

The log roller nods, "Damn it, it's drunkenness."

HENRY SCAGGS

Perhaps your son will arrive soon.

And with that wish, Scaggs makes his way down the road.

EXT. COLONEL TRABUE'S CABIN - DAY

Old rustic cabin, chickens in the front yard. Outhouse in the back of the cabin. A well worn trail leads to the front yard of the cabin from the woods.

COLONEL TRABUE sits on the front porch, feet propped up on the railing. His hat is pulled down over his face as if he is sleeping but he slowly lowers his right hand to the flintlock on the table beside him and pulls the hammer back, careful not to give away that he is awake and aware of company.

Scaggs walks forward and when he is about 10 feet away Trabue draws on him. Scaggs freezes.

COLONEL TRABUE

Hold it right there unless you want some lead in your gut.

Scaggs is standing with his hands empty and partially raised.

HENRY SCAGGS

Good afternoon, Colonel.

Trabue lowers the hammer into place and places the flintlock onto the table. He slides his hat back into place on top of his head and stands up. He stares coldly at Scaggs for a few seconds then smiles.

COLONEL TRABUE

Well I be damned. Henry Scaggs! Set that long rifle down and come pour yourself a drink.

HENRY SCAGGS

I think I'll do just that

Scaggs walks onto the porch and pulls up a seat next to Trabue, but he keeps his rifle close. The colonel pours whiskey from a jug into a dented tin cup and hands it to Scaggs.

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COLONEL TRABUE
What brings you out this way?

HENRY SCAGGS
I need your help, colonel. There aren't many men 'round these parts with your talent for... fighting.

Trabue stares silently at Scaggs.

COLONEL TRABUE
No.

HENRY SCAGGS
At least hear me out.

COLONEL TRABUE
No. Mr. Scaggs, I am done. I have my boy here to look after and I'll be damned if I die on a trail chasing God know what. I have made it this long without dying and I plan to keep it this way.

HENRY SCAGGS
Have you heard of these Harpe brothers?

COLONEL TRABUE
Yeah, a foul group for sure. I've heard the tales.

HENRY SCAGGS
Then you know how much people need us to put a stop to these scoundrels.

COLONEL TRABUE
There is no us Henry. I'm no indian fighter anymore. I'm no fighter of any creature that walks on its hind legs.

(beat)
If you must battle with these men, then battle. But only you.

Scaggs sighs and holds out his cup for a refill. The colonel complies.

HENRY SCAGGS
I understand, Colonel, I really do. But I can't just stand by and watch as innocents are robbed and torn

(MORE)

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HENRY SCAGGS (cont'd)
asunder. These are ordinary folk
being murdered, not soldiers.

COLONEL TRABUE
Are the stories true?

HENRY SCAGGS
About the Harpes?

COLONEL TRABUE
Yes.

Scaggs lifts his cup and takes a big gulp. He sets the cup
down and looks right at Trabue.

HENRY SCAGGS
Yes, every damn bit of it is true.
Every man, woman, and child they
kill. They are the meaning of
horror, Colonel. Bodies found cut
open and filled with rocks, then
thrown into the river. Whole
families murdered with their heads
smashed in.

COLONEL TRABUE
(to himself)
It has the sound of nightmares.

HENRY SCAGGS
One we cannot wake from if we don't
take action.

COLONEL TRABUE
Damn. I can't do it Henry, I really
can't. My boy, John needs me. He's
not ready to be on his own just
yet.

HENRY SCAGGS
Well... I had hope. I just can't
seem to keep a posse together long
enough to catch these bastards. As
soon as we get close, my men turn
tail and run.

COLONEL TRABUE
You will find them, Henry. Evil
always meets its end at the hand of
good men.

He says this without the confidence he might once have and
Scaggs believes it with the same degree of faith.

(CONTINUED)

COLONEL TRABUE

Rest here a bit. My boy is due back soon with some supplies from the neighbor. I'll fix up a meal and you can at least start your trip with a full belly.

HENRY SCAGGS

Consider me thankful.

The two men smile at each other but this brief moment of ease is ruined as the whining of a dog can be heard in the distance.

Scaggs and Trabue perk up and lean forward in their seats, trying to discern the direction of the whine.

HENRY SCAGGS

Colon-

COLONEL TRABUE

Shhh. That sounds like Jasper.

HENRY SCAGGS

Jasper?

COLONEL TRABUE

John's dog. They travel everywhere together.

The whine is getting louder as the dog nears.

HENRY SCAGGS

Something ain't right.

The dog emerges from the woods. It is limping and is covered in blood. The dog has several large lacerations and is loosing blood.

COLONEL TRABUE

Oh hell.

Trabue jumps up and moves quickly towards the dog. Caggs gets up and follows, checks to make sure his gun is loaded and ready.

The dog slowly limps toward the colonel, who now sees how bad its wounds are.

COLONEL TRABUE

Scaggs, take him back to the house.

Scaggs grabs the dog and hurries back to the house.

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