

LONESOME TRAILS

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAWN

JACK (early 20s, confident, rugged, and androgynously handsome) stands in an open desert shooting range. A tumbleweed rolls behind him.

A picture of a YOUNG MAN WITH SCARS on his face is nailed to a wooden board in front of Jack.

Jack's hand hovers over his holster. He stares down the picture and waits until somewhere far away, an eagle SCREECHES.

In the blink of an eye, Jack draws out his revolver and rapid-fire shoots all six bullets into the man's forehead with perfect aim. He smirks.

Jack empties the barrel of his gun and checks his watch. He leaves the shooting range while loading the gun with six more bullets.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

A middle-aged MAN with a brown cowboy hat walks down the busy main street of a western town

The town has seen better days. The buildings seem like they're about to topple over and the signs are barely legible. There is one inn that looks luxurious in comparison, but it's boarded up and has cobwebs all over.

The man keeps walking like he doesn't have a care in the world. Behind him, Jack closely follows him but stays hidden among the crowds. The man doesn't suspect a thing.

The man turns a corner and as he passes by an alley, Jack is suddenly there. All we see from the street is that one moment the man is walking, and the next he is roped into the dark.

A beat later, Jack leaves the alley wiping a bloody knife. He twirls the man's hat as he walks.

EXT. HOUSE PORCH - DAY

Jack arrives at a rundown-looking house. He knocks on the door and out comes a WOMAN (30s) holding a fussing baby. He holds out the man's hat for her to take. The woman gasps in relief and takes the hat.

WOMAN

Praise the Lord! You are a saint
good sir. Thank you!

Jack's hand is still outstretched. A beat. The woman drops the praising act.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Yes, yes. I'm coming. Can you hold
this?

The woman dumps her baby into Jack's arms and goes inside. He holds the baby at a distance. The baby looks at his face and starts to CRY. He rolls his eyes.

The woman returns with a very small bag of coins and hands it to Jack. He shoves the baby back to her and walks off. The woman looks at him up and down as he walks away.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(mumbling)

I wouldn't mind having his baby.

The baby CRIES again.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

Jack walks through Main Street again. He passes the town's community board. The SHERIFF (50s, greedy and a suck-up) nails a "Wanted for Murder" poster with Jack's face, the name "LITTLE JACK," and a large reward.

The community board is filled with different wanted posters, mostly of Jack.

Jack smirks at the Sheriff. He whistles and the Sheriff spins around, but Jack is already gone.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Jack enters a saloon as he counts the few coins inside the bag. Once inside, he gets PUNCHED out of nowhere.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BORLAND MANOR HALLWAY- DAY

CATHERINE BORLAND (early 20s, refined and clever, but stuck up) strolls the halls of her family manor. Morning birds sing. She plays with a buttercup flower.

Catherine stops in front of a set of doors and gently knocks.

MARGARET

Come in.

Catherine opens the doors and we catch a glimpse of an older woman at a desk. The woman is MARGARET BORLAND (40s, cold and ruthless), matriarch of the Borland cattle empire.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

And close the door Catherine.

Catherine walks in and quietly shuts the door.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Back at the saloon, a full-on brawl breaks out. Someone is playing an upbeat ragtime song on the piano.

Jack fights the other patrons along with the bartender, HENRY (early 30s, a mountain of a man, usually very gentle).

INT. MARGARET'S STUDY - DAY

Margaret talks very seriously but sounds muffled and Catherine's ears ring. The only words clearly heard are...

MARGARET

...to be married...

And...

MARGARET (CONT'D)

...duty to this family.

Catherine drops the buttercup. It falls in slow motion and sounds heavy when it lands. She's frozen and doesn't react to Margaret's questions in the background.

INT. BORLAND MANOR HALLWAY - DAY

Commotion is heard inside Margaret's study like yelling and furniture scraping. Suddenly, Catherine bursts out of the study crying.

Inside, the room looks worse for wear and Margaret rubs her head. She snaps her fingers at one of the servants outside.

MARGARET

Get my useless son and tell him to come IMMEDIATELY. Then clean this mess up.

SERVANT

Yes ma'am.

Margaret sips her coffee and glances at a painting of her and her family from ten years ago.

MARGARET

You really did it now, boy.

Margaret looks at the painting with disdain.

INT. SALOON - DAY

A PATRON pins Jack to the bar and goes to hit him, but Jack uses the bar to push off and kick the man in the gut.

JACK

I leave for two minutes, what the hell happened?!

Henry sees a MAN trying to steal a bottle of liquor from behind him. Henry picks him up by the neck of his shirt and throws him against the pool table, knocking it over.

HENRY

Daniel found out Jonathan was sleeping with Rebecca!

Jack makes a face that says, "Yeah, that'll do it."

JACK

About time.

Jack ducks as a pool cue comes flying right at his head.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Catherine rides into town on her horse with a large bag. Her eyes are red and her clothes are dirty. She gets to the nice but boarded up inn from before. She groans.

CATHERINE

Just my luck.

Catherine turns to look for different accommodations and sees the town's community board with a few of Little Jack's wanted posters. She humorlessly laughs.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Nice face.

INT. SALOON - DAY

The fighting continues. Henry flips a man over his back and Jack throws a stool at another guy's face. Even the piano man has joined the fight.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Catherine rides further along Main Street. She arrives at a saloon. Compared to the other buildings, it looks decent. She ties her horse to the saloon's stable and walks to the front door.

INT. SALOON - EARLIER THAT DAY

Catherine enters the saloon and... it's peaceful. She goes up to the bar where Henry is cleaning a glass.

(Note: A lighting change will also show that Catherine's arrival happened earlier in the day.)

CATHERINE

Give me a bottle of the best
whiskey you have.

Henry gives her the bottle and Catherine drops some coins.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Are there any rooms available?

HENRY

Yes ma'am.

Henry turns to get the keys. He turns back and sees a bigger pile of coins and Catherine gone.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - DAY

Catherine enters an unlocked room. A beat. She SMASHES a nearby vase.

CATHERINE

FUCK!

She yells and destroys other items of room decor. She eventually tires herself out and face plants on the bed. She cries for hours until she falls asleep.

(Note: We see time passing through the light in the room changing to match the lighting in the saloon present time.)

Catherine wakes up to a noise from the brawl downstairs. She rubs her head.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Can they make any more noise?

Catherine looks at the whiskey and raises it to take a big swig. On the bottle's way down, cut to..

INT. SALOON - DAY

Jack BREAKS a bottle over someone's head. Behind him, a different PATRON creeps up on him and pulls out a knife. He stabs Jack in the bicep.

JACK

BITCH! That's it!

Jack raises his gun to the patron's head and...

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - DAY

Catherine stares at the wall with a blank look. She drinks from the bottle again when a SHOT startles her. She drops the bottle and it spills all over the floor but doesn't break.

CATHERINE

Guess they can.

Catherine grabs a washcloth.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Jack's shot clears out the brawl.

HENRY

Jack! Are you okay?!

Jack grabs his arm and grimaces. His sleeve is soaked through with blood. He waves Henry off.

JACK

(strained)

Sure! Never better!

Jack climbs up the stairs in the corner of the saloon.

INT. SALOON SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Jack makes it to the the second floor where the bedrooms are. He is pale and can barely keep his eyes open. He opens the first door on his left.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Catherine cleans up the spilled whiskey off the floor. The bottle is knocked over with very little left.

Jack BARGES in and Catherine jumps. They stare at each other. A beat.

JACK
Hey pretty lady, how you-

The blood loss catches up with Jack and he passes out.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - DAY

Catherine stares at Jack lying on the floor.

CATHERINE

Hello?

She slowly approaches him. He is on his back and his face is partially covered by his cowboy hat.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Sir?

Catherine nudges Little Jack with her foot but he doesn't stir. She notices Jack's injured arm. She appears conflicted for a beat.

INT. SALOON SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jack lies in the hallway, bleeding out. Catherine shuts the door to her room. He groans loudly, still unconscious. A beat later, Catherine opens the door again and drags him into the room.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Catherine props Little Jack's body on the wall and his hat falls off. She gasps at his face.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WESTERN TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Catherine's POV of Little Jack's wanted posters.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - DAY

Catherine's mouth is still open. Then a lightbulb turns on in her head.

CATHERINE

Lord have mercy, you just might be exactly what I needed.

Catherine pulls his sleeve up and takes the ribbon out of her hair to make a make-shift tourniquet.

She puts a hand up to Jack's forehead to check his temperature and takes a moment to look at his defined yet soft features. She snorts.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
You're even handsomer in person,
aren't you?

Catherine soaks a handkerchief with the rest of her whiskey.

EXT. BORLAND RANCH - DAY - FLASHBACK

[INSERT FLASHBACK MONTAGE OF YOUNG ISABELLA FROM BEFRIENDING LUCY TO WAKING UP IN THE GRAVE THEY WERE BURIED IN]

Jack awakes with a start.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Henry sweeps up the mess from the brawl. An obviously wealthy young man, ANDREW (late 20s, witty, charming, and sarcastic), strolls in.

ANDREW
Mornin' hot stuff! What's u-

Andrew looks around the trashed room.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
What happened here?

HENRY
Daniel found out about Jonathan and Rebecca.

ANDREW
Jeez! Took him long enough. Still,
poor guy.

Andrew sits on a table next to Henry and gives him the biggest heart eyes.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
He was so very in love with her.

Henry stares at Andrew blankly and sweeps away from him. Andrew shrugs and picks up the knocked-over chairs next to him.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - DAY

Jack wakes up disoriented and pins Catherine to the floor. He almost strikes her but YELPS from the pain of pulling his arm back.

He runs to the adjoining bathroom. Catherine lies on the floor and breathes heavily with a noticeable flush.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack locks the door and looks at his wound in the mirror. It's still bleeding, but the ribbon tourniquet has visibly slowed it down. He seems just a bit impressed.

He tears off the rest of his sleeve and splashes water on his wound. He uses the torn sleeve to make a makeshift bandage.

Jack steps back and takes in his appearance in the mirror. He takes a deep breath and reaches for the door handle.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - DAY

Jack slowly opens the door and pokes his head out. Catherine faces away from her, looking out the window. Catherine's blush is only slightly visible now.

Catherine fidgets with her cross necklace. It's a simple and dainty piece with a unique engraving.

Jack tip-toes towards the door and reaches for the doorknob.

CATHERINE
Stop right there!

Jack winces and turns around. Catherine puts her hands on her hips and tilts her chin up. Her cross necklace is tucked under her blouse.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Do you care to explain yourself,
mister?

JACK
Not really.

Catherine scoffs.

CATHERINE

A criminal almost assaulting an honorable lady? I could have you hanged!

JACK

I'd like to see you try, miss.

Jack pronounces the last word extra mockingly.

JACK (CONT'D)

Besides, what makes you think I'm a criminal?

CATHERINE

Oh please. Your face is plastered all over Main Street. You're Little Jack, aren't you?

Jack tilts his hat, still mockingly.

JACK

(in a high-class accent)

Pleasure to make your acquaintance, madam.

Catherine rolls her eyes.

CATHERINE

Quit horsin' around. Now tell me, what are you doing breaking into a respectable woman's room?

Jack takes in Catherine's appearance. She still has the dirty clothes she traveled in and her face is puffy from crying.

JACK

She don't look that respectable to me.

CATHERINE

You're one to talk about appearances, short-stack.

Jack's eye twitches.

JACK

What did you say?

CATHERINE

(fake-apologetically)

Oh, I'm sorry. Has no one ever told you what a scrawny shrimp you are?

JACK

And you're a real looker? I've seen cattle with prettier eyes than you.

Catherine EXCLAIMS in outrage.

CATHERINE

YOU'RE SUCH A PIG! GET OUT!

JACK

Gladly.

Jack turns to leave.

CATHERINE

I should of let you bleed out.

JACK

Yeah? Well don't think I owe you nothin'.

CATHERINE

(mumbling)

I need your help.

Jack stops.

JACK

What was that?

CATHERINE

I need your help.

JACK

Whatever could you need my help with, little lady?

CATHERINE

Don't call me that.

Catherine sighs.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I received the news this morning that I am to be engaged-

JACK

Well congratulations.

CATHERINE

-as part of a business deal between my family and this horrible man.

JACK
I'm sure he ain't that bad,
princess.

If looks could kill, Jack would be dead.

CATHERINE
He is 38 years older than me and is
said to have beaten all his past
wives to death.

JACK
Ah. That explains the puffy face.

CATHERINE
So I need you to take care of him.

This takes Jack off-guard.

JACK
Come again?

INT. SALOON - DAY

Andrew lazily wipes the tables and hums a tune. Henry
singlehandedly picks up the knocked-over pool table. Andrew
wolf-whistles at him and Henry rolls his eyes.

The Sheriff walks in. Andrew glares at him.

HENRY
Good afternoon, Sheriff.

SHERIFF
Mornin'. Heard y'all had some
trouble.

ANDREW
Nice of you to finally stop by.

Henry sends Andrew a warning look.

SHERIFF
Sorry boy, some of us have an
actual job to do.

Andrew scoffs and walks off.

HENRY
No trouble here, sir.

SHERIFF

Right. Say, you wouldn't know what happened to the wanted posters I pinned outside the other day?

HENRY

They're not there? That's weird, maybe the wind blew them away.

SHERIFF

Maybe. 'Cause you would tell me if you'd seen Little Jack 'round here, wouldn't you?

HENRY

(forcedly smiling)
Absolutely Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Good. I can't wait to get my hands on that slimy sonuvabitch.

Henry's jaw muscles twitch.

HENRY

Is there anything else I can help you with?

SHERIFF

That's all.

ANDREW

(overly sweet)
Have a nice day.
(once Sheriff is gone)
Asshole.

Henry nervously glances up at the stairs.

INT. CATHERINE'S SALOON BEDROOM - DAY

JACK

Just to be clear, you're asking me to kill this guy?

Catherine grimaces but nods.

JACK (CONT'D)

Why don't you just run away?

Catherine sighs.

CATHERINE

My mother may have engaged me, but I have a comfortable life with my family and I don't wish to part with it any time soon. If this man "disappears" then I won't have to get married and my family won't disown me. It's a win-win.

JACK

Actually, I just realized I don't care about some spoiled brat's problems.

CATHERINE

You will help me or else-

JACK

Or else what?

CATHERINE

Or else...

(then proudly)

I'll go right to the Sheriff and tell him where you've been hiding!

JACK

Huh.

Jack takes out his knife and twirls it.

JACK (CONT'D)

Guess I'll just have to kill you then.

CATHERINE

Ok fine, you called my bluff. So how much?

JACK

How much what?

CATHERINE

How much money will it take for you to deal with him.

JACK

You've got some nerve trying to hire me after all the shit you've pulled, princess.

Catherine rolls her eyes.

CATHERINE

I'm "sorry" if I hurt your ego, but we both know you need the money.

JACK

I don't need your money.

CATHERINE

Your boots are coming off their soles, your shirt's threadbare, that gun is at least 20 years old, and the knife you threatened me with? We own butter knives sharper than that. You need new equipment but you obviously can't afford it.

JACK

Alright, you got me there. But-

CATHERINE

150 dollars. Take it or leave it.

SUPER: \$6,000 in today's money.

Jack's eyes go wide.

JACK

Ain't no way you got that kind of money on you.

CATHERINE

You're right. But I do have money hidden all over town. And I have this.

Catherine pulls out a ten dollar banknote from her bag.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Ten dollars up front, the rest when the job is done. Do we have a deal?

Jack mulls it over for a bit.

JACK

Fine.

Jack snatches the bill and they shake hands.

INT. MARGARET'S STUDY - DAY

Margaret sits at her desk looking pissed (more than usual).

Her son, NATHANIEL BORLAND (mid-20s, cunning and manipulative), sits in front of her. He's turned away from the camera. Margaret taps her nails against the desk.

MARGARET

I can't believe you talked me into signing a deal with Jeremiah du Pont, of all men. I must of really lost my marbles this time.

NATHANIEL

Mother, those are just rumors. With his support we will triple our land and cattle, no other rancher in Texas would even come close. Besides, it's about time Catherine started pulling her weight for this family.

Margaret SLAMS her fist on the desk.

MARGARET

Watch your tone, boy.

Margaret pinches the bridge of her nose.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Regardless, the deal is done, so find your sister and bring her home. I have a wedding to plan.

NATHANIEL

Where should I start looking?

MARGARET

I don't know, but she better be back by the rehearsal dinner tomorrow. Dismissed.

NATHANIEL

Mother-

MARGARET

Dis. Missed.

Nathaniel stands up and leaves.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. SALOON - DAY

Downstairs, the saloon is back to being impeccably tidy. Henry is behind the bar polishing glasses and putting them in their place.

A little paper ball THWACKS against his head.

Henry turns to Andrew who twirls a paper straw between his fingers with a cheeky smile. Henry huffs and goes back to polishing glasses.

A beat.

THWACK. Another paper ball hits Henry.

HENRY
Andrew, please stop doing that.

ANDREW
(innocently)
Doing what?

Henry levels Andrew with a glare and goes back to polishing glasses.

Two beats.

Henry raises his hand and catches another little paper ball right before it hits him. He repositions it in his hand and sends it flying to Andrew's forehead.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
OW! Rude!

Andrew rubs his forehead and Henry smirks.

HENRY
You started it.

ANDREW
I could have you fired for that!

HENRY
But you won't.

ANDREW
You're lucky I like you.

Jack and Catherine walk down the stairs.

JACK
(to Henry)
New job came up, I won't be back
'til late.

Henry nervously looks at Jack's arm. The bandage around his bicep is soaked through with blood.

HENRY
Are you sure that's a good idea,
bud? That looks like it needs
stitches.

Jack waves Henry off as he heads to the stables.

JACK
This won't take long, I'll be fine.

Andrew notices Catherine and puts on his best southern gentleman voice.

ANDREW
And who might you be, pretty lady?

Henry overhears and rolls his eyes. Catherine extends her hand and puts on a show of her own.

CATHERINE
The name is Catherine, and who do I
have the pleasure of speaking to?

ANDREW
Pleasure's all mine Miss Catherine.
I'm Andrew, the owner of this fine
establishment.

HENRY
Son, of the owner.

ANDREW
AKA soon-to-be owner and boss of
you.

HENRY
Only if you can find a woman
that'll marry you.

ANDREW
Excuse you, I'm a catch!

Catherine gives Andrew a confused look.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

The old man put a condition on my inheritance. I need to marry a nice lady and have a good old-fashioned family, or else I won't get a penny from the bastard.

CATHERINE

(half-jokingly)

Oh, well I can help with that.

Henry and Andrew break into laughter.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

ANDREW

Thank you kindly, Miss Catherine, but uhm... You're not exactly my type.

CATHERINE

Then who is?

Andrew points to Henry.

ANDREW

Him.

Henry scoffs and Catherine's face lights up.

CATHERINE

Oh! So you're..

ANDREW

Yup!

CATHERINE

And y'all are..

ANDREW

I wish! Been trying to court this guy for ever but he likes playing hard to get.

(to Henry)

We could live a very comfortable life y'know.

Henry snorts.

HENRY

Not enough money in the world.

Henry goes to the back. Andrew watches him go, genuinely hurt this time.

EXT. SALOON STABLES - DUSK

Jack readies his horse, BUTTERCUP, for the journey. Buttercup is an old girl and she looks like she doesn't have many miles left in her.

Jack hoists the saddle on her but even that leaves him winded. Buttercup neighs worriedly. Jack groans.

JACK

Not you too. How many times do I
have to say it? I'm fine.

Buttercup side-eyes him. Jack finishes readying her and they ride off into the night.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Andrew and Catherine sit side-by-side at the bar.

ANDREW

So, what brings you to our humble
abode?

Catherine's smile drops.

CATHERINE

Well... you could say I have a bit
of a problem back home.

ANDREW

Uh oh. On a scale of one to ten,
how big is this problem?

CATHERINE

Twelve?

ANDREW

Well in that case, Henry! My good
man, please pour us two of the
strongest you have.

Henry grabs a bottle of whiskey.

EXT. JEREMIAH'S MANOR - NIGHT

Jack sneaks around the outside of Jeremiah's manor. The only lit room of the house is on the third floor. He scales the outside of the building.

As Jack climbs, he slips and catches himself with his bad arm. He screams internally and silently mouths a litany of curses. He regains his composure and keeps climbing.

Jack is out of breath and woozy when he reaches the top but he shakes it off. He creeps right next to the window and we hear two men talking.

UNKNOWN MAN
..childish sister has run away
again..

Jack stops listening and readies his pistol. He takes one more breath and CRASHES through the window.

INT. JEREMIAH'S STUDY - NIGHT

Shattered glass sprays everywhere inside the study. The men are taken aback. Jack recovers and aims his pistol at Jeremiah but before he shoots, he glances at the other man in the room.

It's Nathaniel Borland, the young man with scars in the picture Jack was shooting at.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BARN - DAY - FLASHBACK

YOUNG NATHANIEL inside a barn. Instead of four linear scars on his cheek, there are four bleeding scratch marks.

He holds a pistol in a shaky hand. In front of him lies a bleeding and unconscious young girl, LUCY (15, African American). Her servant's dress is torn at the collar.

INT. JEREMIAH'S STUDY - NIGHT

Jack freezes a second too long. Jeremiah disarms him and throws him against the wall.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Catherine and Andrew are still at the bar. Around them, the saloon slowly fills up with people.

ANDREW
Jeremiah du Pont?! THE Jeremiah
"Wifebeater" du Pont?!

Catherine shushes him and looks around nervously. Andrew finishes his Cosmopolitan in one gulp while Catherine nurses her whiskey. Henry already has another Cosmopolitan ready for Andrew and pours it into his glass.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
I don't understand how your own
mother could engage you to such a
monster.

CATHERINE
Mom has always been ruthless when
it comes to business. I'm not
surprised she sold me like the rest
of her cattle.

Andrew and Henry share a look of pity. Catherine tries to brush it off.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
But no matter! Soon he'll be gone
and I'll be back home, unmarried
and safe.

Catherine downs the rest of her drink. Henry quickly refills it.

ANDREW
What do you mean?

CATHERINE
I'm the one who sent Jack on the
job tonight. He's going to take
care of Jeremiah.

ANDREW
Wow. Good for you!

CATHERINE
Yeah... Good for me...

Catherine fidgets with her cross necklace.

ANDREW
What's wrong?

CATHERINE

I can't help but feel a little guilty, I guess. Being responsible for someone's death.

ANDREW

Why?! The bastard obviously had it coming.

CATHERINE

I just can't stop thinking about how disappointed my governess would be. She always taught me to do what's right. If she saw me now, she'd be so disappointed.

Catherine becomes lost in thought but Andrew's snort pulls her out of it.

ANDREW

Oh please, don't be so naive. You really think that people in our circles don't hire mercenaries all the time to deal with their problems? Hell, even your own mother has probably gotten Jack to do her dirty work. At least you have a good reason.

Catherine gives Andrew a small smile.

CATHERINE

Thanks Andrew. Have you ever employed him?

ANDREW

(seriously)

God no, I could never do that!

Catherine's face falls. Andrew laughs.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I'm just messing with you Miss Catherine. But seriously, thank you for doing this world a favor.

They clink their drinks. Catherine takes a sip

ANDREW (CONT'D)

And for making our friend a little less broke.

Catherine snorts her whiskey and starts coughing.

INT. JEREMIAH'S STUDY - NIGHT

Jack bounces back after being thrown against the wall and lunges towards Jeremiah. However, he is too slow and gets intercepted by Nathaniel.

Bodyguards outside try to open the locked door.

BODYGUARD 1
Mr. Borland! Sir!

BODYGUARD 2
Stand back, we're breaking the
door!

Nathaniel grabs Jack by his injured arm and Jeremiah HITS him in the gut. His vision starts to darken around the edges. He tries to fight back but is too weakened from the blood loss.

He is not the same fighter from the alley earlier.

Nathaniel and Jeremiah corner Jack. The bodyguards outside the room KICK the door, splinters flying everywhere.

Jack's eyes dart all over the room for an exit, but there is none.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. JEREMIAH'S STUDY - NIGHT

Jack looks behind him at the window he's been pinned to. He glances down and grimaces at the distance.

The bodyguards outside finally BREAK through the door and they draw their pistols at Jack. He has no choice and with one last prayer, he launches himself out the window, much less gracefully this time.

INT. SALOON BAR - NIGHT

Catherine and Andrew are visibly tipsy now. People fill the saloon.

ANDREW

(laughing)

And just as we were about to get to the good part, Dad bursts in and threatens to shoot the poor guy.

CATHERINE

He didn't!

ANDREW

Jim ran like hell outta there and next thing you know, the butcher shop closed and I never saw him again. Lucky bastard got away, all I got were blue balls and a black eye.

Catherine winces and places a hand on his shoulder. Andrew playfully shrugs it off.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

But hey, at least I'm not disowned yet.

Andrew says "disowned" in a pointed manner. Catherine rolls her eyes.

CATHERINE

(sarcastically)

Oh ha ha. Aren't you the lucky one.

Henry returns behind the bar with a crate of liquor bottles and restocks them on the shelves.

ANDREW
What about you?

CATHERINE
What about me?

ANDREW
Any special cowboy back home?

CATHERINE
Hah! No.

Catherine takes a sip of her whiskey

ANDREW
Cowgirl?

Catherine chokes on it and starts coughing again.

CATHERINE
Stop doing that! And no, I'm not...
like that.

ANDREW
Okay, okay. But there has to be
someone you at least think is
attractive.

Catherine finishes the rest of her drink.

CATHERINE
I will say Jack ain't too hard on
the eyes.

Henry snorts and Catherine blushes.

ANDREW
What're you laughing at?

HENRY
Oh nothing.

CATHERINE
Please don't tell him I said that!

HENRY
You're secret is safe with me,
miss.

Catherine sighs in relief.

Jack barges into the saloon bruised, out of breath, and
limping. He scans the saloon and points to Catherine.

JACK
YOU!

ANDREW
Oh shit! What happened to you,
little one?

JACK
Shut it! You, with me.

Jack grabs Catherine by the wrist and drags her to a private corner. Henry and Andrew share a worried look.

INT. SALOON CORNER - NIGHT

Catherine sobers up.

CATHERINE
OW! Let go! What's the matter with
you?!

JACK
Why was Nathaniel Borland at your
fiancé's place?

CATHERINE
How do you know Nate?

JACK
(dangerously)
Answer the question, Catherine.

A beat.

CATHERINE
Because he's my brother and I guess
they're looking for me?

Jack groans and rubs her forehead.

JACK
My fucking luck.

CATHERINE
But why does that even matter?

JACK
Deal's off. You have to leave.

CATHERINE
Wait, what?! Why?!

JACK

Jeremiah's still alive so if you know what's good for you, you'll get on your horse and never come back.

Catherine tears up and Jack turns to leave.

CATHERINE

You said you'd help!

Jack ignores her and keeps walking.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Jack! Stop!

Catherine accidentally reaches for Jack's injured arm. Out of instinct, Jack whips around and pins Catherine to the wall, knife to her throat.

INT. SALOON BAR - NIGHT

Henry shakes a drink behind the bar. Andrew rolls a little paper ball.

HENRY

Don't even think about it.

Andrew groans and hunches over.

ANDREW

But I'm bored.

HENRY

I'm working. Go make a friend.

Henry tends to some other patrons. Across the saloon, a few cowboys play pool. One of them is very handsome.

Andrew smiles mischievously. He saunters over. The patrons talk to Henry, but it's muffled. His eyes are locked on Andrew.

INT. SALOON CORNER - NIGHT

Jack still holds Catherine at knifepoint. Both of them breath hard. After a beat, Jack lets go of Catherine and looks at the ground.

JACK

Your brother killed someone very close to me. I can't help you.

Catherine gasps.

CATHERINE
You're lying! Nate would never do that.

JACK
Wish I was, princess. Now get out.

Jack goes to leave again.

CATHERINE
I'll double it!

Jack stops dead in his tracks. Catherine takes off her cross necklace and holds it out to Jack.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
300 dollars cash and you can add this to the down payment.

Jack turns around. His eyes widen.

INT. BARN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lucy's body lies on the floor like in the last flashback, but this time it's a close up of her necklace. It's the same engraved cross that Catherine is holding.

INT. SALOON CORNER - NIGHT

CATHERINE
Please Jack, I need your help.

Jack shakes off the memory and roughly grabs the necklace.

JACK
We need a new plan. Jeremiah knows he's in danger so he'll have bodyguards now, like your brother.

Jack says the last word with as much venom as he can. Catherine thinks for a second.

CATHERINE
What if we don't kill him?

JACK
Then what the hell am I here for?

CATHERINE

Men like Jeremiah don't like to wait. If he can't marry me, he'll get impatient and find another bride. What if we pretend you kidnapped me instead?

JACK

Won't they come looking for you?

CATHERINE

Well, your job now would be to keep me hidden.

JACK

This seems like an awful lot of work.

CATHERINE

It is 300 dollars... Besides, I'm sure in a week Jeremiah will be married to some other unlucky girl and I get to return to my very comfortable life.

Jack mulls it over.

JACK

I'm still not sure 'bout this but I can't say I have a better plan.

CATHERINE

First things first, we have to send the ransom letter.

Catherine pulls a piece of paper and a pencil from her bag and starts writing.

INT. SALOON POOL TABLE - NIGHT

HANDSOME COWBOY bends over the pool table to hit a ball. When he comes up, Andrew is leaning seductively on the edge.

ANDREW

Hey there handsome, how you doin'?

Handsome Cowboy doesn't look at Andrew and moves to hit the next ball.

HANDSOME COWBOY

Fuck off.

Handsome Cowboy's friends snicker. Andrew can see Henry watching him and he trails a finger down Handsome Cowboy's arm. Henry's eyes darken.

ANDREW
All I did was say hi.

HANDSOME COWBOY
I said, piss off fruitcake.

Handsome Cowboy's friends laugh cruelly.

ANDREW
Fine. You probably can't get it up anyways.

Handsome Cowboy's friends stop laughing. Handsome Cowboy grabs the front of Andrew's shirt and yanks him.

HANDSOME COWBOY
What did you say you little shit?

ANDREW
(sarcastically)
Aw, did I hurt your wittle feewings?

Handsome Cowboy goes to punch Andrew but Henry appears behind him and catches his arm.

HENRY
(to Handsome Cowboy and friends)
Now gentlemen, I must ask you to kindly leave this establishment.

HANDSOME COWBOY
Oh. You think you're tough, huh, defending your little boyfriend?

Handsome Cowboy shoves Henry. Henry's composure doesn't break.

HANDSOME COWBOY (CONT'D)
You're just another pansy.

Handsome Cowboy pushes Henry again. Lightning fast, Henry pins Handsome Cowboy's arm behind his back and shoves him against the table. Handsome Cowboy's face SMACKS hard against it.

HENRY
Apologize.

Tears stream down Handsome Cowboy's face.

HANDSOME COWBOY
(to Henry)
I'm sorry! Please don't-

HENRY
Not to me. To him.

Henry pulls Handsome Cowboy's head up so he faces Andrew.

HANDSOME COWBOY
I'm sorry!

HENRY
Good. Now get out.

Handsome Cowboy rubs his face as he walks out of the saloon with his friends behind him. They pass by Jack and Catherine as they approach. Jack notices Handsome Cowboy's face.

JACK
(to Henry)
What happened to him?

ANDREW
Oh, just Henry being my knight in shining armor.

Andrew jumps on Henry's back and puts his arms around him. Catherine snickers and Henry rolls his eyes.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
(to Henry)
He called us boyfriends y'know.

Henry shrugs Andrew off.

HENRY
Please, we're barely friends. Stop being so reckless.
(to Jack)
And you. You look awful, come here.

Jack crosses his arms but goes anyways.

INT. SALOON BAR - NIGHT

Henry pulls an ice bag and a first aid kit from behind the bar.

HENRY
Here. Roll up your sleeve.

Jack holds the ice bag to his swollen cheek and rolls his sleeve to reveal an infected-looking wound. Henry shakes his head and cleans it with an alcohol-soaked cloth. He then starts to stitch the wound closed.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I take it the job didn't go so well.

JACK
Yeah but it doesn't matter.
Catherine has now been "kidnapped."

Jack does air quotes with her good hand

JACK (CONT'D)
We sent a letter to her family
demanding half a million dollars,
not even they can pay that.

SUPER: Over \$20,000,000 today.

Henry whistles and ties off the stitches. He grabs a salve.

HENRY
And won't they come looking for her?

JACK
So we'll hide her until things blow over. We're pretty good at hiding.

Jack winks at him and Henry shakes his head. He wraps his arm in a clean bandage.

HENRY
And does she know about your connection to her brother.

JACK
Partly...

Henry levels Jack with a look.

HENRY
Isabella...

Jack/Isabella snaps up at hearing her name. She looks around wildly.

JACK/ISABELLA
SHH! Are you crazy?!

HENRY
Relax, they're too busy becoming
best friends.

They turn to Andrew and Catherine playing pool and laughing.

HENRY (CONT'D)
So she doesn't know that you plan
on killing him?

ISABELLA
I'll get to it. Eventually.

HENRY
You might want to do it sooner
rather than later.

ISABELLA
And why's that?

Henry smirks and secures the bandage.

HENRY
Someone has a little crush on you.

A beat.

ISABELLA
Oh.

HENRY
Seems like your disguise continues
to work.

Isabella turns to Catherine again. Andrew makes a joke and she throws her head back in laughter. She is beautiful. Isabella shakes her head.

ISABELLA
It's just a stupid crush. It'll
pass.

Henry smiles knowingly at her.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
Don't look at me like that. You
have your own problems to deal
with.

HENRY
What do you mean?

ISABELLA
You're not fooling anyone with your
bodyguard act. You were jealous
weren't you?

Henry glances down at the floor.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)
Why do you keep breaking his heart?

HENRY
Can you imagine what his father
would do if we got caught? Not to
mention all the money I still owe
that man. It's just too
complicated.

ISABELLA
As if you couldn't take that
asshole on.

HENRY
Andrew needs his dad and a wife to
get his inheritance, he'll thank me
one day.

Isabella and Henry smile sadly to each other. She glances
over at Catherine again. Isabella takes out the cross and
rubs it absently, lost in thought.

INT. NATHANIEL'S STUDY - NIGHT

Nathaniel crumples the ransom letter and picks up the phone.

NATHANIEL
Good evening, Jeremiah. Sorry to
bother you so late, but it looks
like my stupid little sister got
herself kidnapped.

Jeremiah's surprised response is muffled.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
By Little Jack no less.

An exclamation.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Yeah, same prick. He must be
targeting our family. Hey, do you
still keep in touch with the
Farrington brothers?

An affirmative sound.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Good, tell them we have a very
special job.

Nathaniel hangs up. He glances at one of the picture frames on the fireplace mantle.

He stands and picks up the picture. It depicts Margaret from almost ten years ago in front of their ranch. On one side of her is her family: a younger Nathaniel and Catherine along with their other siblings.

On Margaret's other side is the ranch staff comprised of cowboys and enslaved people. We see Lucy and young Isabella from the flashbacks. Isabella has her arm around Lucy's shoulders.

Nathaniel squints at the picture and grips the frame so tightly he cracks the glass. A shard gets in his thumb and he drops the frame.

Nathaniel leaves his study. Zoom in on Isabella smiling cheerfully at the camera and the now bloody spiderweb crack that runs between her and Lucy.

END OF PILOT