

Sully's Choice

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TEASER

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY ONE

Sully is seated on the wood-chopping stump out front with a sheet draped around his shoulders. He flinches.

SULLY:

Careful ...

Reveal Mike standing behind him with a pair of scissors. She's giving him a haircut.

SULLY:

Don't want it too short.

MIKE:

I'm only giving you a trim.

Sully squirms a little.

SULLY:

Thought you liked my hair long.

She runs her fingers through it gently.

MIKE:

I do. I just want to even it up a bit.

She snips off a tiny bit more of his locks.

SULLY:

Won't look stupid, will it?

MIKE:

It'll look handsome.

Just then we hear hoofbeats approaching. Sully stands up and yanks the sheet off, embarrassed to have a visitor see him this way. It's Reverend Johnson who rides up in a hurry, looking upset.

REVEREND:

Dr. Mike!

MIKE:

Reverend. I thought you were away.

REVEREND: (dismounts)

Just rode in from Soda Springs. They got a terrible epidemic goin' on there.

MIKE:

What is it?

REVEREND:

Influenza. Same as we had here, only worse. I buried twelve people, including four children in just two days.

MIKE:

Who's caring for the sick?

REVEREND:

They don't have a doctor. They wired the army for one, but they haven't heard back.

MIKE:

I'll leave this afternoon.

REVEREND:

I know they'd appreciate it.

MIKE:

I'll take some of the fever reducing tea.

REVEREND:

Let me come with you.

MIKE:

But you've never had the influenza, have you?

REVEREND:

No.

MIKE:

Then you mustn't go back and expose yourself further. I've already had it.

REVEREND:

Will the children be alright alone?

MIKE:

Matthew will take care of Brian and Colleen.

SULLY:

And I'll look in on 'em.

MIKE: (searching his face)

How often?

Sully sees, in her eyes, how anxious she is.

SULLY:

You want me to stay here?

MIKE:

They've stayed alone before, but I don't know how long I'll be.

SULLY:

I'll stay.

MIKE:

Well I would worry less. You wouldn't mind ... staying put?

She looks at him: he's never stayed put before.

SULLY:

I said I'll stay. (beat). Lemme help you get ready.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY ONE

Mike has her coat on and the children and Sully are seeing her off. She's riding Flash and taking Bear with supplies and medicines strapped on him. Mike hugs Brian, Colleen and Matthew.

BRIAN (trying to be brave)

You won't be gone long, will you?

MIKE:

Well, I can't say exactly. It could be a few days. But I'll be back as soon as I can.

MATTHEW:

Everything's gonna be all right.

COLLEEN:

We'll be fine.

Brian throws himself at Mike for a final hug, clinging, not wanting to let her go.

MIKE:

I'll see you very soon.

Sully helps Mike mount up. Then he walks her on the horse toward the road. Mike looks down at him,

MIKE: (softly)

I'll miss you.

SULLY:

You be careful. And don't worry. I'll take care of everything.

He squeezes her hand and she starts off. After a few paces she looks back at the children and Sully. They smile bravely and wave.

ON MIKE:

Hoping she's doing the right thing, she rides off.

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY TWO

Sully is playing Mr. Mom. He's taking laundry down from the clothesline, putting the pieces in a basket. Matthew's in the barn milking the cow. Colleen's on the porch, peeling apples and Brian's with her. They're squabbling.

COLLEEN:

Don't do that.

BRIAN:

They ain't all yours ...

Brian gets up and runs to Sully.

BRIAN:

Sully! I'm hungr7 and Colleen won't let me have none of the applies.

Sully walks around to see what's going on.

COLLEEN:

I'm makin' a pie.

SULLY:

You got a lot of apples there ...

COLLEEN:

No, I don't hardly got enough.

SULLY:

Just let him have one.

Reluctantly, she hands Brian an apple. Sully goes back to the clothesline, but he sees that several pieces in the basket have blown into the dirt. He holds up a slip covered in dust. He's frustrated ... it'll have to be washed again. In the background we hear Brian and Colleen squabbling some more. Now Colleen runs to Sully.

COLLEEN:

Brian won't keep his fingers out of the bowl. He keeps botherin' me.

SULLY:

Brian, leave her be!

Matthew comes out of the barn with a pail of milk.

BRIAN:

She called me a pest.

COLLEEN:

No, I didn't.

BRIAN:

You're lyin'.

SULLY:

Cut it out.

MATTHEW: (to Sully)

Don't get caught in the middle, or they'll be runnin' to you all day.

BRIAN:

When are we gonna do somethin'?

SULLY:

What do you wanna do?

BRIAN:

Let's go fishin'!

COLLEEN:

I hate fishin'. Can't we do somethin' else?

BRIAN:

Like what?

Sully turns to Matthew.

SULLY:

So what does Dr. Mike do?

MATTHEW:

She decides.

SULLY: (nods to Brian and Colleen)

Get in the wagon. We're goin' into town.

EXT. TOWN - DAY TWO

Sully, with Wolf, Brian, Colleen and Matthew walk toward the General Store from Robert E's where they left the wagon. Jake is outside the barber shop, holding court, taking care of townsfolk who need medical advice or attention. Loren is there, with Dorothy. Myra has a boil on her arm, which she shows him.

JAKE:

Gotta be lanced. No question 'bout it.

MYRA: (spots Sully and kids)

Colleen, when will Dr. Mike be back?

COLLEEN:

We don't know. It might be quite a while.

JAKE:

I can take care of you.

MYRA:

Maybe I'll wait. It don't hurt that much.

LOREN:

Aw, Jake's done that dozens of times. Took care of one I had long before Dr. Mike ever got here.

DOROTHY: (to Myra)

I don't think you oughta wait.

Jake pulls out a razor.

JAKE:

Come on inside. It'll be over 'fore you know it.

COLLEEN:

You're gonna sterilize that, aren't you? It could get infected ...

JAKE: (stern, to Colleen)

I know what I'm doin'. And it's none of your business.

He pointedly turns his back on colleen, takes Myra inside and closes the door. Colleen turns to Sully, but before she can say anything ...

BRIAN:

Hey! Soldiers!

Everyone turns and sees

SIX CAVALRY

Riding into town from the direction of the church.

BACK TO SCENE:

MATTHEW:

What are they doin' here?

SULLY:

I'll find out. You all wait here.

EXT. SALOON - DAY TWO

The cavalry tie up their horses and head into the saloon. Sully catches the last soldier before he goes in.

SULLY:

Afternoon. What brings you to town?

SOLDIER: (surly)

Army business, half breed.

SULLY:

Mind if I ask what?

SOLDIER:

Looking for renegade Indians. Dog Soldiers.

SULLY:

'Round here?

SOLDIER:

Yep. Got a report they're plannin' to attack the bridge.

SULLY:

Been real peaceful lately.

SOLDIER: (hard)

Gonna stay that way.

He holds Sully's glance a beat then heads into the saloon. Sully looks troubled.

EXT. RESERVATION - DAY TWO

Sully and Cloud Dancing are talking by his teepee. Around them, we see signs of activity and dissension. Dog Soldiers in battle gear are arguing with other braves.

SULLY:

The army thinks they're gonna attack the bridge.

CLOUD DANCING: (shakes his head no)

No, not the bridge.

SULLY:

Good.

CLOUD DANCING:

But they do want to attack.

SULLY:

This ain't the time. The army's gonna be combin' the countryside.

CLOUD DANCING:

The dog soldiers do not care.

SULLY:

I know they're renegades. I know some of 'em aren't even Cheyenne. But can't you reason with 'em?

CLOUD DANCING:

They would rather fight and die than sit like sheep.

SULLY:

Please. Try.

Cloud Dancing stares at Sully for a few beats.

CLOUD DANCING:

I will do my best.

Sully looks at him, then nods.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT TWO

Colleen and Brian are asleep in their beds. Sully's bedroll is layed out on the floor. Sully kneels by the fireplace and stirs the last of the embers. Everything is quiet. Suddenly, a tiny voice and a hand tugging on his sleeve.

BRIAN: (O.S.)

Psst ...

Sully turns around and sees Brian there.

BRIAN: (whispers)

Sully?

SULLY:

What's the matter?

BRIAN:

I can't fall asleep.

Sully looks at him, not sure what to do.

BRIAN:

Maybe you could tell me a story?

SULLY:

It's awful late.

BRIAN:

But Ma always does.

Sully takes a beat.

SULLY: (giving in)

Alright.

Brian smiles, sits down next to Sully by the fire. They both speak in hushed tones so as not to wake Colleen.

SULLY:

What kind of story you wanna hear?

BRIAN:

How 'bout ... buried treasure!

Sully thinks for a minute.

SULLY:

There once was a miner called Old Pete. People laughed at him 'cause he was ... different. He talked to himself, and he was always sayin' he'd found gold and was keepin' it in a cave, but no one believed him. One winter, he got stuck out in a blizzard and froze to death. When they thawed him out, they found gold dust inside his pockets and his shoes.

BRIAN:

So you think he really did hide his gold in a cave?

SULLY:

Folks been searchin' for it for years. No one's found it though.

BRIAN:

Could we go look for it?

SULLY:

I know some caves that no miners been in yet.

BRIAN:

Could you take me there?

SULLY:

Maybe some day!

BRIAN:

How 'bout tomorrow? Just me and you?

SULLY:

If I say yes, will you go to sleep?

Brian smiles, nods and curls up against Sully without another word, closes his eyes. Hold on Sully, as he watches the sleeping child tenderly.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO CAVE - DAY THREE

Sully and Brian, carrying lanterns and digging tools, walk to the entrance of the cave. Wolf follows. Sully looks around, to make sure no one is watching.

SULLY:

This used to be a sacred cave for an Indian tribe long ago, so we wanna be respectful.

He starts to go inside.

SULLY:

Be careful of your footin'.

He disappears. Wolf goes after him.

SULLY:

Hand me the lantern - Brian hands it.

Brian steps into the cave.

INT. CAVE - DAY THREE

It's dark, except for the lanterns' glow. Water drips.

BRIAN:

This is spooky! What are those things hangin' down there?

SULLY:

Stalactites. Made of minerals that build up over thousands of years.

We hear rustling of wings.

BRIAN: (alarmed)

What's that?

SULLY:

Just bats. They won't hurt you. Stay close to me.

Brian sticks close to Sully.

SULLY:

Now, you wanna look for signs of digging, or rocks that look a little different from the ones around 'em.

BRIAN:

Why's it all wet?

SULLY:

Just water collectin'.

BRIAN:

Which way now?

SULLY:

Straight on. If we keep goin', we'll come out the other side of the hill.

EXT. CVE - DAY THREE

We see Brian poke his head out the other opening to the cave, followed by Sully, with Wolf. They blink at the light, rub their eyes.

BRIAN:

That was great! (beat) But I don't know if old Pete was ever there. Can we come back and explore again?

They start walking along a path toward town.

SULLY:

Sure. Just don't tell no one 'bout it.

BRIAN:

Could I just tell one person?

SULLY:

No, cause they'll just tell one other person and before long, everybody'll be trampin' through there. (beat). It's good to have a place no one knows about.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE WOODS - DAY THREE

Sully, Wolf and Brian come over a rise, with Sully leading. Suddenly gun shots ring out. The wolf growls. Sully stops, signals for Brian to stop and be quiet.

THEIR POV

About six dog soldiers gallop up a path, guns drawn. They're galloping towards ---

RAIL END

There's a small construction encampment where the metal railroad tracks come to an end. A couple of railroad workers see the Indians coming and flee into the woods.

BACK TO SCENE:

Sully turns to Brian.

SULLY:

Stay here. I need you to promise me --- you won't move, no matter what. Promise me.

Brian looks at him and nods. Sully motions Wolf to stay. Then he starts down the hill to

the dog soldiers.

SULLY: (in Cheyenne)

Stop! Don't do this. We need to talk.

BRIAN'S POV

Sully approaches the dog soldiers, speaking in Cheyenne - which we can't really hear - and sign language. The dog soldiers are alarmed at first, then relax when they recognize Sully. He tries to persuade them to stop and reconsider, but they argue back and continue their task of destroying the rail encampment.

ANGLE

The cavalry comes into view and spots the Indians. They stop for a few beats, observing. Then the Sergeant gives the signal to charge.

BRIAN'S POV

Sully is pleading with the Indians when they suddenly hear the cavalry, turn and spot them. Sully tires to call out to the dog soldiers but one Indian carrying a torch races to set fire to one of the tents. Sully sees him, moves after him and as he does ... Sully is shot in the back by one of the Cavalry. He falls down and disappears behind a large rock.

ANGLE - BRIAN

Horrified. Wolf takes off toward Sully. Brian's impulse is to run out as well but he stays back like he promised.

BRIAN:

Sully!

BRIAN'S POV

Brian's yell is drowned out as the tent housing the dynamite explodes - creating a rain of dust and debris. The Indians split up and run for the woods. Everything is obscured by clouds of smoke.

ON BRIAN

Crying, confused and more frightened than he's ever been in his life.

BRIAN:

Sully ...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT RAIL END - MOMENTS LATER - DAY THREE

Smoke fills the screen

We hear gunshots and a cavalry Sergeant charges out of the smoke, wheeling around, looking for Sully.

ANOTHER ANGLE - HALF A DOZEN CAVALRY SOLDIERS

Search around the wreck of the railway. The smoke begins to clear.

CALVARY SOLDIERS POV - DOG SOLDIERS

Racing away on their Indian ponies.

EXT. WOODS ABOVE - DAY THREE

Brian hides and watches, desperate for any sign of life.

ANGLE - SERGEANT

Rides around a large rock, sees something on the ground, raises his pistol and fires off camera. Satisfied with his marksmanship and the results, he grins, spurs his horse.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As the Sergeant takes the lead and the other cavalry follow, ridding off in pursuit of the dog soldiers.

ANGLE - BRIAN

BRIAN:

Sully!

Brian breaks from his cover, starts for the rail end.

ANGLE - RAIL END

As Brian runs up to the place where the Sergeant fired his gun. He stops in his tracks, staring down at the body.

ANGLE - BRIAN

Unable to move, staring at the ground.

ANGLE - A LARGE RATTLESNAKE

In the sand - head cleanly blown off by the bullet, jerking with the last twitches of life.

BACK TO SCENE:

Brian starts looking around, desperately searching the tall grass.

BRIAN: (shouting)

Sully! Sully! Wolf! Here boy! Sully!

Finally Brian sees something. He kneels down. It's a trail of fresh blood leading off to the woods. Brian runs to the edge of the woods and stops where the trail ends, looks one last time into the trees ...

BRIAN:

Sully!

But there's no answer. Brian turns and runs back towards town as fast as he can.

EXT. TOWN - STREET - DAY THREE

Brian comes running up the middle of the street past the clinic up towards the general store looking around for his brother.

BRIAN:

Matthew Matthew!

He stops, panting, in the street, and looks towards -

EXT. ROBERT E's LIVERY - DAY THREE

Robert E is talking to Matthew next to the wagon. They look up when they hear Brian yell.

MATTHEW:

Over here Brian! What's the matter?

Brian races up to them.

BRIAN: (out of breath)

It's Sully! He's hurt!

MATTHEW:

What happened?

BRIAN: (frantic)

We were in the woods and we saw some Indians and soldiers by the railroad and he got shot!

ROBERT E:

Where?

BRIAN:

I'll show you!

Robert E pulls Brian to the wagon with him. Matthew jumps on his horse.

MATTHEW:

Don't worry. We'll find him.

As the wagon pulls away, Grace comes around the corner.

GRACE:

Where're y'all off to?

ROBERT E:

Sully's in trouble!

But the wagon's already left her in the dust.

EXT WOODS - DAY THREE

In the distance, the wagon rumbles down the road toward the rail end. Reveal the Wolf in the foreground. He puts his ears up when he hears the wagon coming.

INT. WAGON - ROLLING

Brian tugs at Robert E's sleeve and points.

BRIAN:

There's Wolf!

Robert E steers the wagon towards the wolf and the wolf barks and runs towards the wagon.

CLOSER TO THE WAGON:

As it stops near the rail end. Brian and Robert E jump out. Matthew gets off his horse.

MATTHEW:

Where is he? Show me boy.

BACK TO WOLF:

As he barks, turns, runs to the edge of the woods. Starts barking.

ANGLE - SULLY'S ARM

The only thing we can see, extending from under a pile of leaves he's used to cover himself. Wolf pushes it with his nose, paws at the leaves.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As Robert E, Matthew and Brian move to his side. Robert E and Matthew brush away the leaves, and find Sully, unconscious, but alive.

ROBERT E:

He's alive.

And this is a great relief to all of them. Matthew pulls off some sticky, wet, red leaves and moss.

MATTHEW:

He tried to stop the bleedin'.

ROBERT E: (looks)

Seems to have worked.

Robert E checks Sully's side, doesn't see an exit wound.

ROBERT E:

But the bullet's still in him.

BRIAN:

Is he gonna be all right?

MATTHEW:

We gotta get him back to the clinic.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLORADO SPRINGS - DAY THREE

A COLUMN OF SIX CAVALRY SOLDIERS

Rides into town. They stop at the

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY THREE

Two cavalry soldiers split off and go to stand guard in front of the clinic. The Sergeant dismounts goes inside the telegraph office, carrying some small posters.

ANGLE - SALOON

As a few patrons step onto the porch to watch the action. Hank comes out with Myra behind him.

ANGLE - LOREN'S STORE

Loren stops to watch. Dorothy comes out, followed by the Reverend.

ANGLE - JAKE'S BARBERSHOP

Jake comes out to see what's going on.

ANGLE - TELEGRAPH OFFICE

The Sergeant exits, mounts up, rides out with his four men, leaving the two behind to guard the clinic. A moment later, Horace comes out, heads up the street to Loren's store. He's carrying a poster. As he passes Hank.

HANK:

What's goin' on?

HORACE:

Official government business.

He keeps walking to Loren's. Hank is intrigued. He follows.

EXT. LOREN'S STORE - DAY THREE

Horace walks up to the porch followed by a few more townsfolk and is joined by Myra and Hank.

HORACE: (upset)

The railroad's put a bounty on Sully's head.

He hands her the hand-lettered poster.

DOROTHY: (reads, stunned)

Wanted. Dead or alive. Two hundred dollar reward.

HORACE:

It's just awful.

LOREN:

What'd he do?

HORACE:

Cavalry fellah says he was with some Indians that blew up the railway.

DOROTHY:

Anybody see him do this?

JAKE:

You know he did it or they wouldn't be offering two hundred dollars.

HORACE:

But Sully's always tried to keep the peace. He don't wanna fight.

HANK:

Looks like he changed his tune.

JAKE:

I told you he'd side with them Indians when it came right down to it. He's always been one of 'em.

General murmurs of concurrence from the crowd.

LOREN:

Dressin' like 'em and livin' in a teepee, I don't have trouble with that, but he's gone too far this time.

HANK:

Loren, I need me a couple of boxes of cartridges.

Hank goes into Loren's store.

JAKE:

Me too.

And he follows. So do many of the other men, going to load up on ammunition. Loren goes in, smile on his face for the new business. We hold on Dorothy shaking her head.

CUT TO:

GRACE'S CAFE - DAY THREE - LATER

Several of the Cavalry guards are having something to eat. At the table under the

canopy. Grace serves them, walks away.

ANGLE - STOVE

The Reverend enters shot.

REVEREND:

Grace.

GRACE:

You heard about the bounty?

REVEREND:

Yes. It's terrible.

They keep their voices low so the soldiers won't hear them.

REVEREND:

We've go to find Sully and warn him.

GRACE:

You don't think he did it, do you?

REVEREND:

I doubt it. I do know he won't have a chance unless we get to him first. Have you seen Robert E? I thought he might help me look for Sully.

GRACE:

He's already out lookin' with Matthew. They said Sully was in some kinda trouble.

REVEREND:

How long ago was that?

GRACE:

A few hours ...

And then she sees ...

GRACE:

Oh, Lord. They found him.

REVEREND:

Why do you say that?

GRACE:

Robert E don't ever drive that fast.

EXT. ROAD - THE WAGON - DAY THREE

Coming down the road. Robert E is driving. Brian's in the back with Sully's head on his lap. The Wolf is with them too, Matthew follows on horseback.

BACK TO SCENE

As the Reverend and Grace look at the solders, who are busy eating. The wagon is going to pass right by them. Without a word the Reverend and Grace both know something's got to be done. The Reverend walks quickly through the caf, to the fence and out into the street to intercept the wagon.

Grace picks up a pie, several plates, move to the soldiers, gets in position to block their view while she dishes out some pie to them.

GRACE:

I thought you might like to have some dessert. No charge.

She flops a piece on each plate.

ANGLE - STREET

As the Reverend reaches Robert E, stops him not far from the soldiers on the other side of the rail.

The Reverend approaches.

REVEREND: (loudly)

Afternoon Robert E.

And then the Reverend looks down in the back of the wagon, sees Sully. He's shocked. He struggles to remain calm.

REVEREND: (loudly)

Nice day.

Robert E and Matthew wonder what's going on, but the Reverend holds his fingers to his lips.

REVEREND: (whispers)

Is he alive?

Matthew nods. The Reverend is relieved.

REVEREND: (whispers)

There's a bounty on Sully. That's why the soldiers are here.

Robert E looks up at the soldiers.

ROBERT E: (whispers)

Cover him up.

Brian moves the blanket that's on him, up over his head.

ANGLE - THE SOLDIERS

Seated at a table. The Sergeant glances up at the wagon. Grace notices and comes over to divert him.

GRACE:

More coffee?

She pours, moving in front of the Sergeant.

ANGLE - REVEREND AND WAGON:

REVEREND: (loudly)

I see you've fixed the wheel. Looks good. (whispers). He needs medical attention.

MATTHEW:

I'll get Colleen. She knows how to stop the bleedin'. She learned lots of things from Dr. Mike.

REVEREND:

But they're guardin' the clinic. Where else can we take him?

BRIAN: (whispers)

There's a cave no one knows about.

ANGLE - SERGEANT

Who's walking straight for the wagon.

SERGEANT:

Hey, you on the wagon ...

Everyone freezes, for a moment.

ROBERT E:

Yes, sir.

SERGEANT:

You a blacksmith?

ROBERT E:

Uh, yes, Sir.

SERGEANT:

Good. I need some work done.

As the Sergeant moves closer to the wagon, the Wolf growls. The Sergeant stops. Another step and he'd be able to see Sully. Matthew hushes the Wolf.

MATTHEW:

Sorry Mister.

Robert E jumps down to prevent the Sergeant from coming closer.

ROBERT E: (to Sergeant)

I'll be right there. (to Reverend) Here you go, Reverend, you better be getting' your boy on home.

The Reverend nods, climbs up on the wagon. Robert E stands between the soldier and the wagon so he can't see. The Reverend snaps the reins and the wagon pulls away.

ROBERT E:

Now, tell me Sergeant . What needs fixin'?

The Sergeant gives him a curious look.

ANGLE - THE WAGON

As the Reverend drives the wagon quickly but not too quickly up the road, escaping safely for the moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. SALOON - DAY THREE

Hank comes out, guns strapped on, a couple of whores sending him off. Hank checks his saddle, rams a 30-06 into the scabbard. He looks up the street to see ...

ANGLE - JAKE

Also slamming a rifle into his scabbard. He mounts up, looks over to see ...

HANK

Mount up. Hank just stares back at Jake for a moment. Then he smiles, tips his hat.

HANK:

Good huntin'.

Hank turns and rides out in one direction.

ANGLE- JAKE

Watching him go, then turning his horse and riding off into the other direction.

ANGLE - LOREN'S STORE

Where Dorothy is standing on the front porch, watching armed men ride out of town. Loren comes out of the store, strapping on a holster. He looks at Dorothy.

DOROTHY:

Do you really think you could raise a gun against the man your daughter loved?

Loren looks at her. He unstraps the gun, goes back inside. We hold on Dorothy watching the street.

EXT. CAVE - ESTABLISHING - DAY THREE

INT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Brian holds up a candle as Matthew and the Reverend carry Sully, who is still

unconscious, deeper into the cave. Colleen's with them now. They lay Sully down.

REVEREND:

Here, give me that blanket.

She does, and the Reverend makes a pillow for Sully's head. Colleen examines Sully.

COLLEEN:

He's bleedin' bad.

She lifts her petticoat up, tears a strip out of it.

COLLEEN:

Dr. Mike says the first thing to do is stop the bleedin'.

Colleen makes a bandage, applies direct pressure to the wound.

MATTHEW:

We should have stayed in town.

REVEREND:

No, somebody would have killed him for sure. If you say he didn't do it, he's got to be alive to prove his innocence.

BRIAN:

He didn't do it. He was tryin' to stop 'em.

REVEREND:

I believe you.

Colleen presses hard.

COLLEEN:

I think it's gonna work.

MATTHEW:

What about the bullet?

COLLEEN:

It's gotta come out. (beat). I'll need all kinds of things from the clinic

MATTHEW:

Wait, you think you're gonna take out that bullet by yourself?

COLLEEN:

If I don't, he's gonna die.

We hold on them as we end

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Colleen checks Sully's wound, while the Reverend, Matthew and Brian look on, worried.

REVEREND:

How's he doin'?

COLLEEN:

The bleedin's stopped, but we still gotta get the bullet out.

Colleen's gentle prodding has awakened Sully.

SULLY:

Dr. Mike?

Colleen and Matthew trade a look.

COLLEEN:

No, Sully. She's not here.

He comes to a little more.

SULLY:

Where are we?

BRIAN:

We're in the treasure cave.

Sully winces from pain as he tries to sit up.

SULLY:

How'd we get here?

MATTHEW:

Me and the Reverend brought you. (beat). There's a bounty out for you Sully. They think you helped the dog soldiers blow up the railroad.

REVEREND:

We thought this would be the safest place.

Sully nods.

SULLY:

Good thinkin' - (beat - he gathers his strength). Reverend, I want you to take the kids back to town.

COLLEEN:

We're not leavin' you alone!

SULLY:

Isn't safe here.

BRIAN:

Ma'd want us to take care of you Sully.

Colleen lays him back down.

COLLEEN:

'Sides, you're in no condition to argue.

BRIAN:

Yeah, you gotta do what we say now.

Sully nods, weakly, falls back, unconscious.

MATTHEW:

I'm goin' for Cloud Dancin'.

BRIAN:

Yeah, Cloud Dancin' can fix Sully.

Matthew exits but Colleen still looks worried.

COLLEEN:

If he can find him and get him here in time. But I don't know how much longer we can wait.

The Reverence makes a decision.

REVEREND:

I'll go to the clinic. What exactly do you need?

COLLEEN:

Dr. Mike's surgery book, her instruments, chlorine water to clean the wound, bandages, chloroform ...

The Reverend nods, making mental notes.

REVEREND:

I'll be back as soon as I can. In the meantime, do what I would do ...

COLLEEN:

Pray.

He nods, gives her a squeeze and exits.

EXT. RESERVATION - DAY THREE

Jake rides up, stops a ways from the reservation He pulls out a spyglass, looks through it.

JAKE'S POV:

Cheyenne women, sorting baskets of fruit. Several braves are stringing up leather hides.

BACK TO SCENE

Jake moves the spyglass to see ...

JAKE'S POV

Cloud Dancing, who sits staring into the fire looking worried. No Sully. Jake sighs, puts down the spyglass.

EXT. WOODS - DAY THREE

Matthew rides hard down the road toward the reservation. He has the rein-up when he sees

CAVALRY

Blocking the road up ahead.

MATTHEW

Frustrated he turns his horse around and rides back in the direction he came from. As he does, reveal

JAKE

Hiding in the brush. He smiles as he sees Matthew pass and spurs his horse to follow.

EXT. TOWN - DAY THREE

The Reverend peeks around the corner of the telegraph office to the clinic. He sees the cavalry still out in front, but they're pointing off in the distance. Horace comes up behind him.

HORACE:

Reverend?

The Reverend almost jumps out of his skin.

REVEREND:

For God's sake Horace.

HORACE:

Reverend! You took the Lord's name in vain.

REVEREND: (looks up)

Forgive me.

The Reverend peeks back around the corner.

REVEREND:

When is the cavalry going to leave?

HORACE:

Right now (off the Reverend's look). Heard 'em talkin'. They're gonna start searchin' the woods for Sully. But they'll be back.

They look again and sure enough the Cavalry rides off. He turns and shakes Horace's hand.

REVEREND:

God bless you, Horace.

Horace reacts as the Reverend heads towards the clinic.

INT. SALOON - DAY THREE

Hank is returning from his search. Myra watches as he takes off his holster, grabs a bottle and plops down at he bar.

HANK:

Two places you look and find any regular man - at work or with a woman. Sully ain't interested in neither.

MYRA:

He's interested in Dr. Mike.

HANK:

Well, she ain't here now, is she?

A beat. A note of hope creeps into Myra's voice.

MYRA:

That mean you stopped lookin' for him?

Hank lights up a cigar. He's not going anywhere.

HANK:

Ah ... he's disappeared into them there woods

Myra turns to go, to hide the relieved smile on her face. As she opens the doors, Hank catches a glimpse of

THE REVEREND

Exiting the clinic with an armload of supplies.

BACK TO HANK

Lightbulb going off over his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Colleen's giving Sully some water. He's fighting to stay conscious.

COLLEEN:

You should try to rest Sully.

SULLY:

Gotta stay awake. Case they come.

Colleen nudges Brian.

COLLEEN:

Wh don't you tell him a story Brian?

BRIAN:

I never told a story before.

COLLEEN:

Well, make on up.

Brian thinks a beat.

BRIAN:

Once upon a time there was a miner named Sully...

Sully manages a weak smile.

BRIAN:

And folks thought he was kinda strange when they heard him talkin' Cheyenne. (beat). But he knew how to do lots of other things too, like how to keep a fire goin' in the rain, and .. where to find the best fishin worms ... where eagles live.

Sully's fallen unconscious. Brian doesn't notice, he's concentrating on his story.

BRIAN:

He even knows where there's buried treasure. He never showed it to nobody, but he showed it to me.

Brian stops, emotional. He turns to Colleen, buries his face in her skirts.

BRIAN:

Don't let him die, Colleen, Promise.

A beat.

COLLEEN:

I promise.

Hold on Colleen, not sure she can keep her word ...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Matthew arrives, dismounts, goes into the cave. Jake rides up, sees Matthew's horse. He gets down, ducks behind a bush.

INT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Matthew's filling Colleen in. Brian kneels beside the unconscious Sully.

MATTHEW:

Cavalry's everywhere. Couldn't get near the reservation. How's he doin'?

Colleen shakes her head. Matthew squeezes her shoulder.

EXT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Jake is about to leave his hiding place when he hears ...

THE REVEREND

Riding up. Behind him, Jake sees what the Reverend doesn't ...

HANK

Following a short distance behind.

JAKE:

Shoulda known ...

BACK TO SCENE

The Reverend and Matthew unload the supplies and take them into the cave. Hank arrives, swings down from his horse. Jake waits a beat, then stands up from behind the bush to confront Hank, who's surprised to see him. Their voices are low at first, but progressively get louder.

HANK:

What're you doin' here?

JAKE:

Same as you, only I was here first.

HANK:

Then how come you ain't got him?

Hank takes off towards the cave. Jake reacts, follows right after him.

INT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Colleen is going through the supplies.

REVEREND:

I brought everything I could find.

COLLEEN:

It's just what I needed, Reverend. Thank you!

MATTHEW:

Shhh!

JAKE (V.O.)

I just been waitin' for the right moment, that's all.

HANK: (V.O.)

Time's up Jake. Step aside.

COLLEEN:

It's Mr. Slicker! He's gotten bullets out before.

MATTHEW:

No, Colleen!

But she's run out of the cave. The Reverend and Matthew follow.

EXT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Colleen runs right up to Jake.

COLLEEN:

Mr. Slicker.

JAKE:

Colleen - you all got Sully in there don't you?

HANK:

Not for long, she don't. I'm getting' that bounty money.

Colleen stops him. The Reverend and Matthew come out.

COLLEEN:

Wait! He's hurt real bad.

HANK:

Good. He won't be puttin' up a fight.

Matthew puts a hand on Hank to restrain him.

MATTHEW:

You can't go in there.

HANK:

Watch me.

Hank pushes Matthew roughly aside.

HANK:

Outta my way.

Hank bullies his way though.

COLLEEN:

Please! Mr. Slicker, you gotta help him.

JAKE:

Bounty said dead or alive.

New Colleen steps in front of Jake and Hank, a girl standing up to two brutes.

COLLEEN:

Please Mr. Slicker! (beat). You wouldn't be here if it weren't for Sully! Those Indians were gonna kill you after you accidentally shot one of them and Sully saved your life. The least you can do is try and save his.

Jake reacts, looks to Hank.

JAKE: (wavering)

Well, we ain't really sure he did it ...

HANK:

I'm sure.

Hank takes a step forward. Jake puts his arm out to stop him.

JAKE:

Now wait a minute ...

The Reverend takes advantage of the diversion to grab Jake's gun.

REVEREND:

"Scuse me Jake.

And he hits Hank over the head with it. THUNK! Hank stops. A beat. Finally he falls face forward onto the ground, out cold. The Reverend looks toward the sky.

REVEREND:

Lord forgive me.

He hands the gun back to Jake.

REVEREND:

Thank you Jake.

Jake, dumbfounded by the Reverend's action, lets Colleen pull him into the cave. The Reverend gingerly steps over Hank's prone body.

REVEREND:

Better tie him up.

As Matthew goes to tie Hank ...

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CAVE - DAY THREE

Sully lies face down on a blanket, his shirt off. His wound is circular, blackened by blood. The Reverend watches as Colleen splashes carbolic acid on her hands, and passes the bottle to Jake who does the same. Jake glances over at her, admits ...

JAKE:

Taken a lot of bullets out ... but never one this deep.

COLLEEN:

I saw Ma do it, once.

REVEREND:

Together, I know you can do it it.

BRIAN:

I know you can, too.

A beat. The Reverend puts an arm around Brian's shoulder, and the two of them exit, to wait outside. Jake looks to Colleen.

JAKE:

Ready?

Colleen nods. They cross over to Sully, kneel down. Colleen wets a rag with chloroform, hands it to Matthew.

COLLEEN:

Matthew, hold this over Sully's nose and mouth every few minutes. Be careful not to breathe it yourself.

Matthew nods.

JAKE:

Colleen, I'll make the cut. You hold it open with that...

He points to an instrument.

COLLEEN:

Retractor. Here's the scalpel.

Colleen hands it to him, holds up the retractor. A beat. He makes the incision. Jake removes the scalpel. Colleen holds the incision open with the clamp.

COLLEEN:

There's where it tore the muscle. (beat). There's the bullet! I see it!

JAKE:

That's it, alright. Give me the ... bullet extractor thing.

Colleen hands it to him.

JAKE:

Here goes nothin'.

Jake begins digging in the wound. Sully moans. Matthew has to look away. Jake struggles to pull it out. A beat. He stops.

JAKE:

Lost it.

COLLEEN:

It's alright. Try again.

He stops, takes a breath.

JAKE:


Hold it open further.

Colleen does, swabs the area. Jake goes back to it. Finally -

JAKE:

Got it.

He lifts it out. Colleen stares at it just a beat, then looks down again.



COLLEEN: (rising panic)

Oh, no!

JAKE:

What?

COLLEEN:

You musta nicked an artery when you lifted the bullet out. He's bleedin'.

MATTHEW:

Stay calm.

Jake:

Didn't Loren have one of these bleeders?

COLLEEN:

Yeah.

JAKE:

Well, what did Dr. Mike do?

COLLEEN:

I don't remember!

JAKE:

You gotta try!

COLLEEN:

You were there too!

JAKE:

I was passed out cold on the floor.

He takes Colleen's hands, makes her look him in the eye.

JAKE:

You stood right by your Ma's side the whole time. Now, thin. What'd she do?

A beat. Colleen strains to remember.

COLLEEN:

She sewed it up with a tiny piece of thread.

He hands her the needle and thread.

JAKE:

Then that's what you're gonna do.

Colleen nods, takes it. A few tense beats as she sews. There's blood everywhere.

COLLEEN:

There. I think I got it.

JAKE:

Good. Now let's finish sewin' him up.

Colleen nods, does.

MATTHEW:

You done good, Colleen

Matthew squeezes her shoulder.

MATTHEW:

You too Jake.

Jake nods, goes to wipe his hands.

JAKE:

Yeah, but it ain't over yet. He's still got that bounty on his head.

As Colleen and Matthew share a look over the unconscious Sully ...

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

INT. CAVE - DAY FOUR

The Reverend is there, still praying as Colleen anxiously watch over a sleeping Sully. After a beat, he stirs awake.

COLLEEN:

Sully?

He groans a bit, shifts around. Brian rushes to his side.

BRIAN:

Sully, it's me, Brian ...

COLLEEN:

You're doin' just fine ...

REVEREND:

We're all here with you ...

Sully's fully awake now. Focuses on their faces.

SULLY:

How long have I been out?

REVEREND:

Just since last night.

BRIAN:

Jake to the bullet outta you and Colleen sewed you up real good.

SULLY:

Jake?

Sully feels where the bandage is. Winces just a bit.

COLLEEN:

Gonna be sore for a while ... and we gotta watch so infection don't set in ... but looks like everything's gonna be alright.

Sully gazes at Colleen.

SULLY:

Your ma'd be proud of you. (beat). I know I am.

Colleen blushes.

SULLY:

You're getting' more like her every day.

COLLEEN:

I miss her Sully.

BRIAN:

Me too.

A beat. Sully misses her too, but he's got to be strong for them.

SULLY:

Don't worry, she's gonna be back any day now. (then). I think we oughta be waitin' for her at home.

COLLEEN:

But Sully ...

REVEREND:

I don't think you're well enough to travel. And besides, the cavalry's still out lookin' for you.

SULLY:

I'm gonna take care of that. (then). Colleen, where's Matthew?

COLLEEN:

Down the road, keepin' watch.

SULLY: (to the Reverend)

Would you get him for me?

The Reverend nods and exits the cave.

COLLEEN:

I want to just check your bandage ...

As she tends to Sully, Jake hovers in the doorway.

SULLY:

Jake ...

COLLEEN:

I didn't know you were still here.

JAKE:

Thought I'd stick around for a bit, see how things turned out.

Sully can see through Jake's casual demeanor.

SULLY:

I hear you helped save my life.

Jake shrugs.

JAKE:

We're even.

Sully nods an acknowledgement. The Reverend re-enters with Matthew.

MATTHEW:

Sully, you're alright ...

SULLY:

I've felt better.

MATTHEW:

What's this talk 'bout goin' home?

SULLY:

That's right.

MATTHEW:

But you can't ...

SULLY:

What I can't do is hid in a cave the rest of my life.

REVEEND:

If you hold out a couple more days it may be safe. Looked like the cavalry was headin' out when I was in town yesterday.

SULLY:

Then Matthew, I want you to go find 'em and bring 'em to town.

MATTHEW:

I'm not goin' to get the cavalry!

SULLY:

I'm askin' you to.

MATTHEW:

That's crazy.

SULLY:

I gotta go back. I gotta clear my name.

JAKE:

What're you sayin'?

SULLY:

I'm gonna turn myself in.

Reactions from the group.

JAKE:

They'll never believe you.

SULLY:

It's a chance I gotta take. I can't run from 'em forever.

COLLEEN:

But we can hid you, we can keep you safe.

SULLY:

As long as there's a bounty on my head, I'll never be safe. And neither will any of you.

Everyone knows he's right.

BRIAN:

Sully, I'm scared.

SULLY:

Nothin' to be scared of, Brian.

REVEREND:

Not if the truth is on your side.

He Pats Brian on the head.

EXT. CAVE - DAY FOUR

Matthew, Jake and the Reverend carry Sully out to the wagon. Brian and Colleen follow,

carrying the supplies from the cave. As they're loading him - Hank comes up. He looks disheveled from laying in the brush all night and he's got a mood to match. He's been waiting for them to come out. He points his gun at the group.

HANK:

Pretty little bump on the head you gimme, Reverend.

REVEREND: (stiffly)

Much obliged, Hank.

HANK:

But you shoulda tied those knots a little better (then) where're you taking my prisoner?

JAKE:

Ain't your prisoner Hank. Ain't nobody's prisoner.

MATTHEW:

Sully's turnin' himself in.

HANK:

That right?

SULLY:

That's right.

REVEREND:

Three against one Hank.

Hank looks around, realizes he's outnumbered.

JAKE:

Put your gun away.

The group parades past Hank who knows it's a lost cause.

HANK:

Plannin' on tellin' 'em you didn't do it?

SULLY:

Yep.

HANK: (fat chance)

Good luck.

Hank watches as the wagon rolls away.

EXT. TOWN - DAY FOUR

The wagon pulls up the main street with the kids and Sully slumped in the back, and the Reverend driving and Jake following on horseback. Their caravan draws stares and whispers from the townsfolk who flock out and gather around as the wagon pulls up in front of the ...

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY FOUR

Loren and Dorothy come out to see what's going on. Dorothy runs to Sully's side.

DOROTHY:

Sully, are you alright?

SULLY:

I'm fine, thanks to my friends here.

Loren and Dorothy both throw a look to Jake. A crowd is gathering around them as Sully is helped down by Jake and the Reverend onto the porch. They all want to look at the "wanted man."

EXT. PORCH - DAY FOUR

Sully steadies himself against the porch rail. He sees the wanted posters reading 'OUTLAW WANTED: BYRON SULLY', under a crude drawing of his face, tacked up on a post. He rips it down and turns to address the people, including Robert E and Grace, Horace, Myra and Hank who's ridden up behind them.

SULLY: (loudly)

I've been called a lot of things in my life. Bit I ain't never been called an outlaw. I respect the laws in this territory and though there's a few of 'em I don't agree with ... I can say honestly I never broke one.

(MURMURS FROM THE CROWD)

SULLY:

I help the Cheyenne 'cause I care 'bout 'em and I think they're bein' treated bad by our government. I help 'em with medicine and food and learnin'... I help 'em negotiate with the arm. But I ain't never helped 'em hurt no one. And I never will. (beat). Most of you here have known me for years. You know that I don't even carry a gun. You know my word is good. I had nothin' to do with that railroad blowin' up.

LOREN:

Then why'd the cavalry shoot you?

SULLY:

I was trying' to stop it from happenin'. They shot me in the back. That oughta tell you somethin'.

HANK:

Tells me you must been runnin'.

SULLY:

I wasn't runnin' then and I'm not runnin' now. I'm standin' here tellin' you the truth.

Sully steadies himself again. The pain of standing so long is starting to get to him.

Suddenly there's the thunder of hooves in the distance. It's Matthew, with the Sergeant and Soldier # 2. They stop just in front of the general store. Point their guns at Sully

SOLDIER # 2:

Don't move.

Sully puts his hands up. The Sergeant dismounts and comes toward Sully.

SULLY:

No need for weapons. I'm turnin' myself in.

SERGEANT:

Now that's a right smart thing to do Mister. Less trouble for all of us.

He pulls out a pair of handcuffs.

SULLY:

I said I was turnin' myself in. I didn't say I was guilty.

SERGEANT:

We'll let a court decide that.

Dorothy steps up in front of the Sergeant.

DOROTHY:

Seems to me that'd be a waste of time, bringin an innocent man to court.

SERGEANT:

What're you talkin' 'bout Ma'am? This here's the man in the picture, ain't he?

The Sergeant pulls a folder up wanted poster from his jacket.

DOROTHY:

That's his picture all right. But you've been lookin' for the wrong man.

The soldier with the Sergeant speaks up.

SOLIDER # 2:

No, Sir. That's the man I saw at the railroad.

DOROTHY:

That can't be 'cause he was here in town the afternoon the railroad blew up.

The Sergeant stares at her. He's not ready to back down.

SERGEANT:

Pardon me if I can't just take your word for that, Ma'am

He goes for Sully again with the handcuffs. Robert E steps forward.

ROBERT E:

The man was here in town. I saw him.

GRACE:

That's right, we both did.

SERGEANT:

Lemme get this straight, you folks saw him in town?

Looks are passed around. Who else will stand up for him? Surprisingly ...

JAKE:

Sure did.

LOREN:

I saw him, too.

HORACE:

Me too.

MYRA:

Fact is, he was playin' poker over at the saloon. Wasn't he Hank?

Hank, the lone hold-out, glares at Myra. Then.

HANK:

That's right, he was.

DOROTHY:

As you can see Sir, you've got a whole town ready to vouch for this man. Wouldn't it be pointless to take him to trail?

But the Sergeant still looks skeptical. Sully steals himself against the pain and remains standing, clutching the rail for balance.

SERGEANT:

The man we want was shot. I supposed that'd settle it once and for all.

He turns back to Sully.

SERGEANT:

Take off your shirt.

DOROTHY:

He's fit as a fiddle. Anyone can see that ...

SERGEANT:

Take it off.

Colleen, standing next to Sully, glances at a tiny streak of blood starting to seep through the bandage on Sully's lower back. Brian sees it too. They're both afraid. But Sully slowly unbuttons his shirt all the way down to the last button at his waist. He pulls his shirt back. The Sergeant glances at his chest.

SERGEANT:

Now turn around.

Everyone holds their breath.

DOROTHY:

You're not suggesting the cavalry shot an unarmed man in the back?

The Sergeant stares at her.

DOROTHY:

Because if they did, I'd think it'd make an interesting story for my Gazette. (beat). I believe people would like to know what really happened out there at the railroad.

The Sergeant looks from face to face, the steely eyes of the townsfolk, all sticking up for one of their own. He knows this is a losing battle.

SERGEANT:

There seems to have been some sort of mistake. The man we're lookin' for is most likely an Injun. (toward Sully). It's just with his long hair and that get-up he's wearing, well ... you can see how we mighta made a mistake. (then) You can bet we'll find the man who did it, and when we do ...

But the Sergeant's back on his horse already. And the two of them are riding off. Everyone's holding their breath. As soon as the men round the corner on their horses.

SULLY

Collapses on the porch. Colleen and the others rush in to help him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT HOMESTEAD - DAY FIVE

A week later. Colleen, Matthew and Brian are outside doing chores. They look up when they hear hoofbeats.

BRIAN: (excited)

It's Ma.

Dr. Mike walks up. The children run to her. Matthew practically pulls her down and they all hug her tight.

COLLEEN:

We're so glad you're back.

BRIAN:

We missed you!

MIKE:

I missed all of you, too.

Mike looks up to see Sully, standing in the doorway of the cabin, smiling. Their eyes meet and they look at each other a long, loving beat. She walks over to him with the kids.

SULLY:

Welcome home

MIKE:

Feels good to be here.

They embrace. A nice, warm hug. And a tender kiss.

MIKE:

So how did you get along without me?

The kids all share a look and stifle their laughter.

COLLEEN:

We managed.

MIKE:

Did I miss anything?

MATTHEW:

Not much.

MIKE:

Did Sully take good care of you?

BRIAN:

Sure did.

Even Sully smiles now. Gazes at the kids.

SULLY:

They took pretty good care of me too.

He ruffles Brian's hair. Mike smiles. As they all head back inside the cabin ...

FADE OUT

THE END

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Production Draft

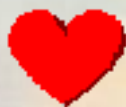
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