

A Town Called Redemption

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- MORNING

Wild West

A twisted oak lies at the edge of a small pond. Mountains can be seen in the distance. Bushes rustle and a deer pops out and runs away.

On a empty piece of land a small mound of earth is pushed out, followed by a man's hand. The arm follows, along with the rest of the body. JOSHUA MEDGINS emerges, dressed in boots, denims and a flannel shirt and covered with dirt.

Joshua takes several furtive glances around, to check if anyone is watching him or is near. Seeing no one, the man takes off running toward the nearby mountains. Slowly, he grows smaller and smaller until he cannot be seen.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- AFTERNOON

Joshua comes to a brook. The sun is at full noon and he is sweating fiercely and is obviously tired.

Joshua reaches the brook and dunks his whole head in the water. As he is gulping the water, we notice that there is another man who is bathing in the water directly in front of Joshua.

The man is SAMUEL WILLIS. He has close cropped hair and a short, recent beard.

Samuel is staring intently at Joshua, who has not realized he is there yet, even though he is less than five feet away.

SAMUEL

Hey!

Joshua looks up, startled and slowly begins to back away.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Hey, what do you think you're doing?

JOSHUA

I don't want any trouble.

SAMUEL

I didn't ask you if you wanted anything. Don't you realize I'm taking a bath here.

JOSHUA

Sorry, I didn't realize...

SAMUEL
No, you didn't, did you?

JOSHUA
Look, I said I was sorry. If that's not good enough, then find your sorry some where else.

They stare at each other for a few moments more.

SAMUEL
Well...

JOSHUA
Well, what?

SAMUEL
I'm waiting for you to leave.

JOSHUA
I'm thirsty and I don't know where I'm at.

SAMUEL
And that means what to me?

JOSHUA
I don't know. Look, where am I?

SAMUEL
Currently?

JOSHUA
Yeah.

SAMUEL
Currently, you are standing in my bathroom. Now, give me a few moments to finish up and I'll be glad to help you figure out where you're at.

JOSHUA
Okay.

Slowly, Joshua edges back up the ravine and notices a bag full of clothes and a wound up knapsack and tent. There is a rifle next to a tree and a small fire pit, surrounded by rocks, is in the center of the small camp.

SAMUEL (O.S.)
And don't touch any of my stuff.

Joshua quickly pulls his hand away from the knapsack that he was rifling through as if stung. Guiltily, he glances around the campsite.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

You ain't taking my stuff are you?

JOSHUA

No! Why would I want your stuff any way?

SAMUEL (O.S.)

Right!

Joshua notices a bag full of jerky. He promptly sticks a large wad of jerky into his mouth.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Hey, do you see a pair of boots up there?

Joshua starts to respond, but can't through his full mouth. He looks around for help of any kind and quickly removes the wad from his mouth to utter his reply.

JOSHUA

No!

Joshua goes to stick the wad back in his mouth, then stops.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

What?

SAMUEL (O.S.)

I said, do you see my boots up there?

Joshua takes the wad back out of his mouth.

JOSHUA

What do they look like?

Joshua pops the wad back in his mouth as Samuel appears at the top of the ridge.

SAMUEL

They look like boots. And what's in your mouth?

Joshua tries to quickly chew up his food and fails. He looks around helplessly, then slowly takes the wad out.

JOSHUA

Look, I'm sorry. I was hungry.

SAMUEL

That's all right. I don't mind sharing what I've got. So, you like coyote jerky, huh?

JOSHUA (Through a mouthful)

What?!

SAMUEL

That, my friend, is 100 percent pure coyote jerky. Made it myself just a few days ago.

Samuel pulls a pair of boots from behind the tent and slips them on. Joshua looks around furtively, then rolls his eyes, resigned, and continues to chew.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

So, where are you from? Around here?

JOSHUA

No, I'm from Edgerton.

SAMUEL

Where's that?

JOSHUA

Apparently not from around here. Where is here?

SAMUEL

You got here and you don't know where you are?

JOSHUA

I reckon not. So?

SAMUEL

You, my good man, are forty miles from a small town called Colorado Springs. And that's in Colorado, of course. So, where's Edgerton?

JOSHUA

It's about two hundred miles west of here, I think.

SAMUEL

And, is that where you're going?

JOSHUA

Yeah, I thought I might head that way. I used to live there once upon a time.

SAMUEL

Once upon a time, huh? What are you, in some kind of fairy tale?

JOSHUA

Seems like it sometimes. Look, I don't want to be a bother to you...

SAMUEL

You're not...

JOSHUA

But, there's someone who's going to be coming looking for me.

SAMUEL

A friend? No, I guess not. Well, I guess it doesn't matter any way. Need any company on your trip?

JOSHUA

(Suspicious)

Why?

SAMUEL

Look, it gets kinda lonely around here and I ain't had any companionship for awhile...

Joshua slowly backs away from Samuel.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

(Laughing)

No, look. I was only foolin' ya. I was thinking about headin' out West a little, that's all.

While Samuel and Joshua are talking, Samuel is slowly rolling up his tent and stowing things in his knapsack. Joshua is sitting on a fallen branch and watching him as he works.

JOSHUA

So, what do you do?

Samuel pauses packing.

SAMUEL

What do I do? What kinda ignorant question is that? What do you think, that I'm some kinda black man puppet, waiting for me to do a trick?

JOSHUA

No, I meant, what's your job? You don't have a horse.

SAMUEL

I had a horse. His name was Shadow and he was a beautiful chestnut roan and some no good horse thief took him while I was sleeping.

JOSHUA

When was that?

When Joshua completes his packing, both men get up and start to walk.

SAMUEL

About two years ago. I haven't been the same since.

JOSHUA

You've been walking for the last two years?

SAMUEL

Is there some problem with that? Is walking not dignified enough for you?

JOSHUA

No, walking's fine, I reckon.

SAMUEL

Good. I'm glad I got your approval.

JOSHUA

You're awful angry.

SAMUEL

I gotta be somethin'.

JOSHUA

Fair enough. Well, my name's Joshua Medgins.

Samuel extends a hand.

SAMUEL

Samuel Wills. Pleased to meet ya.

JOSHUA

Same.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- LATER

The two men continue to walk by a mountainous region.

SAMUEL

Look, Joshua, the truth is that I don't know where I'm going. I've been wandering around for years since I got free. I've been lookin' for a home somewhere but nothin' feels right yet.

JOSHUA

Where were you before here?

SAMUEL

Do you mean where was my Massah's house at? Where was the plantation where I was slavin' at?

JOSHUA

No, not really. I was wonderin' where you were at before you came here. I mean, I guess you were a slave or something, right?

SAMUEL

Yeah.

JOSHUA

So, where was that at?

SAMUEL

You heard wrong. I was in Topeka with a politician from Springfield, Missouri. I guess he needed me so he could brag to everyone else how important he was. I never did do much for him though. I mean, I was a little like a butler to him. He felt kinda bad when the whole thing blew over and he let me go. Of course, the only problem is that I didn't have anywhere to go or anything I could do. I guess I could have been a butler to someone else, but that's just settin' myself up to be a slave again.

JOSHUA

So, where'd you go?

SAMUEL

Aw, I went here and there. I pulled a stint as a bartender, but my drinks weren't worth much. I tried to learn how to farm hand, but I'm not really built for it.

JOSHUA

What do ya mean?

SAMUEL

Well, okay, I never got much into physical labor. Butlerin' doesn't require a lot of heavy lifting. But farmin'...that's a lot of work. I couldn't really get into it.

JOSHUA

Yeah, I can see that.

SAMUEL

What's that supposed to mean?

JOSHUA

I...I don't know. I guess that means that farmin' is a lot of work.

SAMUEL

So, what about you? What's your story?

JOSHUA

I had a house once and a wife and a kid.

SAMUEL

In Edgerton?

JOSHUA

Yeah. In Edgerton.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- EVENING

The sun is about retired for the evening. Joshua and Samuel come over a ridge and see a lone house in a valley. There's a light on inside the house, because the light peeks out from underneath the curtains in the front window. Samuel stops and turns to Joshua.

SAMUEL

Well, what do ya think?

JOSHUA

About what?

SAMUEL

About seeing if whoever lives there will let us sleep around here for the night.

JOSHUA

Why? Why don't we keep moving?

SAMUEL

Cause I can't see my hand in front of my face any more.

JOSHUA

You don't have to see your hand. You just have to see the road.

SAMUEL

And do you see the road?

JOSHUA

Well, no.

SAMUEL

Okay. Do ya think anyone's at home?

JOSHUA

I don't know.

The men hear a click from behind them and then a voice.

QUINCE (O.S.)

Maybe whoever lives there doesn't
want to be disturbed no how.

SAMUEL

Yeah, maybe.

Joshua nudges Samuel and they both turn around.

Behind them is a grizzled, old trapper, named QUINCE. He has a full-length beard, is covered in fur, has some traps over his shoulder, and has a rifle pointed at the men, which slowly points from one man then the next.

Samuel reaches for his rifle, but Joshua quickly nudges him.

QUINCE

Ya better pay attention to your
friend. I think he's got your welfare
in mind.

Samuel slowly returns his hand to his waist.

SAMUEL

Yeah, okay. Now, hold on there, Old
Timer...

QUINCE

Who you callin' Old Timer?

SAMUEL

Uh, I'm just gonna shut up now.

JOSHUA

Look, Mr...

QUINCE

Quince.

JOSHUA

Mr. Quince.

QUINCE

No mister. Just Quince.

JOSHUA

Right. Joshua Medgins.

SAMUEL

Samuel Wills.

QUINCE

Allrighty, boys. Since we're on a first name basis and all, I reckon we can get on with it. What do you boys want?

SAMUEL

Actually...

JOSHUA

Actually, we were wonderin' if we could bed down in your land tonight. We're on our way to Edgerton...

QUINCE

Now, where's that?

JOSHUA

It's at the Western edge of Colorado, about a hundred or so miles from here.

QUINCE

So, why does that have to take you straight through my land?

JOSHUA

I'm sorry about that, Mr. Quince.

QUINCE

Just Quince.

Quince puts his rifle in the holster on his back.

JOSHUA

Right. I reckon we got a little lost in the dark.

SAMUEL

If you don't mind, we'll get movin' on right now.

They all start to walk toward the cabin.

QUINCE

Now then, hold on a moment. I got some room down in the cabin. You folks are welcome to stay there tonight.

SAMUEL

We don't wanna put you out.

QUINCE

No, you ain't gonna put me out. As long as you don't mind cats.

JOSHUA

Cats?

QUINCE

Yeah. I've got a whole mess of them. They're the only company I get on some nights.

SAMUEL

Cats.

JOSHUA

No, that's fine, Quince. We don't mind a few cats.

They reach the door to the cabin and Quince throws the door open revealing a cabin that has quite a number of cats within.

QUINCE

Well, that's a good thing that you don't mind a few cats cause I've got a few more than a few cats in here. Have a seat.

CUT TO:

INT. QUINCE'S CABIN -- NIGHT

As the men enter the cabin, Quince places his rifle on a stand above the fireplace and throws his traps by the front door.

Samuel lays his stuff by a table and proceeds to the rocking chair. Joshua looks around the room. Wherever he goes in the room, the cats run away from him. It is apparent that the cats do not want to be around Joshua at all.

A little kitten approaches Samuel, who picks it up and starts to stroke it. Quince talks as he prepares food and situates his things.

QUINCE (CONT'D)

Now don't you worry about them cats at all. They won't bother you if you don't bother them.

JOSHUA

Oh, I'm not worried about the cats. How long have you been here, Quince?

QUINCE

Huh? Oh, I've been around for a few years. Yep. I've been makin' my way around these parts for some time now.

SAMUEL

Have you ever found your way into Colorado Springs?

QUINCE

Naw, I don't mess much with that town. I go there every once in a while to do some tradin', but I don't have much call for travelin' near them folks. I'm not much into big cities an all.

SAMUEL

Colorado Springs ain't much of a big city.

QUINCE

Well, it's plenty big enough. 'Sides, I'd rather be out here on my own, without any neighbors to be botherin' me.

JOSHUA

Do you have many folks travelin' through here?

QUINCE

Oh, I'm sure I see my fair share.

Joshua reaches up to pet a cat on a dresser. The cat hisses at him and backs away.

QUINCE (CONT'D)

Lady! You be nice to Mister Joshua.

JOSHUA

No, it's all right.

QUINCE

I've never seen her act like that before.

Quince reaches and picks up Lady. When Joshua draws near, the cat claws at Quince who drops her.

QUINCE (CONT'D)

What the? Well, she ain't never clawed me before neither.

Lady starts to howl. The other cats join in.

QUINCE (CONT'D)
 (Yelling)
 Would you all just shut up? Ah,
 hell!

Quince walks over and opens the door and all the cats but the one in Samuel's lap run out as quickly as they can.

QUINCE (CONT'D)
 Now what do ya suppose got into them?

SAMUEL
 Maybe Joshua smells like a dog to 'em.

QUINCE
 Yeah. Oh well, no accountin' for taste. So, Joshua, tell me about yourself. You say your headin' to Edgerton?

JOSHUA
 Yeah, that's right. I used to live out there.

QUINCE
 In Edgerton?

JOSHUA
 Yeah, that's right.

QUINCE
 Only I heard that they had a fire a time back that ate up most of the houses. Don't suppose you know anything about that.

JOSHUA
 Well...

QUINCE
 And I heard that there was a man who set that fire and killed his wife and daughter and himself.

SAMUEL
 For someone who doesn't go the big city much, you sure hear an awful lot.

QUINCE
 Well, you don't need city folk to tell you every little thing. There's other ways of getting information around here.

SAMUEL
 For instance...

QUINCE

There's always the wind, for instance.

SAMUEL

Yeah, well. What ya cookin' there?

QUINCE

What here? Oh, I'm just cookin' some stew. I caught me a whole mess a game today.

SAMUEL

Well, whatever it is, it don't smell too bad.

JOSHUA

Yeah, it smells pretty good.

QUINCE

Well, have a seat and we'll see if we can't get you set up.

They sit at the table and Quince gives them each a bowl of the stew. He pours one for himself and takes a seat as well. Joshua and Quince start to noisily eat as Samuel quietly says grace. The other men stop to look at him. Joshua stops eating while Quince shrugs and continues.

SAMUEL

Amen. What? Don't you say grace?

QUINCE

We don't get much call for God around here.

SAMUEL

I'd think you'd need God most in a place like this.

QUINCE

Yeah, well we don't. Oh, there's some folks in the next town over, but there's no reason for a God out here where there's just me and Mother nature.

SAMUEL

Maybe Mother Nature's your god.

QUINCE

What's that supposed to mean?

SAMUEL

I dunno. Everybody has a god of some kind. My Mama always told me that if God wasn't your god, then you probably had something else.

QUINCE

That's stupid.

JOSHUA

No, what did she mean by that. How can something be your god?

SAMUEL

Well, whatever you let be master over you becomes your god.

QUINCE

Well, that's plain dumb. I mean, if I went up to some poke and asked him to be my master, he wouldn't be my god; he'd be my boss.

SAMUEL

Well, I reckon she wasn't talkin' bout that. I think Mama meant that if you were a heavy drinker, then alcohol would become your god. And believe me when I tell ya that I've seen lots of men who were slaves to the bottle.

JOSHUA

Well, yeah. But what about yourself? Can you be your own god?

SAMUEL

I reckon you could be. Suppose all you thought of was yourself and all you lived for was yourself. Then I suppose you would be your own god.

QUINCE

Well, I'll be...I'm a god. Do ya hear that world? Quince is god in these parts.

SAMUEL

Now, settle down Quince. Nobody's lining up to worship ya yet.

QUINCE

Yeah, you just wait and see boy.

Quince gets up to clear the table.

QUINCE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I reckon you two can bunk down in here tonight. I don't mind much...

JOSHUA

Ah, we don't want to put ya out at all Quince. You've been really good to us...

QUINCE

Naw, you ain't gonna put out old Quince. Just promise me you'll play a little cards with me and keep me company and that'll be good enough.

SAMUEL

Well, I reckon that's a fair enough trade.

QUINCE

That sounds real good.

JOSHUA

Quince, how long have you been out here?

QUINCE

Aw, you don't want to hear about me. What about you, Mr. Samuel? How long have you been on the road?

SAMUEL

Well now, that's a story worth tellin'. When the war ended, and Mr. Jenkins, that was the politician I was employed with had to let me be, I had a tough decision to make...

Light dims as Samuel starts talking.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUINCE'S CABIN -- NIGHT

Joshua, lying on the floor is tossing around on the floor as he sleeps.

In his dream, Joshua is running away from something awful.

A great fire sweeps up and over the hill in front of him. A woman and a young girl are caught up in the towering flame and screaming for help.

Joshua looks on, with a look of terror on his face, unable to act or move.

Suddenly, a shadowy figure in a cowboy hat and red eyes rides up and over the hill, laughing as he rides.

A town is covered in flames and...

Four shadowy figures on horses galloping across the Plains. The leader shoots a pistol that trails fire after its bullets. They are chasing Joshua. One of the horsemen pulls up close to Joshua and swings an axe at him, which barely misses, but lights his arm on fire. He screams and falls, rolling to the ground. Then he wakes up.

CUT TO:

INT. QUINCE'S CABIN -- NIGHT

In the darkness of the cabin, Joshua is drenched with sweat. When his eyes adjust to the light, he sees Quince hovering over Samuel as Samuel sleeps. The moonlight from a window reflects off the knife in Quince's hand. Joshua sits up and yells.

JOSHUA

Hey!

Quince turns and lunges at Joshua, who backs out the way and trips over something in the dark. Quince jumps on top of Joshua and the two wrestle around. In the meantime, Samuel is woken by the noise and sits up and looks at the two men.

SAMUEL

Hey, what's goin' on?

JOSHUA

(From underneath QUINCE)

Would you help me?

SAMUEL

Quince, what the heck are you doin'?

Quince doesn't answer, just makes weird grunting noises. The knife and Quince's hand are nowhere to be seen. Samuel picks up the nearest heavy object, a big ladle, and hits Quince in the head with it. Quince slumps down on top of Joshua.

JOSHUA

Get him off me.

Samuel moves Quince off of the top of Joshua.

SAMUEL

What did you do to him?

JOSHUA

What did I do? He was trying to kill you!

SAMUEL

Me? Why would he do that?

JOSHUA

I don't know. Let's get out of here.

SAMUEL

Okay. Let me get my stuff.

Samuel turns up the lantern light and looks around the cabin.

JOSHUA

Well hurry up before he wakes up.

SAMUEL

Keep your shirt on. By the way, you might want to get dressed before we go.

JOSHUA

Yeah, you too.

Samuel looks down to see that he is in his long underwear. Both men quickly search for and find their clothes.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Look, what if he wakes up and comes after us?

SAMUEL

We could tie him up.

JOSHUA

Yeah, but what if no one came any time soon? We could be killing him.

SAMUEL

So, wasn't he going to kill me just...Hey, what's that stickin' out of your side?

Joshua looks down to see Quince's knife sticking out of his side.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Damn. That sure looks like it hurts.

Joshua fingers the knife handle.

JOSHUA

Yeah, but it doesn't hurt at all.

SAMUEL

What the hell's that mean? How can you have a knife stuck that far up in ya, and you not hurt?

JOSHUA

I don't know.

Slowly, Joshua pulls the knife out of his side. No blood comes out with the knife.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

I don't know what's goin' on.

SAMUEL

Well, maybe it's God protecting you.

JOSHUA

I don't think God has anything to do with this.

Quince starts to stir, so Samuel looks around quickly, locates a pot and hits him in the head with it.

SAMUEL

Look, we don't have the time for this. Let's get out of here quick.

JOSHUA

All right. Take his gun with us.

Samuel raises a questioning eyebrow.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

So he doesn't shoot us if he comes after us.

SAMUEL

I knew that.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUINCE'S CABIN -- NIGHT

The front door of the shack opens, still in the dead of night, and Joshua and Samuel run out. As they run, they exchange a few looks and quips.

JOSHUA

Did you get his gun?

SAMUEL

Yeah. Hey, where'd all them cats get to?

JOSHUA

Who cares? Maybe they'll eat him.

SAMUEL

Yeah. Maybe.

They crest a hill.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- LATER

Samuel and Joshua are sitting around a campfire, far away from anything else. Samuel is sitting away from Joshua with a puzzled look on his face. Joshua is looking back at him, slightly angered.

JOSHUA

What?

SAMUEL

I'm just thinkin'.

JOSHUA

Yeah. Thinkin' about me.

SAMUEL

Well, how does someone get knifed in the side and not have any pain or any blood? How can that happen Joshua?

JOSHUA

Maybe it's a miracle.

SAMUEL

Yeah...maybe. Or maybe there's something about you that you ain't tellin' me.

JOSHUA

Like what...

SAMUEL

(Raising his voice)

Like maybe you were dead before he knifed ya.

JOSHUA

Do I look dead?

SAMUEL

How do I know? I ain't never seen a dead man before. Maybe you're a figment of my imagination.

JOSHUA

Or maybe you're still asleep in Quince's cabin and this is all a dream. Maybe you had too much coyote jerky.

SAMUEL

Maybe.

Samuel stands up.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Here, let me take a look at that.

JOSHUA

Take a look at your own side.

Samuel sits down again.

SAMUEL

Joshua, what are you?

JOSHUA

I'm just a man.

SAMUEL

No, you're not just a man. A man would bleed. A man would be in pain. You ain't nothin' like a man.

JOSHUA

Then maybe I'm a demon.

SAMUEL

No, I don't think demons are like that.

JOSHUA

How would you know? You ain't never seen a demon.

SAMUEL

Still, the way the Bible tells it...

JOSHUA

The Bible is a bunch of old stories written by a bunch of long-dead men. Don't tell me about the Bible.

SAMUEL

I'll excuse your ignorance this time.

JOSHUA

Ignorance? You don't know the first thing about ignorance. And you don't know anything about demons neither.

SAMUEL

Well, whatever you are...you ain't a man.

JOSHUA

Thank you very much.

SAMUEL

Now, if you'll kindly permit me, I'm gonna get a stick to light a torch and take a look at that wound of yours.

JOSHUA

If that'll make ya leave me alone, then fine.

Samuel reaches behind the log he is sitting on for a stick to use as a torch. His hand grabs the nearest stick, which isn't a stick but a snake.

SAMUEL

What the...

Samuel picks up the snake and gets a good look at it. Before he can drop it, it bites him in the hand. Samuel promptly throws the snake as far as he can outside of camp.

JOSHUA

Samuel!

SAMUEL

Son of a...Damn, this hurts!

Samuel cradles his hand and continues to look at it.

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

See, a real man feels pain when he gets bit by a snake.

JOSHUA

Yeah, you're a real man all right. We better get you to a doctor somewhere quick or you're gonna be just as dead as me.

SAMUEL

What did you say? I'm having a hard time hearing ya.

JOSHUA

We better get you to a doctor quick.

SAMUEL

Yeah. My vision's startin' to get really thin.

JOSHUA

Thin?

SAMUEL

And there's all these stars. Where are we? I ain't ever seen these stars before.

JOSHUA

I'm not too familiar with where we're at. Don't you know where we're at right now?

SAMUEL

Sassafrass.

JOSHUA

What? Look, are there any towns near here?

SAMUEL

(In a hoarse voice)
My mama didn't raise no gypsies.

JOSHUA

Oh Man.

Joshua looks around, panicked.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

What do I do? What do ya do for snakebite?

SAMUEL

(Yelling in feverish confusion)
Old lady Simpkins stole my laundry!
Gimme back my shirts!

JOSHUA

Would you be quiet! I'm trying to think.

Samuel slumps forward off the tree limb to land on his face before the fire.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Dang. All right. Hold on Samuel.

Joshua bends down and picks up Samuel. He throws Samuel over his shoulder and heads off into the woods. Every few minutes, Samuel is jolted awake by his rough passage and he lets loose another hallucinatory meandering.

SAMUEL

Shadow, don't eat them ants! Them don't look like any chickens I ever seen.

JOSHUA

Shut up.

Joshua starts to breathe a little harder and still looks around for any signs of civilization.

SAMUEL
Pickles on Sunday? What's this world
coming to?

JOSHUA
(Screaming)
Help me, somebody. I've got a sick
friend.

SAMUEL
Dadgum rooster won't stop crowing.

Joshua stops moving for a moment and pauses to yell and look
around.

JOSHUA
Help! Somebody!

SAMUEL
No ma'am, I ain't never milked a
goat before.

JOSHUA
Somebody!

In the distance, Joshua sees a light coming through the trees
toward him.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
Help! Over here!

SAMUEL
And that's what we call dancin'.

As the light draws near, JOSHUA notices that it is an old
woman, dressed in rags and holding a lantern. Her name is
NANNY.

JOSHUA
Help please!

NANNY
Shush child. Quit your screaming.
Your gonna attract something you'd
wish you hadn't. What's a matter
with your black friend?

SAMUEL
I smell corn.

NANNY
That's just me, dear.

JOSHUA
No, he's just delirious, ma'am.

NANNY

Well, never you mind then. Come with me.

Nanny leads Joshua through the forest.

NANNY (CONT'D)

Now, it's lucky you found me when you did. I don't think your friends in too good of shape.

JOSHUA

He got bit by a snake.

NANNY

Did he now? Well, it's a good thing you found old Nanny then isn't it?

JOSHUA

Nanny?

NANNY

That's me. You can call me Nanny.

JOSHUA

I'm Joshua. And that's Samuel.

SAMUEL

(Yelling)

The cat's in the well.

NANNY

He's a vocal one, isn't he?

JOSHUA

I guess he gets that way after being bit by snakes.

NANNY

Everyone acts differently I reckon. Ah, here we go.

They stop in front of a cave entrance.

JOSHUA

This is a cave.

NANNY

This is my cave. Now, if you want to save your friend, you'll follow me.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE -- CONTINUOUS

Nanny moves into the interior of the cave. She has a ring of stones in the middle of the cave, a bed off to the side, and various things in jars on shelves. She also has odds and ends in jars hanging from the ceiling. Nanny motions Joshua to lay Samuel onto her bed.

NANNY

Quickly! Quickly now!

Nanny turns to grab a few things out of some jars, which she puts in a bowl and mixes together with a pestle.

JOSHUA

What are you? Some sort of doctor?

NANNY

Some would say that. Yes, some would say that Nanny's a doctor. She helps some who needs help.

SAMUEL

(Yelling)

My fingers on fire!

NANNY

(Turning to SAMUEL)

Now, now child. You just hush now.

Nanny puts some liquid up to Samuel mouth and he gulps at it. Quickly, he gets limp.

NANNY (CONT'D)

Now then. We can work without all that yelling going on.

JOSHUA

Are you some sort of witch?

Nanny temporarily stops her work and looks at Joshua.

NANNY

Witch? No, they burn witches, don't they? No Nanny's just a forest doctor to some. She helps those with man problems and those who needs help with other...difficulties.

JOSHUA

Sounds like a witch to me.

NANNY

Well, I ain't. See? Your friends gonna need some medicine right away. The poison's gone deep already.

JOSHUA

Is there anything I can do to help?

NANNY

Why would you want to help him? Do you even know him?

JOSHUA

No, not really.

NANNY

Then leave him to me. Helpin's for friends and for them that care.

JOSHUA

Okay.

Joshua looks around at the different objects in the jars as Nanny works at mixing the ingredients together. He notices a small, feather-less bird in one jar, a pig's head in another jar and a bunch of herbs in another jar.

Nanny starts the fire in the fire pit and places the mixture into the pan on top of the fire. She starts to hum. Joshua picks up a jar.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Well, if you ain't a witch, then why do you have bat wings.

NANNY

Why would having bat wings make you a witch? And them ain't bat wings.

Joshua looks closer at the jar he's holding.

JOSHUA

Well, if they ain't...Ew!

Joshua quickly puts the jar down.

NANNY

Why are you so quick to call poor Nanny a witch?

JOSHUA

Let's just say that I knew a few witches in my time and if you were one, you might be able to help me.

NANNY

Why would I want to help you?

JOSHUA

I ran away from a...well, from a jail sort of. And this jailer's comin' after me.

NANNY

It weren't no jail you ran away from.
And it ain't no jailer that's comin'
after you.

JOSHUA

I knew you were a witch.

NANNY

Yes, Old Nanny's a witch. But only
to some, dear...only to some.

JOSHUA

Do ya have any of them cards or can
ya figure out if he's comin'?

NANNY

Oh, Nanny can take a quick peek for
ya. But you've gotta promise old
Nanny that you'll do her a special
favor.

JOSHUA

(Suspiciously)

What kind of favor?

NANNY

Oh, it's nothing you weren't gonna
do already. And what do you have to
worry about? You're dead, ain't ya?

JOSHUA

What?

NANNY

Oh, don't be trying to pull one over
on Old Nanny. She knows. She sees,
she does.

JOSHUA

All right. Whatever you want. Just
let me know where he's at.

NANNY

Ya gotta promise to visit a town
called Redemption. It's on the far
side of Edgerton. My sister lives
there and I need ya to tell her to
run far away.

JOSHUA

Redemption, huh? What's your sister's
name?

NANNY

Oh, you'll find her, well enough.
Do we have a deal?

JOSHUA

Sure.

NANNY

Yes, you're no stranger to deals,
are you dear? No, not at all.

JOSHUA

Just get on with it.

NANNY

First, let me see about your friend
here.

Nanny pours the mixture out of the pan and into a small bowl.
She then takes it to Samuel and makes him drink it.

NANNY (CONT'D)

Now, drink all this then. That's
right.

JOSHUA

What is it?

NANNY

It's just something to break up the
poison. Never you mind about that.
Now, let's get a little nearer to
this fire. Sometimes, we can see
visions in the fire.

JOSHUA

Visions?

NANNY

Visions of far away places and farther
away people. Now concentrate on
who's coming to get you. I need you
to see him for me.

Nanny and Joshua both stare into the fire. After a few
seconds, Nanny suddenly arches her back and screams.

NANNY (CONT'D)

That ain't a man. What have you
done to me?

JOSHUA

No. Tell me where he is.

NANNY

But I can't get away. He's...

Suddenly the fire sweeps out of the pit and covers Nanny's
face. Through the fire, Nanny's face contorts until she has
the face of the man in Joshua's dream, the one with the cowboy
hat and the glowing red eyes.

The face turns to look directly at Joshua.

NANNY (CONT'D)

(Speaking in a deep
man's voice)

I got you boy. I know where you're
at and I'm comin' to get ya. And
I'm bringin' some friends with me.

As the face is turning into the demon's face and starts to talk, Joshua is backing slowly away. When the demon announces that he is bringing friends, Joshua turns quickly and runs out the mouth of the cave.

The voice continues to laugh as the face and Nanny start to melt away. Soon, Nanny's head has melted completely away. Echoing in the background is the laughter.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- MORNING

Back at the twisted Oak at the edge of the pond where Joshua first broke through the ground, the sun is just coming over the horizon.

The animals scatter as there is a rumbling from under the ground. The ground begins to shake and starts to pour upward from the ground. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning strikes the tree and sets it on fire.

A horse and its rider erupt from the ground, literally exploding from below the ground. The rider is the one with the cowboy hat pulled low, a long, ankle-length coat, and red-burning eyes. He sits on a horse that is half-decayed and smoke pours from its nostrils. The demon's name is Baltus and he slowly sniffs the air.

He points his nose, although you can't see any particulars of his face because they are covered in shadow, toward the direction Joshua ran off in.

BALTUS

Ah, there you are, boy. I'm coming
to get ya. That's right. Yah!

He kicks the horse into full gallop in the direction that Joshua ran off. Slowly, they disappear from view.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -- MORNING

The sky is beginning to lighten.

Joshua runs through the woods, constantly looking back over his shoulder.

He looks back once too often and trips over a log on the ground. Quickly, he gets up and continues to run.

He breaks out the trees into a clearing, a wide-open prairie. Joshua stops and looks around.

JOSHUA

Wait. This looks familiar. This looks like...

Joshua spies a brook winding its way through the meadow and a burned down structure on a nearby hill. Quickly, he runs toward the structure.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Home.

The burned down structure is a barn and farmhouse that are next to each other and have long since burned to the ground. A wall is still intact here and there and burnt furniture is littered around as well.

Joshua looks around longingly at each structure as he walks through the buildings and surrounding yards. As he walks through the buildings, different scenes from Joshua's past overlap his present reality.

As he walks up the hill toward the house and barn, the house appears whole and a young girl, age 5-7, runs out of the house, yelling "Daddy, daddy". She runs up to him and a past version of Joshua picks her up and swings her around. The past-Joshua steps out from the current-Joshua to pick her up. That scene dissolves into reality.

Current-Joshua walks past a well whose walls have been pushed over. As he walks near, the well's walls regain their former shape, circular, and a woman appears standing by the well, pulling the bucket up and filling a bowl with water. She notices Joshua.

WIFE

Well, now, looks who's come back so soon.

Past-Joshua pulls away from current-Joshua and embraces her and kisses her on the mouth. They pull away.

Current-Joshua stops to watch the interplay between past-Joshua and his wife.

JOSHUA

Yeah, they didn't have anymore of them cheap shoes, so I got what I could afford.

WIFE

Josh, you know we can't afford to not get the cheapest shoes.

JOSHUA

I know. I know. But what would you have me do.

WIFE

We could always move closer to town.

JOSHUA

I'm close enough for my tastes.

WIFE

It was just a thought.

JOSHUA

Did those soldiers ever come back to get their horses shoed? I was working on a wheel for one of their wagons.

WIFE

No, I haven't seen much of anyone since you left. Missy Starford came by once or twice to pay us a visit and she brought her son, Caleb with her.

JOSHUA

Never did like that boy.

WIFE

Oh, he's all right. Anyway, he got along well with Alice. They played down by the brook while Missy and I got to work on a quilt.

JOSHUA

Woman, you know I don't want Alice playing down by that brook. She could fall in or something could come out the woods and grab her.

WIFE

Well, nothing came out of the woods and she didn't fall into the brook. She's just fine.

JOSHUA

Even so...

WIFE

Even so nothin', Joshua Medgins. I know how to take care of my own child.

JOSHUA

All right. All right. So, what'd
ya cook a hungry traveler for dinner
this evening.

WIFE

Maybe I didn't cook him nothin'.

JOSHUA

(Mock anger)

Nothin'! Why you good for nothin'
woman. Why, I've half a mind to go
get me a new wife.

WIFE

(Joking)

And that's all you have is half a
mind. What woman would take you
besides?

JOSHUA

Why you...

Past-Joshua chases his wife toward the house and they both
disappear.

Current Joshua looks at the barn. He sees the forge in the
center still intact but covered with the roof of the barn.
The tools of the blacksmith are laid around the forge and
leaning on the side of it.

The next vision is of Past-Joshua pounding out a horseshoe
on an anvil in the intact past-barn and dipping it into a
barrel of water, where it steams. He inspects it, then shoves
it into the fires of the forge again.

The barn doors open and ALICE, his daughter enters.

ALICE

Hi Daddy. What are you doing?

JOSHUA

(as he stokes the
flames)

Oh, I 'm just fixing some horseshoes.
What's my pretty baby doing?

ALICE

I didn't know where you were at.

Alice comes next to Past-Joshua, who picks her up and places
her on top of a tall table.

ALICE (CONT'D)

So, Daddy...

JOSHUA

Hmmm?

ALICE

When are we going to town again?

JOSHUA

I don't know, Sweetie. Daddy's kinda busy at the moment.

ALICE

Daddy's always busy.

JOSHUA

Yeah, but if I wasn't busy then we wouldn't have any food to eat.

ALICE

Mama says that you're starting to not get so busy.

JOSHUA

(slightly irritated)

Did she now? Well, I still have a few loyal customers. I got the doctor from the next town over who comes in for me to fix his horses' shoes. And, of course, there's Missy...

ALICE

But...

JOSHUA

No buts

Past-Joshua picks her up and sets her back on the ground.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Now, you get for now. Daddy's busy.

ALICE

All right, Daddy. Oh, Mama says it's almost time for supper.

JOSHUA

Tell your Mama that I'm too busy for supper tonight. Tell her to keep it on the stove for me till later.

ALICE

Yes Daddy.

Alice exits the barns. When she's gone, past-Joshua cocks his head to one side, listening, and then he reaches behind under a bucket on the ground and picks up a bottle.

He slowly takes a drink and then wipes his mouth. He sits down on the over turned bucket and drinks some more as the scene fades away.

Current-Joshua bends over and picks up a bucket that is half eaten away from fire. He stands, slowly getting angry. Finally, he throws the bucket to the far side of the barn. He starts to cry, then gains control over himself and leaves the barn.

Slowly, current-Joshua walks toward the house and walks across the blackened bits of where a wall used to stand. As he steps over the wall, the walls of the house gain substance and the past-Joshua is in the kitchen arguing with his wife.

WIFE

Would you keep your voice down? Alice is sleeping.

JOSHUA

Why should I keep my voice down in my own house? This is all I've got.

WIFE

This is all we've got. Look, Joshua, can't you get a job with one of the farmers nearby, helping out?

JOSHUA

I'm a blacksmith, woman. Can't you get a job from Missy?

WIFE

We've been through this. Look, Missy says that she's been praying for us and hopefully God can...

JOSHUA

Her God. I don't give a damn about her God. He's given me nothin' but this.

Past-Joshua stretches his arms out.

WIFE

You're drunk again, aren't you?

JOSHUA

If I am, it's because of you. I'm so tired of not having enough for you. I'm doing my best, woman, but that's not good enough is it?

(Shouting)

It's never good enough.

WIFE

Please Josh...

JOSHUA

Don't you "please Josh" me. You never loved me enough.

WIFE

Look, please go sleep this off in the barn. You'll feel better in the morning.

JOSHUA

(Shouting)

Feel better for what? I ain't got nothin' to feel better for. Doc's dead and the business is all dried up.

The wife goes up to him to usher him toward the door.

WIFE

Look, Joshua, please just go back to the barn. There's more liquor out there, if that's what you want...

JOSHUA

Yeah, you'd like that, wouldn't you? You'd like me to stay drunk, wouldn't you? So you can control me. Well, nobody's gonna control me again, do ya hear?

WIFE

Joshua...

JOSHUA

(Shouts)

No!

Past-Joshua pushes his Wife hard where she hits the kitchen table and falls to the ground. Past-Joshua glances at her as she lays on the floor in a stupor.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

I'm...

He pauses to look at her on the ground, then wanders out the back door. The Current-Joshua follows past-Joshua out as he opens the door to the barn and walks in.

Past-Joshua looks around angrily around the barn. He picks up some tongs and throws them across the barn. He then angrily swipes a bunch of tools off of a ledge onto the floor. Finally, he picks up a horseshoe and throws it across the barn. The horseshoe hits the lamp and busts it, splattering oil, which quickly catches fire. Past-Joshua doesn't notice because he has slumped onto a blanket on the floor.

He quickly closes his eyes, oblivious to the fact that there is a fire starting in the corner of the barn. The fire rages out of control and eventually spreads to the house, enveloping that as well.

Current-Joshua stands by the well, crying, and watches the barn and house go up in a blaze. Slowly, reality reasserts itself around him.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- EVENING

Next scene opens on a graveyard that is located right outside a small town. A boy and a girl are playing in the graveyard with a Dancing Man, which is a wooden marionette on a stick.

They hear a horse whinny and stop their play. Baltus rides up and dismounts beyond the cemetery gates. Slowly, the children back away from Baltus.

BALTUS

Hey kids.

BOY

Hey Mister. What ya doin' in our graveyard?

BALTUS

Your graveyard. I didn't know anybody owned it, except the dead.

GIRL

It belongs to our town.

BOY

We've never seen you around before.

BALTUS

And you probably won't see me around again neither.

BOY

Hey, how come we can't see your face, Mister?

BALTUS

Maybe I ain't got a face.

GIRL

Oh everybody's got a face.

BALTUS

Maybe it's horribly burned.

BOY

Can we see?

BALTUS

Now, you seem like a bright young man and woman. Maybe you two can help me.

BOY

Sure.

BALTUS

I'm looking for the grave of one Thomas Dooley.

The boy and girl look at each other.

BOY

Oh, he's not buried with everybody else.

GIRL

Yeah, he's a real bad man.

BALTUS

And what trouble would he cause if he was buried with everybody else, seeing that he's already dead?

GIRL

Well...

BOY

Pa said that Dooley killed a lot of people. He said that Dooley murdered them.

BALTUS

Did he now?

BOY

Yup. Pa said that Dooley used to pretend to be a barber, but that he was really killing people.

GIRL

Yeah and Pa said that the men of the town had to get together and string him up.

BALTUS

They had to string him up you say?

GIRL

Yeah.

BALTUS

Gosh. He must have been a really bad man.

BOY

Yeah, he was a bad man. Pa said he killed...

BALTUS

Yeah, we've been through that already boy. So, where is this really bad man buried at?

GIRL

They buried him under the Sycamore tree down yonder.

The girl points down the hill toward a large, foreboding tree.

BALTUS

Excellent.

Baltus starts to walk toward the tree and then stops and turns back to the kids.

BALTUS (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, do you kids want to see something special?

BOY

Sure.

GIRL

Yeah.

BALTUS

Okay.

Baltus pulls a ring from out of his pocket and extends it toward the kids.

BALTUS (CONT'D)

What's this look like?

GIRL

It's a ring.

BOY

Are you a magician? Is this a trick?

BALTUS

Kinda. Now, this looks like an ordinary ring right.

Both kids shake their heads "yes".