

GUNS AND GRACE

By Odin Ozdil

FADE IN:

INT. FIRST NATIONAL BANK - MORNING

SUPER: HELENA, MONTANA TERRITORY, 1868

A small, musty branch office. Keeping watch at the door with a revolver drawn is JACK VANCE (40), tall and lean, piercing eyes, chiseled cheekbones. His pistol is pointed at --

BANK TELLER, who cowers on the floor next to the counter.

Emptying gold coins from the safe is LEFTY VANCE (30), wild eyes, giddy.

The bank teller peeks at a HIDDEN GUN tucked under the counter. He glances up to see Jack looking out the window. Lefty, distracted, grins into the bulging bag of coins.

The teller takes the opportunity to grab the gun --

BAM!

Without turning his head to look, Jack, aiming backwards over his shoulder, blasts the teller square between the eyes.

REVEAL: Jack was simultaneously looking outside while keeping an eye on the teller by the REFLECTION in the window.

LEFTY

Whoa! Thanks, Brother.

JACK

(stern)

A child you are, unawares.

Lefty lowers his eyes, embarrassed. He grabs the bag and follows Jack out.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Jack's GANG OF EIGHT MEN wait outside on horseback. Scars and sneers, not a friendly bunch. Jack and Lefty hop on their horses. The gang parts for the brothers to ride through and lead them out of town.

EXT. HILLS - DAY

The FOG is thick. It swirls around and makes anything short of ten feet an aberration. Jack rides in front, the saddlebag of coins jingles with each step.

Jack descends to the bottom of a hill.

LEFTY
I can't see nothin'.

JACK
Stay close.

The fog PARTIALLY CLEARS and Jack comes face-to-face with --

U.S. MARSHAL CHESTER SAMPSON (40s), a stoic, no-nonsense bear of a man with SIX LAWYERS behind him on horses.

LEFTY
It's the marshal!

Both sides, quickly overcoming the shock of running into the other, draw their weapons and FIRE. Everyone scrambles to find cover behind trees and rocks.

Jack is SHOT in his left arm and falls off his horse.

LEFTY
Brother!

Jack, cut off from Lefty and the gang, runs into the thicket.

Chester dismounts, gun drawn, growls at his men.

CHESTER
I'll get Jack. You get the rest.

As the dense fog clears, Jack's men find themselves at an overall advantage, standing uphill from Chester's men.

Both sides take cover positions and continue shooting.

EXT. THICKET - SAME TIME

The chase between Jack and Chester is on.

Panting. The snapping of tree branches. A crow caws.

The fog is thick. Neither man knows where the other is. They each strain to hear any clues as they tread cautiously.

INTERCUT THICKET/HILLS

The gunfight between the groups of men soon reveals a victor. A few of Jack's men go down, but ultimately, all the marshals are killed and the gang stands at Lefty and five men strong.

THICKET

The fog DISSIPATES -- Chester finds himself standing right on the edge of a STEEP CLIFF, one step away from death. He breathes a sigh of relief at the close call.

Jack shoots out of the woods at full speed. Chester turns just in time to see him coming --

CHESTER

Christ.

Jack PLOWS into Chester, sends him flying over the edge.

Chester smashes into the ground, 20 feet below.

Jack smiles. With a grunt, he hobbles off, nursing his arm.

EXT. BOTTOM OF RAVINE - SAME TIME

Chester lays on the dirt. His eyes pop open, furious.

EXT. MONTANA PRAIRIE - DAY

The golden sun shimmers on a wheat field nearly ripe for harvest. Nestled in the picturesque hills is a SMALL CABIN.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

GRACE LEWIS (25), too properly dressed to match the very modest home, sits upright and ladylike at the table. She reads over the book, "LADIES GUIDE TO HEALTH AND DISEASE." The page is turned to the chapter on pregnancy, paired with a drawing of a woman in labor.

She scrunches her nose, not particularly thrilled about the passage she reads. Her gaze drifts out the window into the distance where she can make out the outline of a man laboring. She gets up to get a better look at him. She has a slightly visible BABY BUMP.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - CONTINUOUS

BEN LEWIS (30), rugged, good-natured, uses the tip of a KNIFE WITH BLACKFOOT MARKINGS to examine a piece of grain.

A LOUD CAW draws his attention to the sky. His gaze follows a CROW in mid-flight to the edge of the field where stands --

CRAZY CROW (25), a Blackfoot woman with DEEP SCARS across her face. In one arm she carries a BUNDLE OF BEAVER PELTS, in the other, she cradles a STRAW BABY DOLL.

Crazy Crow eyes the knife in Ben's hand, respectfully nods. She lays down the pelts.

Ben walks over and picks up the pelts. He is impressed by the quality.

Crazy Crow glances at the CABIN in the distance.

INTERCUT CABIN/FIELD

Grace disapprovingly looks out towards Ben and Crazy Crow.

Ben motions towards the cabin.

BEN
Will you come in?

Crazy Crow can make out Grace in the window.

She turns around and walks away, back into the prairie.

BEN
Guess not.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Grace sews at the kitchen table. She attaches an extra pocket to a LEATHER FIELD BAG that has been previously patched up.

The front door opens. Ben wearily drops the pelts on the floor. He immediately brightens up when he sees Grace working on the bag.

BEN
You fixed the bag!

He walks over to get a closer look.

BEN
And you added a pocket.

Grace slips in a canteen.

GRACE
This way it won't be banging up
against your leg all the time.

BEN
It does do that. Thank you.

He goes in for a hug. Grace gets a whiff of him, makes a face.

GRACE
I'll draw a bath.

Ben sniffs himself and shrugs. Grace checks out the pelts.

GRACE
I don't like it when that Crazy
Crow comes around.

BEN
She ain't Crow, she's Blackfoot.

GRACE
That's what everyone in town calls
her.

BEN
Don't make it right.

GRACE
What isn't right is she wanders
about by herself carrying that
straw doll. What kind of proper
woman does that?

Grace examines the pelts.

GRACE
Gotta admit, another fine batch.

BEN
They always are.

GRACE
She sells 'em in town, but for you
they're free.

BEN
Don't go being jealous--

GRACE
I ain't!

BEN
You know what happened that day I
saw her. I couldn't just walk away.

GRACE
No, I don't expect you could have.

BEN
And now she's just saying thank you
in her way.

GRACE
I don't like her way.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grace brushes her hair in the mirror by the light of the lantern. Ben lays on his separate bed and sharpens a knife.

GRACE
Must you do that in bed?

He places the knife and block on the nightstand.

GRACE
The yield from our no good field
won't be but enough to trade for
half the supplies we need for
winter.

BEN
It's still a new crop. It takes a
few years for the soil to
acclimate.

GRACE
You said that last year.

BEN
We don't need as much as you think.
By the grace of God, we'll survive.

GRACE
I want to do more than survive.

BEN
I'm sorry I can't give you more
like you grew up with on your
daddy's plantation. But I told him
I'd do my best by you.

GRACE
He'd believe anything in his last
days.

He let's the comment slide, takes LAVENDER out of a pouch.

BEN
We're here now. And I know it's
difficult to see, but we got enough
to make a life here.

GRACE

We have a baby coming. It deserves
a better life.

BEN

Maybe it will be a she.

GRACE

Maybe it won't survive.

BEN

Don't say such things. There are
things that neither man nor woman
can control. I seen it in the war.
We are all children crying for our
mothers.

GRACE

War's over.

BEN

I know that.

Ben takes her hand in his.

BEN

That's why I'm happy to be here
with you.

Ben places the small buds on the lantern. The released scent
permeates the air.

GRACE

Lavender.

BEN

From our no good field.

Grace inhales the lavender and relaxes a bit. She squeezes
his hand back.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

From his bed, Ben gazes at the sleeping Grace, her hair
shimmering in the moonlight. Without the pretenses of
consciousness, she looks like an innocent little girl.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Grace wakes before Ben, quietly slips out.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Grace prepares breakfast.

EXT. WELL - EARLY MORNING

Grace goes to the well with an empty bucket and fills it.

Twenty yards away, she spies the SILHOUETTE OF A MAN staggering towards her. She drops the bucket into the well and calls out to the house.

GRACE

Ben!

The man collapses.

GRACE

Ben!

Ben, half-dressed, comes running out of the house.

BEN

What's wrong?!

GRACE

There!

She points to the body and they run up to it.

Ben flips the man onto his back -- it's a battered Jack. The wound on his arm is caked in blood.

GRACE

He's been shot. Could be someone's after him.

She scans around warily.

BEN

Help me move him.

A CROW CAWS as it circles overhead.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

A passed out Jack lays on Ben's bed as Ben dresses his wounds.

Grace stashes Jack's gun in a CHEST.

GRACE

I got this feeling, like a cold shadow. Like we shouldn't be here.

BEN

You always trying to run away from this place--

GRACE

I swear it ain't like that.

Jack stirs. Ben looks to him.

JACK

(murmurs)

Lucy.

BEN

Looks like you been through a right piece of nasty. I'm Ben. This here is my wife, Grace.

Jack opens his piercing eyes, lucid, looks directly at Grace.

JACK

I'm Jack.

Grace quickly looks away.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ben and Jack sit at the table. Grace serves stew.

JACK

Much obliged.

GRACE

What were you doing out there? Why are you shot?

BEN

Now Grace, we have no meddle in this man's affairs.

JACK

I do appreciate the courtesy. And I'm sure my tale would bore you.

GRACE

I'm sure it would.

As Jack eats, he spies the field bag on the mantelpiece.

JACK

I believe that bag was standard
army issue, before leather became
expensive and lives became cheap.
That would make you a fellow
compatriot. Myself, 41st regiment
out of the great state of Alabama.

BEN

We're from Georgia.

GRACE

He don't need to know our story.

Jack motions towards a bottle of whiskey.

JACK

May I?

Ben nods. Grace serves Jack. He smacks his lips, relishes in
taking the shot.

JACK

Ahh. Full health is now attainable.
Once again, I am much obliged. May
I have a little more? To sip.

Ben motions to Grace to refill. She does so begrudgingly.

JACK

To find a Southern brother -- nigh,
to be given rescue in Montana by one
-- is quite fortuitous indeed.

BEN

All men are brothers.

JACK

As were Abel and Cain.

GRACE

You sure can talk for being half-
dead this morning, Mister.

JACK

Many half-dead men roam this
country. Ain't that right, soldier?

GRACE

What are you implying? Ben was a
medic during the war.

Jack examines his bandages and nods in approval.

JACK

If you'll allow me to enlighten you, your husband knows what I speak of. It's the voice in his head every day since he's been back from war. I'm just speaking that demon's voice aloud, ain't that right?

Ben takes his shot of whiskey and holds out his empty glass for Grace to refill. Grace barely recognizes her husband.

Jack observes Grace's hands as she pours.

GRACE

Now that's enough outta you!
 (to Ben)
 He's messing with your mind, Ben. No need to get mixed up about past horrors all over again.

BEN

The man speaks his mind. He served like me, watched his friends die. This is a house of free thought.

GRACE

And what about my free thoughts?
 (to Jack)
 Who are you to conjure up such wretchedness?

JACK

A wretched man, I suppose.

Jack turns to look at Grace and sends shivers up her spine, but she keeps her eye contact.

GRACE

I don't need to know your story to know Ben is a better man than you.

Jack reclines.

JACK

Right you are. He is a better man, but better men ain't doing so well in these times. My curiosity prevails: Why is it that a lady with dainty hands, who doesn't feel the need to toil with her husband in the field, feels the need to defend his honor so dutifully? Is it you look to justify this life in
 (MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

God's armpit with hollow reasons of
how Ben is a "good man?"

Jack takes a deliberately thoughtful sip. Reaffirms his theory.

JACK

Yes, you didn't know what you
married -- you thought him a hero,
going off to war. A man with a good
heart, a strong back. But upon his
return, you found a mind burnt by
war. A broken machine, like a till
without teeth. A challenge to love
on some days, to be sure.

Jack takes in the pregnancy magazine that lays on the fine china cabinet.

JACK

And how could you possibly raise a
child like this? Because this ain't
no life.

Grace feels naked. Cold. Her look confirms the accuracy of his insight to a pleased Jack.

GRACE

How do you figure...

She looks to Ben, who sits as if in a trance.

JACK

You ain't that special, darling.
All fall to the trappings of their
beliefs in some fashion. The men
who send others to die. Them who do
the dying. With the North against
you and the South not doing
anything for you, there's only West
left to go.

(To Ben)

Have you come far enough? Have you
been able to hide from your demons
behind this darling, peachy, silly
little thing?

Ben moves fast and WALLOPS Jack a good one, flipping him over his chair.

Ben stands over Jack, his chest heaving.

BEN

Say what you will to me, but you
will respect my wife.

Jack has fallen onto the pelts. He massages his jaw as he examines the stitching.

JACK

That's some good Injun work.

Jack groans as he picks up his chair, sets it back at the head of the table, takes a seat.

JACK

Forgive me. I can get carried away sharing my notions and admit I need to be reminded when to stop from time to time. My tongue is a curse, my presence often has a way of upsetting the lady of the household. Perhaps it is why I have yet to acquire the gift of companionship as you have managed in life.

Jack laughs himself a hearty one. He realizes no one has joined him, stops laughing. He motions to the bottle.

JACK

If I may have another sip.

GRACE

You've had enough.

JACK

Perhaps you are correct as alcohol thins the blood and my wounds are still moist. However, another pull will certainly help me go to bed and part company all the sooner tonight.

He briefly pauses to see if anyone will stop him, takes the bottle, refills.

Grace glares at Ben, who peers into his whiskey.

EXT. CABIN - DAWN - THE NEXT DAY

Ben stands on the porch. He can see the far-off silhouettes of SIX MEN ON HORSES riding up.

He heads inside.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack lies on his back looking at the ceiling, his eyes wide open. Ben walks up.

BEN

You got friends looking for you?

JACK

For your hospitality, I will tell my men to leave you in peace. But don't get too comfortable, and keep that lady-thing away.

EXT. CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Jack waits outside to greet the gang as they ride up. Lefty dismounts and Jack greets him with open arms.

LEFTY

Brother!

They embrace.

JACK

Good to see you, Brother.

Lefty looks at the cabin entrance where Ben stands protectively in front of Grace.

BEN

Go inside.

She doesn't. Lefty lecherously EYES her up and down.

JACK

These people will be left alone.

A disappointed Lefty nods in agreement.

LEFTY

Aw, alright.

JACK

The loot?

Lefty grins and motions to the men. They proudly lift the flap of the saddle bag that's still filled with gold coins.

Jack nods and turns to Ben.

JACK
My firearm, if you please.

Ben takes a look at Jack and his men. They're all armed.

Ben nods to Grace to retrieve the gun from the chest.

Grace goes into the house while Ben sizes up each posse member.

Grace emerges with the gun and hands it to Jack.

JACK
Much obliged.

With an expert twirl, Jack smoothly drops it into his holster.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ben and Grace speak in hushed tones as the rambunctious men can be heard laughing and drinking in the living room.

GRACE
They're bank robbers. They're wanted. They've killed.

BEN
Shh. They'll be out in the morning.

GRACE
I'll have no one hush me in my own home. You brought this onto us, bringing that devil in here.

BEN
I took a vow that I'd rather die than be the cause of another man's suffering again.

GRACE
You took a vow to protect your family.

Ben looks away in shame, conflicted.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The rowdy men practice throwing knives at the wall and sticking them into the wood.

Jack sits at the table with Lefty. Lefty's attention is with the celebrating men as he laughs and drinks along with them.

LEFTY

And then the fog cleared, and there we was, surrounding them surprised sonsabitches!

Jack sternly addresses his brother.

JACK

The Marshals cut us off 'cause you didn't scout right.

Lefty's jubilation quickly subdues.

LEFTY

There was heavy fog when I done the scout. I ain't see the other pass.

JACK

Then when you come back from the scout, you report there was fog and could be another pass you couldn't see. Then we ain't ride so we can get ambushed -- which is what happened.

LEFTY

What you want? It worked out. We still got the gold.

Jack SMACKS Lefty. The men go quiet.

JACK

We down three men since I saw you, baby brother.

Lefty is slightly teary-eyed and choked up.

LEFTY

Nothin' I do good enough for you.

Lefty stands up and tosses his chair aside. He storms out.

Jack glares at his men who all look away. He shakes his head and goes after Lefty out the door.

JACK

(exasperated)
Lefty, get back here.

The party starts back up.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

CRASH! The sound of plates being broken along with laughter in the next room is more than Grace can take.

She stares at Ben, trembling with rage at the ruckus.

GRACE

That fine china out there is the last thing of value we own. We'll have nothing left to sell if it's a harsh winter, if we need something for the baby.

BEN

I know--

SMASH!

GRACE

They're knocking it around like it's some cheap glass!

Ben sees her purse her lips and work herself up.

BEN

(warning)
Grace, don't you--

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Like a bat out of hell Grace stomps out of the bedroom.

GRACE

That's enough with your hootin' 'n' hollerin'! Don't any of you have the common decency to respect a good home?

She kneels next to the broken china and tears up as she picks up the pieces.

The intoxicated men are briefly startled silent before they start laughing.

MEN

My, my/Someone wants to play/Look at this 'lil thang!

GRACE

Y'all a bunch of heathens and your mommas would be ashamed of you!

Ben stands in the bedroom doorway.

BEN
Grace, get back in here, now.

Grace gives them all a nasty look, grabs the china, heads back to the bedroom.

A large man with a giant scar across his face, appropriately named SCAR (30s), grabs Grace by the arm and pulls her close.

She drops the last good china and it SHATTERS on the ground.

SCAR
Don't leave yet, little lady. We're just getting to know you.

Without warning, Ben gives Scar a ONE-TWO PUNCH and knocks him to the ground. Ben gets in between Grace and the men.

The men laugh and taunt Scar.

MEN
Hot damn!/Little man just showed Scar what's what!/You gonna let a farmer scrap you like that?/Might be time to retire, Scar!

Scar, dazed, shakes it off and stands up. He is considerably larger than Ben.

SCAR
You gonna regret that.

The men close in a circle around them. One of them holds Grace back.

GRACE
Let me go!

Scar punches Ben in the face and Ben crashes through the kitchen table.

GRACE
No!

Scar bears down on Ben, but Ben KICKS him in the balls and JUMPS onto his back. Ben begins CHOKING him.

Like a rodeo bull, Scar runs into furniture and walls trying to knock Ben off.

Ben hangs on, choking Scar into submission.

Grace screams while the men find the whole thing incredibly entertaining.

Scar, on the verge of unconsciousness, drops to his knees. As Ben takes the upper hand, one of the other men, IRWIN (20s), ugliest of the bunch, BREAKS A BOTTLE over Ben's head.

Ben goes down.

GRACE

Ben!

Grace goes to him. The side of his head BLEEDS.

The laughing men pull her off and begin to pass her around, lewdly GRABBING at her.

BEN

Grace...

A woozy Ben is helpless to do anything.

GRACE

No! Stop it!

Ben shakes his head to try to refocus his eyes. One of the men rips Grace's blouse.

GRACE

No! Please! No!

As a man mounts her, Grace snags the gun out of his holster. Jack and Lefty get back just in time to see Grace pull the trigger.

JACK

Shit.

BANG!

Grace SHOTS the man in the forehead dead.

Everyone else in the room draws their gun on a petrified Grace.

Ben takes Lefty's other holstered gun and puts it to Lefty's head.

BEN

Nobody move!

Lefty freezes, petrified.

LEFTY
Brother!

JACK
Dammit, Lefty.

BEN
Guns on the floor, now!

LEFTY
(shaken)
Do it!

Jack and his men see Ben is serious, put their guns on the ground.

BEN
Slowly.

Grace rapidly breathes, stares at the dead body.

BEN
(commands)
Grace.

Grace scrambles behind Ben.

JACK
I thought we was all friends,
soldier.

BEN
I've met your friends.
(to Grace)
In the chest.

Grace picks up the guns, puts them in the chest. She locks it. Ben keeps his gun trained on the men as he backs up with Grace out the front door.

EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Ben slams the door shut and pushes the porch bench in front of it.

INT. CABIN - SAME TIME

The other men quickly draw hidden pistols from their waistbands and boots and start shooting at Ben and Grace through the door.

EXT. CABIN - SAME TIME

Grace and Ben scramble towards the barn, the angry men shoot out the windows while ramming the barricaded door.

BEN
Get to the horses!

The men pile out of the house and force Ben and Grace to take cover fire positions behind a METAL TROUGH.

BEN
Jack! We had a deal! You were gonna
leave us in peace!

Jack is the only one not shooting. He merely watches from a safe vantage point and shakes his head as he lights a cigarette and calls out.

JACK
Can't help you now, soldier. Can't
stop animals once they've smelled
blood. I told you the rules, you
and your loud-mouthed lady shoulda
stayed put.

BEN
We ain't mean to take a life. But
we saved one when we took you in.
Ain't that count for something?

Jack motions to his men to lower their guns.

JACK
Come on out. Maybe we can come to
an agreement.

GRACE
He's lying. They'll kill you and
then...

BEN
We ain't got much choice. We can't
take them all on.

GRACE
(pleading)
Ben, don't you go out there. You
got a wife and child.

BEN
God will show us mercy.

Ben shows his arms and slowly steps out.

BEN
I'm coming ou--

BANG!

Ben YELPS, shot in the arm by Lefty. He falls back behind the trough.

GRACE
Ben!

Jack projects towards Ben and Grace.

JACK
You see, I myself am not of inclination to harm you or Mrs. Peachy. But my men, well, it is a free country, as they say.

Ben winces and turns to Grace.

BEN
We gotta get to them horses.

Grace glances over to where the horses are. There's no way to cross without being exposed to gunfire.

GRACE
How?

Ben looks around, notices the WOODEN HAY CART next to them.

He pushes at it with his good arm and cringes in pain.

BEN
Grace, help me!

GRACE
Do you think that's gonna be enough cover--

BEN
Push!

The cart begins to roll. Grace cowers as she pushes it and uses it as shelter, Ben hunched down beside her.

As they emerge from behind the trough, the men UNLOAD in their direction, the cart working to block the bullets.

Jack smiles as he sees Grace rolling the cart towards the horses. He laughs.

JACK
Finally gettin' a taste of farm
work, huh, sister?

Grace and Ben arrive at the horses. Grace mounts hers.

GRACE
Ben, come on!

BEN
You ride! Go! I'm right behind you!

He slaps her horse on the rump, she takes off.

Ben picks up an OIL CANISTER and douses the hay in the cart.

He LIGHTS it, and with a SHOVE, sends the flaming wagon
rolling towards the gang who has to scramble for new cover.

Scar catches on fire and begins flailing about.

SCAR
Put me out! Put me out!

The others put him out with water from the well.

Meanwhile, Ben stumbles around to the men's horses and frees
them.

BEN
Yah! Yah!

Ben mounts his horse and takes off.

Lefty takes aim through his RIFLE and lines Ben up in his
crosshairs. It's a clean shot.

Lefty grins -- pulls the trigger --

Ben keeps riding.

Lefty is disappointed.

Jack watches Ben and Grace ride off.

JACK
What a lovely couple.

Scar is back on his feet and literally wet and steaming.

Lefty calls out to the men.

LEFTY

They gettin' away! Round up the horses!

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Chester, bruised but already back in fighting form, looks out at a HALF-DOZEN BOUNTY HUNTERS. He is flanked by two young and earnest DEPUTIES.

CHESTER

A few days ago, ten men held up a bank in Helena. They killed a teller before getting away. They were intercepted in the canyons by a squad of U.S. Marshals. All the marshals but one were killed. That marshal was me.

A BOUNTY HUNTER with BLACK TEETH speaks up.

BLACK TEETH

We don't care 'bout that. How much is the bounty?

A smarmy BANKER (50s) sitting in the corner, sweaty and constantly dabbing his forehead with a cloth, pipes in.

BANKER

For your services, gentlemen, the bank will pay \$100 per head, dead or alive. Twice that for Jack.

BLACK TEETH

This Jack Vance and his men, ain't it? Bad Jack.

CHESTER

That's right.

BLACK TEETH

That worth at least twice the amount to risk my neck.

The other bounty hunters nod in agreement.

YOUNG DEPUTY

This mission is a service to your country and--

BANKER

Agreed at \$200 for gang members and
\$400 for Jack. Get them. Get them
all and you will be rewarded.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAWN

Grace and Ben round a bend to a creek. They stop behind some
LARGE ROCKS. Ben's arm is coated in blood.

BEN

The horses need water.

GRACE

We don't have time.

Ben collapses off his horse.

Grace quickly dismounts and examines him. His arm bleeds.
Grace grimaces at the sight of bone and blood but keeps her
composure together.

GRACE

It'll be alright.

Ben shakes his head.

BEN

It ain't just the arm.

He moves his hand. Blood seeps out of a HOLE in his side.

GRACE

Why didn't you say anything?!

BEN

Wouldn'a done no good.

GRACE

Oh my God.

She tries to sop up the blood with some cloth.

BEN

The Lord will judge me soon.

His side wound won't stop bleeding. Grace knows it's bad.

GRACE

Oh, Ben. It's gonna be fine.
Alright, get back on that horse.

BEN
Listen to me.

He puts a bloody hand on her belly.

GRACE
Don't start talking crazy.

BEN
I'm sorry I brought you to Montana.

GRACE
You are my husband. I can't go on
without you.

BEN
That's what I'm afraid of.

He lays the gun belt with the knife over her shoulder.

BEN
Now, go. I'm sorry I can't do more
for you. You have to take care of
yourself. For both of you. For all
three of us. Go.

The last flicker of life leaves Ben's eyes. He slips into
death.

Grace shakes his shoulders in agony.

GRACE
No... No. Ben...

In the far distance she sees a small cloud of dirt from the
pursuing gang.

Strapped with guilt, Grace pries herself away from her fallen
husband. She rides off.

GRACE
I'm sorry. I'm sorry!

EXT. PRAIRIE - MOMENTS LATER

Jack and his men ride hard and gain ground -- right past the
far side of the large rocks without noticing Ben's dead body.

EXT. RIVER - SAME TIME

A weeping Grace approaches the shore and then urges the horse
into the waist deep river.

A WATER SNAKE startles the animal. He BUCKS and Grace falls off, hitting her head on a ROCK.

A light stream of blood emits from her head as Grace gets caught in some quickly developing RAPIDS.

She struggles as she attempts to get to shore while she's pulled along faster and faster 100 yards downriver. Up ahead she sees a WATERFALL DROP-OFF.

There's nothing she can do as she's spit out the top of a twenty feet DROP.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

She plunges deep into the pool at the foot of the waterfall. Under the slow-moving water Grace opens her eyes.

Serenity.

An OBSCURED FIGURE dives into the water and grabs her around the waist to take her back up.

GRACE (V.O.)

Ben? Ben...

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Grace slowly focuses her sight at the edge of the shore and gets her bearings.

A WHITE DANDELION grows out of the ground in front of her.

A PAIR OF BOOTS walk up and STEPS on the dandelion, dispersing the white pollen into the air.

The boots belong to Lefty. The rest of the gang is with him.

LEFTY

My, my. I caught a fish.

JACK

Where your man at?

Grace is confused.

GRACE

Wha-? Ben? Where's Ben?

Lefty pulls her head up by her hair.

LEFTY

He asking you the question.

Lefty calls out into the woods.

LEFTY

We got yer woman!

Jack nods to Scar.

JACK

Take point. We can't have him sneaking up on us.

LEFTY

Where he at?

Grace is on the verge of tears.

GRACE

Ben? He... he's coming back.

Grace begins to shake with exhaustion and fear and grief.

GRACE

And he'll show you all. He'll show you...

LEFTY

Why you out here all alone? I think your man done gone.

(gloating)

I knew I got him back at the stead. He just needed to bleed out like a pig.

Irwin makes sounds like a hog. Grace loses it and collapses into great big sobs.

LEFTY

Yep. That's it. I know women, ain't that right, Brother?

Lefty strokes Grace's hair.

She SPITS on him. He licks it off and then BACKHANDS her.

ZHOOF.

A bullet passes through Lefty's neck. He collapses.

All the men scramble for cover.

JACK

Lefty!

A bullet strikes next to Jack, forcing him to retreat.

GRACE

Ben?!

Grace stumbles towards the source of the bullets. The men shoot into the woods after her. Miraculously, Grace is not hit as bullets impact trees and rocks all around her.

From behind a fallen tree trunk Jack watches Lefty choke to death on his own blood.

JACK

Brother!

Jack tries to go to Lefty but another bullet hits the branch right in front of him, keeping him pinned.

JACK

You a dead man, Ben!

The men continue to fire into the woods with no target in sight.

JACK

Stop shooting. Stop shooting!

The men do. All is silent.

SCAR

That sonabitch ain't even shooting at us anymore!

Jack rushes over to his brother, drops to his knees to examine his brother. Lefty is dead.

JACK

Lefty... my baby brother.

Jack mourns as the men watch.

SCAR

After them!

The men rush into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - SAME TIME

A frantic Grace looks over her shoulder as she runs --

And lets out a YELP when she turns into Crazy Crow ready with a gun drawn.

GRACE

It was you? That was you in the water--

Crazy Crow puts her hand over Grace's mouth to silence her, looking past Grace for pursuers.

GRACE

Let's g--

Crazy Crow scrambles up a tree and motions for Grace to quickly join. Grace attempts to climb, but is lousy at it and keeps slipping back down the trunk.

Crazy Crow grows more anxious as Grace repeatedly fails. She jumps down, helps push Grace up the tree and then joins her.

Just as Grace gets situated in the branches, Irwin enters the area looking for them. He briefly pauses nearby. Both women are frozen, Crazy Crow with her knife drawn ready to pounce if Irwin gets closer.

To their relief, Irwin moves on.

Crazy Crow leaps to the ground, motions for Grace to follow and vanishes into the woods. Grace briefly hesitates before jumping down. She runs to catch up to Crazy Crow.

EXT. DROP-OFF - DUSK

Jack's men emerge from the woods to the edge of a mountain. The drop off is hundreds of feet.

SCAR

Anyone seen them?

Everyone shakes their head.

SCAR

They ain't come this way, we musta missed them in the woods.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DUSK

Jack grieves. Scar walks up.

SCAR

North is a cliff. They're heading east.

JACK

Tonight we bury my brother. In the morning we show those two regret they never seen.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Grace sits up against a tree and weeps while Crazy Crow silently watches and feeds the horse.

EXT. JACK'S CAMP - NIGHT

Through watery eyes, Jack finishes shoveling a hole for his brother. A few yards away, Irwin is spooked and speaks in a hushed tone to Scar, who still nurses his jaw from earlier.

IRWIN

I don't like no burial. Maybe this woman's bad chance on us.

Scar doesn't say anything.

IRWIN

We got the gold. Why we care 'bout some damn dame and her man?

REVEAL: Jack stands behind a startled Irwin.

JACK

We lost two men yesterday. One my brother. You suggesting we don't pursue?

IRWIN

N-n-no boss.

Jack holds the shovel to Irwin's neck.

JACK

All monies that belonged to the deceased will be split evenly among the living. If any of you maggots wish to leave, you forfeit your entire share. Sound fair to you, Irwin?

IRWIN

Very fair, boss.

Jack drives the shovel into the ground.

JACK

We out in prairie country. Ain't nothing for hundreds of miles and they only got but a couple guns. In the morning, we ride.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Crazy Crow gently makes sure her doll is tucked into a small makeshift bed near the fire. She catches Grace giving her a weird look. Grace turns away, not wanting to offend.

GRACE

Ben told me how he found you that day. I'm sorry you went through that.

Crazy Crow adds a few sticks to the fire.

GRACE

But why are you helping me?

Crazy Crow stares into the flames. The floating embers dissolve into floating dandelion pollen.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. BLACKFOOT VILLAGE - DAY

SUPER IN LARGE LETTERS: RED FEATHER

RED FEATHER (18), Crazy Crow's real name, watches DOZENS OF U.S. ARMY MEN WITH GUNS hold her village hostage.

Pollen floats by as many villagers weep.

FIVE BLACKFEET MEN are paraded out at gunpoint. They are unceremoniously executed with shots to the head.

The beaten-up CHIEF (60), is tossed onto his knees in front of the bodies.

An ARMY CAPTAIN clomps over on his horse.

CAPTAIN

We do not want trouble with you but you force our hand. You are in violation of the terms of your relocation.

CHIEF

Gitmejez. Biz kabul etmedik.

The Captain turns to the ARMY TRANSLATOR (20s).

CAPTAIN
What'd he say?

TRANSLATOR
He says they never signed the
agreement to leave.

CAPTAIN
Tell him I am not here to debate
the ins-and-outs of the treaty.
That does not concern me.

The captain grabs Red Feather and drags her out.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)
Grandfather!

CHIEF (SUBTITLE)
Red Feather!

CAPTAIN
Do we need to make an example from
more of his people, some of his
barbaric women this time?

The chief hangs his head in defeat.

The white pollen turns into SNOW FLAKES as we--

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. PRAIRIE - WINTER - DAY

The tribe walks through the blistering cold as snow swirls
around.

An OLD WOMAN COLLAPSES and others rush to her side. She is
not moving and never will again. Another victim of the death
march.

EXT. PRAIRIE - WINTER - NIGHT

The small, dim campfire doesn't make things much better for
those huddled around it.

The Chief stands off by himself staring into the neverending
snow. Red Feather approaches with an extra coat and puts it
over his shoulders.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)

If you give up now, the tribe will truly be defeated. You must lead or we should all give up now.

The Chief nods. It's exactly what he needs to hear so as not to give into the despair. He puts an arm on Red Feather's shoulder. They head back to camp.

EXT. VILLAGE - SPRING - DAY - A FEW YEARS LATER

The tribe has managed to adapt to the new territory. Women weave baskets, children run around, men carve arrows, there is meat above the fire.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Red Feather walks with BEAR CLAW (22), handsome, confident, toned. They hold hands, Red Feather has a small BABY BUMP.

A DOE rummages in the bushes nearby. A BUCK comes up behind her. Love is in the air. Red Feather and Bear Claw grin.

A twig SNAPS in the distance, the animals run off.

Red Feather and Bear Claw duck behind some bushes. They see FOUR WHITE MEN who have set up a small camp.

Bear Claw takes Red Feather's hand and they begin to run away from the camp --

SNAP! Bear Claw's leg gets caught in a bear trap and he screams out in pain.

Red Feather tries to free him.

BEAR CLAW (SUBTITLE)

Go! Go!

The white men quickly arrive and surround Red Feather and Bear Claw.

It's too late for Red Feather to escape. She looks at the men with pleading eyes.

WHITE MAN #1

My, my. Looks like we caught a skinny bear.

WHITE MAN #2

I didn't know they came in red color.

WHITE MAN #1
America is the land of discovery.

One of the men grabs Red Feather. Bear Claw YELLS and pulls out THE BLACK FOOT KNIFE, which is useless at the distance he stands from the men.

White man #1 unceremoniously shoots Bear Claw in the head, dead.

WHITE MAN #1
What's that? I can't understand a
goddamned thing you saying.

Red Feather SCREAMS.

WHITE MAN #1
Shut up!

He picks up the dropped knife and turns to Red Feather. She begins to CHANT.

WHITE MAN #1
I said, shut up.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

The men are gone. Red Feather, her clothes ripped, her face and stomach slashed, blood running down her leg, lays next to the body of her dead husband.

What little energy she has left, she uses to cry.

Ben emerges from the woods with some dead rabbits.

Red Feather sees him and weakly reaches for Bear Claw's fallen knife to defend herself, but Ben kicks it out of her hand.

Red Feather snarls at Ben as Ben keeps his distance. Ben draws his rifle and Red Feather looks at him with hateful eyes. She is prepared to die.

Ben empties out the ammo from his gun and sets it down. Then, in a show of peace, with his arms open and palms facing outward, he slowly approaches a confused Red Feather, who passes out from exhaustion.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Ben has made a fire and Red Feather shivers with infection. Ben examines Red Feather's wounds, especially her belly, and shakes his head.

He removes the red hot tip of Bear Claw's knife from the fire and cauterizes the wound.

Red Feather HOWLS in pain.

EXT. WOODS - THE NEXT DAY

Red Feather awakes to a freshly bandaged belly.

She looks over and sees BEAR CLAW'S GRAVE and another TINY ONE next to it. She laments.

Ben offers her some water from a canteen, she SMACKS IT AWAY.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)
White monster!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Red Feather looks over at the sleeping Ben. She quietly goes for the water and drinks in great big gulps.

When she puts the canteen down, she realizes Ben is watching and smiling.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)
I don't owe you anything!

Red Feather tosses the canteen at Ben. It spills out most of the water that is left.

Ben picks it up, refills it from another canteen, gives it back to her and goes back to sleep.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

They share some rabbit. Ben looks at her, all smiles.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)
(incensed)
What are you? I hate the white man!
What mind games are you playing?
Stop smiling at me!

Red Feather grabs the nearby knife. Ben looks at her with empathy.

Ben exposes his back to tend the fire and Red Feather sees that Ben has a gun in his holster he could have easily used.

Unable to reconcile her anger, Red Feather THROWS the knife into the tree next to Ben's head.

Ben is a shaken by the close call, but he takes it in stride. He nods, accepting, understanding.

She cries out in frustration.

EXT. WOODS - DAYS LATER

With a helping hand from Ben, Red Feather stands. Ben helps her walk around a bit.

Red Feather heads out.

Ben gathers his things and prepares to leave.

Red Feather turns around and walks back to Ben.

She gives Bear Claw's knife to Ben as a thank you.

Ben takes it. They acknowledge its significance with powerful eye contact and part ways.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Grace and Red Feather sit around the fire.

Grace looks over at the doll. Red Feather looks over at Ben's knife on Grace's waist, and to Grace's belly.

Grace, uncomfortable with Red Feather's gaze, pulls the blanket tighter around herself.

EXT. WOODS - EARLY MORNING

Grace wakes up. Red Feather is gone. Grace quickly sits up, looks around worried.

Sound rustling from above gets her attention. Red Feather climbs down from a nearby tall tree.

GRACE

You stuck around... Thank you. We need help. We need to get to town. Get help from the sheriff.

Red Feather gives Grace a look of contempt. Using a stick in the dirt, she begins to draw a map of the woods, river and surrounding valley.

GRACE

You're thinking what the hell are you doing out here with me? Well, you and me both.

Red Feather takes TWO TWIGS and places them on the map she's drawn. She motions to them.

Grace glances at them but doesn't pay attention.

GRACE

Never should have ended up out here in the middle of Montana. I'm from Georgia. You don't even know where that is, do you?

Red Feather RIPS a piece of lace from Grace's dress. Grace pulls away defensively.

GRACE

Hey! What do you think you're doing?

Red Feather wraps the lace around one of the larger twigs and then motions to herself and Grace and then to the dirt map.

GRACE

Alright, I get it. That's us.

Red Feather sets down some other twigs to represent Jack's gang and draws their path through the valley.

GRACE

And that's Jack and his men and the valley.

Finally, Red Feather draws an alternate path for herself and Grace.

GRACE

You want us to double-back? At the fork in the valley? I understand.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Chester examines tracks leading up to the cabin. The bounty hunters wait nearby. They spot broken windows and empty shell casings.

BLACK TEETH
There was a shoot out.

CHESTER
No shit.

The deputy calls from within the house. He's found the body of the man Ben shot.

YOUNG DEPUTY
One of Jack's men. Looks like
whoever lived here got out alive.

Chester examines some spots of blood next to the trough.

CHESTER
Just barely.

EXT. VALLEY PATH - BEGINNING - DAY

Grace and Red Feather ride on a single horse.

EXT. VALLEY PATH - FORK - LATER

Grace and Red Feather arrive at the fork in the road.

EXT. VALLEY PATH - BEGINNING - DAY

Jack and his men ride the valley path. They briefly scour around and find some horse tracks.

SCAR
These tracks are fresh.

They ride on towards the fork.

EXT. VALLEY PATH - FORK - DAY

Grace and Red Feather dismount. Red Feather SLASHES the horse's rump and sends it running down the path.

Grace and Red Feather disappear into the thicket.

Unbeknownst to Grace, her dress snags a branch, and some LACE RIPS OFF.

EXT. VALLEY PATH - FORK - MOMENTS LATER

Jack and his men arrive at the spot where Grace and Red Feather dismounted.

Irwin looks at the tracks.

IRWIN

Looks like they stopped here for a rest, but then continued on their way. See them tracks?

Jack looks around and spies the lace caught in the thicket on the side of the path.

JACK

It would seem that we should think so.

EXT. VALLEY PATH VANTAGE POINT - SAME TIME

From a high vantage point behind the gang, Red Feather and Grace see the men continue on down the path they sent their horse.

GRACE

They bought it! They think you and I are heading down the path. Now we can go get the Sheriff.

Grace notices Red Feather caress the doll.

GRACE

You, me and... the baby.

Red Feather nods. Grace points east.

GRACE

Nearest town is Great Falls. That way.

Red Feather points north.

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

My tribe is that way.

Red Feather shakes her head.

GRACE

You don't approve, huh? Well you're right. I'm useless.

Grace gets worked up.

GRACE

I got him killed didn't I? But I told him. I told him we shouldn't move out here. I was right, wasn't I? Wasn't I? Now I've got his baby and he's not even here!

A worked up Grace throws herself down and begins sobbing. Her theatrics don't impress Red Feather.

RED FEATHER

Ben!

GRACE

Yes, Ben! I heard you! I know! Ben! Stop looking at me like that!

Irritated by Red Feather's stare, Grace takes her anger out on cutting into the squirrel, putting her disgust aside.

Red Feather looks at the knife in Grace's hand. By the look on her face, it is clear Red Feather does not approve how Grace is using it.

Red Feather has a hushed conversation with her doll.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)

I know, it's not something I want to be doing.

(pause)

She can't do it on her own.

(pause)

It's not for her I'm doing it. I owe Ben my life.

Grace, weirded out by Red Feather's side conversation, pretends not to be listening in. Red Feather clears her throat to get Grace's attention.

Red Feather tosses her knife at a nearby tree -- hits it dead center. She motions for Grace to do the same.

GRACE

Yeah, you got knife throwing skills. I didn't grow up in the circus.

Red Feather retrieves her knife, tosses it again, and motions for Grace to do the same.

GRACE

Fine. If that's what you want to see.

Grace attempts to toss her knife at the tree, but instead hits a rock on the ground and it bounces off, embedding into the ground right near the straw baby.

Red Feather gives Grace a menacing look.

GRACE

I told you I couldn't do it.

Red Feather moves the straw baby away from the tree, talks to it.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)

I don't want to hear another word from you about this.

Red Feather pulls the knife out of the ground and puts it back in Grace's hand.

GRACE

I can't do it. Why are you making me?

Red Feather readjusts the knife in Grace's hand so the grip is weighted on the end.

GRACE

Hey, you're a bit close, now. This is stupid.

Red Feather ignores Grace's complaining and repeatedly guides Grace's arm through a throwing arc, pausing it to show when to release the knife.

GRACE

(irritated)

Okay, okay. I got it.

Red Feather lets go of Grace's arm and motions for her to throw it.

Grace does a couple practice swings and then releases the knife -- it hits the tree just off-center.

Grace proudly grins at Red Feather. Red Feather nods in approval.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Red Feather wakes up and Grace is nowhere to be seen.

There is a RUSTLE in the bushes.

She turns and doesn't see anything. Another RUSTLE from another direction. She quietly reaches for her gun, but stops when a barrel of a gun is put to her head.

JACK

Nuh-uh, I wouldn't do that if I was you.

The gang emerges from the shrubs. The knife lays nearby. Jack examines the markings on the handle.

JACK

I seen this pattern. Back at the stead. Them pelts. All this time it was a damn Injun helpin' out our lady. A damn Injun woman that killed my brother!

Jack holds up a piece of lace. Red Feather understands how they were given away.

Jack examines Red Feather's scarred face.

JACK

How'd you get so ugly?

Red Feather shakes in anger.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)

Demon. Demon.

Red Feather mutters a CHANT -- the same one from when the gang murdered her husband and mutilated her years ago.

Jack THRUSTS the knife into Red Feather's LEG.

EXT. HILLTOP - SAME TIME

Grace is picking berries when she hears Red Feather SCREAM.

She drops the berries and rushes back. The other side of the hill has a quick drop off with RAPIDS below.

EXT. WOODS - SAME TIME

The gang pass Red Feather around like a punching bag. The knife is still embedded in her leg.

ANGLE ON: Grace in the lower thicket ten yards behind the men. She watches the beating. Nearby, the doll lays TORN, its stuffing spills out.

Grace looks past the men to the unattended horses loaded with supplies -- including the pack horse with the gold bag.

Grace slowly weaves a wide circumference, sneaking around the men to make her way uphill.

Red Feather lets out another pained scream. Grace drops below a log, stops and shudders.

Irwin casually approaches towards Grace. He stands right above the log and undoes his belt. She holds her breath as Scar URINATES almost directly on top of her.

JACK

We can't make you talk, savage, but
we can make you bleed.

Red Feather tries to reach out to the doll, but one of Jack's men STOMPS on her arm, causing her to scream out in pain.

Grace cringes at the sound of Red Feather's pain. Irwin finishes up and returns to the gang.

Grace wills herself to keep going. She sneaks from tree to tree, brush to brush, until she gets to the horse with the gold bag.

She silently walks it away from camp, uphill.

The horse is startled by another scream from Red Feather. Grace soothes it so it doesn't make too much commotion.

GRACE

(whispers)
Shh, girl. Shh.

Grace finally leads it to the hilltop.

She undoes the pack.

Behind Grace is a STRAIGHT DROP-OFF into a raging river 100 feet below.

Grace calls out.

GRACE

Jack! Let her go!

Jack and his men turn with guns drawn to see Grace out above them on the hilltop holding the pack.

JACK

Now why would I do that?

Grace holds out a handful of GOLD COINS. The men realize that a horse is missing -- now with Grace at the top of the hill.

IRWIN

She's gots the gold!

Grace tosses the coins she's holding over the edge and then threatens to kick over the entire bag.

GRACE

Now you all stay right there, or all this goes into the river below.

JACK

You dump that gold, you dead.

GRACE

So I reckon, but it's also my guarantee. You stay at least fifty yards away and your gold stays dry. If any of you try something funny, then all the hell you been through and raised on others been for nothing 'cause it all goes in the river. Now let. Her. Go.

Jack's men look at him, ready for mutiny if he forfeits the gold.

Jack slowly takes his foot off Red Feather's neck.

GRACE

Get up! Come over here!

Red Feather, knife still sticking out of her leg, crawls to her doll, retrieves it, and slowly limps uphill to Grace.

She collapses into Grace's arms. Grace stands strong holding the gold over the river while keeping a keen eye on Jack and his men.

GRACE

It's all right. They can't hurt you.

Grace calls back down.

GRACE

I know there's five of you. I want to see you all at all times. From now on, whenever I call out, everyone needs to sound off from their places or I toss the gold in. Now practice.

Jack's men all look at each other. None of them speak.

GRACE

What's the matter? Y'all never learned to count? Sound off!

Jack nods to the men. They take turns calling out.

SCAR

One.

IRWIN

Two.

OUTLAW #1

Three.

OUTLAW #2

Four.

JACK

Five. Alright, now you got us down here, but what's next? How long you think you can hole up there with that cripple?

GRACE

Don't you worry about me.

JACK

Food, water, you gonna have to sleep sometime. Being out here in the wilderness ain't very ladylike.

GRACE

What's ladylike for you, Jack-- staying home and dying?

JACK

Dangerous game you playing, sister.

She tosses some more gold off the cliff.

GRACE
I ain't playing. Keep your
distance.

The men are furious but stay put.

EXT. DOWNHILL - LATER

Jack and his men are gathered downhill from Grace. Irwin grumbles to Scar out of earshot from Jack.

IRWIN
I knew that dame was no good on us.
Ever since the marshals catch us on
that pass, this gold's been cursed.

SCAR
Quit yer yakkin'.

IRWIN
It been four days since we done got
that gold. Marshals have had time
to regroup.

SCAR
There ain't no Marshals left this
side of the Helena since we killed
them all.

IRWIN
I'm just sayin', we already done
fight for that gold, and we still
ain't got it. That sit right wit'
you?

Scar smacks Irwin a good one. Irwin barely manages to stay upright.

SCAR
You ain't sit right wit me. And as
fer the ladies, Jack'll give 'em
what's what when come chance.

Grace calls out from above.

GRACE
Sound off you animals!

They all do, and they ain't happy about it.

EXT. HILLTOP - DUSK

Red Feather mumbles to herself and holds the damaged doll close. Beads of sweat dot her forehead.

Grace examines the knife sticking out of Red Feather's leg.

The two make eye contact. Red Feather nods to pull it out.

GRACE

I'm sorry.

Grace YANKS it out. Blood immediately begins pouring onto the ground.

EXT. DOWNHILL - SAME TIME

The men stand near a small campfire, they hear Red Feather's HOWL.

IRWIN

She scream like a man.

The men laugh.

EXT. HILLTOP - SAME TIME

Grace ties a tourniquet above the wound, then wraps the leg.

GRACE

You ain't going anywhere tonight.

Grace keeps an eye downhill on the campfire. She calls out.

GRACE

Keep that fire going down there and
don't you stray!

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

Grace vigilantly keeps watch.

EXT. DOWNHILL - SAME TIME

Jack pulls out his telescope and can make out a shivering Red Feather.

He takes a SWIG of water from a canteen and yells uphill.

JACK
Will you be needing some hydration,
sister?

INTERCUT HILLTOP/DOWNHILL

Grace quickly moves to make like she is going to toss the
coins into the river below.

JACK
No need for that. We're keeping our
distance.

GRACE
You better!

JACK
Why don'tcha just leave the red
bitch behind? I think she'd
understand.

GRACE
Y'all stay back. And sound off,
now!

The men do so with smirks on their faces.

JACK
One little Indian.

IRWIN
Two little Indian.

SCAR
Three little Indian.

OUTLAW #1
Four little Indian.

OUTLAW #2
Five little Indian.

JACK
That's five, sweet thang. Now we're
gonna get some sleep. Been a long
day and a longer one comin' up
tomorrow.

Jack speaks to his men at a volume Grace cannot hear.

JACK
That Injun ain't got fight left in
her. Let Grace use her energy
staying up all night tending to the
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
red, then we get our gold in the
morning.

He continues to watch Grace through the scope.

JACK
And then some.

EXT. HILLTOP - LATE NIGHT

Grace's eyes slightly droop, but she catches herself, jumps up and counts. All the men are still down there.

Red Feather clutches the torn doll close and murmurs into it as she shivers with pain.

Grace wipes Red Feather's brow with a rag.

GRACE
You're burning up. We gotta get
you to a doctor.
(mournful)
Oh, Ben, you'd know what to do.

Grace wrings out the filthy rag. She smells it and recoils. Red Feather looks at the discolored damp cloth.

GRACE
Let's find you something fresh.

She rummages through the pack on the horse.

GRACE
I don't see any-- here's something!

She pulls out LARGE MEN'S UNDERWEAR.

She holds the old rag in one hand and the underwear in the other.

Red Feather motions she prefers the dirty rag. Despite themselves, they chuckle.

Grace notices a scar that runs along Red Feather's exposed stomach.

GRACE
What they did to you that day...

Red Feather notices Grace's eyeline and covers herself.

GRACE
Here.

Grace reaches out for the doll and Red Feather defensively pulls it away.

Grace pulls out a pin from her hair and a thread from her dress.

GRACE

We can make it pretty again.

Red Feather cautiously hands the doll over to Grace.

Grace begins to stitch it up. The stitch itself is woven into a flower pattern.

Red Feather is impressed at the craftsmanship, motions for Grace to reveal the backing to better understand the technique.

GRACE

(proudly)

This is called a Bullion knot. It's like an extended French knot. Took me an entire summer to learn. My older sister was so mad I learned how to do it first.

Grace touches Red Feather's decorated sleeves.

GRACE

You do beautiful stitch-work too.

Red Feather looks up to the sky, motions in a large arc with her hand.

RED FEATHER

Soksistsikó.

GRACE

Up there?

RED FEATHER

Soksistsikó.

GRACE

That means sky, "soksistsikó?"

Red Feather touches the doll, motions upwards.

RED FEATHER

Soksistsikó.

GRACE

Is that the name of your doll? You were going to name your baby Sky...

Tears appear in Red Feather's eyes. She reaches out and touches Grace's belly. Grace is moved.

GRACE

I can't imagine how difficult it's been for you. I'm sorry I ever judged. I see what Ben admired in you, and I wish I had more of it.

Red Feather takes a fresh look at Grace.

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

I don't know what you're saying, but maybe I've judged you harshly.

They look at each other in acceptance. Grace dabs at Red Feather's leg. Red Feather grimaces, waves Grace's hand away that it's fine.

Lost in her thoughts, Grace looks up at the night sky. ORION'S BELT hangs above them.

GRACE

Orion's Belt. It's always about some big man in the sky, huh?

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

Three canoes. They are lost but they have each other.

Grace doesn't understand, responds thoughtfully.

GRACE

I think I like your people's story better.

Grace hands the fixed doll back to Red Feather, who curls up with it like a little girl and whimpers in pain.

Grace hears the men laugh below, looks back at her suffering friend. She stands and shouts towards Jack's camp.

GRACE

Vile sons of bitches! Curse your souls! Damn you all to hell!

EXT. DOWNHILL - SAME TIME

Jack, eyes closed and settled in for a good night's sleep, smiles as he hears Grace's yells of angst.

EXT. VALLEY PATH - MORNING

Chester and his crew have traced the path of Jack's men just past the fork and examine the tracks.

YOUNG DEPUTY

They followed the trail up to this point here, but then turned back.

CHESTER

Looks like someone tried to pull a fast one but wasn't fast enough. The only town 'round these parts is Great Falls. We'll get 'em there... if they make it. Come on!

Chester turns his horse around, rides hard. The crew follows.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAWN

Grace is about to nod off but pops her head back up. Her gaze darts about, looking through the shrubs.

GRACE

(voice cracks)
Sound off.

One by one she hears all the men count up to five.

GRACE

Good.

She slumps back down. The events of the previous day and night have finally caught up with her.

EXT. DOWNHILL - SAME TIME

Jack watches through the telescope.

JACK

She 'bout done.

Jack hands the telescope to Irwin.

JACK

Wait 'til she nods off one more time. Get ready, boys.

In a daze, Grace looks to Red Feather who lays on the ground breathing heavy. Grace, giving into a dream state, begins to lose focus. She stares into the bushes. The birds in the

trees become invitingly louder. Her cares begin to drift away. And then --

A FAINT TRAIN WHISTLE.

Her drooping head slightly perks up as her consciousness begins to fight back.

She squints towards the distance and sees the steam from a FARAWAY LOCOMOTIVE.

A JOLT of adrenaline. With newfound energy, she shakes Red Feather. Red Feather is sluggish to respond.

GRACE

Come on! We got a way out. We gotta go.

Red Feather finally comes around.

RED FEATHER

Go?

GRACE

Yes, go! On the horse! The train!
(makes train whistle)
Choo-choo! Chuga-chuga-chuga choo-choo!

RED FEATHER

(understands)
Choo-choo.

Red Feather is in bad shape and barely able to stand on her one good leg. With considerable effort, Grace manages to get Red Feather onto the horse. Red Feather grimaces.

INTERCUT HILLTOP/DOWNHILL

Irwin is on lookout and he sees the two women saddling up.

IRWIN

They moving! They aim to ride!

The gang quickly gets to their feet.

JACK

What?

Grace and Red Feather take off on the horse.

The gang scrambles onto their horses to follow.

EXT. PRAIRIE - SAME TIME

Grace and Red Feather break out onto an open plain and race to catch the TRAIN in the distance. Grace's saddle bag jingles with the sound of gold coins. She rides hard.

The time they bought is short-lived as the chase is on with the gang catching up.

Nothing but land between them and the moving train ahead, with the gang closing in fast from behind.

Grace catches up to the train and gallops alongside one of the boxcars.

From a hundred yards away, the gang is in shooting range and begins to open fire. Bullets strike the wood and steel of the train.

Grace forces the boxcar's large SLIDING DOOR open. She JUMPS off her horse into it.

The horse with Red Feather begins to fall behind. Grace tugs the reins to keep the horse up to speed.

GRACE
Come on! Get in!

The gang has almost caught up to the train. Bullets WHIZ by.

Red Feather is barely conscious enough to stay on the horse. She begins to slump over.

Grace tries to pull Red Feather off the horse and onto the train car. For a moment, the horse begins to drift away from the car and Grace is herself half-hanging onto Red Feather and half off the train. Bullets IMPACT all around her.

With sheer will and every ounce of her strength, she manages to reign in the horse and PULLS Red Feather on board.

She also manages to reach back and get the gold pack off the horse as well -- just before a shot hits the horse and it goes down, TUMBLING under the horse of one of the men, knocks him off his horse -- and right under the train.

The other men pull away from the train to avoid a collision.

The train pulls ahead of the men who FIRE at it in vain.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SAME TIME

Grace pants and grins as she sees her pursuers recede in the distance.

GRACE

I can't believe we made it!

Her celebratory feelings quickly drain away as she looks over at Red Feather who breaths heavy and is in great pain.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'll take care of you. You saved me
and I'll save you. Don't worry,
Crazy... hey, what's your real
name?

Red Feather looks to Grace with a glaze over her eyes. Grace points to herself.

GRACE

Grace.

She points at Red Feather, who passes out.

Grace puts the bag under Red Feather's head as a pillow.

EXT. PRAIRIE - SAME TIME

The train disappears into the distance, leaving the agitated men in the dust.

Irwin checks the body of the fallen man. His expression says enough. Jack couldn't care less.

JACK

That train's going to Great Falls.
We'll catch the bitches there!

EXT. GREAT FALLS TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

The train departs. Nearby, Grace tucks Red Feather behind one of the legs of a LIGHTLY SQUEAKING WINDMILL.

EXT. GREAT FALLS - MAIN STREET -NIGHT

Grace frantically runs through the main street looking for a doctor. The DRUNKS and HORNY COUPLES that populate the street are no help.

GRACE

Excuse me, do you know where the
doctor is? The doctor? Where is he?

A woman points to the town doctor's office.

Grace runs up.

There is a sign that says "gawn drinkin."

GRACE

Dammit!

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Piano player. Poker table. Men drinking whiskey. Women in
corsets. Cigars.

Grace barges in.

GRACE

Is the doctor here? I need the
doctor's help.

SALOON KEEPER

He playin' over there. And if he
doin' well, he ain't helpin'
nobody.

ANGLE ON: The DOCTOR. Sweaty and fat with a monocle. And he
is indeed doing well with a pile of chips in front of him.

GRACE

Doctor! There's someone outside who
needs your help.

DOCTOR

We all need help.

He looks her up and down lasciviously.

DOCTOR

With my winnings you can be helping
me later tonight.

(to guys at table)

Two queens! Read 'em and weep!

He displays his cards and the others at the table grumble.

GRACE

Please. Just come out back.

DOCTOR

She wants me to "come out back."
Whatcha think of that, fellas?

The men laugh.

DOCTOR

Ain't no money from no patient I'm
gonna make better than this doozy
hot table right here.

Grace drops a gold coin on his pile. This gets the doctor's
attention right quick.

EXT. GREAT FALLS TRAIN STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Grace leads the doctor to Red Feather who is collapsed in a
heap. She shows him the leg.

GRACE

It's infected bad.

The Doctor does a double take.

DOCTOR

This an Injun! I ain't wasting no
perfectly good white medicine on
red meat!

GRACE

You're supposed to be a doctor!

DOCTOR

Whatever she did to get what she
got, I'm sure she deserve it.

Grace suppresses her anger.

DOCTOR

Now what you doin' out this time a
night? Runnin' 'round with this
dying trash. Your husband know
where you-- oof!

Grace CLOCKS him in the face with the butt of her gun and he
falls to his knees.

She instantly regrets she did it.

GRACE

Oh, no, I'm really sorry. I don't
know what came over me. I can pay
even more--

The doctor isn't even listening and begins to raise hell.

DOCTOR
Help! I been assaulted!

GRACE
Shut up!

DOCTOR
Help! HELP! INJUN!

Grace quickly scurries off with Red Feather who is barely able to stumble along.

EXT. GREAT FALLS MAIN STREET - MORNING

Jack and his men ride in, scowls on their faces.

JACK
Everyone spread out and knock doors
and heads 'til we find them.

Chester, his two deputies and six bounty hunters walk out at the end of the street to intercept Jack's crew. Twenty yards separates the two groups.

Jack is surprised.

JACK (CONT'D)
Chester Sampson and his shiny
shield.

CHESTER
Jack Vance. How does a man get to
be so rotten?

ANGLE ON: PURPLE PETALS flutter across the dirt street.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. VANCE HOUSEHOLD - ALABAMA - DAY

SUPER IN LARGE LETTERS: JACK

Purple petals line a street of weeping willows in bloom. A YOUNGER JACK (30s) sits on a porch swing reading "Leaves of Grass". He looks up to across the street where NEW CONFEDERATE VOLUNTEERS line up to enlist with ARMY RECRUITERS. He shakes his head in disapproval.

LUCY VANCE (20s) calls from inside, her voice sweet as a honey bee.

LUCY

Jack, can you be a darlin' and pick
some mint from the garden?

JACK

Sure thing, darlin'!

Jack smiles and hops over the porch railing.

He picks some mint. Lucy comes out from the house with a
pitcher of lemonade. A total Southern belle, Jack can't help
himself but to scoop her up.

LUCY

Jack Vance! You stop that right now
or I'm gonna spill this lemonade.

Jack puts her down and they kiss. She pours the lemonade and
adds the mint.

A YOUNGER LEFTY walks up. He wears a Confederate hat and has
on a uniform two sizes too large.

LEFTY

Hey, Jack, look at me!

JACK

You lose your damn mind?! Why would
you sign up?

LEFTY

Girls like a man in uniform.

Lefty grins big.

LEFTY

I'm looking good, huh, Lucy?

Lucy looks over to Jack, concerned.

JACK

You gonna go be a meat bag now?

LEFTY

Union already overrun Huntsville.
They just 20 miles north of here.
We gonna send 'em Yanks packin'.

Other NEW RECRUITS pass by on the other side of the street.

LEFTY

Don't worry, Brother, I'll be fine.

Lefty runs across the street to join the other soldiers.

INT. VANCE HOUSEHOLD - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack packs his bag. The sound of CANNON FIRE in the far distance can be heard.

LUCY

Can I do anything to stop you?

Jack shakes his head.

JACK

That boy ain't never gonna grow up.

LUCY

He'll be fine. You know how I know that? Same reason I'll be fine, we got Jack Vance lookin' out for us.

JACK

I love ya, Lucy.

They kiss. She holds him tight.

LUCY

You promise me you gonna take care?

JACK

Don't worry about a thing, darlin'.
You just keep that lemonade cold
and that bed warm.

The FAR-OFF sounds of battle can be heard.

EXT. BATTLE OF BLAKELY - DAY

Jack and Lefty's REGIMENT are in an intense close-quarters battle with A UNION REGIMENT.

Jack is a fierce fighter. From his sword to his pistol, he is in constant motion, shooting and hacking people.

Lefty fights nearby and Jack does his best to protect him. Over the hill appears AN ENTIRE NEW UNION REGIMENT.

JACK

Where's our backup?!

CONFEDERATE SOLDIER

They ain't never show--

SHOOP! A bullet impacts the soldier's head.

The brothers are quickly overtaken and separated as the battle becomes a slaughter not in their favor.

JACK
Brother!

LEFTY
Jack!

Lefty is hit in the head with the butt of a rifle and drops. Jack can't see him.

JACK
Lefty!

Jack stabs a Union soldier and uses him as a shield to make his way over to his downed brother.

Lefty crawls along the ground and moans. Just as another Union soldier is about to come down on him with a lance, Jack runs him through with a bayonet.

He picks up the out-of-sorts Lefty over his shoulder and continues to fight. He shoots down a horse-mounted Union rider and heaves Lefty on the horse. He hops on too and they ride off.

EXT. DECATUR MAIN STREET - LATER

The town is left in shambles. Buildings are shot up and still smoke. The street has become a makeshift hospital for wounded soldiers, the dead and mourning townspeople.

Jack leaves Lefty with a NURSE.

JACK
You're gonna be alright, Brother.

EXT. VANCE HOUSEHOLD - MOMENTS LATER

Half the house stands and smolders. Jack dismounts.

JACK
Lucy! Lucy!

Jack runs inside.

BEAT. We hear Jack's BLOODCURDLING SCREAM.

JACK (O.C.) (CONT'D)
No! God, why... my Lucy.

EXT. DECATUR MAIN STREET - LATER

Lefty recovers on a bed with a solemn Jack by his side.
Jack spots the ARMY CAPTAIN enter a TENT. Jack follows.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

The captain unrolls some maps.

JACK
Lieutenant Vance, Sir. Backup never
came. They must have gotten
ambushed.

The Captain gives him a look of pity.

ARMY CAPTAIN
Son, ask yourself why a field in
the middle of nowhere matters.

JACK
(realizing)
It doesn't.

ARMY CAPTAIN
We needed a diversionary battle to
slow down Union advances while we
resupplied our men downriver. Your
service allowed that to happen.

JACK
We were slaughtered. No one here to
stop the Union from tearing through
town. Lucy...

Jack sees red.

SHWOOF! Jack stabs the Captain in the ear canal with a knife
and digs it in.

Jack pulls out the knife. The Captain collapses.

Jack goes to leave the tent, but then PAUSES. He takes a
quick moment to gather a gold watch, some pendants and other
valuables from within.

CUE MONTAGE:**INT./EXT. VARIOUS**

-Jack and Lefty drink hard.

-Jack and Lefty visit brothels.

-Jack and the gang rob banks.

-Jack and the gang get in shoot-outs.

-Jack mourns over a picture of Lucy by a campfire.

END MONTAGE.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. GREAT FALLS MAIN STREET - BACK TO PRESENT

Back to the moment of encounter on the street between Jack and his men, and Chester's bounty hunter posse.

JACK

You must've learned how to fly.

CHESTER

You can't kill me, Jack.

JACK

Now I'd be curious why you think that is?

CHESTER

'Cause I won't rest till I see you dead.

ANGLE ON: Grace tucked away with Red Feather under the porch of the saloon, not too far from the face-off.

Grace peers out, hopeful.

GRACE

(whispers, excited)

The marshal's here. He'll take care of Jack. This'll be over soon.

Chester looks over Jack's crew, which now only includes Scar, Irwin and one last man.

CHESTER

Looks like you down some men since last we met. And just where is that little brother of yours?

Jack flinches, recovers.

JACK

Very Good, Chester. You are ever so keen. Who's that you got ride along? Bruce, that you?

Black Teeth replies.

BLACK TEETH

Yep. How's it goin' Jack?

JACK

We used to ride.

BLACK TEETH

Used to. But now the price is right.

JACK

Now, I don't know about that. What we fetchin' for? 200? We just robbed that bank, pocket's a bit heavy. Say I triple that to turn on the Marshal here.

Chester looks at his crew who are exchanging shady looks.

CHESTER

Now, don't none of you get any ideas. I have a deal.

JACK

No. You have guns for hire.

Jack motions toward the two deputies.

JACK

That deal extends to you youngins as well. No one need know how things went down out here today. Everyone goes on rich.

Chester's men exchange looks, agree to take the deal. Chester calls out to Jack without much confidence.

CHESTER

We could settle this like men. One-on-one. No weapons.

JACK

We could. But we ain't.

All of Chester's men turn and face Chester, THEIR BACKS TO JACK AND HIS MEN.

CHESTER

Christ.

He quickly pulls his gun and takes out a couple of the men, but he's outgunned.

Chester gets SHOT multiple times and collapses.

ANGLE ON: Grace, horrified.

GRACE

God, no.

ANGLE ON: Scar leans over to Jack.

SCAR

But we ain't got the gold to pay out.

JACK

Exactly. Open fire.

Before the firing squad can turn back around --

BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM!

A volley of shots. Jack and his men finish the bounty hunters off. Eight men and Chester lay dead in the street.

GRACE

(panic, whispers)

There ain't no men left to save us.
We got to go.

Jack turns to his men.

JACK

The consequence for those who turn on the conditions of their employ.

Jack's men definitely get the message. The townspeople are frozen in fear.

JACK

There was a woman who came into town last night. She carries with her a wounded Injun and my gold. Who here has information relevant to my concern?

The Doctor, sporting a black eye, steps forward, holding out a gold coin.

DOCTOR
I seen her last night. She
bushwhacked me and gone a-runnin'.

Jack snatches the coin from the disappointed doctor. Jack calls out for all to hear.

JACK
I own everybody in this town.
Consider your lives collateral
until you return me the gold, the
Injun, and the woman, Grace.

Nobody moves.

JACK
What're ya'll waitin' for? Find.
My. Property!

Scar and Irwin smirk as everyone scrambles.

CUE MONTAGE:

INT./EXT. GREAT FALLS - VARIOUS

From the outhouses to the stables, rooftops and sheds, the search is on by Jack's men and the townsfolk.

Jack, passing by the porch where Grace and Red Feather were hiding, his sixth sense alerted, drops down with his gun drawn --

No one there. Jack stands back up and walks on.

Grace and Red Feather are nowhere to be found.

END MONTAGE.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Jack takes a shot of whiskey at the bar. Scar walks up afraid to speak.

SCAR
Nothin', boss. Everyone been
lookin' all day.

JACK
Then they gonna keep lookin' all
night.

Irwin walks outside and yells at the townspeople who wait in silence.

IRWIN

Get your craggy asses back out there! Get!

Tired people resume the search.

INT. UNDERTAKER'S OFFICE - LATER

The dead bodies of the posse are laid out next to each other on the floor. A few are already in coffins.

The UNDERTAKER (50s) whistles as he seals up a coffin and uses a HOIST AND PULLEY CONTRAPTION to more easily move the coffin over to the finished stack.

He turns to the next dead body. It's Marshal Chester.

As the undertaker goes to open an empty casket, he is surprised to see Red Feather. He leans in and checks to see if she's breathing.

UNDERTAKER

Oh, my. You still alive... or somethin'.

As he turns around to leave, Grace steps out of another coffin with a gun. The coin bag is at her feet.

GRACE

You'll do no such thing.

UNDERTAKER

Well, I'll be. The alive be dead and the dead be alive.

Grace keeps her gun trained on the undertaker.

GRACE

You have to help us.

UNDERTAKER

Oh, no. I ain't ready for my grave yet.

She shows him some of the gold and his eyes go wide.

UNDERTAKER

But being buried in a nice coffin someday sounds like a good idea.

Grace holsters her gun.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Jack and his men occupy the bar and the mood is tense. He pours himself a whiskey.

SALOON KEEPER
I'll start a tab.

Jack glances at him.

SALOON KEEPER
On the house.

The saloon keeper turns back to cleaning some glasses as the men pour freely for themselves.

JACK
Nobody left town and we turned the whole thing upside down. They turn into goddamn cactuses?

Irwin laughs and Scar smacks him.

SCAR
We get 'em soon boss. They gotta come out fer something.

Jack gets an idea.

JACK
You right about that, Scar. You right about that.

INT. UNDERTAKER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Red Feather is tied down to a table. The undertaker cuts off her pant leg while Grace hands him supplies.

Red Feather mumbles unintelligibly.

UNDERTAKER
Listen to that. She sounds like she in a hurry to get somewhere. Hand me the anesthesia.

Grace looks at the table of bottles.

GRACE
Which one?

UNDERTAKER

The one with the horse on it.

She gets it but gives a worried look.

UNDERTAKER

You gotta put all types of animals
under in this job.

He applies a rag to Red Feather's face. She goes limp.

The undertaker examines Red Feather's wound closely.

He grabs a pair of COAL TONGS from the fireplace.

Grace kisses Red Feather's sweaty forehead.

The undertaker applies the fire-hot tongs to Red Feather's
leg.

Red Feather immediately wakes up in extreme pain. Grace holds
a rag with the horse anesthesia tightly over Red Feather's
mouth to both muffle her scream and knock her back out.

Red Feather's pained wide-eyes slowly close, and she quickly
passes out.

The undertaker wraps the leg.

UNDERTAKER

If we don't get some medicine from
the Doc, she ain't gonna make it.

GRACE

So get some.

UNDERTAKER

Gonna look mighty suspicious if I'm
asking for medicine with a dying
Injun missing somewhere in town.

Grace pulls out a hammer and nail.

GRACE

I'll double the gold.

The undertaker hesitates, and then takes the nail.

INT. DOC'S OFFICE - LATER

The Doctor paces back and forth, nervous in the company of
Jack and his men.

DOCTOR
Why you think she gonna come back
here? She ain't like me much.

Jack leans back in a chair and props his feet up on the table.

JACK
'Cause ain't no where else to go
for medicine.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Jack motions for the Doctor to open it and for Scar and his men to hide in ambush on the opposite sides of the door.

DOCTOR
Who-who is it?

UNDERTAKER (O.C.)
Linus, it's me. I hurt myself.

DOCTOR
Charles?

The Doctor opens the door. The undertaker gives a look of surprise to see Jack and his men.

DOCTOR
What happened?

UNDERTAKER
Um, I was hammerin' up the coffins
and...

He holds out his hand. It has a nail through it.

The Doctor takes out some pliers and pulls it out of the undertakers hand.

The undertaker yelps in pain.

The Doctor puts some OINTMENT on it.

DOCTOR
All these years and never seen you
to be uncareful.

The undertaker gives a nervous laugh.

UNDERTAKER
Heh, yeah, must be gettin' old.
Woulda taken care of it myself, but
I'm all outta medicine.

DOCTOR

Oh, here ya go. I got some extra--

As he goes to hand the jar to the undertaker, Jack steps in.

JACK

Now hold on a minute there. Why don't you take me to the scene of the accident? Let's make sure your manor of your toil doesn't pose any more safety concerns.

The undertaker is petrified.

INT. UNDERTAKER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The undertaker leads Jack and his men in and breathes in relief.

UNDERTAKER

See, nothin' here but me and some coffins--

BAM!

Jack shoots one of the coffins where the chest would be.

The corpse collapses out.

JACK

You think I don't know you're here?

BAM!

Jack shoots another one of the coffins and checks the body.

UNDERTAKER

They dead. I-I-I don't know what you--

BAM!

JACK

You're time is coming. What're your last thoughts?

BAM!

The undertaker flinches with each shot.

JACK

Nothin' you can do when I come for you but die!

BAM!

JACK

You gave it a good run, but you
ain't cut out for this world. You
are weak. Too incapable of
dictating your own fortunes.

ANGLE ON: In the rafters above, Grace lays precariously
balanced across two crossbeams. An unconscious Red Feather
has been hoisted up with ropes and pulleys and DANGLES above
Jack and his men.

Red Feather slightly sways back and forth as the BLOOD from
her leg POOLS UP at the tip of her feet.

BAM!

JACK

Women better than you have died for
less.

Jack proceeds down the rest of the row, shoots each coffin,
and checks its contents to make sure there's a corpse.

A DROP OF RED FEATHER'S BLOOD just misses Jack and lands on
the floor next to his boot.

The undertaker notices and glances up.

Grace watches anxiously, continuously WIPING the blood off of
Red Feather's foot with the doll every time Red Feather sways
towards her. However, Grace can't keep up with every drop,
and some drip down when Red Feather sways away from her.

Jack gets to the last coffin.

Jack puts the nozzle of the gun right up to the coffin's head
and FIRES. No movement from within.

Jack kicks it over.

Chester's body falls out, still dead, now with an extra
bullet in his head.

SCAR

That's all nine, boss.

Jack is not happy. With a grunt, he tosses the undertaker the
ointment and leaves with his men.

The undertaker is severely shaken up. He takes a seat on a
coffin and trembles. He jumps at the sound of Grace dropping
from the rafters.

UNDERTAKER

What in tarnation? You trying to
get us killed?!

GRACE

Shh! They'll hear you.

Grace lowers Red Feather down and moves her back onto the table.

Grace takes the ointment from the undertaker and applies it to Red Feather's leg.

GRACE

How are we gonna get out of town?

UNDERTAKER

The only way anybody leave this
town.

EXT. GREAT FALLS - MAIN STREET - MORNING

The undertaker makes his way out of town on a wagon of coffins pulled by three horses. He sees Irwin up ahead.

IRWIN

Where you think yer goin'?

UNDERTAKER

These bodies startin' to stink.

Irwin gives the cart a once over. The undertaker quivers in fear.

Irwin waves him on. As the cart continues on its way it hits a BUMP. Irwin notices the undertaker glance at the coffins in the back.

INT. SALOON - SAME TIME

Jack sits at the bar, calls out to the SALOON KEEPER.

JACK

Gimmie a lemonade.

The saloon keeper chuckles, thinks Jack is joking.

SALOON KEEPER

Sure.

He goes to pour a whisky.

JACK
 (deadly serious)
 Do I look like I'm joking?

The saloon keeper quickly puts down the whisky and begins to make a lemonade. Scar walks up.

SCAR
 They ain't in town. Maybe she left
 that night after the doc--

JACK
 She's here. I can smell her!

Jack smacks the whiskey bottle off the bar in frustration.

EXT. SALOON - SAME TIME

From the back of the undertaker's wagon, Grace spies out of the bullet hole in her coffin. As it passes by the saloon, she sees Jack through a window.

UNDERTAKER
 We gonna make it.

GRACE
 Shh.

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - MOMENTS LATER

The undertaker drives the cart past the edge of town.

IRWIN (O.S.)
 Hold it!

The undertaker stops the wagon as Irwin rides up.

UNDERTAKER
 (under breath)
 Oh, heaven above, I will forever
 embrace his holiness if He shall
 continue to let me live past this
 day on His kingdom on earth.

Irwin gets right up in the undertaker's face.

IRWIN
 You must think I'm right stupid?

Irwin SHOVES the undertaker aside and grabs the crowbar sitting next to him. He begins to pop open some caskets.

CREAK-CRACK. CRACK. First casket is empty.

IRWIN

Don't want to alert no one in town,
but I know youse got the girls and
the gold.

UNDERTAKER

I just got the bodies--

Irwin PISTOL WHIPS the undertaker across the face, busting his teeth. He cries out as blood pours down his chin.

UNDERTAKER

Ma teeth!

IRWIN

Don't wanna hear no more outta you.

CRACK. He opens another -- and there lays Grace with the bag of gold and a gun pointed directly at Irwin.

IRWIN

Now the last thing you want to do,
little lady, is shoot, draw the
attention of everyone in town.

He motions to his own gun.

IRWIN

It's why I ain't kill ya yet.

Red Feather weakly struggles to get out of her coffin that's buried under the weight of two other coffins. She grunts and groans to no avail.

Irwin smiles. He reaches for the bag of gold, Grace raises the gun.

IRWIN

Don't do nuthin' stupid, and we all
get outta here alive and go our
separate ways.

The undertaker fearfully scans around. No one is yet witness to the commotion in the back of his cart.

UNDERTAKER

Let him take it.

GRACE

What guarantee do we have?

Irwin draws his knife.

IRWIN

The more you talk the more I think
I might end you for all the
trouble.

Irwin GASPS and his eyes go wide. He looks down.

Grace holds Ben's BLOOD-STAINED knife -- she's stabbed Irwin under the ribs.

Irwin looks up gives Grace a look of shock. Grace seems almost as surprised as he is.

GRACE

I-I-I...

Irwin collapses out of the cart pulling a COUPLE CASKETS down with him.

SPLAT. He lies face down in mud, unmoving. Grace turns to the undertaker.

GRACE

Move.

The undertaker quickly gets the cart rolling again.

Grace looks at Irwin's lifeless body as the cart makes its way past the edge of town and out onto the open prairie.

Still in the back of the cart, Grace drops the knife next to her. She breaths very shallow and rocks back and forth, processing the kill.

Red Feather manages to get a hand through the crack in her coffin and takes Grace's hand. She gives it a squeeze.

Grace looks to Red Feather in shock. Red Feather gives a nod of approval and understanding.

Red Feather hands Grace the blood-stained doll. Grace embraces it for comfort, lies down next to her friend.

They hold hands and look into each other's eyes for support and strength as the cart reaches a safe distance from town.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - SAME TIME

The undertaker unloads the caskets and helps Grace open up the one that contains Red Feather.

Red Feather is doing better. Grace helps her out of the coffin.

UNDERTAKER

Gimme. Gimme.

Grace gives him a small pouch of gold. The undertaker counts it and grins.

UNDERTAKER

Where you gals goin' now?

Grace looks to Red Feather. Red Feather points to the north.

GRACE

North. Get her back to her tribe so they can take care of her.

The undertaker turns his horse and cart south.

GRACE

Where you going?

UNDERTAKER

Opposite of you. Bad Jack's gonna figure out what happened and come lookin'. When he does, thank the good Lord I ain't gonna be anywhere near.

The undertaker takes off.

EXT. GREAT FALLS - LATER

Irwin's body is flipped over next to a couple fallen caskets. Scar examines him, makes out a few short raspy breaths.

SCAR

He still breathin'. Barely.

Jack puts his foot on Irwin's face, completely submerging it into the mud, suffocating the last breath of life out of him.

Scar remorsefully watches Irwin's last quivers, but knows enough not to interfere.

JACK

Now where's that undertaker?

EXT. GRAVEYARD - LATER

Scar examines the tracks and points in the direction that Grace and Red Feather went.

Jack takes off with his men.

EXT. BLACKFOOT TENT VILLAGE - DAY

Grace and Red Feather ride up towards a FEW BLACKFEET.

Red Feather weakly motions for Grace to hang back and rides up to greet them.

They catch her as she wobbles off her horse and look suspiciously over to Grace.

Grace waves hello.

INT. TENT - LATER

Grace quietly sits across from the chief as he intensely confers with Red Feather and a BLACKFOOT TRANSLATOR (30).

CHIEF

(subtitled)

What are you thinking bringing her here?

RED FEATHER

She saved me too. And she's pregnant.

The Chief glances at Red Feather's doll. Nods in understanding.

CHIEF

(subtitled)

You have a warrior's heart.

(to Translator)

She can cross these lands safely. She leaves in the morning.

Grace anxiously looks to the translator.

TRANSLATOR

The Chief is grateful for what you done to save his granddaughter. He is also sorry to hear of Ben's death, who was a good man.

GRACE

Thank you.

The Chief confers with some other men and voices get raised. Red Feather is clearly upset and in disagreement.

GRACE

What are they arguing for?

TRANSLATOR

Many do not think it is good idea
for a white man to be in our
village.

GRACE

White woman.

TRANSLATOR

Yes. That worse. You can stay for
night, but then you leave. We take
you to edge of territory tomorrow.
Where do you go?

GRACE

Where do I go?

TRANSLATOR

Where are your people?

Grace shakes her head.

GRACE

Georgia... maybe. I don't even know
what's there for me anymore.

Grace pulls over her pack and reveals the gold.

GRACE

I have a gift.

The Chief shakes his head and speaks.

TRANSLATOR

You do not understand. That in your
hand, is trouble.

She puts the gold back, embarrassed, confused.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING VILLAGE - SAME TIME

Jack, Scar and the remaining two men have taken a position on
the ridge. Jack looks at the village through a telescope. He
spots Grace exiting from a tent with the bag of gold.

SCAR

200 Injuns got our gold. We
supposed to trade some beads for
it?!

CRACK!

Jack busts the telescope over Scar's skull. That shuts him up right quick.

JACK
She gets reinforcements. We get reinforcements.

EXT. FORT BENTON - DAY

Jack and his men ride up to a medium-sized FORT that houses an army regiment. Some SOLDIERS STAND GUARD.

INT. FORT BENTON - LATER

CAPTAIN WILLIAM ROSCOE HILL tries on different captain hats in the mirror. Jack and his men are brought in.

JACK
Thank you for seeing us.

ROSCOE
(Southern accent)
Captain.

Captain Roscoe settles on which hat he'll wear.

ROSCOE
I am Captain William Roscoe Hill,
and you will address me as Captain.

JACK
My apologies, Captain Hill. And from a soldier to a commanding officer, I thank you for your time and hospitality of your immaculate barracks.

ROSCOE
You served, you say?

JACK
That's right. Lieutenant Ben Lewis, 41st regiment out of the great state of Alabama.

Roscoe instantly warms up.

ROSCOE
Well, I'll be! It's an honor to have you, Lieutenant. We haven't seen much action up here during the
(MORE)

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

war, but we were with you in spirit.

JACK

And a great help it was, Captain.

ROSCOE

Someone had to defend Southern gold mines. Hats off to you and what you boys had to go through. Damn shame real men didn't win the war. The North with their tariffs and thievery on the good people of the South. May I offer you a drink?

JACK

If you do, I shall accept.

Roscoe lets out a HUGE LAUGH.

ROSCOE

Bwah-ha-ha! There's no humor like Southern humor!

JACK

Well, we do like to have our fun.

Jack's men smirk and Jack shoots them a look to shut them up. Roscoe pours a round.

ROSCOE

So what can I do for you?

JACK

Well you see, Cap'n, my men and I, we don't know where to turn. We just some simple miners now, trying to get our lives back on track after the tarnal war, and...

Jack takes a deep breath and mocks that he can't go on.

ROSCOE

(caring)

What is it? You can tell me, soldier.

Jack pulls out Grace's piece of lace from earlier and examines it in his hands.

JACK

We was out mining, and some damn Injuns came and take my woman. They holdin' her over at their village.

Roscoe shoots out of his seat.

ROSCOE

What?!

JACK

We was just mindin' our own
business and they rode in like the
red devil himself. We was
powerless. I can still hear her
cries...

Roscoe calls out to his COMMANDER.

ROSCOE

Commander, prepare my horse!

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING VILLAGE - LATER

Through a telescope, the worked up captain spies Grace sitting next to a teepee. He makes note of her ripped lace dress.

ROSCOE

That poor woman, what she been
through.

A COUPLE SOLDIERS, Jack and his men stand beside the Captain.

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

I can't stand no red chugger
featherhead, gut eatin', wagon
burnin' Injuns! And touchin' our
women?! You have my personal
guarantee, Brother, the full
services of the U.S. Army will be
made available to teach them burner-
creepers a lesson they ain't never
gonna forget!

This is music to Jack's ears.

ROSCOE (CONT'D)

Tell the men we ride at dawn.

Scar leans in close to Jack.

SCAR

You shoul'da been a politician,
boss.

JACK

Maybe I still will be.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - POW WOW - NIGHT

Villagers dance around a great bonfire, beat drums and chant.

Grace sits off to the side. She watches Red Feather teach a group of impressed women the Bullion knot.

A WOMAN brings Grace some food. Grace apprehensively tries it. It is delicious. She nods in thanks.

Red Feather briefly hops around on her one good foot. This elicits a round of laughter and revs up the celebratory vibe.

The Chief is a bit drunk and joins his granddaughter hopping around.

The translator comes over with some wine and hands it to Grace.

TRANSLATOR

The Chief is more happy when Red Feather is around.

GRACE

Red Feather is her name? I didn't even...

Grace looks at her Red Feather with new eyes. She is overwhelmed with shame as she understands her own racism for the first time.

GRACE

Red Feather is the most amazing woman I have ever known.

TRANSLATOR

She has been through much. She says she owes you her life.

GRACE

And I owe her mine. She has done more for me than I can ever repay.

A TEENAGE GIRL (16) gets her hair braided and flowers put into it. She makes eye contact with a TEENAGE BOY (16) and they shyly smile at each other.

Through the fire, Grace watches the universal display of young love.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. MONTANA PRAIRIE - DAY

SUPER IN LARGE LETTERS: GRACE

A YOUNGER GRACE (22) sits next to a YOUNGER BEN (27) who drives their horse drawn wagon. Grace has on a fine dress and holds a parasol.

Ben looks over at Grace and shoots her a dopey grin. Grace returns a large smile and puts her arm through Ben's.

GRACE

Can't wait to live in my new home
with my war hero.

Ben drops his smile.

BEN

Aw, c'mon now, I told you not to
say things like that. I ain't no
hero.

Ben checks a MAP and looks out at the landscape. He stops the horses.

BEN

We're here!

Grace looks around at the rather unremarkable and undeveloped plot of flat dry land.

GRACE

You sure?

Ben hops out elated and begins pointing. Grace is underwhelmed to say the least.

BEN

Can you believe it? The house here!
Wheat as tall as your head all the
way to that hill! We can have some
berry bushes here. Oh, and some
squash over there! This place can
be everything we could dream of!

GRACE

(bothered)
And just where we gonna sleep
tonight?

Ben doesn't hear her and continues to excitedly explore.

EXT. CABIN - DAWN - A YEAR LATER

The cabin is livable, but not completely finished. The porch and the living room extension are still incomplete.

The field has been plowed, but there is no vegetation yet.

INT. CABIN - DAWN - SAME TIME

Grace, from her bed, watches Ben sleep in his. The early sun highlights his broad shoulders and toned arms. Although he has the body of a man, the expression on his face is that of a troubled child.

She crawls over into his bed and strokes his face. He relaxes. Her hand begins to go further down the covers.

SFX: SOUNDS OF BATTLE from the front lines of the Civil War. Gunshots. Men screaming. Explosions.

Ben's eyes twitch. He's having a bad dream. Ben awakes with a start, ready to strike Grace.

BEN
What are you?!

Grace cowers. Ben catches himself.

GRACE
I'm sorry!

Ben lowers his arm, feels terrible.

BEN
I... I'd never hurt you.

GRACE
(shaken, unsettled)
I don't even know what you would or wouldn't do. Do you?

BEN
I know I would never hurt you.

He puts his face in his hands and begins to cry.

GRACE
Here we go again. War's over.

Grace glares at him while Ben avoids eye contact and gathers himself.

BEN
I have to get supplies in town.

He leaves.

INT. GENERAL STORE - LATER - DAY

Ben picks out some items and puts them in a basket. MR. KENT (50s) works behind the counter.

BEN
Hi, Mr. Kent. Any messages?

MR. KENT
Good day. Yes, something just came in for Mrs. Lewis yesterday.

He hands over an ENVELOPE.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Ben hands Grace the envelope and begins unpacking supplies.

Grace rips into the envelope and lets out a YELP.

BEN
What's wrong?

She holds out the letter.

GRACE
It's Daddy. He's dead!

BEN
He was a good man.

GRACE
You got what you wanted out of him.

Ben stares out the window, lost in thought.

GRACE
You see something out there? I couldn't even be at my daddy's funeral. I couldn't be there with momma and my sisters. What do they think of me?

BEN
What do you think of you?

GRACE

What kind of a question is that,
Ben Lewis? What kind of a question
is that?!

BEN

Sorry.

GRACE

You want to know what I think about
being out here?

She begins breaking china.

GRACE

Out here away from everything I
know with a man that stares out at
nothing? A half-man that's too
scared to touch me but once a moon?

Ben stands up and goes to walk away.

BEN

I'll leave you by yourself.

GRACE

You're always running but you
haven't stopped to see where you're
at! Well, let me tell you, you made
it all the way to Montana! You
happy now? Am I supposed to be
happy for you?

BEN

Be happy with me.

She slaps him HARD.

GRACE

You don't know what's for me.

The slap stings. Grace watches as BLOOD forms on Ben's lip.
Ben speaks with sincerity.

BEN

I know it don't feel fair, being
out here with this life you didn't
know you signed up for.

He wipes the blood from his lip.

BEN

If I knew how to do better by you,
I swear I would. Sometimes... I'm
lost. But I find myself in you.

She feels ashamed.

GRACE

I know I can't understand what
horrors made you as you are.

BEN

And you shouldn't. The war, it's
always with me. I'm trying to
forget. I love you.

GRACE

I know.

He looks into her eyes.

BEN

It may never be easy for us, but
whatever happens, I'll give you all
I got, every minute, I swear. And
one day, I hope you can truly love
me back and embrace the life we can
make here, together.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Grace watches the celebration by firelight and can't help but
be overwhelmed and strangely happy. She tears up at her
memories of Ben.

GRACE

Thank you, Ben Lewis. I'll love you
every day until I die, and be
driven by want no more.

Grace looks down at the knife in her hands. She looks up to
Red Feather who laughs and chats with some friends.

Grace grips the knife just as Red Feather taught her and
THROWS IT --

SHOOFF! It impacts the tree just a few feet from Red Feather's
head.

Red Feather's eyes go wide in surprise. The music and
celebration stops. All eyes on Grace.

Red Feather looks from the knife to Grace and begins to laugh. Grace and Red Feather embrace and fall down laughing. It's infectious and the tribe joins in.

The celebration starts back up. Grace and Red Feather dance spiritedly around the warm fire.

GRACE

This is so wonderful!

Red Feather beams back at Grace.

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

You keep talking but no one understands you!

GRACE

Sure, whatever you say!

Grace looks around at the revelry. She feels warm, accepted. She stops dancing, steps away, touched. Red Feather stops dancing too, approaches.

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

You okay?

GRACE

This is a whole world I never understood. Filled with love and pain and happiness and values. Thank you for showing me. I didn't deserve it. I always treated you all like you were some bad part of my story when I'm a part of yours, the bad part. I'm sorry.

Red Feather acknowledges whatever Grace just said was significant.

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

You were actually worth saving. Enough talk, let's dance!

Red Feather pulls Grace back into the music.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING VILLAGE - DAWN

The troops line up above the sleepy village. Fire pits still smoke from the party the night before.

EXT. TENT VILLAGE - SAME TIME

The village is just waking up. A few women clean up. Some kids run around playing.

Then, with the call of a BUGLE, the massacre is on.

Footsoldiers and calvary DESCEND on the unsuspecting village with no mercy. They plow through the tents and kick over supplies.

Newly awoken Blackfoot men are shot down as they run out of their tents.

Embers kicked aside by horses begin to burn tents.

All the screaming and pleading from women and children are part of the white noise of what has quickly become an outdoor slaughterhouse.

EXT. RIDGE - SAME TIME

Jack and his men watch from above as they keep Roscoe company.

Just as Jack is about to join the fray, the Captain holds an arm out.

ROSCOE

Relax Soldier. Let the boys do the dirty work. We're safer up here.

Jack sees red.

JACK

Now why send others to die for your transgressions --

He swiftly runs Roscoe through with a bayonet.

Even Jack's men are stunned.

JACK

When you can do the dying so well yourself?

The Captain is in shock as he stumbles around with the bayonet still in him.

The few soldiers in the vicinity draw their weapons and a quick FIREFIGHT ensues.

Only Jack and Scar survive, along with the impaled captain.

Jack pulls out the bayonet and the Captain falls dead.

JACK

Ride!

He heads towards the burning village, Scar behind him.

INT./EXT. TENT - SAME TIME

Grace is huddled in a tent with PETRIFIED CHILDREN. She keeps her arms around them.

Outside, Red Feather and her Grandfather guard the tent with all they got. Even with one having an injured leg, and the other being elderly, they are a force to be reckoned with.

Every soldier that comes by, Red Feather and Chief are adept at using whatever means necessary, be it a hatchet, pistol or fists to get each others' back and keep the tent safe.

ANGLE ON: Like the devil himself, Jack walks among the burning teepees, ripping through both villagers and soldiers as he goes tent to tent looking for Grace.

ANGLE ON: The fight outside Grace's tent continues. Scar appears from behind a tent with a clear shot at Red Feather.

The Chief sees Scar at the last moment and jumps in the way of the bullet. He gets shot in the chest.

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

Grandfather!

The Chief goes down. Red Feather hurls a hatchet at Scar and gets him in the throat. That's the end of Scar.

Red Feather goes to the Chief's side --

Just as Jack TRAMPLES the chief on horseback and knocks Red Feather back.

The chief lies motionless as Jack and Red Feather make eye contact.

Jack spots Grace through the tent flap behind Red Feather. He dismounts.

Red Feather turns to Grace and the children.

RED FEATHER

Go. Go!

Red Feather turns back to Jack, her war face on.

JACK
(to Red Feather)
I missed you too, sweetheart.

Jack and Red Feather immediately begin to brawl. Red Feather initially holds her own, forcing Jack to take a few steps back. It buys the witnessing Grace the time she needs to get the children out of the tent and lead them safely away.

Although Red Feather gets a few punches and scratches in, in her weakened state, ultimately, there isn't much she can do.

Jack manages to knock her on the ground and pin her down. He digs a finger into her injured leg. Red Feather HOWLS in pain.

Although being held down, Red Feather manages to reach over and pull the hatchet from Scar's body. She slashes at Jack.

Jack intercepts her arm and takes the weapon.

He LODGES it into her stomach.

Red Feather collapses onto the ground bleeding and has no fight left in her.

Jack looks into her eyes.

JACK
You killed my brother, now you can
join him in Hell.

ON GRACE: A MOUNTED SOLDIER intercepts Grace, towering over her. She stands in front of the children to shield them.

The soldier pulls a gun and aims it at one of the kids who is running away.

The nearby translator sees this and helplessly SHOUTS out, begins to run over but there's no way he'll arrive in time.

Grace KICKS BURNING EMBERS FROM A FIRE into the horse's face causing the animal to buck the soldier off. The Translator and his wife quickly pile on the soldier and take him out.

The translator nods in appreciation to Grace. He and his wife take the kids and run off.

Grace mounts the horse with the bag of coins. She calls out to Jack.

GRACE

Jack!

She makes sure he sees her, then rides away from the village towards the mountains.

JACK

Bitch!

Jack pushes a confederate officer off a horse, mounts it and follows.

Red Feather lays on her side and witnesses the village burning and her people being killed.

As she lays there next to her grandfather, they make eye contact. They speak between the rasps of the last breaths of life they can muster.

RED FEATHER (SUBTITLE)

I brought this on us.

CHIEF (SUBTITLE)

It was always coming. This is just the form it finally came in.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - SAME TIME

Grace rides with all she's got. She heads towards an abandoned GOLD MINE.

Jack is in pursuit.

INT. MINE - VARIOUS - MOMENTS LATER

Jack enters the mines.

Grace tries to get lost in the mines, but Jack expertly follows the sounds of her footsteps, recently disturbed puddles, and flitting shadows.

INT. PROCESSING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Grace emerges into a processing area. It's a large room, and also a dead end.

Some MINE CARTS are scattered around the old tracks.

Grace begins to crawl into the first cart she sees, but then changes her mind.

She scurries from cart to cart trying to pick one to hide in.

Jack emerges into the processing area. He makes his way cautiously and calls out.

JACK

Just you, me and the gold. And only two of us are coming out of here.

Jack takes note of the mine carts.

JACK

Now, tell me, why you ain't just leave the gold behind? I mighta let you live at some point.

ANGLE ON: Grace huddled inside a mine cart.

GRACE

You lie. And it's high time something don't go your way.

Grace's voice has a tinny metallic quality to it as it echoes through the cavern, making it difficult to place the exact location.

Jack smiles.

JACK

Just like a woman. You talk too much, and now by your sound, I know you're in a little metal hole.

With his gun drawn, Jack begins to investigate all the mine carts, looking for Grace.

He kicks one over. CLANK!

No one inside.

JACK

I have to admit, you didn't make it easy.

He kicks another one over. CLANK! No Grace.

CLANK. CLANK.

After checking all but the last cart, Jack smiles and heads over.

JACK

All this 'cause you ain't stay in your bedroom where you belonged.

Gun cocked, sure of the kill, he approaches.

JACK

Women ain't meant for this world,
but for the whims of man. Ain't ya
learn that yet?

He pops up on the cart, ready to shoot -- but is surprised to find no one inside.

He notices the mine cart has a RUSTED HOLE in it just large enough for a person to squeeze through.

Jack realizes he's been had, spins around with his gun --

SHOOF!

From behind, Grace lodges her knife into Jack's shoulder.

He yelps and drops his gun, falls to his knees.

Grace grabs the gun.

GRACE

We're beyond considering if a woman
can take care of herself.

She stands firm and points the gun down at him. Jack chuckles through his pain.

He slowly goes for a HIDDEN GUN in his boot.

JACK

I reckon you ain't the lady I met
when this started.

GRACE

I reckon the same.

Jack pulls the gun--

Grace SHOOTS his other shoulder.

Jack YELLS in pain, both his arms now useless, laying limp at his sides.

Grace kicks the other gun away. She towers over him.

GRACE

It ain't so tough to shoot a man,
but a whole lot tougher not to when
you're angry.

Jack gets the message loud and clear -- Grace is deadly serious.

JACK

Alright, sister, you got me. You can get the men to serve me justice.

GRACE

I think I can do that just fine.

BLAM. Grace shoots him in the head between the eyes. His head snaps back. It absorbs the bullet and he manages to stay sitting upright.

He dies in the pose.

Grace kicks him over.

EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

Grace approaches the smoldering village. She is sickened as she witnesses the injured being tended to by survivors, and others mourning the bodies that lay about.

Grace spots Red Feather's doll sticking out of a collapsed tent. She scrambles over to pick it up.

Doll in hand, Grace looks around, spots Red Feather's body.

Almost dead, Red Feather takes broken breaths. Grace immediately falls to her weeping.

GRACE

I'm so sorry.

She tries to place the doll in Red Feather's hand. Red Feather shakingly hands it back to Grace, guides it up towards the sky.

GRACE

Yes. Sky.

Red Feather leads the doll back to Grace's belly.

RED FEATHER

(subtitled)

I'll join my baby now.

Red Feather's hand goes limp. A crow flies overhead.

The translator, who weeps nearby over the body of his dead wife, sees Grace. He stands up and yells at her to leave.

In tears, horrified and apologetic, Grace leaves behind the gold bag and rides out.

EXT. MONTANA - VARIOUS - DAY

From the wide open plains and streams, to frontier towns and settlers, a snapshot of Montana in 1868.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Grace rides up. She is weary, but something catches her eye -- the wheat.

She dismounts and walks through the field. It is growing beautifully, swaying in the wind like a great broom cleaning the sky.

She picks a stem of wheat and massages it between her fingers. She is one with the poetry of the moment. This is where she belongs.

Grace walks up to her front door to see a NOTE. The voice of a MAN (20s) walks up behind her.

MAN

I was wondering if anyone lived here--

Grace spins around with her gun drawn.

MAN

Whoa! Easy. I just came to deliver that notice there.

Grace reads the note. Doesn't like it.

MAN

We got government orders to repossess this valley. Train gonna be coming through here.

GRACE

Over my dead body.

MAN

Now, ma'am--

She holds the gun higher, level at the man's head.

GRACE

Or yours.

MAN

Take it easy.

GRACE

Life isn't about easy. It's about
doing what needs to be done.

The man quickly gets on his horse and rides away.

Grace traces her stomach with the wheat.

GRACE

It's gonna be a good year, Sky.

She goes into the house.

The wheat sways in the dusk.

FADE OUT:

THE END