half-
dead swine in it.

EDMUND
Oh. Most of them got the fever
now.

RED BAKER
Kill the ones ain't got the fever.
We'll help you carve 'em up.

EDMUND
Thank you.

RED BAKER
It'll make things quicker for when
we're ready to leave.

FIDDLER JOHN
We're not leaving yet.

Edmund tries to move by the men to the kitchen.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Did you show Red your new
Remington?

EDMUND
No, sir.

FIDDLER JOHN
Why don't you go get it so he can
have a look.

EDMUND
Alright.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Edmund enters and removes his revolver from the dresser drawer, hidden among the socks and underwear.

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Fiddler John reaches out his hand as Edmund comes back in, and Edmund hands him the revolver.

Fiddler John swings the cylinder open.

FIDDLER JOHN
Already loaded I see.

RED BAKER
Let's have it here.

Red grabs the revolver off of Fiddler John.

FIDDLER JOHN
(to Edmund)
Did you see the job Red did with
your door after you fucked it all
up?

EDMUND
I did.
(to Red Baker)
Thank you for undoing the damage.

FIDDLER JOHN
(to Emily)
Emily!

Emily emerges from the kitchen behind the Fiddler.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Why don't you take Red here into
the bedroom. Show him the benefits
of a job well done.

RED BAKER
Well, that sounds just fine to me.

EMILY
Fiddler, the stew's boiling up on
the stove.

FIDDLER JOHN
That stew'll keep for the time
being.

(MORE)

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

That is, unless you're cunny's too sore out and bruised from bouncing around with the boy all afternoon.

EMILY

No, Fiddler.

Emily takes Red's hand.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Come on then, honey.

RED BAKER

Girl is ready to go. I like that.

Red takes the gun with him into the bedroom with Emily and closes the door.

FIDDLER JOHN

Edmund, come and sit down with me. Misery loves company, and all my men are otherwise engaged.

Edmund takes a seat across from the man.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

(reading out loud)

Outpost will be abandoned within the appropriate amount of time, a day or two at most, as conditions have become too harsh. In keeping with original caretaker's intent... So on and so forth...I could never presume that anyone will read it, but I will keep it here. Before starting off.

(to Edmund)

Very poetic. When was it you wrote it?

EDMUND

Two nights before the last one.

FIDDLER JOHN

After Perry showed up then?

EDMUND

Before, sir.

Edmund cannot help but hear the MOANS from the bedroom. Outside the house, Calvin Ed has woken up and is CRYING again.

FIDDLER JOHN

Wish that boy would shut up.
 (looks at the logbook)
 This looks to be your only entry
 here. I take it the handwriting
 through the rest is your daddy's?

EDMUND

Said it was for historical
 purposes. For the Pinkertons.

FIDDLER JOHN

Fucking Pinkertons. Miserable
 sodomites. Bad trackers and worse
 with the rifle.

Edmund winces at the Fiddler's change in temperament.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

I once seen a Pinkerton hang from a
 noose out on the border near
 Minnesota. He tore up and raped
 this little Sioux girl. Not but 9
 years of age. They ain't no
 saints, that lot. Just as fuckin'
 evil as the rest. But they got a
 false front, which I cannot oblige.
 (to Edmund)
 You don't mind me lookin' through
 this then?

EDMUND

I'm gonna go check on the stew.

Edmund passes Fiddler John and moves into the kitchen. The
 Fiddler listens to the moans in the next room.

Fiddler John's eyes find the daguerreotypes on the front
 wall. Edmund's father and mother are staring at him.

FIDDLER JOHN

I say at least it was a girl and
 not some little fuck Sioux tadpole.
 You never know. That's why it's
 good to keep the whore.

THE PICTURE ON THE WALL: Edmund's mother. Staring out from
 the glass.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

Gotta keep your dick pointed in the
 right direction.

Fiddler John takes a long look at the picture of Edmund's mother. He sifts through the journal, listening to the cries and moans of his men all around him.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
 (singing to himself)
*A prayer for the Father,
 A good man, tried and true.
 May he be warm gentle,
 And forgive the sins you do.
 A prayer for the Mother...*

He trails off. His eyes scan a page near the front of the journal written by Edmund's father.

VIEW ON THE PAGE: Scribbled words from the entry jump out and grab him. "HIS MOTHER". "CHILDBIRTH". "SAN FRANCISCO". "DIED".

Fiddler John stops. His eyes goes dead and cold. Edmund's mother is staring at him through the glass. Motionless.

Whispering the answer to him from the past.

INT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - NIGHT

Calvin Ed is passed out alone in his tent. There is a distant CLATTER of noise from the farmhouse.

EXT. GRAVES - NIGHT

Blood in a water bucket. A hand brings a rag down into the water and out again. Emily is cleaning underneath her dress in front of the two graves.

Edmund appears from the porch, dumping out a pot of grease into the snow.

FIDDLER JOHN (O.S.)
 Emily! Let's go!

Emily drops the rag into the bucket and walks by Edmund.

EMILY
 They know.

She moves through the front door into the house.

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner is ready. Fiddler John, Charley, and Red Baker are sitting and talking by the table when Emily appears.

FIDDLER JOHN

There you are. Serve out the stew and then you can take yours and go look after C.E. in the tent.

EMILY

Yes, Fiddler.

She brings the stew from the kitchen and doles it out.

CHARLEY

Where's the boy?

FIDDLER JOHN

He's coming.

RED BAKER

That girl's got a new trick every time I'm with her. Always a surprise, I tell you.

CHARLEY

Is that right?

RED BAKER

You just gotta know how to bring it out of her like I do.

Charley looks up as Edmund appears in the doorway.

FIDDLER JOHN

Edmund. Come here. Beside me.

Edmund takes his place as Emily takes her bowl and walks outside to the camp.

EDMUND

Emily not eating with us tonight?

FIDDLER JOHN

The dinner table is not for whores, Edmund.

EDMUND

This is my dinner table. It's not your place to say who eats here and who don't.

Silence in the room. Fiddler John's face breaks open into a wide smile.

FIDDLER JOHN

That's your prerogative, Edmund.
If you will allow, I just want to
say a simple grace and then we'll
call her back in.

EDMUND

Go on then.

FIDDLER JOHN

Let's all join hands for the
blessing.

All of the men, including Edmund, join hands at the table.
Fiddler John grabs Edmund, not by the hand, but by the wrist.
The Fiddler takes a fierce hold on him.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

Good.

(bows his head)

Be with us tonight, oh Lord, as we
suffer and sin. Every man alone
under your judgment. We can only
beg your mercy and await the
punishments you have in store. We
know that we can never ask for true
forgiveness.

Edmund's wrist feels like it is going to break under the grip
of Fiddler John's hand.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)

Whether we be Dysmas or Gestas, the
two thieves crucified on either
side of Jesus on the cross, one
begging for repentance, the other
full of only ridicule and vileness,
we know that we will all be
punished. We suffer equally and
die. No man can be washed of his
sins, and no sin can be left
unpunished. We will hold true to
that tonight. Amen.

EVERYONE IN UNISON

Amen.

THEN IT HAPPENS ALL AT ONCE. Every hand breaks free except
Edmund's, still held by the wrist. Fiddler John, in one
move, SLAMS EDMUND'S HAND DOWN ONTO THE TABLE, TAKES HIS
DINNER KNIFE, AND STABS EDMUND THROUGH THE HAND.

CHAOS. Edmund falls out of his chair, SCREAMING, the knife in his left hand through the dinner table. Blood pouring out through the table to the ground below.

Fiddler John JUMPS UP ONTO THE TABLE, crouching over the screaming boy.

FIDDLER JOHN
WHY WOULD YOU STEAL FROM ME EDMUND?
HOW DID YOU POSSIBLY THINK YOU
COULD GET AWAY WITH IT?

Edmund falls to the floor. He clings to his wounded hand.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
ARE YOU LISTENING, BOY?

Fiddler John yanks the knife out of his hand, and Edmund collapses fully on to the ground.

Fiddler John jumps off the table and straddles him.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
LET NO SIN GO UNPUNISHED! LIKE HIS
COCKSUCKER FATHER! ALL LIES AND
DECEIT THIS BOY!

The Fiddler grabs Edmund by the hair and lifts his head up. Edmund is on the verge of passing out.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
CAN YOU HEAR ME, SON? ARE YOU
LISTENING? YOU ARE A THIEF AND A
LIAR. A SINNER. I AM THE LORD'S
RIGHT HAND. BRINGING HIS
RETRIBUTION DOWN UPON YOU!

Fiddler John looks up at his men, who have backed against the wall.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Charley.

No answer.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Charley!

CHARLEY
Yes, Fiddler?

FIDDLER JOHN
Go grab the shovel and dig up what
is rightfully mine. Then bring it
here. Inside.

CHARLEY
Fiddler?

FIDDLER JOHN
What's the matter, Charley? What?
Don't you know where it is? Don't
you know where he hid it?

The Fiddler is laughing now, looking down at his victim.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Haven't you figured it out? It's
been here the whole time! Just
right outside! Under my fucking
nose!

He leaps up off of Edmund and grabs the photograph of
Edmund's mother off of the wall, painting the dirty glass
with her boy's blood.

Fiddler John hops back on top of Edmund and breaks open the
picture, ripping the paper out and SHOVING IT IN EDMUND'S
MOUTH.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Go take a look at his poor old
momma's grave!
(to Edmund)
She ain't there though, is she
Edmund? Never fucking was!

Charley and Red Baker exit.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Very clever, you little fuck! Died
in childbirth in fucking San
Francisco! Very fucking clever!

EXT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - NIGHT

Emily can hear the yelling and watches as Red Baker and
Charley grab shovels and move to the side of the yard.

EXT. GRAVES - NIGHT

A shovel hauling frozen dirt out of the ground. Charley is working only by moonlight, digging deeper and deeper into the grave.

Edmund is sitting on the porch watching the dig. Dried blood on his face and his left hand turning shades of black. Red Baker is sitting with him, a rifle pointed in his face.

RED BAKER

You and me, we've been here before.

Fiddler John is standing alone in the dark. He has his back to all of them, looking out across the trees and the snow.

Emily comes out of Calvin Ed's tent and approaches the Fiddler.

EMILY

Fiddler?

FIDDLER JOHN

What is it?

EMILY

You got no further cause to harm that boy.

FIDDLER JOHN

Is that so?

EMILY

I heard the screaming in there.
I've ridden with you long enough.
The world would just as well stay
the same if, once you get what you
want, we ride outta here. On our
way.

FIDDLER JOHN

Are you coming along then?

Emily stops.

EMILY

Aren't I?

FIDDLER JOHN

You get back in that tent and do
what I told you to. I'll deal with
you later.

Emily slinks away back where she came from.

CHARLEY

Fiddler!

Charley raises an oak barrel with his hands out of the earth and hurls it out into the snow. He cracks it open with his shovel.

Meat and salt pour out of the barrel. Charley covers his nose, sifting through the contents.

And there it is. Pay dirt. Over eighty leather pouches pour out. Charley looks in them. Gold Double Eagles.

FIDDLER JOHN

You got them?

CHARLEY

I got them, alright. We're all set.

FIDDLER JOHN

Good.

(to Red Baker)

Take him inside. We leave at first light.

Red Baker sets his rifle aside and grabs a handful of Edmund's hair. As Red is dragging him screaming into the house, Edmund can see the Fiddler move toward the grave, putting his hands on the white cross.

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Red Baker throws Edmund by the hair into the center of the room. Fiddler John appears silhouetted in the doorway holding the large, wooden cross in his hands.

He moves swiftly over to Edmund and raises the cross, STRIKING HIM OVER THE HEAD AND KNOCKING HIM UNCONSCIOUS.

INT. CHARLEY'S TENT - NIGHT

Red Baker and Charley are perched on their beds, trading shots of whiskey between them.

RED BAKER

I ain't seen him like this in a long time.

CHARLEY

Remember the family in Fort Worth?
The son?

(MORE)

CHARLEY (CONT'D)

We snuck on up into that house.
Fiddler and I did away quick with
the mother and the father. The two
sisters made a wretch of noise.
Fiddler went up to the boy's room,
and the boy was sitting there, wide
awake. Sittin' up. Said he knew
the Fiddler was coming. Knew his
name. Knew my name too.

Red Baker takes another shot of whiskey and lays himself down
across the bed.

RED BAKER

No shit?

CHARLEY

Then it was. Fiddler picked the
boy up from the bed and put his
long arms around him. Set him down
on his knee. I sat there in the
corner. Fiddler made him look up
at the night sky and name the stars
while he took his knife and opened
up the boy's throat. Blood pouring
out over all those expensive
bedsheets.

RED BAKER

My Lord.

CHARLEY

He was a wreck. Hitting the booze
day and night. I guess eventually
we just left it alone. I can't
even remember why we did it.
Wasn't nothing in the house.

RED BAKER

The Fiddler took a shine to this
boy.

CHARLEY

He did.

RED BAKER

Said he was coming with us. Right
up until I showed him that leather
pouch.

INT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - NIGHT

Two bodies lay still in the darkness. Emily is lying on the ground, listening, her eyes wide open. She can hear Charley and Red Baker talking in the tent beside them.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAWN

Darkness. Edmund slowly opens his swollen eyes. He is cowering in the corner. Fiddler John is sitting on the dinner table before him, looking down.

FIDDLER JOHN
Are you awake then?

EDMUND
Huh?

FIDDLER JOHN
I said 'are you awake'?

Fiddler John takes a long pull from a bottle of whiskey.

EDMUND
You're gonna kill me?

FIDDLER JOHN
Yes.

EDMUND
What's stopping you?

Edmund can see the white cross sitting next to the Fiddler on the table. The bottom is splattered with blood from his own head.

FIDDLER JOHN
I've killed many boys. Your age and younger. All different ways too. The way you do it has meaning. You wouldn't think it, but it does. Personal not just to the victim, but personal to all the involved parties. The way it's done. The nature of it. You remember it. The whore asked me to leave you be, and I've been turning it over in my mind. I could. It would have no effect on me, leaving you out here in these woods. No one would know. But it's not about me. It would be a disservice to you.

(MORE)

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
Leaving you here, disgraced and
rotten, festering like a sore on
this mountain. A no good dogshit
thief and liar. It wouldn't be
right to let you go on with this
diseased life. Wouldn't be the
Lord's Way.

INT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - DAWN

Emily is sifting through Calvin Ed's belongings. She lays
her hands on a HUNTING KNIFE in his bag and then climbs into
the bed on top of him and puts the knife up to his throat.

CALVIN ED
Do it.

Emily stops. She can see Calvin Ed's delirious eyes wide
open in the darkness.

CALVIN ED (CONT'D)
I've done all the wrong things,
Momma. Leave me behind.

Emily covers the man's mouth with her hand and STABS HIM IN
THE SIDE OF THE THROAT MULTIPLE TIMES. AGAIN AND AGAIN...

Calvin Ed struggles beneath her as blood rises up from his
mouth over her hand. She takes her hand away and moves off
of him quietly.

EMILY
That's for all the evil shit you
done to me, you sonavabitch.

Emily moves quickly. She finds the Winchester Repeater rifle
near his bed. She takes a box of shells and loads the rifle,
shoving the scope inside her jacket.

No movement outside. Checking that no one heard her, Emily
lifts the back of the tent and rolls herself outside.

EXT. TENTS - DAWN

Crouched, Emily draws the rifle up eye-level and can see the
three tents laid out before her. Calvin Ed's tent in front
of her is black and silent.

In the second tent, Emily can see Red Baker and Charley
asleep, silhouetted by the candlelight. She raises her rifle
up and aims slow and careful at the first of the two shadows.

The shots have to come quick. One then two. She cannot give the other any time.

She stops, thinking. Fiddler John's tent is quiet. She looks around and sees him...

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAWN

Fiddler John has his pistol out.

FIDDLER JOHN
Do you know the Lord's Prayer?

EDMUND
My father knew it.

FIDDLER JOHN
He taught it to you?

Edmund does not respond.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
I wonder what the father would
think of the son now.

Fiddler John drops six bullets into the cylinder of his pistol.

Edmund sees her first. Emily. Through the doorway. She has her rifle aimed directly at the Fiddler.

BAM! Edmund ducks as the rifle blast hits the wall directly above him. The wood splinters and hits the floor. She missed.

Fiddler John barely has time to turn around when...

BAM! The rifle fires again and TAKES OFF A PIECE OF FIDDLER JOHN'S EAR. Blood and cartilage jumping up into the air.

In one quick move, Fiddler John ducks down, flips over the dinner table and crouches behind it. The dinner plates, still on the table and full of food, come crashing onto the floor.

BAM! BAM! BAM! Bullet holes rip through the table inches away from the Fiddler's face.

Fiddler John turns quickly around to find Edmund, but he is already gone.

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund sails into the bedroom on his hands and knees, moving toward the gun case under the bed. He reaches it and puts his hands on the Hawken rifle.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Fiddler John peeks out from the table, pistol in hand, to see Red Baker and Charley running up to the front door. He sits himself up and looks around, but there is no sign of Emily.

CHARLEY

What's going on?

Fiddler John motions the men inside and locks the door behind them. He looks at them and smiles.

FIDDLER JOHN

The whore's got a rifle and she
shot my ear off.

Charley can see the blood pouring down the side of Fiddler John's face.

CHARLEY

Jesus...

FIDDLER JOHN

Now, just listen. This will be
easy enough to clean up.

(to Red Baker)

Red, get the horses saddled up. I
want to be ready to leave within
the hour. Give me your rifle.

(to Charley)

The whore went around the back of
the house. I'll go back around and
take care of it. The boy is hiding
in the bedroom. He's got the
Hawken so he's only got one shot.

CHARLEY

Yes, sir.

INT. FOREST EDGE - THAT MOMENT

Emily moves quickly into the dark trees at the back of the farmhouse. She slings the Winchester over her shoulder, and, taking a firm hold, starts to climb up one of the pines.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Fiddler John has a firm grip on Red Baker's rifle in his hands as he moves off of the front porch to the side of the house. His revolver is shoved hastily into the back of his pants.

He looks over at the hog pen. His eyes scan the bushes at the side of the house. The trapdoor to the cellar. The trees ahead. No movement.

INT. CALVIN ED'S TENT - THAT MOMENT

Red Baker opens Calvin Ed's tent and begins to move inside but pauses. He looks at his friend lying in the bed, bloody and quiet. He exits.

INT. FIDDLER JOHN'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Red Baker is on his hands and knees, loading all of the Orofino Mine pouches into a knapsack to take with them. He starts to gather up all of the Fiddler's belongings at a frantic pace.

INT. FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ten Charley has his Remington New Model Army pistol drawn and moves silently through the wreckage of the dinner table and the scattered food. His eyes move over the empty kitchen.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door to the bedroom BURSTS OPEN and Charley stands in the doorway, pistol drawn, but Edmund is not there. He scans under the beds and the closet. No sign of the boy.

EXT. PINE TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Hidden in the darkness, Emily has perched herself unsteadily on the strongest branch she can find. She is crouched, balanced against the trunk.

In one movement, she finds the long scope in her coat pocket, screws it quickly to the top mount of the rifle, and raises the sight up eye-level, aiming.

She watches Fiddler John through the dirty glass of the scope as he moves across the side of the house. The rifle aimed at his head. She holds her breath.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENT LATER

Charley sees the empty gun case on the bed and moves to the door. There are only a few places the kid could be.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darkness in the bathroom. Charley's footsteps quietly creep up, shadows against the light near the bottom of the door.

INT. HALLWAY - THAT MOMENT

Charley puts his ear to the bathroom door, listening. Silence. After a long moment...

INT. BATHROOM - THAT MOMENT

Charley rips open the door to the bathroom, light pouring in from the front room. Empty. Only the dark, empty hole of the toilet. Charley moves slowly toward it, his footsteps CREAKING on the floorboards.

INT. TOILET - THAT MOMENT

Edmund, crouching in the darkness. His rifle pointed upward at the circular light. Standing in nearly a foot of human waste.

INT. BATHROOM - THAT MOMENT

Charley, tentative, peers over into the toilet. Blackness and shadow. And then...

BAM! THE BRIGHT FLASH OF GUNFIRE THROUGH THE DARKNESS BELOW. The round goes into Ten Charley just over his right eye, shutting his motor off and spraying blood over the bathroom. Without a scream, Charley collapses to his knees, his eyes going black and dead. His head hits the ground and shakes the room.

EXT. PINE TREE - THAT MOMENT

Emily, her finger just about to squeeze the trigger, loses her shot at the sound of the ECHOING GUNFIRE. Through the sight, she watches Fiddler John move quickly back toward the house.

EMILY

Dammit.

INT. BATHROOM - THAT MOMENT

The Hawken rifle rises quickly out of the toilet and Edmund follows, raising himself up on to the bench, gagging from the smell. He looks down at his pants and shoes, dark with filth.

Edmund tosses the rifle aside and falls to the floor near Charley, picking up his Remington pistol. He opens the cylinder and sees that it is fully loaded. Six shots.

Edmund takes a last look at Charley. Looks into his eyes. Charley is staring back at him, his mouth moving but no sound coming out.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund crawls silently out of the bathroom, pistol in one hand and rifle in the other. He pauses in the doorway, looking out.

BAM! BAM! BAM! Sudden rifle fire all around him. Wood in the door frame splintering and flying into the air. He loses his balance, falling on his back into the bedroom. As he shuts the door with his legs, he sees...

FIDDLER JOHN. Outside the far window. Aiming his rifle down the long hallway at Edmund...

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund slams the door shut with his legs and rolls out of the way just as RIFLE FIRE SPRAYS THE BOTTOM HALF OF THE DOOR.

EXT. FAR WINDOW - THAT MOMENT

Fiddler John, raising the rifle and moving away from the window, stops cold. He looks again down the long hall...

A hand in the bathroom doorway. Motionless. Charley is dead.

EXT. HITCHING POST - MOMENTS LATER

Red Baker is almost finished loading up the pack saddles on the four horses when Fiddler John comes around the corner.

RED BAKER
Calvin Ed's dead.

This does not phase Fiddler John in the slightest. He tosses the empty rifle at Red and pulls out the pistol from the back of his pants.

FIDDLER JOHN
I need your Colt and rounds for the
Remington. Quick.

Red Baker gives him his pistol and a handful of cartridges.

FIDDLER JOHN (CONT'D)
That it?

RED BAKER
Yeah.

FIDDLER JOHN
We'll take 'em all, but we only
need saddles and stirrups ready for
two.

Red watches as Fiddler John moves back toward the house. Holding the Colt under his arm, Fiddler loads up the Remington and shoves the remaining bullets into his coat pocket, A FEW SLIPPING FROM HIS GRIP AND HITTING THE GROUND BELOW.

INT. FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fiddler John moves silently through the front doorway like a shadow, two pistols drawn. The front room is empty.

FIDDLER JOHN
(calling out)
Edmund! Where are you gonna go,
boy? This is Death that's comin'
for you!

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund is crouched in the corner of the room, listening.

FIDDLER JOHN (O.S.)
You can't run from it!

He has no clever ideas left. Panicked, he turns over the first bed, standing the mattress on it's long side. Gripping the edge, he hides behind it, his other hand on Charley's Remington. He watches the bedroom door.

EXT. HITCHING POST - MOMENTS LATER

Red Baker is listening as well, breaking open a new revolver. He turns his eyes to the forest's edge. Darkness beyond the trees.

EXT. PINE TREE - THAT MOMENT

Emily, hidden, holds her breath, her thumb bringing back the hammer.

THROUGH THE SIGHT: Red Baker at the hitching post.

She lets out a long breath and makes the adjustment, squeezing the trigger...

EXT. HITCHING POST - THAT MOMENT

Red Baker, dropping in the first bullet, FREEZES at the sound of ROCKETING RIFLE FIRE through the clearing...

A LOUD SPLASH as the bullet rips through the pig trough just a few feet away from Red and water LEAPS UP INTO THE AIR.

RED BAKER

Oh Hell...

Without even a second to duck, ANOTHER SHOT HITS RED IN THE CHEST AND COLLAPSES HIM TO THE GROUND, HIS EYES WIDE.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Fiddler John, checking the empty kitchen, lifts his head at the sound of the gunfire.

EXT. TREES - THAT MOMENT

A cloud of ghostly white rifle smoke rising over the tops of the pine trees and disappearing.

EXT. PINE TREE - THAT MOMENT

Emily, shrouded by the white smoke, raises the weapon away and lets out a quick breath.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

A worried look crosses Fiddler John's face, recognizing the snap and hiss of the rifle fire even from a distance. It was the Winchester that Emily was holding. And it was only two shots. No way to tell how many more she might have.

He calls out to the boy, lying through his teeth.

FIDDLER JOHN

Now that's two pulls from the
Winchester Repeater, Edmund. Not
too far away neither. There's a
strong shot your girl didn't
survive it, not with Red at the
trigger. Just you and me now.
There's no more help comin'...

Fiddler John pulls open the trapdoor and peers into the empty basement.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund waits, breathless. He's lost his only ally.

The creaking of FOOTSTEPS ON THE WOODEN FLOOR. He readies himself, cocking his pistol. The closed bedroom door. The dark room. Each moment draws itself out longer and longer.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Gripping the rifle at her side, Emily travels quickly and quietly from the trees to the side of the house.

EXT. HITCHING POST - THAT MOMENT

She moves carefully to the post to see if Red Baker survived the gunshot.

But he's NOT THERE. She stops. An empty spot in the snow colored with blood and dirt. Tracks. No sign of Red Baker.

Emily is caught off guard. She kneels down, cocking the rifle.

Now the horses are uneasy. Grunting and whimpering. Emily turns to see why...

Wolves at the edge of the clearing.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fiddler John kicks in the bedroom door. He spots Edmund behind the mattress in an instant and ducks back into the hallway just as...

BAM! BAM! Edmund fires twice into the empty doorway, hitting the wall where the Fiddler was standing only a second before.

Silence. Edmund stays crouched, watching the open doorway. Ready.

INT. BATHROOM - THAT MOMENT

Fiddler John escapes into the dark and quickly faces the wooden wall that joins the bedroom to the bathroom. He can picture the layout of the bedroom in his mind and he sidesteps, one at a time, measuring out where Edmund might be crouched in the next room.

He aims both pistols a foot apart at the wall.

INT. BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Edmund, still hunkered down, keeps his gaze intent on the doorway.

BAM! BAM! BAM! Gunshots out of nowhere from the opposite wall.

Edmund falls to the ground, two bullets hitting the wall behind him and one hitting him square in the shoulder.

Fiddler John comes storming into the room, moving around the mattress as both men UNLOAD THEIR WEAPONS.

A TORNADO OF GUNFIRE. But there are no fancy movements or dodging of bullets. There is no poetry to it. It is clumsy and brutal. They stand feet apart and fire, missing and hitting the wall or the floor...

CHAOS...SMOKE AND FIRE IN THE ROOM...

Fiddler John's Remington tears into Edmund's thigh...

Edmund, with his last bullet, FIRES AND HITS THE FIDDLER IN THE CHEST, SPINNING HIM AROUND AS HE COLLAPSES.

EXT. HITCHING POST - THAT MOMENT

Emily is frozen listening to the sound of the gunfire. Her eye catches a glimmer on the ground in the bloody snow where Red fell. His PISTOL.

She eyes the outside cellar door.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund manages to pull himself up off of the floor. Bloody, he kneels over the Fiddler with a firm grip on his weapon. Fiddler John slowly opens his eyes and sees the barrel of a gun pointed directly at him, HIS BREATH LEAVING HIS LUNGS...

CLICK. CLICK. Edmund pulls the trigger at the man on the ground. Fiddler winces, cowering. It is a dry fire. An empty revolver.

Wounded and bloody, Edmund crawls on all fours out of the room.

BAM! A shot from Fiddler John's gun misses just above Edmund as he disappears from the doorway

Fiddler John, blood running down the front of his shirt, picks himself up.

INT. FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund is pulling himself along the floor, using the last of his energy, looking frantically around the room. Then he sees it...

A BULLET. No...A COLLECTION OF BULLETS. Scattered in the front doorway.

INT. HALLWAY - THAT MOMENT

Fiddler John, looking for the boy, pulls himself slowly along the wall, leaving a long smear of blood behind him.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - THAT MOMENT

Edmund on his knees in the front doorway. Trying to steady his hand long enough to fit a bullet into the cylinder of Charley's Remington.

The bullet slides into the first chamber. A perfect fit...

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Fiddler John spots Edmund in the doorway. He lifts up his pistol. Edmund, his back to the Fiddler, closes the cylinder of the revolver and cocks the gun...

BAM! FIDDLER JOHN SHOOTS EDMUND IN THE BACK. Edmund collapses outside, falling like a wet sack into the snow.

Fiddler John relaxes his weapon as a figure appears behind him from the open cellar trapdoor.

Suddenly, A PISTOL COCK, and he can feel cold metal against the back of his head.

FIDDLER JOHN
Emily, my sweet...

Fiddler John smiles. Emily has Red Baker's Colt fixed on him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Edmund is on the ground, breathing heavily in the snow. He has given up. Shot three times.

HE DOES NOT SEE: Fiddler John and Emily behind him through the doorway. Motionless.

FIDDLER JOHN
Can't help but wonder...

BAM! He can not even finish his sentence as EMILY'S PISTOL FIRE RIPS THROUGH HIS HEAD AND COLLAPSES HIM TO THE FLOOR...

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Emily draws back the gun, a thick cloud of gray smoke filling the room. She breathes it in, her eyes still fixed on the space where Fiddler's head used to be. It is a long moment...

A black pool of blood begins to silently grow beneath the man on the ground, creeping across the wood flooring.

Emily watches the blood and then moves, taking extra care as she heads out of the house not to step in the dark puddle beneath her.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Emily checks her gun. An empty chamber. She holsters her weapon and moves to Edmund. He is struggling with his breath, twisted up on the ground.

EMILY
Where's Charley?
(He does not hear her)
Where's Charley, Edmund?

EDMUND
(turning)
Shot.

EMILY
Dead?

Edmund gives a slight nod of his head.

EMILY (CONT'D)
That's it then. Where are you hit?

She unbuttons his coat quickly. No time to linger.

EDMUND
Baker.

EMILY
(uneasy look)
I shot Baker.

Edmund winces as the coat opens over his wounds. Emily looks the boy over. He starts to cough, and she can see that he is in trouble. The snow beneath him is a deep red.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(shaken)
C.E. is dead. Ain't no one left
but us two.

The slightest smile finds its way onto Edmund's face.

EDMUND
We got 'em all, you and me.

HOG PEN

The sound of SQUEALING from the hog pen. A pack of gray wolves at the side of the house. They have smelled blood and seized the moment, collapsing onto the sick and paralyzed animals.

EMILY

Unbuttoning Edmund's shirt.

EMILY

The pain is somethin' fierce, ain't it? Feels like the air's just comin' out of you. But it's a false notion. You ain't hurt that bad.

She wipes her face hard with the side of her coat sleeve. His blood smearing across her cheek.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Bad news is that we've got to move you. Hold on.

Emily works quick, tearing little pieces off the bottom of her shirt and tying them around Edmund's wounds, trying to put some pressure on the bleeding.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(nervous)

Ready then?

Emily tries to lift Edmund up by the shoulders but he lets out a loud WAIL.

EDMUND

No, no.

EMILY

We have to move you.

EDMUND

No. I'm staying.

EMILY

No arguing. There ain't no time.

EDMUND

No. No time.

Emily stops. She can see the look in his eyes. He knows the condition he is in just as well as she does.

CALVIN ED'S TENT

A low breathing inside the dark tent.

A set of eyes watching Emily's back as she kneels beside Edmund only a few yards away.

EMILY

Her eyes move from Edmund and are now following the path of a wolf as it moves from the hog pen to the front porch and then inside the house. They are closing in.

Her window for a clean departure is closing every moment.

INT. FRONT ROOM - THAT MOMENT

The silhouette of a wolf in the doorway. It's long shadow moving across Fiddler John's dead body.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

No more time. Emily picks up the revolver in Edmund's hand.

EMILY

Alright.

She cracks it open. One bullet.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'll bring back help. It's less than a day's travel to Stevens at a gallop. There will be a doctor there.

(beat)

Can you make it until I get back?

EDMUND

Ain't no good come of it...what I've done in this place.

EMILY

Hold still.

EDMUND

It's a mess.

EMILY

Don't you be sorry for what you done here.

(urgently)

Now can you make it?

Edmund nods his head. She hands him the pistol.

EDMUND

I'll be here.

EMILY

Good.

She tries to keep her gaze on Edmund as the wolf inside the house pounces at the body lying on the floor.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You'll see me round that forest
edge after the next nightfall. You
keep your eyes intent there Edmund.

EDMUND

I will.

Without taking a second look, she moves away, walking quickly to the horses.

EXT. HOG PEN - THAT MOMENT

The wolves inside the hog pen. Most of the hogs cannot move anymore, but the ones that can are running for their lives.

A slaughter. Fangs cutting into their skin. Blood.

EXT. HITCHING POST - THAT MOMENT

Emily unties Fiddler John's horse and leads it away from the post. She checks in the bags. Gold.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund can hear a HORSE WHINNY and HOOVES IN THE SNOW. He looks up to see Emily on horseback moving away from the farm. The horse is loaded with heavy saddle bags and has a difficult time moving very fast.

EMILY

In an involuntary moment, Emily stops the horse near the camp and looks back at Edmund. He lay helpless on the ground, watching her as she leaves the clearing.

She feels a sudden compulsion to turn around and make her way back, but as she grabs the reigns, she sees Edmund give her the slightest nod, and it is all she needs. She pushes the horse forward.

EDMUND

Watching her ride, but she no longer looks back. Emily is riding hard across the front yard toward the wheat field. She has her gaze intent on the forest ahead.

HOG PEN

A lone wolf finds his way out of the pen and sets his sights on the half-dead boy limp in the bloody snow. A GROWL...

EDMUND

He sees the wolf now. Approaching him without any notion of fear or hesitation. In only a moment, the wolf is merely feet away.

CALVIN ED'S TENT

A long rifle, low and hidden, trained on Emily as she rides away.

EDMUND

Tightens his grip on the pistol and raises it, pointing it up at the wolf just ahead of him. A stand off...

He PULLS BACK THE HAMMER...

CALVIN ED'S TENT

Red Baker COCKS HIS RIFLE...

EDMUND

Stops. A sound from one of the tents...

And then Edmund sees him. Red Baker. Just beyond the wolf in the closest tent. Pointing a long rifle at Emily.

Edmund aims, but the wolf is right in his eyeline.

EDMUND
(to himself)
Move...

In one last motion, Edmund FALLS ONTO HIS SIDE, SETS HIS AIM PASSED THE WOLF ONTO RED BAKER, AND SQUEEZES THE TRIGGER...

BAM! Red Baker takes a bullet straight through the side of his throat and falls, a spray of blood hitting the flap of the tent.

Edmund collapses in exhaustion, the pistol falling from his hand.

EMILY

Stops her horse at the edge of the clearing as the rippling sound of GUNFIRE rushes by her. Turning, she sees, in the distance, Edmund on the ground. No movement.

The boy shot himself. She closes her eyes.

EDMUND

Twisted up on the ground. The cold wind rushing over him as he tries in vain to catch his breath.

In the distance he can hear the SOFT GALLOP OF A HORSE fading away. He turns his eyes up just in time to see Emily disappear into the darkness of the treeline.

A peacefulness moves through him, but it does not last...

A SNARL. The wolf, scared off momentarily by the pistol fire, is now only several yards away. It will not be deterred.

Edmund meets the gaze of the animal, knowing that it will never get the better of him. He turns his eyes up to the white sky above.

Snow falling. He watches his last frozen breaths as they evaporate up into the emptiness, each one more labored than the last, until they cease...

And the sound of the wind through the forest trees so loud in his ears that he can hardly hear the low growl and the steady rhythm of paws approaching in the snow.

FADE OUT.