

# THE HEALING

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## TEASER

### FADE IN:

### EXT. TOWN - STREET - DAY 1

Mike, Matthew, Colleen and Brian are hurrying down the street. We hear, in the background, the sound of a crowd gathering.

### COLLEEN:

Can you teach me?

### MIKE:

I'm a little rusty.

### BRIAN:

I want to play too!

### MATTHEW:

The Reverend don't want no one touching it ...

### THEIR POV

a special freight wagon with a flat bed, pulled by horses, has stopped in front of the general store. On the wagon is an upright piano. The Reverend is directing Loren, Sully and Robert E as they prepare to lift it down. In the crowd are Horace, Jake, Emily and Olive.

### OLIVE:

**Nice and gentle, now. The keys break easy.**

**LOREN: (huffing with strain)**

**How you expect to get this clear to the church?**

**REVEREND:**

**Just set it down. We're bringing a wagon ... Loren lets out a cry of pain and drops his end of the piano. He doubles up, clutching his abdomen area. Other men set their ends of the piano down. Everyone clusters around Loren, uncertain how to help, when ...**

**Mike pushes through.**

**MIKE:**

**What happened, Mr. Bray?**

**LOREN:**

**I'm all right.**

**He tries to straighten up and limps toward the store. Mike follows. Others look on.**

**MIKE:**

**Strain a muscle?**

**LOREN: (brushing her off)**

**Leave me be.**

**MIKE:**

**But I'd like to ...**

**She's interrupted by a woman screaming. Everyone looks across the street towards the saloon.**

**EXT. SALOON - DAY**

**Myra comes running out, half dressed, pulling on her blouse. She's in shock, near hysterical.**

**MYRA:**

**Dr. Mike! Dr. Mike! There's a prospector in back. Something awful's happened ...**

**ANGLE**

**Mike turns away from Loren and starts for Myra.**

**EXT. SALOON**

**Mike comes walking across the street, holding Myra by the arm. The crowd trails after them, especially Horace, who hurries to stay close behind Myra. Hank comes out and tries to bar the door.**

**MYRA:**

**Nothing like this ever happened before ... Oh, Lord ...**

**MIKE: (soothing)**

**All right. We'll take a look..**

**MYRA:**

**He was doin' fine. I mean, he looked okay.**

**MIKE:**

**Who is he?**

**MYRA:**

**Sam. I don't know his last name.**

**They've arrived at the door. Hank lets them through, but tries to hold back the crowd.**

**HANK:**

**Hey! Get back! This ain't no peep show. Go on! Everybody clear out!**

**The crowd ignores him, surges forward and a few people make it through the door.**

**INT. MYRA'S ROOM - DAY**

**Close on Mike, standing next to Myra, looking down at the bed. Mike's taking the man's pulse, but we hold on Mike and don't see the man. Horace stands by Myra, a little repulsed by what he sees.**

**MYRA:**

**He fainted cold. Right .... right ....**

**JAKE:**

**Right with his boots on.**

**MIKE:**

**He's dead.**

**CLOSE ON**

**a big moose of a miner, naked under the sheet.**

**ON MIKE**

**tries to keep her cool, but she's thrown - finding a man who died in the act.**

**FADE OUT**

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

**FADE IN**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**Mike walks toward the clinic with Hank and another man who carry the dead miner,**

**wrapped in a sheet with his boots on. Townspeople look on.**

**MIKE:**

**You sure he has no family?**

**HANK:**

**Told us all his kin were killed by a twister.**

**Mike stops outside the clinic.**

**MIKE:**

**Bring him into the clinic.**

**HANK:**

**What?**

**MIKE:**

**The operating room.**

**HANK (taken aback, to onlookers)**

**She's gonna try and bring him back from the dead now!**

**MIKE:**

**No, I'm going to do an autopsy. Find out why he died.**

**HANK:**

**Who cares?**

**MIKE:**

**He looks young and strong. Young men don't usually... (embarrassed) ... die like that.**

**HANK:**

**He went out happy.**

**Mike gestures toward the clinic. Hank shakes his head, thinks she's nuts. Then starts taking the body in.**

**INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY**

**Jake's shaving Loren.**

**LOREN:**

**Y'ever seen a piano that big?**

**JAKE: (engrossed in shaving)**

**Nope.**

**LOREN:**

**A man could hurt himself liftin' somethin' that big, couldn't he?**

**JAKE:**

**I reckon he could. Hold still, now.**

**LOREN:**

**What would you do if it was you ... hurt yourself like that?**

**Jake, finished with the shave, flips Loren's chair up. Loren winces in pain.**

**JAKE:**

**What the heck you talkin' bout?**

**LOREN:**

**I got a bulge.**

**JAKE:**

**Bulge? Where?**

**LOREN:**

**Down there.**

**JAKE:**

**Loren - I better take a look.**

**LOREN:**

**No.**

**JAKE:**

**You rather have that woman do it?**

**That does it for Loren. He opens his pants and allows Jake to examine him. We hold on Loren's face, embarrassed.**

**JAKE**

**You got a hernia is all.**

**INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY**

**In a scene reminiscent of Scarlett and Mammy in "Gone with the Wind," Loren holds onto a chair while Jake pulls him into a corset-like truss, stringing it tight, while Loren frowns.**

**LOREN:**

**Anybody ever die from this?**

**JAKE:**

**Well, Ol' Lou did back in 62. (Off Loren's look). But you'll be fine. Long as you wear this.**

**INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY**

Olive sits at Loren's roll-top desk, doing the books, as Loren starts digging around in the desk for papers.

**LOREN:**

You gotta help me draw up my will. I want Daddy's pocket watch to go to Cousin Ed.

**OLIVE:**

Cousin Ed? He can't even tell time!

**LOREN:**

Well, I don't have a grandchild to give it to, do I?

**OLIVE:**

Ya' got me. (Beat). You ain't fixin' to die now, are you?

**LOREN:**

People die all the time before they expect to.

**OLIVE:**

You mean like Maude?

**LOREN:**

Yeah, like my wife. (Beat). And my daughter. (Beat). Course I knew, when Abigail took up with Sully, it would end bad ...

Olive picks up a document from the papers Loren's shuffling.

**OLIVE:**

What's this?

**LOREN:**

Deed to that property of Maude's. (Does a double take). Wait. Lemme see that.

He takes the deed from her. Stares at it. Sees something that surprises him.

**EXT. PASTURE - DAY 2**

Kids and parents are gathering for the Sunday School picnic. Mike and the three children walk across the grass, looking for a spot to spread their blanket. Kids run about, playing tag, or chat in groups. Parents are setting out food.

**MIKE:**

Who's hungry now?

The kids aren't thrilled by the thought of Mike's food.

**COLLEEN:**

When do the races start?

**BRIAN:**

Look, there's Alice!

**MATTHEW:**

Let's pitch some horse shoes.

Colleen stiffens at the mention of Alice.

**HER POV**

Alice, a pretty girl about Colleen's age, wearing a frilly dress, walks to the horseshoe court with Becky and another girl. Other kids follow and cluster about.

**MATTHEW (to Colleen)**

You comin'?

**COLLEEN:**

**No thanks.**

**Colleen sits down on blanket and opens her book. Matthew and Brian run off.**

**MIKE:**

**I thought you and Alice were friends.**

**COLLEEN:**

**Used to be. But now, all she cares about is ... hair bonnets.**

**MIKE:**

**I see.**

**COLLEEN: (looks towards Alice)**

**Do you think she's prettier than me?**

**MIKE:**

**No. Not at all.**

**COLLEEN:**

**Then how come she's so popular?**

**MIKE: (shakes her head)**

**It's very mysterious. Some people seem to have ... it's kind of like a perfume ... that makes everyone want to be around them.**

**COLLEEN:**

**I sure don't have it.**

**MIKE:**

**You will, (beat), one day.**

**Colleen shakes her head and buries herself in the book. She doesn't believe Mike. After a moment Brian runs up.**

**BRIAN:**

**Where's Sully? I want him to watch me.**

**MIKE:**

**He'll be along. He's visiting his wife's grave.**

**COLLEEN: (looks up)**

**Again?**

**THEIR POV**

**Long shot of Sully standing at Abigail's grave, with his wolf.**

**BACK TO SCENE**

**BRIAN:**

**He musta loved her a lot.**

**Mike nods. She's uncomfortable with Sully's continued attachment to his dead wife.**

**EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY**

**Loren and Olive are walking toward the graveyard. Loren walks with pain - it's clear from his face that each step hurts. The pain scares him, making him cross and quick to flare. Olive notes his discomfort.**

**OLIVE:**

**We don't have to do this ...**

**LOREN:**

**Course I do. It's the second anniversary of Abigail's passing. (Beat). And my granddaughter.**

**Olive stops in her tracks.**

**LOREN:**

**What?**

**OLIVE:**

**Sully.**

**ANGLE**

**Sully, at the grave, looks up and sees them.**

**LOREN:**

**He'll clear out. We got an understanding.**

**Loren stares coldly at Sully, who starts to go. Then Sully turns back to them. Addresses Loren.**

**SULLY:**

**Hasn't it been long enough?**

**LOREN:**

**It's never gonna be long enough. (Approaches him), limping, points finger). You married her without my permission. Now you're payin' for it. Only I gotta pay too.**

**Sully stares back without speaking.**

**OLIVE: (trying to mediate)**

**Look, we all lost ... why don't you two quit fightin'...?**

**LOREN:**

**And speakin' of payin' --- that land you built your homestead on belongs to me.**

**SULLY: (taken aback)**

**It was Abigail's. Your wife gave it to her.**

**LOREN:**

**I just found the deed, and she never put Abigail's name on it. Legally, it's mine.**

**Sully looks from Loren to Olive, then turns and walks off.**

**EXT. PICNIC - DAY**

**Mike and Colleen sit on the sidelines of the race course, cheering for Brian and Matthew in the wheelbarrow race. Brian is walking on his hands, while Matthew holds Brian's feet. They're in the lead, but others are gaining.**

**MIKE:**

**Come on, Brian!**

**COLLEEN:**

**Faster, Matthew. Faster!**

**Brian's arms suddenly collapse. Matthew helps him up again and they race on, but another pair pulls ahead and Matthew and Brian finish second. The Reverend, who's acting as judge, points to the winning couple.**

**REVEREND:**

**The winners!**

**MATTHEW: (to Brian)**

**I told you to keep your arms stiff.**

**BRIAN:**

**You got goin' too fast!**

**The Reverend consults his list of races.**

**REVEREND:**

**All right. Next we got the three-legged race, for children ten and older. Choose your partners.**

**Colleen stands up with excitement.**

**COLLEEN: (to Mike)**

**This is my favorite.**

**She walks over to the swarm of kids choosing partners. She looks about, expectant but no one approaches her. Colleen walks to Becky.**

**COLLEEN:**

**Be my partner?**

**BECKY:**

**Already got one.**

**Colleen looks at another girl, questioning, but the girl shakes her head.**

**GIRL:**

**I promised Sue Ann.**

**Colleen moves from person to person, but finds them all engaged. Having their legs tied together by volunteers.**

**BRIAN (concerned)**

**Hey, Colleen hasn't got nobody!**

**Colleen blushes. Mike puts her hand on Brian's shoulder to quiet him. She feels Colleen's embarrassment, wants to help. She looks for the Reverend, catches his eye**

and makes a gesture toward Colleen. The Reverend goes to Colleen.

**REVEREND:** (softly, bending down)

Want to be my partner?

Colleen looks down, shakes her head no. She's humiliated.

**REVEREND:** (gently)

Tell you what, you can help me judge.

He walks with her to the finish line. Holds up his arm.

**REVEREND:**

Are you ready? Get set. Go!

He brings his arm down as the pairs start racing. Colleen looks miserable. Mike smiles, tries not to let on that anything's wrong, but she's concerned about Colleen.

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY 3**

Loren has come to deliver a set of surgical instruments he ordered for Mike. She removes them from the box.

**MIKE:**

Thank you, Mr. Bray. You didn't have to carry them here.

**LOREN:**


I was headin' this way.

He looks nervous at the sight of scalpels. Stands rooted to the spot. Mike notices.

**MIKE:**

Anything ... I could help you with?

He shakes his head, turns to leave, then, softly:



**LOREN:**

**Just a little pain I been having.**

**MIKE:**

**From when you lifted the piano?**

**LOREN:**

**Guess that's maybe when it started.**

**MIKE:**

**Would you mind coming in here a moment?**

**LOREN:**

**Yeah, I'd mind.**

**MIKE: (coaxing, gently)**

**Just a moment.**

**She leads him into the examining room, goes to wash her hands.**

**LOREN:**

**I already been examined. Jake told me I got a hernia. Gave me a truss.**

**MIKE:**

**Has the pain stopped?**

**Loren pauses, then gives the slightest head shake no.**

**MIKE:**

**Then, I'm afraid the truss won't work ...**

**She moves toward him but he backs away.**

**LOREN:**

**Don't you go touchin' ' me!**

**MIKE:**

**All right. Perhaps you could describe it for me.**

**LOREN:**

**It's a bump. (Looks down toward groin)**

**MIKE:**

**How big?**

**LOREN: (embarrassed)**

**I ain't measured it.**

**We hear bell ring --- someone's at the front door.**

**MIKE:**

**Would you excuse me?**

**EXT. ENTRANCE TO CLINIC**

**Mike opens door and finds Sully, with Wolf.**

**SULLY:**

**You busy?**

**MIKE:**

**Yes, Mr. Bray's inside ...**

**SULLY:**

**That's what I come to talk to you about.**

**Mike looks back toward clinic, then steps outside and closes door behind her.**

**SULLY:**

**Loren says he owns the land I built the homestead on.**

**MIKE: (concerned)**

**Owns it? What does that mean?**

**SULLY:**

**Don't know yet.**

**MIKE: (thinks)**

**Could you wait ...**

**Sully nods, as Mike heads back inside.**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM**

**Mike is talking with Loren about the hernia, but she's also thinking about the homestead.**

**MIKE:**

**Did Jake explain what a hernia is?**

**LOREN:**

**Course. (Beat). Well, not in so many words ...**

**MIKE:**

**When there's a tear in the stomach muscle, the intestine pokes out --- like this ...**

**Mike pushes her right finger through the fingers of her left hand. Loren grimaces.**



**LOREN:**

**So how do ya' fix it?**

**MIKE:**

**An operation ...**

**LOREN:**

**You mean, cut me open?**

**MIKE:**

**That's right, so I can move the intestine back and sew up the tear ...**

**LOREN:**

**I won't have you messin' with my innards.**

**MIKE:**

**The hernia could become strangulated.**

**LOREN:**

**What's that?**

**MIKE:**

**The muscles clamp down ...**

**She demonstrates. He reacts, screwing up his face.**

**MIKE:**

**...cutting off the blood to the bowel. It could lead to gangrene. Even death.**

**Loren throws up his arms, doesn't want to hear it. He starts out of the room, and Mike**

**follows him out through the clinic to the porch.**

**LOREN: (angry)**

**I heard enough!**

**EXT. CLINIC - CONTINUOUS**

**Loren hurries out the door to get away. Sully, with Wolf is on the porch waiting. Loren spots him and gets more upset.**

**LOREN:**

**What a lot of nonsense!**

**Loren steps down off the porch, causing another jolt of pain. Sully moves as if to help him. Loren waves him away.**

**MIKE:**

**Mr. Bray, you need surgery ...**

**This is the last thing Loren wants to hear.**

**LOREN:**

**Keep away from me with those knives!**

**MIKE:**

**The pain isn't going to go away.**

**SULLY:**

**You best listen to her.**

**LOREN: (turning on him)**

**Don't tell me what I gotta do! Stay away from me. And get off my property. (To Mike) That goes for you too!**

He stalks off down the street stiffly, wearing the corset. Mike and Sully trade looks, disturbed.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY 4

Sully has come into the room as Mike is completing her autopsy on the dead miner.

SULLY:

Find out what killed him? Other than ... (stops in embarrassment).

MIKE:

He had a bad heart. Hole in the left ventricle. He might have died from any ... exertion.

SULLY:

So ... you're done?

MIKE:

No. (off Sully's questioning look). I need to practice sewing up a hernia.

SULLY:

What?

MIKE:

Loren's going to need the operation, and I haven't done it since school.

She picks up scalpel to cut into the stomach muscles, feels Sully's disapproving stare. She stops, looks at him.

**MIKE:**

**Something troubling you?**

**SULLY:**

**He oughta be buried.**

**MIKE:**

**He will be.**

**SULLY:**

**The Cheyenne say the dead carry their scars with them to the afterlife.**

**MIKE:**

**Oh? I disagree. It's the people who are left who carry the scars.**

**SULLY:**

**What're you sayin'?**

**MIKE: (beat)**

**Isn't it time you put Abigail to rest?**

**Sully stares at her --- this is none of her business.**

**SULLY:**

**Things like that happen in their own time.**

**MIKE:**

**I know it's difficult to let go ...**

**SULLY: (angry, indicates miner)**

**Why don't you get on with that? (referring to her insult) You're good at cuttin'.**

**A moment between them. Sully turns and walks out.**

**INT. BRAY'S STORE - DAY**

**Colleen is picking up supplies for Mike, working with Loren, who stands behind counter.**

**COLLEEN:**

**We need a large tin of oil.**

**Loren reaches for the can of oil, and gets a stab of pain.**

**COLLEEN:**

**You all right, Mr. Bray?**

**LOREN: (puts down oil)**

**What else you want?**

**COLLEEN: (hesitant)**

**Sack of flour?**

**He grimaces, moves off.**

**ANGLE**

**Olive is helping Becky and Girl choose fabric. Alice has come in the store and joins the girls, who murmur enthusiastic greetings.**

**GIRLS:**

**Hey, Alice.**

**Alice hands them envelopes.**

**ALICE:**

**I want you to come to my birthday party. We're all gonna dress up in costumes.**

**BECKY:**

**What fun!**

**GIRL:**

**I can be Pocahontas. My Ma's got all these beads.**

**BECKY (to Alice)**

**Who're you gonna be?**

**Colleen sneaks glances at them, can't help overhearing.**

**ALICE:**

**I'm thinking about ... Lily Langtree.**

**Girls squeal and laugh. Alice turns to Olive.**

**ALICE:**

**Miss Olive, you got any feather boas?**

**OLIVE: (joking)**

**Oh, hundreds, hanging right in back. (Serious). I'm expecting some notions this week.**

**ALICE:**

**I'll stop back.**

**She turns to leave, walks toward Colleen, who waits expectantly for her invitation.**

**COLLEEN:**

**Hey Alice.**

**ALICE:**

**Hey Colleen.**

**But Alice doesn't give Colleen an invitation --- merely walks past her and out of the store.**

**Colleen drops her head.**

**Olive takes it all in.**

**EXT. TREE - DAY**

**Colleen is lying in a wagon under the tree --- her favorite spot to come when she wants to be alone. She's crying. Mike comes up.**

**MIKE:**

**Colleen, I've been searching everywhere ... (notes here crying). What's the matter?**

**Colleen can't answer.**

**MIKE:**

**Have I done something to upset you? (Colleen shakes her head no). Is it Brian?**

**Colleen shakes her head more vehemently.**

**MIKE:**

**If you tell me, maybe I can help.**

**COLLEEN (reluctantly; it's hard to say). Alice is having a birthday party. Everyone's invited. Everyone ... (chokes up) ... cept me.**

**MIKE:**

**Maybe she just hasn't asked you yet.**

**COLLEEN:**

**I saw her at the store. She walked right by me.**

**MIKE:**

**I'm sorry.**

**COLLEEN:**

**Nobody likes me. I got no friends ...**

**MIKE:**

**That's not true.**

**COLLEEN:**

**At Sunday school they make fun of me.**

**MIKE:**

**Why?**

**COLLEEN: (shrugs)**

**I guess cause I always know the answers.**

**MIKE: (sighs)**

**I know how that is. When I was your age they called me a bookworm. I was too serious. But let me tell you: people who are popular when they're young often grow up to have very dull lives.**

**Colleen looks miserable.**

**MIKE:**

**And the people who are ... different ... go on to be successful and make wonderful contributions...**

**COLLEEN (challenging)**

**Like who?**

**MIKE:**

**Well, like ... like ... (searches her mind) Abraham Lincoln.**

**COLLEEN:**

**Yeah, they shot him!**

**Colleen cries harder. Mike shakes her head -- Colleen's got her. Mike puts her hand on Colleen, wants to comfort her, but feels frustrated.**

**INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY**

**Sully, studying the deed, confronts Loren, who's behind the counter.**

**SULLY:**

**I don't care what this says.**

**LOREN:**

**The law does.**

**SULLY:**

**You know Maude gave Abigail that land as a wedding present.**

**LOREN:**

**I don't know nothin' of the kind. Deed says the land belongs to my wife, God rest her soul. Which means it belongs to me.**

**The counter between them is the only thing keeping Sully from going at Loren.**

**SULLY:**

**Every hear of squatters' rights?**

**Sully turns and walks out, leaving Loren fuming. He slams his fist on the counter,**

causing another jolt of pain.

**EXT. PASTURE BESIDE CHURCH - DAY**

The quilting circle is meeting in the pasture beside the church. Olive, Emily, Mike and five others sit around the frame, stitching a log cabin quilt.

**OLIVE:**

Who's got my scissors?

**EMILY: (handing them to her)**

I'm outta thread.

**OLIVE:**

Trade ya'. (they exchange).

**MIKE:**

Olive ... when you were growing up, were you popular?

**OLIVE: (a little startled)**

What a question!

**EMILY:**

Well, were you?

**OLIVE:**

No, I was never in the right group.

**EMILY:**

I was (smiles) but the boys didn't fancy me.

**OLIVE:**

**Go on.**

**EMILY:**

**They didn't. They thought I was too skinny. I was always the last one picked to dance.**

**Other women make sounds of empathy -- they've been there.**

**MIKE:**

**Colleen's going through it now, and it pains me ...**

**EMILY:**

**But she's so pretty.**

**OLIVE: (joking)**

**If all it took was bein' pretty, I'da been the most popular girl in town.**

**MIKE:**

**Emily, isn't Alice your niece?**

**EMILY:**

**Alice Mayhew? That's right.**

**MIKE:**

**She's having a birthday party and invited everyone but Colleen. She's crying her eyes out.**

**EMILY: (feeling it)**

**Nothin' cuts you deeper than watchin' our younguns when they're hurtin'.**

**OLIVE: (to Emily)**

**Since she's your niece, maybe you could ... say something?**

**MIKE:**

**You think that's a good idea?**

**EMILY:**

**I'll talk to Alice.**

**Olive shoots her an approving look. Mike is grateful.**

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT STREET - DAY 5**

**Mike has ridden to town and is tying her horse to the post in front of the clinic. Sully approaches with Wolf.**

**MIKE:**

**Morning.**

**SULLY:**

**Dr. Mike....**

**They start walking toward the clinic door when suddenly, Mike's horse spooks, rears up, breaking the post he's tied to and snapping his reins. Everyone on the street cries out and jumps back, including Mike. We have a loose horse, rearing, pawing, acting crazy. Horse knocks into two men, sending them sprawling in the dirt.**

**ON SULLY**

**This is his worse fear -- a horse out of control.**

**Robert E has arrived. Mike starts calling to the horse, moving towards it. So does Robert E. But Sully motions them back. Drawing on the lessons he learned from Cloud Dancing, Sully walks toward the horse with an air of authority. He makes eye contact with it, murmuring to it.**

**SULLY:**

**Easy, Bear. It's all right now. Settle down. All right ... good Bear ...**

**Horse starts to calm down, but makes one last rear, pawing the air with his hoofs. Sully doesn't flinch. He keeps moving closer until he's got the horse by the shortened reins. Pats him. Walks him to Robert E, who takes hold of the reins and starts to take him to the livery.**

**MIKE:**

**What happened? He's never done that before ...**

**ROBERT E:**

**Something he saw or heard gave him a scare. Coulda been a snake. But he's all right now. (to horse) Sure ya' are ...**

**People on the street start returning to their business. Two men pick up pieces of the post and carry them out of the way. Mike shoots Sully a grateful look.**

**MIKE:**

**It's never dull here, is it ...**

**Sully nods. Suddenly there's a commotion across the street at the saloon. They turn to look.**

**THEIR POV**

**Hank is shoving a very drunk Loren out the door. Hank doesn't actually throw him out, but propels him forcefully. Loren's been drinking to kill the pain of the hernia.**

**HANK:**

**I told ya' --- ya' shouldn't drink your breakfast.**

**LOREN:**

**That's none a your business.**

**HANK:**

**It is my business when you're disturbin' my customers. Now go find a bed and sleep it off.**

**Hank retreats into saloon.**

**ON MIKE AND SULLY**

**they glance at each other, unsure what to do.**

**ON LOREN**

**He sits down on the steps -- and even though he's drunk, he still feels the stabbing pain. He takes out a pocket flask, raises it but has another spasm and drops the flask. It crashes to the ground, spilling its contents.**

**Cautiously, Sully moves toward Loren, reaches out to help him up.**

**LOREN:**

**Lee'me alone!**

**Sully stoops, withdraws his hand.**

**LOREN: (lashing out, drunk)**

**You took my daughter. My baby girl. My pretty little baby. I loved her more'n anythin' ...**

**SULLY:**

**Then why'd you close your door to her?**

**LOREN:**

**You know darn well. She was engaged ... Martin Anderson ... fine young man.**

**SULLY:**

**You set that up. She had no say.**

**LOREN:**

**I knew what was best for her ... Martin was gonna work with me, run the store ... you fixed that. (accusing) Ya' happy?**

**SULLY**

**No. (simply). I loved her.**

**LOREN: (rises, with difficulty)**

**Don't you dare say that to me ...**

**He tries to take a swing at Sully but Sully jumps back. Loren comes after him with a fury fuelled by alcohol and adrenalin pumping through him. He strikes at Sully but Sully won't fight back. Sully ducks Loren's blows, which only angers Loren more. Loren picks up a chair and hurls it at Sully -- but Sully jumps aside. He hurls another. Sully is graceful and quick as lightning -- dodging, ducking.**

**ON MIKE**

**watching them**

**ON LOREN AND SULLY**

**Sully tries to restrain Loren by grabbing his arms, lifting and flailing. Mike approaches.**

**MIKE:**

**Stop.**

**Loren continues flailing and Sully holds on as best he can.**

**MIKE:**

**She's gone. What's the point of carrying on this quarrel. Stop it now. Both of you.**

**With a lurch, Loren breaks free and takes another swing at Sully but the effort causes him to double up and convulse with pain. He lies crumpled on the ground. A crowd has formed -- coming out of the saloon and nearby homes. Olive hurries up. Mike's on the ground next to Loren who's groaning. Mike manages to palpate the hernia and Loren cries out in pain.**

**MIKE: (to Loren)**

**I'm afraid it's become strangulated. We've got to operate soon.**

**LOREN:**

**You ain't cutting me.**

**MIKE:**

**If we don't ...**

**LOREN: (emphatic)**

**I don't want it. Not now, not ever, not even if I was ...**

**In the middle of his protest, he suddenly collapses and faints.**

**EXT. STREET**

**Mike has taken Olive aside.**

**MIKE:**

**I need your permission.**

**OLIVE:**

**Mine?**

**MIKE:**

**You're his only relation.**

**OLIVE:**

**He said he doesn't want it.**

**MIKE:**

**He's not being rational. He's in terrible pain. (beat). Please.**

**OLIVE: (thinks)**

**You done this before?**

**MIKE: (pauses)**

**Not ... with these complications.**

**OLIVE:**

**Think you can?**

**MIKE:**

**Truthfully, I'm not sure. But I know this -- if I don't try, he's going to die.**

**Olive looks at Mike. A long beat. Then she gives a small nod. Permission granted.**

**Mike lets out a sigh of relief. Then steels herself to go forward.**

**FADE OUT**

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

**FADE IN**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**A crowd is beginning to form in the street outside the clinic, including Hank, Horace, the Reverend, Myra and Robert E.**

**HORACE:**

**She's gonna cut open his stomach and sew that muscle up.**

**REVEREND:**

**Do what?**

**HANK:**

**He'll never get up off that table.**

**ROBERT E:**

**I say he will.**

**HANK:**

**How much you wanna bet?**

**ROBERT E:**

**I ain't a gambler. But if I was ... the doc fixed me good.**

**HORACE: (slaps dollar in Hank's hand)**

**I'll take that bet!**

**HANK: (looks around)**

**Who else wants to wager?**

**MAN:**

**Two bucks says Loren kicks.**

**HANK:**

**Odds are two to one now against the doc.**

**ROBERT E:**

**Three on the doc.**

**A flurry of money changing hands as Hank takes bets from the crowd.**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

Loren lies on the table, unconscious, under a sheet. Olive stands on one side, holding his hand. Jake stands on the other side. Mike, Sully and Colleen are across the room, preparing tools. Sully lights a kerosine lamp he will hold for Mike.

**JAKE** (whispering to Loren)

Loren, I don't know if you can hear me or not, but you gotta wake up. Don't let her do this. Ya' hear me, Loren?

**OLIVE:**

**Jake!**

Mike approaches the table.

**MIKE:**

Olive, it might be better if you wait outside.

**JAKE:** (to Olive)

I'll look out for Loren, don't you worry.

**OLIVE:**

I ain't squeamish.

**JAKE:** (to Mike, referring to Colleen)

You lettin' the girl stay?

**MIKE:**

She's assisting me. As I did for my father. (Hands Jake rag). Would you pour some chloroform onto the rag and hold it over his nose and mouth. (Demonstrates). Like this.

**JAKE:**

Whisky'd work just as well.

But he takes rag from her and does it. Mike applies carbolic acid to the area she's going to work on. Checks the book one last time. Colleen gives her an encouraging smile.

**MIKE:**

Everybody ready?

They all nod. Mike picks up scalpel. Olive looks green.

**OLIVE:**

On second thoughts, I'll ... wait in the other room.

She exits. Mike waits a beat, then leans into make the incision. Pan over to the window, where Horace sits perched on the windowsill outside.

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

The crowd is gathered outside the clinic window for the big event. Horace is peering in the window, then narrating to the crowd. The Reverend is leading a prayer. Myra stands beside him.

**REVEREND: (sotto voice)**

Dear Lord, we ask you to help our brother Loren in his time of need. Please look after his spirit. And please allow our Doctor Quinn to be the instrument of your healing ...

**HORACE: (over the Reverend)**

She's got him laid out there now. Gettin' ready to cut.

The crowd leans in, enthralled.

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

Tense. Mike makes the first cut.

**MIKE:**

Light, please.

**Sully moves in with lamp.**

**MIKE:**

**Forceps.**

**Colleen hands them to her. Gestures at something.**

**COLLEEN: (curious)**

**What's that soft yellow stuff?**

**MIKE:**

**The subcutaneous layer -- fat.**

**COLLEEN: (fascinated)**

**Looks like chicken fat.**

**SULLY: (amazed)**

**Sure does.**

**Jake looks a little queasy.**

**MIKE: (cuts deeper)**

**Here it is. The tear is larger than I thought. (to Colleen). See where the intestine's coming through?**

**Jake is sweating, has to turn his head away.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**HORACE:**

**She's clamping something with ... pliers, it looks like.**

**ROBERT E:**

**Pliers!**

**Crowd is both mesmerized and horrified.**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

**MIKE:**

**This is the risky part. I have to cut around the tear, loosen the muscle ... without nicking the bowel.**

**COLLEEN:**

**What happens if you do?**

**MIKE:**

**It'll contaminate the wound.**

**COLLEEN:**

**That's bad?**

**MIKE: (beat)**

**Fatal.**

**That's it for Jake. He faints.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**HORACE:**

**Jake done fainted!**

**Crowd reacts.**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

**Colleen's on the floor beside Jake.**

**MIKE:**

**Is he breathing normally?**

**COLLEEN:**

**Yes.**

**MIKE:**

**We'll attend to him later. Take another rag, quickly, moisten it with chloroform. Colleen takes over Jake's job, administering chloroform.**

**MIKE: (to Sully)**

**More light here, please. I'm going to cut the muscle.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**HORACE:**

**Oh ... this looks dangerous ...**

**Some in the crowd start to pray. Others press in closer.**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

**Mike hesitates a beat.**

**SULLY:**

**You're doin' fine.**

**They share a look. Tense beat as she makes the cut. It works.**

**MIKE: (relieved)**

**Colleen, the spoon.**

**Colleen passes her a regular soup spoon.**

**SULLY:**

**What's that for?**

**MIKE:**

**Push the bowel back through the muscle.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**HORACE:**

**She's puttin' a spoon inside him ...**

**REVEREND:**

**Spoon?**

**HANK: (with grisly pleasure) She scoopin' out his guts?**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

**MIKE:**

**Clamp. I've got a bleeder. (to Colleen). Hold it there. I'm going to wrap the vein with thread.**

**Colleen holds clamp in place as Mike wraps thread.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**HORACE;**

**There's blood all over. Looks like they slaughtered a pig!**

**Everyone moans and reacts.**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

**MIKE:**

**Bleeding stopped. (to Colleen). Needle. I'm ready to close.**

**Colleen hands her suturing needle. Mike begins to sew up the wound.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**HORACE:**

**She's sewin' him up. (Beat). She's finished. By god, looks like he's still breathin'!**

**The crowd reacts: some whoop with joy, others groan, as they look to Hank to settle their bets.**

**ROBERT E:**

**He's alive!**

**REVEREND:**

**Praise the Lord!**

**HORACE: (joyous)**

**Pay up Hank!**

**HANK:**

**He ain't off the table yet.**

**INT. CLINIC - MAIN ROOM - DAY**

**Mike hugs Colleen, relieved and grateful. Sully goes to the door and calls.**

**SULLY:**

**Miss Olive?**

**She hurries in, a question on her face.**

**SULLY:**

**He made it through ...**

**Olive grabs him with joy. Sully is startled. Then she catches herself, pulls back. He doesn't know quite what to do, pats her arm, smiles.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**Several hours have passed. Crowd has left the street. Emily and Alice ring bell at door to clinic. Mike opens.**

**EMILY:**

**Dr. Mike, I'm real glad to the operation went good ...**

**MIKE:**

**We're waiting ... for him to wake up.**

**EMILY:**

**I don't mean to trouble you ...**

**MIKE:**

**No trouble. (Holds out hand to girl). Hello Alice.**

**Alice shakes Mike's hand.**

**EMILY:**

**Actually, we come to see Colleen.**

**MIKE: (smiles, calls back)**

**Colleen? Someone's here to see you.**

**EMILY: (nudging Alice)**

**We got Somethin' for her.**

**Colleen comes out, sees Alice, turns shy. Emily motions Alice forward.**

**ALICE:**

**Hey, Colleen.**

**COLLEEN:**

**Alice ...**

**ALICE: (hands her invitation, speaks as if rehearsed)**

**I'd like you to come to my birthday party.**

**COLLEEN: (brightens)**

**Thank you. It's dress-up, right?**

**ALICE (nods)**

**Hope you have time to ... fix somethin'.**

**Colleen looks at Mike**

**MIKE:**

**I'm sure we can.**

**ALICE: (little disappointed)**

**Well, see you then.**

**COLLEEN:**

**See you.**

**Colleen opens envelope with excitement. Mike shoots Emily a grateful look. Emily and Alice walk off.**

**INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY 6**

**Olive is behind the counter, minding the store for Loren. She's upset and worried. Mike has come to report on Loren's condition.**

**MIKE:**

**He made it through the night -- that's very encouraging.**

**OLIVE:**

**But when will he come to?**

**MIKE:**

**Could be a few hours ... or a few days.**

**OLIVE: (not reassured)**

**I can't take this waitin'.**

**MIKE:**

**His pulse is strong ...**

**OLIVE:**

**I don't feel easy.**

**MIKE: (trying to comfort)**

**It shouldn't be much longer.**

**OLIVE:**

**You know how it is with brothers and sisters. Loren's way older n me, and until I came along, he was Ma's darlin'. He's still mad at me just for bein' born. He treated me awful -- and I gave it back twice as hard. But he never allowed another livin' soul to be against me. (Beat). See, what I found out is -- underneath it, he's soft. He just can't stand for anyone to know that.**

**MIKE:**

**We have someone in our family like that.**

**OLIVE: (nods)**

**Your ma. (Beat). Loren told me.**

**Mike smiles at her and nods. They share a moment of recognition.**

**MIKE:**

**They're difficult to live with. Even when you love them.**

**OLIVE: (quiet)**

**I do. He's all I got. And if he don't make it, I'm tellin' you right now --**

**Mike braces. A tense beat, as the women face each other. Mike expects some sort of stern threat, but instead ...**

**OLIVE:**

**I'm grateful to you. For tryin' to save him. (Beat). You and I got our differences. But I respect you. And it's gonna stay that way --- no matter what happens.**

**Mike is moved, and reaches out for Olive. The two women hug and hold each other -- for the first time.**

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**Colleen is walking from the clinic to the store. Sees Alice and her two friends coming towards her and waves, smiles shyly.**

**ALICE:**

**Hey, Colleen. Fixed your costume yet?**

**COLLEEN:**

**I'm gonna be Florence Nightingale. Miss Olive's got some fabric for me.**

**The three girls exchange a look -- Florence Nightingale? Yuck.**

**ALICE:**

**That'll be real ... different.**

**BECKY:**

**Surely will.**

**ALICE:**

**Bye, now.**

**They walk on, giggling. Colleen takes a few steps but a wagon pulls in front of her, forcing her to stop and wait. She overhears ...**

**BECKY:**

**Why'd you invite her?**

**ALICE:**

**My aunt made me.**

**Colleen turns back and looks at them. Girls glance back, realize she might have heard and make shushing motions to each other. Colleen turns forward, waiting for the wagon to pass.**

**INT. STORE - DAY**

**Colleen rushes up to the counter, where Olive and Mike have lingered, talking. Olive reaches for a bolt of white fabric.**

**OLIVE:**

**Here's that muslin -- perfect for your costume.**

**COLLEEN:**

**I don't want it.**

**MIKE:**

**Why?**

**COLLEEN:**

**Alice only invited me because her Aunt Emily made her.**

**Olive and Mike exchange a look.**

**MIKE:**

**What makes you think that?**

**COLLEEN:**

**You did this, didn't you?**

**OLIVE:**

**What're you talking about?**

**COLLEEN: (to Mike)**

**Tell the truth.**

**MIKE: (begins to fidget)**

**We were talking ... at the sewing circle .... about birthdays ... and we merely asked ...**

**OLIVE:**

**You'll have a good time, Colleen. It won't matter how you get there.**

**COLLEEN:**

**I'm not goin'!**

**She turns and runs out of the store.**

**Mike and Olive look at each other, upset and frustrated. But before they can comment, Sully enters, with Wolf.**

**SULLY:**

**Dr. Mike? Loren's coming to.**

**Mike looks at Olive, and the two hurry out of the store.**

**INT. CLINIC - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY**

**Olive and Mike are at Loren's bed. Sully stays a few steps back so as not to upset him. Mike checks his pulse, listens to his heart, as Loren begins to regain consciousness.**

**LOREN: (groggy)**

**Where am I?**

**MIKE:**

**The clinic.**

**Olive is close to tears, she's so relieved he's come to.**

**OLIVE:**

**You're all right, Loren. You're gonna be all right.**

**LOREN:**

**What ... what happened?**

**MIKE:**

**We repaired the hernia.**

**This jolts Loren more awake.**

**LOREN:**



**You what?**

**MIKE:**

**It's all stitched up.**

**OLIVE:**

**As good as new.**

**LOREN:**

**You had no right!**

**He's thrashing about. Olive tries to restrain him.**

**OLIVE:**

**Loren, calm down.**

**LOREN: (to Mike)**

**You cut me open?**

**OLIVE:**

**She didn't have no choice. You were dyin'.**

**Loren tries to sit up.**

**MIKE:**

**Mr. Bray, please. It's dangerous if you move around ...**

**She tries to coax him to lie back, but he struggles harder.**

**Loren:**

**I'm gettin' outta here ...**

**MIKE:**

**You could rupture your stitches ...**

**Sully moves in to help restrain him, but when Loren sees Sully he grows more agitated.**

**LOREN:**

**You want to kill me, don't ya! (To Olive) He ain't gettin' the land. Olive bring me that deed so I can sign it over to you ...**

**In the middle of his tirade, Loren starts to get dizzy and weak from the exertion. He collapses back down on the bed. Mike checks him. He looks pale and sweaty.**

**MIKE: (shakes head)**

**Pulse is weak and rapid. I'm afraid he needs a transfusion ...**

**OLIVE:**

**Slow down.**

**MIKE:**

**We need to replace the blood he's lost.**

**OLIVE:**

**Hold it. I agreed to let you cut him, but you never said ...**

**LOREN: (coming to: addressing Olive)**

**You agreed?**

**OLIVE:**

**Somebody had to.**

**LOREN:**

**How could you?**

**MIKE:**

**She saved your life. Can't you understand? We're all fighting as hard as we can to keep you with us.**

**Loren looks around at the concerned faces -- suddenly realizes how critical things are.**

**LOREN: (frightened)**

**So I'm gonna die?**

**MIKE:**

**No, you're strong, but you've got to cooperate.**

**A beat, as they stare at each other. Loren's silence seems to signal acquiescence.**

**MIKE: (looks at others)**

**I need someone to give the blood.**

**Another beat.**

**OLIVE:**

**I will.**

**MIKE: (takes her hand)**

**Thank you. But we have a better chance if we transfer blood from a man to a man.**

**There's an awkward moment, as everyone looks around the room. Sully steps forward.**

**SULLY:**

**I'll do it.**

**Loren looks stunned. He's appalled, grateful, confused.**

**INT. CLINIC - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY**

**Close on Mike, washing the arm of Sully, who sits on a table with his shirt off. Mike gathers up the tubing she'll use to transfuse blood directly from Sully to Loren.**

**MIKE:**

**This is most generous of you ...**

**SULLY:**

**Will he make it?**

**Mike looks away, troubled.**

**MIKE:**

**Sometimes transfusions work, and sometimes they don't. No one knows why.**

**Mike sighs. She's exhausted and gives in to a moment of doubt.**

**MIKE:**

**Maybe I should have sent him to Denver, where they have hospitals and surgeons who've done this a hundred times.**

**SULLY:**

**He wouldn't a gone.**

**Mike starts putting a tourniquet on Sully's arm, above the spot where she'll draw his blood.**

**MIKE:**

**If this doesn't work ... if he doesn't make it ... (beat) everyone will blame me.**

**Hold on Mike, as we**

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. CLINIC - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY**

**Close on blood flowing through a tube -- from Sully's arm to Loren's arm. Widen to show Sully, lying on a table which has been set up next to Loren's bed, so that Sully is several inches higher than Loren. The men are connected by the tube attached to their arms. Both stare straight up, not wanting to look at each other. Mike checks the tubing.**

**MIKE: (to Sully)**

**You may feel a little dizzy. Just lie still.**

**She retreats to a chair in the back, preparing dressings, Loren sneaks a look at Sully.**

**LOREN:**

**Why you doin' this?**

**Sully doesn't answer.**

**LOREN:**

**If it's the land you're after ...**

**SULLY:**

**I don't care about the land.**

**Mike is listening, reacts.**

**MIKE:**

**Please, both of you, I need you to lie quietly ...**

**Loren turns his head to look at Sully, as Sully's blood flows into him. Sully stares back. Loren's eyelids slowly close and he falls asleep.**

**EXT. CLINIC - DAY**

**Sully is getting ready to leave, with Wolf. Mike is seeing him off.**

**MIKE:**

**We'll know soon.**

**SULLY:**

**If he makes it ... you might have to clear out of the homestead.**

**MIKE:**

**I hope not. Perhaps he's changed his mind.**

**SULLY:**

**He seems pretty determined.**

**MIKE: (thinks)**

**I suppose we could move in here, upstairs.**

**SULLY:**

**Not too private.**

**MIKE:**

**I'd be closer to my patients. (sighs). It may be hard on the children -- going back where their mother died.**

**SULLY:**

**Best prepare them.**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

**Colleen is walking away from town toward the field in front of the church. Mike hurries to catch up with her.**

**MIKE:**

**Colleen!**

**Colleen turns her head around, sees Mike, keeps on walking. Mike catches her up.**

**MIKE:**

**Thank you for assisting with the surgery. You're as good any nurse I've worked with.**

**COLLEEN: (still angry)**

**Good as Florence Nightingale?**

**A beat. Mike weighs her words.**

**MIKE:**

**I'm sorry about the party. Olive and I were just trying to help.**

**COLLEEN:**

**You made it worse.**

**MIKE:**

**I know. Forgive me?**

**COLLEEN: (still cool)**

**Who needs parties anyway? (Beat). I'd rather help you at the clinic.**

**MIKE:**

**Everyone needs parties sometime. But ... if you're happy with who you are and what you're doing ... you'll find the friends who're right for you.**

**As they walk, Colleen is still stiff, but after a few beats, she stops and turns to Mike.**

**Starts to break. Mike puts her arms around Colleen and hugs her, comforts her.**

**INT. CLINIC - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY**

**Loren is propped up in bed, looks a lot better. Mike has just finished taking his pulse.**

**MIKE:**

**You're going to be fine Mr. Bray. In a week, we'll take out the stitches and you'll be up and around ...**

**LOREN:**

**I owe you.**

**MIKE:**

**I'll send my bill to the store.**

**LOREN:**

**Wasn't talkin' bout money.**

**MIKE:**

**I know.**

**She realizes it's hard for him to say, thank you.**

**MIKE:**

**Try to rest.**

**She pats his arm, turns and leaves the room.**

**INT. CLINIC - HALLWAY - DAY**

**Mike runs into Sully, who's come to check on Loren. Mike can show her relief to Sully.**

**MIKE:**

**He's pulling through -- thank God.**

**Sully smiles, wants to touch her but restrains himself.**

**SULLY:**

**I'll be goin' then.**

**LOREN: (O.S.)**

**Sully? You out there?**

**Mike gestures to Sully, urging him to keep quiet.**

**LOREN: (O.S.)**

**Don't creep around like a snake. Show your face.**

**Mike and Sully look at each other, brace for the worst.**

**INT. CLINIC - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY**

**Sully takes a tentative step inside. Loren motions him to sit down.**

**LOREN:**

**Who was that book writer said -- when a man's about to die, he tells the truth?**

**SULLY:**

**You ain't dyin'.**

**LOREN:**

**But I come close, didn't I?**

**Sully nods.**

**LOREN:**

**You wrecked all the plans I had for Abigail.**

**Sully stiffens.**

**LOREN:**

**Truth is, they were my plans, not hers. I saw that, after a time. But ... (starts to choke up)  
I was too proud. I couldn't tell her.**

**SULLY:**

**She never stopped loving you.**

**LOREN:**

**Even after I disowned her?**

**SULLY (beat)**

**She knew you loved her.**

**Loren is close to tears, but doesn't let himself break. He reaches for something on the table, but the reach causes him pain.**

**LOREN:**

**Darn!**

**SULLY: (moves to table)**

**What do you want there?**

**LOREN:**

**That paper.**

**Sully picks up a large envelope, hands it to Loren.**

**LOREN: (refuses it)**

**You keep it.**

**SULLY:**

**What is it?**

**LOREN:**

**Never mind, Don't open it now. Don't open it til tomorrow.**

**SULLY: (shakes head)**

**I don't want nothin' from you ...**

**LOREN:**

**Why you gotta be so darn stubborn?**

**Loren speaks in a cranky tone, but there's affection in it now.**

**SULLY:**

**Same reason you do, I guess.**

**Loren:**

**Just take it!**

**They stare at each other a moment. Then Sully puts the envelope under his arm.**

**LOREN: (softly)**

**Get outta here now. Let an old man sleep.**

**Loren's eyelids close. Sully watches him a beat, but then, instead of leaving, Sully sits back down in the chair. He keeps his eyes on Loren. The bitterness of years is dissolving. They've made their peace.**

**INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT**

**Mike and the kids have finished dinner and are sitting at the table. Brian's puppy is there. Mike puts on a bright face.**

**MIKE:**

You know how I was saying ... I ... um ... have news ... well ... (takes breath, then finally spits it out). What would you think about ... moving back to town -- where you used to live?

There's a moment of stunned silence. It's clear the kids don't find this appealing at all.

**MATTHEW:**

It's your clinic now.

**MIKE:**

We could take the rooms above it.

**MATTHEW:**

With people comin' and goin' all the time?

**BRIAN:**

Do we have to?

**MIKE (nods)**

It seems Mr. Bray owns this land and he's asked us to go.

**BRIAN:**

But I like it here.

**MATTHEW:**

What about my horse? The animals?

**MIKE:**

They could go to Robert E's.

**COLLEEN:**

**Not the chickens.**

**BRIAN:**

**What about my puppy? He won't have nowhere to run around and play (sad) cept on the street.**

**MIKE:**

**There's the meadow ...**

**COLLEEN:**

**When do we have to leave?**

**MIKE: (tries to be bright)**

**We'll pack tomorrow. I'm sure it'll be fine, once we're settled ...**

**MATTHEW: (stands, unhappy)**

**Scuse me. Feel like turnin' in.**

**He starts for the door. Brian follows.**

**BRIAN:**

**Me too.**

**MIKE:**

**See you in the morning.**

**As Matthew and Brian go out the door, Colleen stands and goes to her sleeping alcove, stops at curtain.**

**COLLEEN:**

**You glad about this?**

**MIKE: (trying to convince)**

**It'll be easier to care for my patients ... no long drives in and out of town ...**

**COLLEEN:**

**You don't sound glad.**

**MIKE:**

**It's just ... (looks around) ... this was my first home.**

**Colleen nods. She understands. Then quietly she moves behind the curtain.**

**Once the kids have gone, Mike can drop the pretense. She stands up, starts to walk about the room, remembering all the things that have happened since she arrived. She wells up with tears.**

**EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY 7**

**Mike and the kids are outside, starting to pack. They've filled several trunks and brought them out to the porch. Brian and Matthew are filling a box with gardening tools. Mike and Colleen are tying a trunk shut with rope. Sully approaches in a hurry, with Wolf.**

**SULLY:**

**Morning.**

**BRIAN:**

**Hey, Sully.**

**SULLY:**

**Gotta tell you Something'.**

**MIKE:**

**What is it?**

**SULLY:**

**You don't have to leave.**

**MATTHEW:**

**How's that?**

**SULLY:**

**Loren gave me the deed to the land. Signed it over.**

**There's a beat as they absorb it. Then they explode -- whoop and cheer. Mike holds out her arms -- the kids run to her and they hug.**

**ON SULLY:**

**He looks happy.**

**MATTHEW: (pointing to the trunks)**

**What do we do with these?**

**MIKE:**

**Unpack them.**

**The kids pick up items and start carrying them back inside. Mike walks to a trunk in the corner of the porch, opens it.**

**MIKE:**

**This trunk was Abigail's, wasn't it?**

**Sully nods, walks over to it. He removes a framed photograph of him and Abigail on their wedding day.**

**CLOSE ON THE PHOTO**

**ANGLE**

**Sully studies it. Mike stiffens, uneasy.**

**MIKE:**

**What do you want to do with it?**

**Sully puts the photograph back in the trunk face down.**

**SULLY:**

**Take it all to Loren.**

**He snaps the lid of the trunk shut.**

**SULLY:**

**I'll stop back for it.**

**ON MIKE:**

**She's moved and pleased. Symbolically, he's shutting the lid on his past.**

**ANGLE**

**Sully starts to leave.**

**MIKE:**

**Sully! Stay for dinner?**

**He stops, then turns and nods.**

**MIKE:**

**We got things to celebrate.**

**They walk together into the homestead and shut the door.**

**FADE OUT**

**THE END**

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