

DIABLO'S RUN

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH BRIDGE, VIRGINIA - EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

Union Captain JONATHON Silverton, 30s, confident, seals an envelope and hands it to a CORPORAL at the edge of a bridge leading out of town.

JONATHON

Make sure this gets to headquarters.

CORPORAL

Yes, sir.

The corporal salutes, jumps on his horse and rides past Sergeant BRADDOCK, 40s, tough, scanning the road.

BRADDOCK

Captain, there's a house just ahead.
Sure they got a well. Like to stop
and get some water.

Jonathon quickly finds the house.

JONATHON

Good idea, Sergeant.

EXT. OLD MANSION - BACKYARD - DAY

Drinking from his canteen, Jonathon leans against an old stone water well as Sergeant Braddock empties the bucket.

A suspicious NOISE comes from the side of a shed about 20 feet back. Before Jonathon can free his pistol, a nervous 15 year-old Confederate SOLDIER steps out pointing a rifle, quickly followed by a second soldier the same age. Sergeant Braddock grabs his rifle.

JONATHON

Sergeant, don't move.

(turns to the Confederates)

Nobody needs to get killed here.

You boys put your guns down and we'll
all walk away.

SOLDIER

You burn our houses down, destroy
our livestock, and you expect us
to believe you.

JONATHON

Listen to me, son, the army's heading
outta town. You put your guns down
and we move on. There doesn't need
to be anymore killing.

The soldier glances back to a hidden figure behind the
shed.

SOLDIER

Major, whadda we do?

A wounded Confederate MAJOR steps into view, leaning
against the wall for support.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Major?

The Major is silent, his gaze, cynical. After a tense
moment, Jonathon quickly speaks up.

JONATHON

Put the guns down, boys. It looks
like the Major needs medical attention.
If you shoot, more of us will come
and then nobody wins. Just put the
guns down.

The soldiers are scared, nervous and unsure.

SOLDIER

Major?

The Major eyes his enemies with disgust, then winces
at his bloody chest wound. He slowly raises his head
and speaks in a slow and drawn out tone.

MAJOR

Kill those Yankee bastards.

JONATHON

Don't do it, boys. Don't do it!

Sergeant Braddock acts fidgety.

JONATHON (CONT'D)

Sergeant, stay as you are.

One of the Confederate soldiers jerks suddenly, but in a move of unparalleled quickness, Jonathon draws his pistol...

BANG! BANG!

With shock and momentary regret, both soldiers fall dead.

The Major slowly attempts to raise his pistol...

BANG!

...only to catch a bullet from Sergeant Braddock's rifle.

He falls dead and a moment passes.

BRADDOCK

My god, Captain, that's the fastest draw I've ever seen.

Jonathon glances at him before going over and kneeling by the soldiers. He shakes his head regretfully.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

You gave them a chance, sir.

Jonathon turns to Sergeant Braddock.

JONATHON

It's a good thing this war is about over, because I'm done with killing - never again!

Jonathon tosses his gun in disgust.

INT. WESTBOUND TRAIN - DAY

Jonathon's eyes pop open, a bit disturbed from the memory. He pulls out a pocket watch, opens it and smiles.

An OLD LADY across from him notices, plump and full of jolly enthusiasm. She subconsciously streams the edges of an embroidered handkerchief with her fingers.

OLD LADY
Is that your wife?

JONATHON
Sure is.

Jonathon hands her the watch.

INSERT - POCKET WATCH

Photograph of Beth.

BACK TO SCENE.

OLD LADY
She's pretty. What's her name?

JONATHON
Bethany, but I just call her my beautiful Beth.

OLD LADY
Such a pretty name. Any children?

JONATHON
You bet. Got a little boy who's... gee, Scottie's seven now. And my little girl is two. (beat) And this train can't move quick enough, because this'll be the first time seeing her.

OLD LADY
Well, the Lord certainly has blessed you.
(turns to the man next to her)
Don't you think so, mister?

Hat over his eyes, the man next to her appears to be sleeping. No response.

JONATHON

In a way, I suppose that's true.

OLD LADY

(playful)

Well, He certainly hasn't blessed us with an amicable traveling companion. He hasn't responded to me all day. It could very well be that he's ignoring me.

Jonathon grins.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Do they know you're coming home?

JONATHON

Not sure. I wrote them, but I haven't received a letter from her in several months.

OLD LADY

Well, with the war and those godless wild Indians, not to mention the Mexicans from down there coming up and all the hooligans running around these parts, it's a surprise the Postal Service can deliver anything.

Jonathon isn't sure what to say.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

I haven't heard from my daughter in nine months. She's back in Boston, you know. Married to a government man. Got himself a good position. But apparently, no pull with the Post Office. Nine months. With all the chaos in this country, it's a wonder anything gets done these days. We should've let the French keep this wretched part.

The train JERKS and the whistle BLOWS several times indicating a stop. The old lady peers out the window.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
We're out in the middle of nowhere.
What on earth are we stopping for?

Horsemen ride by SHOUTING and FIRING their guns.

The train slows down.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
This part of the country is so uncivilized. I don't know why I come out here. My husband! Him and his big ideas! I tell you.

CORSKY Owens, late 20s, unshaven and simple, bursts through the door waving a gun in the highest of spirits.

CORSKY
Greetings and salutations all! Kindly hand over all yur' valuables and nobody gets hurt.

Similar SHOUTS are heard from the next car.

Corsky punches a guy who refuses. His wife hands over her necklace.

CORSKY
Now don't be stupid folks, just give me what you got and everything'll be fine.

People reluctantly put their valuables in Corsky's bag as he makes his way toward Jonathon's booth.

CORSKY
And what do we have here ... a genuine Yankee Captain.

OLD LADY

The lord will strike you for this,
young man.

CORSKY

(smiles)

He hasn't yet. Now hand them over.

Jonathon tries to hide his pocket watch as Corsky pokes the sleeping man. No response.

CORSKY

That goes for you too, Captain.
How 'bout that fine looking watch
yur' holding? Let's have it.

Jonathon slightly shakes his head.

CORSKY

The war's over, Captain. No need
to be a hero now.

Corsky taps his gun on Jonathon's shoulder.

A moment passes.

Jonathon reluctantly hands over the watch. Corsky admires it and drops it in his pocket.

CLICK!

Corsky's eyes widen as he looks down to see a pistol nudged against his crotch.

DARROW, the sleeping man, 20s, happy-go-lucky, brims with steady confidence, revealing his eyes.

DARROW

I suggest you rethink your future.

Corsky switches from surprised to steamed.

CORSKY

I don't know who you are mister,
but you just made an awful mistake.

With his free hand, Darrow reveals a deputy badge on his chest.

DARROW

You sure about that?

OLD LADY

I say you shoot the hooligan, Sheriff.

Corsky, now unsure, looks at her perplexed.

CORSKY

Now, that's not very Christian like, lady.

DARROW

If you want kids, I suggest you drop the gun and back it up.

After a moment's hesitation, Corsky's gun swings bottom up. Darrow carefully grabs it, standing up.

DARROW (CONT'D)

Hold this for me, would you Captain?

Jonathon stares at the gun.

DARROW (CONT'D)

Captain?

Reluctantly, Jonathon takes the pistol, and carefully places it on the empty seat next to him.

DARROW (CONT'D)

Alright Corsky, back it up ... outside.

At the other end of the car, JACK, 20s, slim and confident, bursts through the door, gun in hand.

JACK

Stop right there, Sheriff.

Darrow freezes and glances suggestively to Jonathon at the gun on the seat.

DARROW

You wouldn't shoot a man in the back,
would you?

JACK

If I have to.

Jonathon looks hard and long at the gun. He's
conflicted.

Will he use it?

Corsky smiles sinisterly as Darrow's eyes widen
questioningly at Jonathon. Corsky turns momentarily
concerned, realizing Darrow's intent.

The train JERKS to a full stop.

With blinding quickness, Darrow spins around...

BANG!

Jack's gun DROPS to the floor as he falls to one knee
holding his hand in surprised agony.

Corsky wants to react, but finds Darrow's gun snug
against his crotch again.

DARROW

How are those kids doing? So much
as blink and they get it.

Corsky SWALLOWS loudly.

Darrow cuffs him to a metal fixture, moves down the
aisle and quickly does the same to a defiant Jack.

JACK

You wait till Kelley gets to town.
You and your badge are going straight
to hell.

DARROW

Kelley again, huh? It'll be nice
to finally meet your boss.

JACK
Believe me, you'll wish you hadn't.

EXT. JULESBURG, COLORADO TERRITORY - TRAIN DEPOT

Most of the passengers have debarked. Jonathon jumps off and looks around, smiling.

Darrow tries to get Corsky and Jack off the train, but they offer some resistance. Darrow kicks Jack from behind, knocking him off the platform and to the ground.

Jonathon turns toward the commotion.

JACK
Damn you, Deputy. You're gonna pay for that.

Darrow turns to Corsky.

DARROW
You want my help too?

Corsky throws him a dirty look and jumps.

DARROW (CONT'D)
Captain, you got that gun?

JONATHON
No, it's back on the train.

DARROW
Watch these two geniuses while I get it?

No time to argue.

Darrow tosses Jonathon his other side arm and disappears into the train.

Jonathon stares at the gun unforgivingly.

Corsky and Jack exchange curious glances.

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