

RECKONING

Written by

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RIDER ONE
D'you hear that?

The second man spits, indicates a direction.

RIDER TWO
Came from that way.

5 **EXT. CABIN CLEARING**

5

The two men ride into the clearing. Brows furrow at the sight of the cabin.

RIDER ONE
You know this was here?

RIDER TWO
Nope.

Rider One dismounts. Approaches the door. A curious look.

RIDER ONE
Everything okay in there?

Both men stare at the empty doorway.

RIDER ONE (CONT'D)
Hello..?

Into the doorway steps the man -- WHITE MASK now on his face.

The men stare, slack-jawed. Rider One steps back.

RIDER ONE (CONT'D)
Ghost? I thought you were...

RIDER TWO
YA!

Rider One whirls, sees his counterpart vanish.

He spins back, drops to his knees. Two-fingers his pistol from its holster, tosses it to the ground. Hands raised.

GHOST saunters forward. Stoops, picks up the pistol with his left hand.

GHOST
You thought I was what?

RIDER ONE
Dead.

We pull back to see Rose, COLT CATTLEMAN pistol in hand.

VOICE (O.S.)

By gum!

Rose spins at the sound of the voice. A man approaches. Denim overalls, straw hat. Weathered face. This is JACOB COLWELL (56). Burlap bag slung over his shoulder.

JACOB

As I live and breath, I never seen
no girl shoot like you!

ROSE

Howdy, Mr. Miller.

JACOB

Sometimes the Misses worries bout
you out here with the panthers. But
I tell her you're like a real life
David with his sling. Just make
that a six-shootin sling.

ROSE

And the good news is...

Rose aims back at a remaining can.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I already killed my giant.

BAM-! The can flies from the fence.

JACOB

Yes ma'am you did. But remember
those Philistines kepta comin back
after David. It's never just about
one giant.

Jacob turns to leave. Stops, swivels back.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Almost forgot, postmaster said you
got a letter. Said it's been there
over a week.

ROSE

A letter?

Rose turns and RUSHES for the cabin entrance.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mr. Miller!

ADDIE

And guess what? I even stopped a robbery with it once.

ROSE

Really?

ADDIE

Gunslinger came through town, tried to rob the general store. Everyone was lily-livered, and I knew I couldn't out-draw him.

ROSE

What'd you do?

ADDIE

I fooled him with a riddle.

ROSE

What riddle?

Addie laughs as she places the gun back in the drawer.

ADDIE

I don't even remember! But it distracted him long enough for me to pull my gun.

A man's voice echos from downstairs.

VOICE (O.S.)

Addie--?

Addie frowns at the sound of the voice.

ADDIE

Sounds like doc...Come on dear.

13

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

13

Addie and Rose proceed down the stairs. Inside stands a man. Tall, square jawed. This is DOC HOWELL (48).

DOC HOWELL

Afternoon. Door was open so--

ADDIE

--Of course Doc. What do you need?

DOC HOWELL

I heard Rose was here, and well...

Doc Howell unfurls a WANTED POSTER.

DOC HOWELL (CONT'D)
 Needed to warn you Rose.

We follow Rose's gaze to the poster. On it, the drawing of a masked man. The name reads: GHOST.

Rose's eyes widen.

ROSE
 No, that can't be true.

DOC HOWELL
 Man in a mask. Southpaw. Shot
 someone near Bowmantown.

Rose stares blankly. Then pushes past Doc Howell and RUNS out the door. The U.S. Cavalry letter flutters to the floor.

ADDIE
 Rose--!

Addie wears a forlorn look - Watches from the doorway.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
 She's gotta be terrified.

DOC HOWELL
 Nobody goes her way without passin
 through here first.

ADDIE
 We need a sheriff.
 (beat)
 Folks are sayin that should be you.

DOC HOWELL
 Doc and sheriff don't mix. But the
 right man'll show up.

ADDIE
 How do you know?

DOC HOWELL
 Because I've been askin God to send
 him.

Rose charges down the trail. Doesn't let up. Runs by the town's small church, nestled in the trees.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Mama..?

GHOST jumps out behind the glass! Rose SCREAMS.

21 **INT. CABIN - DAY**

21

Rose BOLTS UPRIGHT at the desk. A mix of terror and grogginess on her face. Sunlight streams in from the window where we saw just Ghost.

The morning dawns on Rose. She slumps back into the chair, glances at the photo of her mother. Sadness in her eyes.

CUT TO:

22 **EXT. FOREST - DAY**

22

Rose hunches low in a bed of ferns. Gun in hand. A worn, cotton cape. Her breath clouds in the brisk air.

A distant warning call from a bluejay.

Rose spots something: A figure in trenchcoat moves in and out, through the trees. The figure looks at Rose -- A ghostly white mask his face.

Rose lifts her gun, pulls back the hammer and BAM-! The figure disappears. Reappears from behind another tree. She shoots again. Rose continues to burn shots.

Out of nowhere, a gloved HAND! The hand SHOVES her gun down. Rose looks up to see a tall figure tower over her.

ROSE

No--!

Rose reacts. Kicks and punches. The figure yanks the pistol from her. Rose falls, rolls over in fright.

A tall man towers over her. African-American. Hefts a double-barrel shot gun. The unmistakable crossed swords of the US Cavalry on his hat. This is PRIVATE LYLE MATHIS (43).

LYLE

You Rose Lawson?

Rose takes a moment to catch her thoughts and sanity.

LYLE (CONT'D)

I'm with the Cavalry. Private Lyle Matthis.

ROSE
You don't look like Cavalry.

LYLE
What're you doin out here? Aren't
you a little young to be shootin?

ROSE
Ain't you too old for private?

Lyle smirks at her strong personality.

LYLE
Seems like I'm too dark for
sergeant.
(helps her to her feet)
Call me Lyle. Heard y'all have
something for us?

ROSE
This way.

22aA **EXT. STREAM - DAY** 22aA

Rose leads Lyle along a stream through the forest.

22A **EXT. ROSE CABIN - DAY** 22A

Rose and Lyle walk across the porch of the cabin.

Lyle stops, stares out at a beautiful pasture and stream in
front of the home.

Rose looks back.

ROSE
What?

LYLE
Just a perfect place. Where're your
folks?

ROSE
Dead. This way.

Lyle raises an eyebrow, follows Rose towards a barn.

23 **EXT. BARN - DAY** 23

Rose and Lyle enter a barn. A goat sticks his head out from a
stall to baa his welcome.

ROSE
That's Buster.

LYLE
Hey Buster.

24 **INT. CHICKEN COOP - SAME**

24

Light beams in through cracked side boards. It's a small space. Nesting boxes for six hens.

Rose pulls hay from a box. Underneath, a canvas bag. Lyle reaches in, opens the bag: Gold bars.

LYLE
Damnation. Guess your chickens got that magical goose beat.

Rose looks away. Fidgets. Kicks dirt.

LYLE (CONT'D)
You know, Aesop? The goose that... forget it.

ROSE
That laid the golden eggs. You hungry?

LYLE
No, best be gettin back.

ROSE
How bout coffee? I make a tasty cup.

Lyle notices Rose's demeanor. He gets it.

LYLE
Coffee sounds delightful.

Lyle shoves the straw back in place.

LYLE (CONT'D)
You chose a good spot, we'll leave it here for now.

25 **INT. CABIN ENTRANCE - DAY**

25

Rose and Lyle enter the small kitchen. Rose heads for the stove.

*
*
*

ROSE
Coffee comin up!

*
*

Lyle steps from the kitchen into the main cabin.

26 **INT. CABIN - DAY**

26 *

Lyle examines the living quarters.

ROSE (O.S.)
Want some jerky?

LYLE
Oh I never refuse jerky.

Rose moves to the wooden chest on the floor.

ROSE
You can sit down.

Lyle nods in acknowledgement. Takes a seat. Rose brings the meat to the table. Takes a seat across from Lyle.

LYLE
Nice place.

ROSE
My daddy built it.

LYLE
They didn't tell me anything, cept
"Go get the gold." But you're out
here nervous as a squirrel. No
parents.
(beat)
What's the situation?

ROSE
I wanna go with you in the mornin.

LYLE
With me? Why?

ROSE
Coffee's ready.

Rose stands, moves into the other room.

LYLE
Have anything to do with the WANTED
posters I've been seein?

Rose comes back, pours two steaming cups. Sits down, but doesn't touch her coffee. Lyle picks his up, takes a sip.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Ariosa! That's what Texans call it.

ROSE

You from there?

LYLE

Spent a time with the 10th Cavalry
at Fort Davis.

ROSE

The man on the wanted posters stole
your gold.

LYLE

So I take it he knows you have it.
(off her nod)
Who is he?

ROSE

Lucent Taylor. He knew my Pa.

Rose stands from the table, moves over to the desk. Stares at the picture of her mother.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Union soldiers killed his family
during the war. After that he
became Ghost.

LYLE

How does it involve you?

ROSE

Pa tried to stop him. Was gonna
turn him in, and...

Rose stops. She's silent.

LYLE

I'm sorry.

She slides the desk drawer open. Lifts a SILVER and BLACK COLT PISTOL for Lyle to see.

ROSE

He came after me too. But I shot
him. Took his gun and the gold.

LYLE

You shot him?

28D **INT. BEDROOM**

28D

Addie RUSHES into the bedroom. Ghost leaps in behind. Grabs Addie, SHOVES her onto the bed. Addie hits hard, looks up, terror filled eyes. Ghost cowers above her.

GHOST

Rose Lawson, where is she?

ADDIE

I don't know her.

Ghost SLAPS Addie across the face.

A voice sounds from behind.

DOC HOWELL (O.S.)

Leave her alone.

Doc Howell stands in the door, rifle in hand.

In a BLUR Ghost draws, aims back and FIRES. Knocks Doc Howell out onto the street.

Ghost turns back, palms the gun. STRIKES Addie across the face.

GHOST

WHERE IS SHE--!

CUT TO:

29 **EXT. CABIN - TWILIGHT**

29

Lyle and Rose are on the front porch. Lyle leans against a post, admires the property.

LYLE

I don't think goin with me's the answer.

Rose doesn't respond. Martha clucks in the yard.

FOOT STEPS. Running. They turn to see a young boy. He runs from the direction of town. He stops, out of breath.

BOY

Ghost! He's in town. Shot Doc Howell and Miss Crain!

ROSE

NO--!

The boy turns, disappears down the trail.

LYLE
There a sheriff in town?

ROSE
No.

Rose is somewhere else. Somber.

LYLE
We need to get packed.

ROSE
No. You're right. If I leave more
people will die.

Rose turns to face Lyle. A sober reality in her eyes.

ROSE (CONT'D)
I have to stop him.

Lyle takes pause. Studies her.

LYLE
Okay.
(beat)
Then we do it here. And we need to
get ready.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Lyle dumps corn on the front porch.

Rose grabs Martha. Carts her off to the chicken coop.

Lyle strings twine from the house to a pile of cans.

Rose stacks wood piles in the yard.

They light multiple fires around the outside of the cabin.

END MONTAGE

Rose takes position. Lyle moves over to a window. Watches.
Pivots and moves to another.

ROSE
Never thought this would happen
again.

LYLE
Evil doesn't tuck and run just
because you hit it once. It
regroups, comes back at you harder.

ROSE
Then what do you do?

LYLE
You realize everything in life has
prepared you for right now.

Rose frowns her unspoken thoughts.

LYLE (CONT'D)
What'd David say when King Saul
didn't think he could fight the
giant?

ROSE
Told him about the lion and the
bear.

LYLE
It was never about the lion or the
bear. No coincidence David was good
with a sling neither.
(beat)
God knew a giant was comin, and
David needed to get ready.

31 **EXT. FOREST - TWILIGHT** 31

CLOSE UP on boots walking down the forest trail.

32 **EXT. LITTLE CATALOCHEE - NIGHT** 32

Doc Howell groans. Comes to. Leans up from the dirt. His eyes
widen at the sight of Addie unconscious.

He groans up from the ground. Makes his way to Addie's side.
Checks her pulse.

DOC HOWELL
Okay. Stay with me.

Lyle motions for her to keep back. He moves closer. One foot in front of the other. Slow, quiet steps.

Rose can't help herself, she follows.

Lyle is a few feet away when Ghost SITS UPRIGHT. Gun pointed, BAM-!

The blow knocks Lyle off his feet.

Rose SCREAMS.

ROSE

No--!

She turns, runs.

Ghost takes aim, squeezes the trigger. Rose trips, goes SAILING. Hits the ground just as **ZING**, the bullet flies overhead.

She jumps up, sprints for the corner.

BAM-! Another shot. Wood splinters on the side of the cabin as Rose darts out of sight.

45 **EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY** 45

The trees are a blur. Rose's feet pound the earth. Her legs piston her down the trail towards town.

46 **EXT. LITTLE CATALOCHEE - DAY** 46

Rose sprints out onto the main road.

Nobody is in sight.

She runs for the General Store.

ROSE

Addie--!

47 **INT. ADDIES BEDROOM - SAME** 47

Doc Howell sits on the bed next to Addie. The right sleeve of Doc's shirt is cut off. Shoulder wrapped, stained red.

He lifts a wet cloth from Addie's head. Dark bruising covers her face.

ROSE (O.S.)
Addie--?

Doc Howell looks up, hope glimmers in his eyes.

DOC HOWELL
Up here Rose!

47A **INT. FOYER - SAME** 47A

Rose charges for the stairs.

47B **INT. ADDIE'S BEDROOM** 47B

Rose burst into the room, her eyes widen at the sight in front of her.

DOC HOWELL
Rose, I was so worried.

ROSE
Is she okay?

DOC HOWELL
Almost lost her, but she's stable.
Where's the man from the Cavalry?

ROSE
Ghost shot him!

DOC HOWELL
Where is he now?

ROSE
I don't know.

Then it comes, the relentless cry of vengeance from outside:

GHOST (O.S.)
ROSE LAWSON--!

Rose stiffens. Doc moves to the window.

DOC'S POV:

Ghost stands outside the home. Stairs up at the window.

Doc slumps back to the bed.

DOC HOWELL
He's right outside.

Doc hefts his rifle from the floor.

DOC HOWELL (CONT'D)
I'll distract him. You run out the
back, and get over the mountain.

ROSE
No...I can't.
(beat)
This is my fight.

GHOST (O.S.)
ROSE!

DOC HOWELL
He will kill you.

ROSE
God is bigger than him. Whatever
happens, I'm not gonna run.

Doc Howell pauses, studies her resolve.

DOC HOWELL
(holds out the rifle)
Take it. Don't give him a chance.

ROSE
I don't know a rifle.

Rose glances down at Addie -- Her face brightens. She hurries
around the bed, yanks open the drawer.

There, loaded and ready is the PEACEMAKER.

50 **EXT. LITTLE CATALOOCHEE - DAY**

50

Ghost stands on the main street of town. He turns at the
sound of foot steps behind him.

Rose approaches, EMPTY-HANDED. She moves down the path.

GHOST
There she is. The girl who thought
she killed Ghost.

ROSE
I never wanted to kill nobody.

GHOST
Just an innocent girl in a world of
evil men.

Rose takes a few steps closer.

ROSE
Men don't have to choose evil.

Ghost stares at Rose for a moment in silence.

GHOST
It chooses some of us.

ROSE
This is God's fight, and you're on
the wrong side of it.

Spins up the black and silver COLT PISTOL from the cabin.

GHOST
That hasn't seemed to hinder me
before now.

Ghost points the pistol at Rose. Pulls back the hammer.

GHOST (CONT'D)
There is one lingering item before
I send you to see your parents.
(beat)
Where's my gold?

ROSE
You found the gun but not the gold?

BAM-! Ghost FIRES.

The ground EXPLODES inches from Rose's feet.

GHOST
WHERE IS IT--!

Rose maintains a controlled demeanor. She steps forward. We see the Peacemaker tucked in her belt behind her.

ROSE
Sometimes it's not a goose, but a
chicken that lays the golden egg.

Ghost pauses. Rose slips her hand back, GRIPS the handle of the pistol. Pulls back the hammer.

GHOST
Of course... you hid it in the
chicken coop.

Rose DRAWS and FIRES -- The bullet HITS Ghost's hand.

His pistol SPINS to the street.

Ghost wrings his hand, reaches with his right, pulls another gun.

Rose's eyes widen.

Ghost points the gun and...

WHUMP-!

Ghost ARCHES back, teeters and PLUMMETS face down to the ground. WHAM!

Behind him, rifle butt raised for the next blow, stands Lyle.

ROSE

Lyle-!

Rose rushes for him.

Lyle drops the rifle, crumbles to his knees.

A warm smile as Rose hugs his neck. She casts a worried look at his blood-stained shirt.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

LYLE

There a doctor in this town?

DOC HOWELL (O.S.)

Nice shooting Rose!

Doc Howell emerges from the general store, coiled rope in hand.

ROSE

Doc, he needs you!

Doc Howell moves close, Lyle indicates the rope.

LYLE

Lemme see that.

Lyle stands, takes the rope.

ROSE

No, you're hurt!

LYLE

I'm okay.

LYLE

Well Miss Lawson. It's good to see you in town. Seen any outlaws around these parts?

ROSE

Not a one, sheriff.

LYLE

How about some coffee? I make a tasty cup.

ROSE

I brought a picnic. Care to join?

Lyle glances down to Addie, who wears a delightful smile.

ADDIE

I think a picnic would be wonderful.

ROSE

I know just the spot.

54

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

54

The three sit and dine adjacent to a meandering meadow stream.

FADE TO BLACK