



ON THE TRAIL TO RAGE

WRITTEN BY M.LATHROM

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OVER BLACK

The crackle of a burning fire over the chirps of crickets and birds.

The haw or men and gallop of horses as a posse rides off on horses into the distance.

The fire grows louder. It consumes all of the sounds around it, until it's all that's left.

Then.

A gasp cuts through the raging fire.

EXT. COUNTRY TRAIL - DAY

Shoed hooves kick up dirt.

The wheel of a wagon rolls along the trail.

Guiding an odd pair, a well-fed horse and a slightly smaller donkey, is WILLIAM BAKER (38).

Beneath the grit of long travels lies a kind face younger than its years. Dirty blonde on the trail, bright blonde in the home. Smiling eyes that instill an instant trust.

He has a look of content as he looks forward and listens to the sounds of the land. He takes a deep breath. Exhales the crisp, evening air.

He twists around to the covered carriage behind him, pulls back the flap.

Inside, MABEL BAKER (32) wrings out a wet rag over a bucket. Places the rag on the forehead of their boy SAMUEL (6), a spitting image of his father.

Mabel's red hair pulled tight in a ponytail. She has a toughness in her eyes. The kind that comes from being the rock on shaky ground. There's a mesmerizing precision in her movements. Watching her tend to a sick child is like watching a blacksmith forge a sword. She wears a dark blue dress of light material.

Samuel lies holding his stomach with his eyes closed. He moans a bit.

WILLIAM
(whispers)
May, how's he doing.

MABEL

Just a little trail sickness. We need to stop for a bit. Stretch our legs.

WILLIAM

Think he'll hold out for another few miles?

Mabel shakes her head.

WILLIAM

All right, I'll see if I can find a place to--

William turn back to the trail to see a woman right in front of the carriage.

He yanks on the ties.

The horse and donkey kick to a stop.

Mabel braces. Catches Samuel.

The dust settles.

GEORGIA (36), a dark-hair woman in a dirty blue dress. In a frazzle, she moves beside the horses out of the way.

GEORGIA

Oh my, I'm so sorry, sir! Hasn't been anyone on this trail for days and I was afraid you'd miss me. I'm Georgia.

William, annoyed, takes a breath. Calms.

WILLIAM

William. And no worries, Ma'am.

He looks around.

No wagon. A small camp with a little smoking fire-pit next to a small brook.

WILLIAM

You out here all alone?

GEORGIA

My husband went out for food two nights ago and I ain't seen him since.

William takes pause. He looks over the woman. A tan face, a bit of grit.

HER HANDS

Fresh tie marks on her hands. Peeking out behind her dress, the hands of a large blade.

WILLIAM

We don't have room for another body on here. Next town's a day out. I'll send some help when I reach--

GEORGIA

I ain't got no food.

William leans back, pulls open the flap, signals to a basket beside Mabel.

Mabel shakes her head no, nervous. He motions again.

Mabel opens the basket, pulls out a loaf of bread. Hands it to William.

William tosses it to Georgia.

WILLIAM

Really sorry I can't do more, Ma'am.

Antsy, William whips the ties. The odd pair starts off.

Georgia runs up beside him, grabs a tie. Yanks. The horse and donkey stop.

GEORGIA

You can't leave me.

WILLIAM

There's no more help I can be.

GEORGIA

No! You got it all wrong, Mister William. I ain't askin'.

The sound of trotting horses.

William whips around. On the other side of the wagon, three men in thick leather and dark clothes on horses. They wear bandana around their faces. Loot bags hang from the sides of their horses. Some full, some waiting to be filled.

William looks back down at Georgia with fear in his eyes. A wry grin creeps across her face.

He whips around to look at Mabel. She stares back. That toughness. Those eyes.

SMASH TO BLACK.

Silence.

A deep gasp. A raging fire.

EXT. COUNTRY TRAIL - DUSK

Violent flames reach into the dark blue sky. Rings of smoke rise through the tree by the brook.

Mabel, dirty, her blue dress stained red at her side.

She pants for air, her eyes filled with terror. She crawls through the dry grass to William, who lies motionless.

His hate lies in her path, she shoves it away, then pauses. She grabs it. Holds it up toward the light of the fire.

The light shines through a bloody hole on the back of the hate.

Mabel moans in emotional agony. She crawls onto William's chest. His head laid back in a puddle of blood. She looks away as tears fall.

She sits up. Searches the area for something... or someone.

POV to the right. Empty grass. To the left empty grass.

Her gazes shifts slowly to the hellish inferno. She takes a small sniff of the air.

Tears stream down her cheek. The fire steals her breath. She chokes on the air, unable to scream.

She stares at the fire, then screams into the night.

She cries, breaks down on William's chest. The toughness she once had has left her.

She coughs. Then winces, grabs her side. Looks at her hand. Wet blood.

As she cries, she crawls to the edge of the brook. To the edge of the water. She gets on her knees. Rips open the side of her dress. A knife wound leaks blood.

She splashes water on it. The precision she once has is lost. She gives up, bends down. Splashes water on her face. Drinks a bit. Cries.

She sits up, looks to the west. Sparks pepper the dark sky as the sun disappears behind the horizon.

She looks at her face in the water. The tough woman reduced to a sobbing mess.

A sliver of sunlight from the setting sun shines on something in the water. Just beneath her reflection.

The tears stop. Captivated by the sight. She reaches in. Feels around.

Pulls her hand out. In it, ten-inch silver blade. A hunting knife. A little longer and it'd be a battle sword.

She lifts it before her.

The last bit of dying sunlight glimmers on its edge. Then it's gone. All that shines in it now is the tower of fire behind her.

She peers into the metal of the blade. Sees herself.

She pulls a foot forward. Plants it on the ground. She pushes off the ground, onto her feet.

She turns around. Stares at the carnage.

The fire burns around her silhouette. The blade in her hand. Her shadow stands tall behind her. Steady as a rock.

ON HER FACE

In her eyes.

That toughness.

It's back.

FADE OUT.

THE END