

VIGILANTE

"Pilot"

Written by

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EXT. RANCH HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

SUPER: Idaho Territory, February 1863

GRACE QUINLAN, 20s, independent and resolute, pulls a heavy wool BLANKET tight around her shoulders as she looks out into the cold windy night.

The low light from the house only reveals snow beginning to fall heavily. Grace strains to see across the dark yard towards the barn.

Finally she spots a tall male figure carrying a lantern trudging through the gathering snow. He braces against the gusts and grips a rope that leads from the barn to the house. She smiles.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Grace warmly greets JOHN QUINLAN, mid 20s, handsome with an easy smile.

GRACE

Thought you might've gotten lost
out there.

John shucks off his snow-covered COAT, HAT, GLOVES. He crosses to the wood-burning oven where socks and shirts dry in front of the fire. He rubs his hands together to get the feeling back in his fingers.

JOHN

Would you've come lookin' for me?

*

GRACE

In this weather?

She solemnly shakes her head no. Then can't help but smile. John takes the blanket from her shoulders revealing she's pregnant.

JOHN

(tenderly)

It was snowin' like this when I
first met you.

GRACE

I wanted to leave you out in the
snow then too.

John laughs at that. Surprised.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Verity insisted we put you up. Said it wasn't the Christian thing to let you freeze to death.

JOHN

I should've married the nice sister.

He pulls her in for a playful kiss. He sits in a nearby chair. Bringing her down into his lap.

GRACE

How's the roof coming?

JOHN

Now I'm wishin' I fixed it in the summer.

GRACE

Summer's too busy with the breaking.

JOHN

And winter's too damn cold.

GRACE

It'd be faster if you let me help.

He gives her a look. They've had this conversation before.

JOHN

I don't want you climbin' up on roofs even if you weren't seven months along. Don' worry. I'll get it done before the hands arrive.

GRACE

When's that?

JOHN

Emmett was supposed to be here already, but who can tell with Emmett. Might've found some pretty girl who likes the broodin' type.

He kisses her shoulder.

GRACE

So we might not see him 'til June. I'm still not sure why you think we need so much help this year. I might be back riding by then.

JOHN
You'll be busy.

His hand gently drifts down to her stomach.

GRACE
I hope Verity is home by the time
this one comes. It's so quiet
without her and Tommy here.

JOHN
I don't mind it just you and me.

GRACE
I know, but we've never been apart
this long.

JOHN
What's it called that they'll teach
Tommy at the school?

GRACE
Braille.

JOHN
It'll be good for him. Give Tommy
some independence. He'll be able to
read without needing his sisters to
do it for him. Verity'll love St.
Louis. She won't want to come back.

GRACE
Don't say that.

JOHN
I'm sorry.

John sees her worried face and takes her into his arms.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I was only tryin' to make you
smile.

She buries her head deeper into John's shoulder, ever
patiently he rubs her back.

EXT. ABADDON - NIGHT

TWENTY ARMED MEN ON HORSES gather at the edge of small mining
town, Abaddon. The snow's not coming down so heavily here,
but the night is ominously cloudy and dark.

These are the Alder Gulch Vigilantes, a posse made up of influential townsmen of nearby mining town of Alder Gulch. They're led by TIM WHITNEY, 50, rich and enigmatic.

SHERIFF HENRY TURNER, 30s, who looks too young for his position and too charming to be trustworthy, joins them.

He wears a shiny badge pinned prominently on his chest and rides a striking black horse with a distinct white stocking on his hind leg.

SHERIFF TURNER

Evenin' Mr. Whitney. Or is it mornin' by now?

TIM WHITNEY

Sheriff. You been to your bed yet or come from the brothel?

Sheriff Turner shrugs -- what's the difference?

SHERIFF TURNER

You quite sure you want to be doing this now? Don't you have a warm bed of your own you'd rather be in?

TIM WHITNEY

I'd rather get this over with. Which way we headed?

SHERIFF TURNER

It's a good half-hour's ride. Out towards the road through Lost Canyon, but you follow the creek West instead. Ranch is set back in a protected valley. Pretty spot. Not that you'll be able to see it in this weather.

TIM WHITNEY

You're sure he's there?

SHERIFF TURNER

I'm sure. The man you're after is John Quinlan. Better known as Jack Quick, the leader of the Quinlan Gang. Wanted in three territories.

TIM WHITNEY

Word is he's dead.

SHERIFF TURNER

Seems he's made a miraculous resurrection then.

(MORE)

SHERIFF TURNER (CONT'D)

Been 'round here for a few years
now. Hidin' in plain sight.

TIM WHITNEY

You've known all this time?

SHERIFF TURNER

Lots o' types come here and if they
don't cause no trouble I got no
reason to kick a hornet's nest.

TIM WHITNEY

(scoffs)

Spoken like a true lawman.

SHERIFF TURNER

Hasn't caused any trouble 'til now.
He's married and expectin' a baby.

VIGILANTE

How armed up will he be?

SHERIFF TURNER

There's no sayin', but be ready. He
didn't get the name Quick for
nothin'.

TIM WHITNEY

Even he can't outdraw twenty men.

SHERIFF TURNER

(shrugs)

I only ask that you leave the wife
outta this.

TIM WHITNEY

(nods)

We want Quinlan.

Tim turns his horse and all the rest follow kicking up a
flurry of mud and hooves.

Sheriff Turner watches, readjusts his hat and then
reluctantly urges his horse after them. It's the last thing
he wants to be doing.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

John wakes up to faint noises outside. The wood burning oven
in the other room provides little light.

He puts his hand over Grace's mouth waking her. Her eyes grow big with terror. He puts his finger to his lips to signal for her to be quiet.

He gets out of bed and quietly goes for a pistol on the dresser.

Grace reaches under the bed, hand grasping for a shotgun when she's pulled backwards by the hair. She screams and suddenly the room is overtaken by a group of four ARMED MEN.

John fights, throwing punches wildly, but there are too many.

GRACE

No! John!

His pistol wrenched from his hand. Each arm held by one of the intruders, he desperately tries to get free.

TIM WHITNEY

Stop fighting or she'll get a bullet.

John sees Tim Whitney point his gun at Grace's head. John stops fighting.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

John's dragged out of house by the group of armed men. He struggles against the rope tied around his arms, chest and ankles.

The rest of the mob are on horseback with their guns pointed at the house. Sheriff Turner stands next to his horse.

Tim Whitney pushes Grace in front of him. Gun still pointed at her head. He sizes up John.

TIM WHITNEY

You're accused of the stage robberies on the 24th, 29th, and 31st of November. Resulting in the deaths of seven people. The robbery and murder of two miners in their camp on the night of December 14th--

JOHN

You've got the wrong man.

TIM WHITNEY

You're the outlaw Jack Quick, are you not?

John nods stiffly.

TIM WHITNEY (CONT'D)

We have witnesses that put you at
the robberies.

Tim pushes Grace. She stumbles forward and Sheriff Turner catches her before she falls.

GRACE

(desperate)

Sheriff Turner. Henry. Please do
something. Please stop them. He
hasn't done anything.

Sheriff Turner grasps her arms. He looks torn, but won't let her go.

TIM WHITNEY

(to John)

We know exactly who you are, Jack.
You're an outlaw. And you'll hang
for your crimes.

GRACE

(crying)

It wasn't him.

Tim nods at the men. They drag John into the half finished bunkhouse. They throw a rope over the rafter and put the noose around John's neck. Two men lift him by the legs to stand on a stool.

We don't hear any sound as Grace struggles to get free. Time slows. She escapes Sheriff Turner's grip and runs towards John just as he is hanged from the bunkhouse rafters.

Grace drops to her knees in the snow. Crying in anguish, but we don't hear it.

CUT TO BLACK

CREDITS