

72

EXT. TIMBERLAKE'S RANCH - CORRAL

72

Mabel approaches the corral once again. Marcus has pulled one of the horses into a separate area and is trying to break it. He falls off with just a couple bucks from the animal. Covered in dirt, he just bounces right back up with a smile on his face.

Mabel can't help but smile at this too. Paul notices this from across the way and she hides it as soon as he does.

A horse comes up to her. She runs her fingers down its nose. As it turns, she catches something on its rear side: a brand.

She looks at another now in the herd. It is branded too but with a different mark. And then another and another. The horses were not wild; they were stolen.

Mabel brushes the hair out of her face and rushes away.

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EXT. TIMBERLAKE'S RANCH - CABIN

73

She comes out, ready to mount her horse who is tied up just yards away, but Paul is waiting for her.

MABEL

They're not wild.

She puts a foot in the stirrup and lifts herself onto the saddle.

PAUL

They were once.

(beat)

Just as you were once.

This goes straight to her core.

MABEL

I'll be going to town to fetch my husband...

She realizes now in mentioning him that this might in some way be a reaction to her attraction to him.

MABEL

He and the sheriff will be here shortly. I suggest you leave.

She rides off.

As Mabel's horse makes it to the crest of the hill, Paul catches up to her, riding bareback.

He cuts her off between two trees.

MABEL

Those horses aren't yours to sell.

PAUL

And why's that?

She tries to back up and go around him but he's too good of a horseman, blocking her.

PAUL

Someone else stole them first.

This confuses her for a moment as she continues to struggle.

PAUL

They were taken. From the land.
From their own.

She begins to listen.

PAUL

So what does it mean that I took
what was never theirs to begin
with?

Their horses settle, breathing hard from the climb and confrontation. His words resonate with her.

MABEL

Then why don't you set them free?

She is speaking as much about herself as the horses. This time, it's her words that sink in: Paul feels his place in the cycle of ownership.

PAUL

If you want to go, I won't stop
you.

He moves his horse, clearing the path.

PAUL

Tell your husband.

He turns back to the ranch.

PAUL

But I will not leave.

He rides down. Mabel watches him, her skin glistening from the energy of this intense moment. She gazes the other way, at the small town in the distance.

MABEL (V.O.)

I should have come to you. Part of me will never know why I didn't.

She descends back to the ranch, lured by something new and unusual.

75 EXT. TIMBERLAKE'S RANCH - CORRAL

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Mabel rides back into the ranch but now notices a black horse up outside the corral.

MABEL (V.O.)

When Paul returned, a stranger had

She gets off her horse and goes off the ranch to a tree and continues on foot to the cabin.

76 EXT. TIMBERLAKE'S RANCH - CABIN

76

Mabel makes quiet steps to the cabin, from which she can hear Paul's voice. The man, familiar to us but not to her.

She comes to the wall and looks through a corner of the window.

Mabel's POV: The Marshal Graham, in his black attire, at the table.

MABEL (V.O.)

The man who'd come for the horse.

We know now for certain that Graham is a direct player in this scheme. Paul paces back and forth in the small room. Timberlake and Marcus are there too, just watching and listening.

GRAHAM

That's my price.