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Rocky Mountain

By Winston Miller

To us, as we first saw it...
...this place was known only as The Rock.
Two thousand miles behind us...
...Lee was fighting for the life
of the Southern Confederacy.
We were some of Lee's men.
He had sent us here, eight of us...
...in a last desperate effort
to save the war.
Our mission was all but impossible,
but we had to succeed...
...for we knew now, that we were living
the last days of our cause...
...unless we ourselves could turn the tide.
There, high above us...
...was the man
we'd ridden 2000 miles to meet...
...Cole Smith.
You Captain Barstow?
I'm California Beal. Cole Smith sent me.
Where is he?
He'll be along.
That all the men you got with you?
I'm not here to supply men.
How many have you got with you?
Nobody.
Cole Smith sent me to give you the word,
that's all.
Plank, Kip, Jonas.
Up top and have a look around.
They won't find nothing up there now.
Cole Smith camped there a month ago
with maybe 60 men.
Sixty? What about the 500
he's supposed to have?
You'll see them, when it's your time to.
You a fair sample of Cole Smith's troops?
I don't know as we call ourselves
anybody's troops, old folks...
...but we're plenty able to keep
half of California in a cold sweat.
You'll get the chance.
We didn't like that very well.
Cole Smith wasn't here.

And we didn't like
the envoy he'd sent either...
...California Beal.
That crooked line there
is the Humboldt River.
The Overland Stage Route runs along it.
Cole Smith picked this meeting place
pretty close to the trail.
You won't be kept awake
by no stagecoaches on it.
Not the way the Indians is right now.
There's a coach on it today.
You can see the dust from his wheels...
...where the trail comes out
of the Battle Mountains.
Well, anyway,
he sure don't belong there.
There's some kind of passel of Indians
a whole lot closer than that.
Look at them sand hills
by the Humboldt, Plank.
I see it. That ain't wind doing that, Lafe.
There's been plenty Shoshones
gouging around here this past week.
I'm a lot more interested
in where you left Cole Smith.
I'd never ask Cole Smith
where he's going.
Lafe, look at that dust there now.
There's a war party underneath that,
just as sure as you're born.
What's wrong
with that stagecoach driver?
He must see that. He can't help seeing it.
You figure they're there
to jump the stage?
Listen, Beal, we've come a long way.
I don't want to be told
that Cole Smith can't be found.
- You just relax, soldier boy.
- And I don't wanna hear...
...that all he's got with him
is a bunch of 60 or 70 penny-ante misfits.
- Like me?

- That's the general idea.
I'll tell you, maybe we don't drill good...
...but when we get started,
we cover a lot of ground.
By the time we get to Sacramento...
...counting rebel sympathizers we'll pick up
on the way, we'll be close to a thousand.
We'll make your General Lee
a president of the town inside of 30 days.
Hey, you know something?
That coach has been in a fight already.
Give me the glass.
No shotgun guard either. Must be dead.
They're closing in on all sides.
I'll give him about five more minutes.
They'll kill his horses
when he gets to that point of rocks there.
That man can sure drive, whoever he is.
Sure you can drive.
You'd be surprised how you can drive
with a war party closing in on you.
There they are, Lafe.
The war ponies are busting out of the draw.
This thing ain't going on
much longer, Lafe.
In case you're getting any wild ideas...
...Cole Smith wouldn't like
you getting mixed up in this.
He'd sort of feel it might spoil
what General Lee sent you out here for.
Let's get down there.
Yee-ha!
Hyah!
Hyah! Hyah! Hyah!
Forward, ho!
Hyah!
Hyah!
Yah-hah!
Hyah!
Often afterwards in our days
on The Rock, it was easy to forget...
...why I'd ever chosen six rattle-headed
kids and an old man for the job we had.
Kip Waterson,

the baby-faced heir to a plantation.
Come back, you ninny.
Pierre Duchesne, from French Louisiana.
Pap Dennison, an old man really...
...but a hard, reckless fighter
who never gave ground while he lived.
Kay Rawlins,
from the Mississippi steamboats...
...a rough, unfriendly man,
as the Indians now found out.
Jimmy Wheat,
the little rednecked cropper...
...who could fight
like a wildcat with hydrophobia...
...but carried a useless little dog
2000 miles.
Jonas Weatherby, the Texan,
a seasoned plainsman at 18.
Plank, our other real plainsman,
hard and bitter...
...with chain-gang scars
on his legs at 22.
One moment they were all around us,
and we were drowning in Indians.
Then suddenly it was over with
and we had the desert to ourselves.
But I knew we had to get back to The Rock,
and quickly.
Ho!
Nicked you, huh?
What kept you fellers?
Pierre, pick up those loose horses.
Rawlins, see to the driver.
Ho.
Where you hit, mister?
Get the woman out.
Woman?
Hey, he's right.
Packed with dang female women.
You might have known it.
I don't know what's wrong with her.
This ain't her blood.
Is anything busted anyplace, ma'am?
They're dead.

They're dead in there.
We never realized as we stared so
curiously at our unexpected guest...
...how much history
might have been differently lived...
...if she'd not been there.
Are you all right, ma'am?
Yes, thank you.
I'm sorry I went to pieces so.
Oh, it was only natural, ma'am.
How are the others?
The driver's all right,
but the other two are dead.
Were they kin of yours?
No, they were strangers.
Somebody let you travel
through this country alone?
I was coming out to get married.
My fianc is stationed out here.
- Stationed?
- He's a lieutenant in the Army.
Union?
Of course.
Uh... Was he expecting you?
Yes. I wrote him at Fort Churchill.
He'll be worried
when the stage doesn't arrive.
Is there some way
you can let him know I'm safe?
We won't have to. He'll probably come
right out here looking for you.
I haven't thanked you yet
for saving my life.
I'm Johanna Carter.
And I'm very grateful.
Thank you, ma'am.
I'm Lafe Barstow. We'll try to make you
as comfortable as possible.
If you'd minded me, captain, you wouldn't
have no Yankee girl to worry about.
Would you leave her to the Indians?
Depends on whether I wanted to be a hero
or get a job done.
- How's the arm?

- Just a scratch.
They must have been Yankee Indians,
the way they shoot.
Lafe.
This man has
a very interesting suggestion.
I was telling these fellers here...
...that if somebody would helped me
fix that busted wheel...
...that me and my passenger
could be on our way tonight.
That is, unless you fellers
are going on into Fort Churchill too.
It'll be sundown in about an hour.
You don't want to be traveling at night.
The way these Indians are,
nighttime's the only time I dares to travel.
Best thing for us would be
to bust out of here as soon as it got dark.
Might be a couple
of big fat drawbacks to that.
I kind of thought so.
When you fellers came over
that ridge down there...
...seems to me
like I sort of heard that yell before.
Johnny Rebs, ain't you?
How you know we ain't Yankees?
Oh, shut up.
I don't know what you're doing
in Yankee territory...
...but naturally I know you be in a fix
if you get caught.
Speaks plain, don't he?
Personally,
I ain't got no stake in this war.
I'd be glad to disremember
I ever seen you boys.
Guess I must have
beat off them Indians single-handed.
Nice work.
What about that Yankee girl
you got with you?
I think she'd be glad to forget

that she was...
That doesn't make any difference.
I can't let you go.
Wouldn't be considered
prying into your personal affairs...
...if I was to ask you
how long you figure on holding us here?
Oh, not long.
I hope.
Captain Barstow.
There's seven riders up here
in the northwest...
...about 15 miles.
Can't see them,
they dropped behind a ridge.
But they was headed this way.
Fifteen miles, eh?
Well, they won't be here tonight.
If they wanna, they can.
You think it's Cole Smith?
It had better be.
So that's how they act
when they're peaceable, huh?
They wouldn't be a-stomping and
a- yelling if they aimed to fool with us.
They'd be a-crawling up this rock.
They ought to be long gone by morning.
Guess this will keep Cole Smith
scared away till daylight.
If it is Cole Smith out there.
If it ain't, our time's awful short.
Them Yanks will come looking
for their woman and we'll be up a stump.
I'm sorry to be such bad luck to you.
But I'm awfully glad
I'm not down there tonight.
Explain why your parents didn't have
the sense to keep you home...
...fianc or no fianc.
We've been separated for two years.
And I didn't want to wait another two.
What's the matter?
I was just thinking how pleasant it was
to hear a woman's voice again.

Even a Yankee voice, Captain Barstow?
- We're not fighting the women.
- Do you really believe that?
Do you think you can keep them out of it
just by words?
I understand how you feel.
With your fianc in the Army.
I had a brother in it too.
He was killed at the Antietam.
I was there.
We call that the Battle of Sharpsburg.
You were at the Sunken Road?
We called it the Bloody Lane.
It could've been you who killed him.
It could have.
Was that only three years ago?
Seems a lot longer.
Not to me.
Of course not. I'm very sorry, ma'am.
Captain, I didn't mean that.
Please stay a moment.
It just seems so...
So incredible that we can be here...
...2000 miles from the war...
...and I find that you and my brother...
There were a lot
of other brothers there too.
Husbands. And sons.
You sound as if you hate the war
as much as I do.
You don't have to like a war
to fight in it.
You just have to believe
in what you're fighting for, or against.
Do you really believe in it that much?
Back home, I had a plantation.
From the second floor, you could see...
You could see the river.
White cotton fields
going right down to the bank.
It was beautiful.
I didn't think there was anything on Earth
could ever make me leave that.
Here I am.

Here we both are.

That's one of the few compensations,
ma'am.

- Good night, ma'am.

- Good night.

One more washing

and I can use this shirt for a handkerchief.

You better get some sleep.

You relieve the lookout at midnight.

Plank, horses all watered?

How's the head, Jim?

It's all right, sir.

I've been trying to teach Spotty
how to sit up.

You've been trying that every night
for three months.

He does seem a little slow to catch on.

Just where do you think
you're gonna mail that?

This isn't a letter, it's a diary.

For my son to read.

I didn't know you had one.

I haven't.

But someday after the war
and I'm back in Virginia...

...I'll get married and have a son.

And one day when he's growing up...

...he'll ask me what I did
in the war between the states...

...and I'll let him read this.

Hope it has a happy ending.

If it doesn't, it won't matter.

Be no son to read it anyway.

Sure must be a restful feeling
to be neutral.

Heh. Next war let's try it, huh?

Rawlins.

- Where do you think you're going?

- Just stretching my legs.

Try stretching them the other way.

Thought I'd see

how the little Yankee's making out.

I told you to stay away from her.

Now, look, captain,

I'll take orders about fighting...
You'll take any orders I give you.
Won't you?
Yes, sir.
Lafe.
The Indians pulled away.
But them riders we was watching,
they camped about four miles out.
I seen their campfire
before they drenched it.
- Hmm. They won't be here till morning.
- That ain't what I called you for.
Beal?
He keeps moseying around our horse line.
What do you want me to do
in case he tries to vamoose?
- You know two things to do?
- Sure.
I can finish him
or I can just bring him down.
Don't just bring him down.
It's the same seven riders, all right.
But it sure ain't Cole Smith.
Know for a chance it could be?
Not unless he's joined the Union Army.
Four Yankee horsemen.
Three troopers and an officer.
- Other three is rag-head Indians.
- They're probably scouting for them.
Sure didn't take them long
to miss that stage.
I told you. The best Yankee bait
in the world's a Yankee girl.
Maybe they'll just take a look at the coach
and ride on.
Indian ponies made tracks all over.
They won't fool
them rag-head scouts none.
You better see to it they don't ride on.
One or two of them
is bound to get away from us.
You're a long way from home, soldier.
You can't afford to make mistakes.
- Lf you ask me...

- I didn't.
- Jimmy.
- Yes, sir?
Get down to the water hole.
Start a fire like you're making breakfast.
Put on coffee
and be sure that fire smokes.
- Yes, sir.
- Come on.
Lafe, you'll draw that patrol right on in.
We hope.
Kay, let me know
if they do anything different.
- Keep your eye on Beal.
- Yes, sir.
Be careful with that gun, sonny.
It might go off.
That's right. It might.
I wonder what they're up to now.
Look.
Whoever it is, they're heading this way.
What is it? Can you make them out?
Sure I can, Yankee uniforms and all.
I saw Captain Barstow and the others
going down the hill.
What are they going to do?
Now, what would you think they gonna do,
invite them for supper?
May I see a moment? Please.
It's very important.
Sure. Take a good look.
Pretty, ain't they?
All dressed up in those nice blue suits.
They'll never know what hit them.
They're not after you.
It's me they're looking for.
Now that's too bad,
because they ain't gonna find you.
Let me go.
Lafe.
They're almost there.
Pull back a little, Pap.
Let's get this over with
as quick as we can.

We ain't gonna fool them Indian scouts
very long.

Ow.

Hey, now.

Don't be nervous, Jim.

You're well covered.

I never was much good
at this play-acting.

You know, Jim...

...there's something

I've often wondered about you.

- What's that?

- Well, on your service record...

...your first initial is down as B.

B. Wheat.

Now, how do you make James
out of that?

Well, I'll tell you if you wanna know,
but you won't believe me.

My right first name is Buck.

Buck. Buck Wheat, huh? Heh.

So they named you after a pancake.

Well, no.

My uncle had this team of mules.

When I was born, he told my old man he'd
give him any one that he named me after.

So he picked the one named Buck.

Oh.

- Guess he should've picked the other one.

- Well, no.

The other one was named Sally.

Lafe.

They're out at the stagecoach.

Maybe she wasn't on it, lieutenant.

She might have missed the stage.

Scouts, out.

Forward.

Lafe, here they come.

They'll see the smoke in a minute.

Just go on cooking.

Captain!

Captain Barstow!

They said you were going to...

Why are your men hiding?

Why are you two here like this?
You better go back up there.
If this ambush don't work, ma'am,
there's gonna be an awful lot of shooting.
Captain, they're not after you.
That's Lieutenant Rickey, my fianc.
- Let me go! Let me go...
- If you make a noise, they'll all be killed.
There's a gun covering every one of them.
One sound out of you, and we'll shoot.
You wouldn't kill them in cold blood.
That's up to you.
They'll be here in a minute.
I'm gonna try to take them alive.
But if that doesn't work, I promise you
not one of them will have a chance.
What do you want me to do?
Sit down there quietly, by Jimmy.
You expect me to help you
set an ambush?
The best thing you can hope for
is that it works.
Jimmy, a cup of coffee for Miss Carter.
Coffee, Miss Carter?
Here they are, Lafe.
Remember, we'll have them covered
every second.
Rick!
Johanna!
Johanna, darling.
You got here pretty quick, lieutenant.
- Were you on the stagecoach too?
- We came along just after it was over.
I don't understand.
- How did you...?
- She was unconscious when we found her.
Indians must have left her for dead
along with the others.
They came back after dark
and burned up the stagecoach.
There's been a whole lot more men
here with their horses than just you two.
I guess the Indians
use this water hole too.

They saved my life, Rick.

You might thank them.

I'm sorry.

I'm very grateful.

We got word just before we left

to keep our eyes open...

...for a rebel patrol

that's been reported heading this way.

- For a moment there, I thought...

- That's all right.

- How about a cup of coffee?

- Fine.

Rustle up another cup, Jimmy.

We've got company.

Steady, Jimmy.

Remember, Rick, I owe my life to them.

Darling, I couldn't forget that.

- There you are. Hope it's not too strong.

- Thank you.

Plank, Jonas,

come down and get their side arms.

Hang their gun belts on their saddles.

I'm sorry, Rick. I had to do that.

Or they would have killed you.

- Come on, let's have it.

- You and your men are prisoners of war.

As commanding officer, you'll be

held responsible for their behavior.

- All right, take them to the top of The Rock. Let's move, blue
-belly.

We know all about him.

His name's Lafe Barstow.

And he's a captain

from the Mississippi Mountain Rifles.

Whatever a mountain's doing

in Mississippi.

We got a mountain.

Well, kind of, anyway.

Yes, but what's he doing out here?

His mission is to contact

the Confederate underground in California.

He has authority to commission officers

for an armed uprising.

And make it an act of the Confederacy.

How can he get anywhere with that,
with just these few?
Of course he can. California's crawling with
bandits, outlaws and rebel sympathizers.
All Barstow has to do is gather up a few
thousand of them and call them soldiers.
They can burn
and sack everything in the state.
Then, if captured, call themselves
prisoners of war. They'll jump at it.
What good would that do?
The war's 2000 miles away.
How do we know
how much damage he can do?
What if an army has to be brought
out here to stop him?
- That could change the course of the war.
You're just overwrought, son...
...because you been took.
- Yeah. And you know how it was done.
By using Miss Carter as a blind.
All I know is...
...I wouldn't be up here now,
all in one piece, if it wasn't for him.
Same goes for her too.
He knew what he was doing.
- It gave him a hostage in case of trouble.
- That isn't true, Rick.
Then why didn't he leave you up here?
He tried to.
I forced my way into it.
I didn't know what to do.
I'm sorry, darling. I didn't mean that.
I'm just sore at myself for being stupid.
I wouldn't say you was exactly stupid.
The captain's just a little bit smarter.
Lieutenant.
As you know,
we can't stay here much longer.
There will be a search for your patrol.
From what you say, a search for me too.
You're right.
But you can't ambush the whole regiment.
I've made a fair start.

While you're my prisoner,
it will make it a lot easier...
...if you'll give me your word
not to try to escape.
You can have freedom of the camp.
I ain't going nowhere.
Not at the cost of getting shot at, I ain't.

- Well?

- I give you my word that I'll escape if I can.
And do my best
to see you caught and shot.

- Suit yourself.

- I will.

Miss Carter,
I must ask you the same question.

- See here now...

- Miss Carter can speak for herself.
Miss Carter is my fiance.
I know.
That's the only reason you're alive.
Don't force your luck.
I regret this,
but you must see the necessity for it.
I promise you
I'll make no effort to escape.
Thank you.
Guess I'll be pulling out for a while,
soldier.
Hi there, lieutenant.
I always said the only way you could find
me would be to get yourselves captured.

- You know this man?

- Every garrison knows Cole Smith.
And the band of outlaws that follow him.
Why don't I just stroke you one
across the snout?
Never mind that.
Jimmy.

- Yes, sir?

Miss Carter and Craigie
will have the freedom of the camp.
If the lieutenant or his men
make any suspicious move, shoot them.
Yes, sir.

Just a minute.

- I suppose you had a good reason for this.

- I always do.

Would it be asking too much,
why the "California Beal"?

I never go into deals blindfolded.

Before I go joining any army,
I wanna look the soldier boys over first.

- And now you've had your look.

- You're lucky.

You got yourself in a mess of trouble,
and I ought to let you stew in it.

But I got enough stake in this
to pull you out.

I'll be back in two days with my men.

Before it gets any more crowded up here.

Any objections?

How do we know you'll ever get back?

I don't think you got much choice.

Unless you fellows
wanna go along with me.

You couldn't travel
with all them prisoners, though.
You'd either have to let them go
or kill them off.

We got this far without you.

We'll finish the job the same way.

You try to raise an army out here
by yourselves...

...and the war will be over
before you can even get up a platoon.

After all,
it ain't like you boys was winning.
Give him a hand with his gear.

- Lookit here, Lafe...

- Don't worry, scissorbill.

Like I said,
I get something out of this too.
I'll be back.

It will be a sorry day when me
and that feller's in the same army.

That's what we came here for, Pap.

Well, you'll sure never get me
to salute him.

Salute? You?
Who did you ever salute?
Jeb Stuart, once.
He must be quite an officer.
Sure, we can get us
through them mountains.
We can get us through any mountains.
The only hard part's
to come out someplace.
There's 50,000 square miles
of nothing but mountain range out there.
The only chance in the world of ever seeing
Cole Smith again is to wait for him here.
What happens when more blue-bellies come
looking for the ones we got?
If we can hold on here
till Cole Smith gets back...
...we'll get our job done.
If we can't, we're through.
It's as simple as that.
Where you going, Jimmy?
Thought the lady might like
her supper now.
Heh. What do you know about girls?
Nothing.
Excepting they must get hungry too.
Any more questions?
- Captain, can I see you for a minute?
- Sure.
I've been talking
to these Shoshone scouts.
- You speak their language?
- Some.
I had a Shoshone squaw one time
for a while.
- How was she?
- She didn't say.
But the thing is,
these ain't just common, ordinary Indians.
That old one's named Man Dog.
He just happens to be the biggest chief
of the Shoshones, west of the Escalante.
What's a chief doing
working for the Yanks?

Spying on them, probably.
Them other two is his sons.
I got an idea they figure on pulling out.
If they did,
they'd turn you in for a bale of blankets.
Well, why are you telling me this?
Well, like I told you...
...I ain't got no stake in this war
one way or the other.
Whatever happens to you fellows up here
is liable to happen to me too.
I only got one suggestion.
If you have to kill one of them,
kill them all.
Or we ain't gonna get much further.
No, sir. Not without open dispute.
Thanks.
It surely makes me feel bad, ma'am...
...to bring you just sowbelly
and black-eyed peas.
- Lf only we just had some greens.
- It doesn't make any difference.
This here's the second time I got humiliated
by sowbelly and black-eyed peas.
Just ain't lucky for me I guess.
- When was the other time?
- Well, it was when I...
- Oh, you wouldn't believe me.
- Yes, I will.
Well, it was the time
I put my dinner on a skillet lid...
...and taken it to General Lee
with my own hands.
- Where was this?
- Just before the battle of Gettysburg.
This bunch of officers
comes along and stops...
...and looks out across the valley.
And as the horses parted...
...there was General Robert E. Lee,
setting his gray horse, name of Traveller.
I don't remember how come
that skillet lid in my hand...
...but there was me at Lee's stirrup,

offering it up.

I says, "You gotta keep
your strength up, sir," I says.
Heh. Me saying that to General Lee.
And he taken that skillet lid
and he sat there looking at it.
Like he didn't know what it was.

I says,
"I'm surely sorry we ain't got no greens. "
And Lee, he looked me square in the eye

and he says:

"It's elegant," he says.
Then he looks out across the valley again.
He looked so tired and so sad.
His hair was just as white
as cotton busting out of the boll.
I begun to bawl.
Then he moves on,
old Traveller walking slow.
And Lee looking out across the valley,
carrying a skillet lid in his hand.
And I'd never seen him again.
Nor the skillet lid.
There's just one thing
that keeps coming back to me...
...and it frets me often.
You know, I never give him no knife
to eat them black-eyed peas.
Well, anyway,
I hope you like your dinner, ma'am.
Come on, Spot.
He likes you.
He don't generally take with Yankees.
- Jimmy taking care of you all right?
- He certainly is.
He's a nice boy.
- How old is he?
- You mean in years?
Oh, all of 16.
He's a veteran.
Joined up when he was 14.
He makes me feel very young,
and very old at the same time.

He just makes me feel old.
They grow up fast in a war.
Overnight, the kids are young men.
- And the young men?
- Heh. You got a point there.
Captain Barstow, what are you going to do
about Lieutenant Rickey?
That depends on a lot of things,
including him.
I'm afraid I don't understand
the fine points of war.
One minute you're ready
to shoot him down in cold blood.
The next minute you're willing
to take his word for something.
As if you were all back in your own homes
playing some pleasant game.
- It doesn't make much sense, does it?
- It doesn't make any sense.
I guess it's all we have to hang on to.
A few little customs from the past.
Just to remind us there was a past.
Well, I hope you enjoy your dinner,
ma'am.
How are the blue-bellies?
Asleep.
- Any trouble?
- Dead to the world.
Then for dinner, first I have
two dozen oysters fresh from the shell.
- As big as my hand.
- Oysters.
You mean you'd put one of them
slimy things right in your mouth?
Oyster is a beautiful thing.
All that cool salt water
washes over him all his life.
And the sunlight, it comes down to him
all green and blue.
Not white, hot and dusty like it is here.
And all around him it is coral,
and sea flowers.
And different colored fish.
Such beautifulness

goes into making an oyster.
So you'd go right to work...
...and put one of the slimy things
right in your mouth, huh?
I think nobody has been
so far from home as me.
Stay where you are, blue-bellies.
The Indians are gone.
They went over the rim.
Jonas, Plank, after them.
There's one.
One down here.
That new 45-70
sure put a hole in the man.
How did they come to break?
- Well, I...
The moon went under a minute.
I should have built a fire
but I thought they was all asleep.
Then I heard a noise and they was gone.
I only had a chance for one good shot.
I got one below, Plank just yelled up.
- That makes two.
- What about the other, any sign of him?
They took after him, but it's pretty dark.
If he ain't dead by this time,
they ain't never gonna get him.
- I'm awfully sorry, captain.
- You couldn't help it, Jim.
Plank.
Yes, sir.
Tell Lieutenant Rickey I'd like to see him.
- Which was the first smoke?
- Over there.
Well, at least we know
where Man Dog is now.
If I know these Indians, and I ought to...
...we're gonna see a lot of them
before too long, captain.
That old devil
must have traveled 10 miles.
More like 15.
You wanted to see me?
Yes. There's something I think

you have the right to know.

- Yeah?

- Those Indian scouts of yours...

...turned out to be

just a little bit more than that.

The old one's called Man Dog,

a very powerful Shoshone chief.

- The two we shot were his sons.

- Look, there's more smoke over there.

This ain't gonna be no picayune affair.

Looks like he's rounded up

the whole tribe.

- And what are you gonna do about it?

- Nothing.

You're not gonna hold a woman here,

in an Indian attack?

- Miss Carter's safety is my responsibility.

- It's mine too.

- I got the idea you were our prisoners.

- This has nothing to do with the war.

- What do you suggest?

A garrison, a day's ride from here.

A man who knows the country could

slip her through and be there by morning.

- Even if I could spare such a man-

- Let me do it.

I'll give you my word to return.

- With your regiment?

- Alone.

I offered you parole once,

you turned it down.

It was you against me then.

Things are different now.

She's safer here.

Smith's men will be here tomorrow.

You're willing to let her life

depend on that outlaw?

You'd better hope so.

- Why, I wouldn't trust him...

- I can't travel with prisoners.

If I have to move before I'm ready...

...I'll be forced to stand you up

and shoot you.

You mean to say,

you'd shoot down unarmed prisoners?

- You saw me.

- What, at the water hole?

Barnes was going for his gun.

But you wouldn't stand up helpless men?

Isn't that what you planned for me?

Plank, take him back.

I wish they'd come in

where we get a look at them.

What for? They ain't pretty.

You know this country...

...tell me, supposing Lafe decides
to pull out, could we make it?

Today you could.

What about tomorrow?

Well, if we're still here then
and Cole Smith's men ain't...

...I'd say we're liable to stay.

Cole Smith had better be on time
or we'll have to light out anyway.

- That water hole's almost dry.

- How long do you think it will last?

Hard to tell.

When they start to dry up, they go fast.

Not enough snow up there this past winter,
I reckon.

This time last year,

I was thinking of a lot of things.

But snow on a Nevada mountain
wasn't one of them.

One canteen a day for the men,
cut the horses down as much as you can.

Hadn't we better post a guard down there
case somebody gets extra thirsty?

Oh, I don't think you need to.

Smith will be here tomorrow.

- You still figuring him to come back?

- I'm betting an awful lot on that, Plank.

I sure hope you don't get called.

General Lee dealt the hand.

All I can do is play the cards he gave me.

Come on.

Don't strain your eyes.

They'll be there tomorrow.

Lafe's a fool to trust Smith.

We ought to light out of here
while we can.

- This is what you volunteered for.

- I didn't volunteer to be no Indian fighter.

- No?

- Well, no.

Reckon them buzzards

have lost something around here?

Looks a little

like they don't believe we're leaving.

I never did like them things

studding on me.

It ain't because

the buzzards know what they're doing...

...but it brings a question to mind,

"Do I know what I'm doing?"

How can you expect to understand him?

The man's a fanatic.

They all are,

or this war would have been over long ago.

- Maybe they feel the same way about us?

- He doesn't feel anything.

If he did,

you'd be on your way to the garrison.

He said Cole Smith was coming

with an army.

Army? A bunch of desert rats.

Well, whatever they are, they'll be

more welcome than what's out there.

If they get here.

- You think they won't?

- I don't know.

But if I wait to find out,

it will be too late.

Oh, Rick, I'm sorry.

If I hadn't insisted on coming out here...

...none of this would've happened.

- Don't say that.

- You know how much I wanted you to.

- No...

Two years is a long time.

You begin to forget

how much you love someone...

...till you see them again.
I've been waiting for you to say that.
Why don't we go down there
and pick off a few of them Indians?
That's why
they got their patrols out there.
They're just waiting for us to try it.
Well, let's oblige them.
They can afford to lose a few men,
we can't.
I don't mind the sniping,
they can't hit nothing from down there.
But I could sure use
a lot less of them drums.
The louder they bang them,
the better I like it.
It's when they stop
that I'm gonna start to sweat.
I never did care for sunrise much before.
But tomorrow morning
ought to be right pretty.
I hope I see you.
Half the beauty in the sunrise
is who sees it with you.
- I could argue that.
- At your age, you could.
I'm scared, Rick.
I've tried not to be, but I am.
We'll get out of this, both of us.
I promise you.
How? What can we do?
Listen, tonight, no matter what happens,
you stay in your tent.
- Don't come out for anything.
- What are you going to do?
- I've got it all figured out.
- Be careful, Rick.
Don't worry, I can take care of myself.
You better go now.
Remember, stay out of it.
Go to sleep, Spotty.
They can't jump us and drum too.
Plank's guarding the horses.
- You take care of him.

- Right.

We'll make no move

till Ryan jumps the high lookout.

I'll handle Rawlins here,

as soon as you make your move.

You picked yourself the toughest one.

They're all tough.

Let's go.

Good luck.

All right, Ryan.

Ah. Can't sleep

with all that noise out there.

Those ponies sure are restless tonight.

I guess they don't like Indian drums either.

Here, have a chew?

Yeah.

What part of Mississippi are you from?

Steamboat man, born and raised

on the river. Only, now I...

Will you go back to it later?

- Where's the lieutenant?

- I don't know.

I heard a shot,

first thing I know he jumped me.

Lafe.

Much obliged, captain.

You sure made a good Yank out of him.

Just as dead as they come.

Aren't we going after him?

He won't get far.

Lafe.

We got something down there

but I can't quite make it out.

What is it?

- What did you spot, Pap?

- A loose horse out there.

- The lieutenant's?

- Can't tell, it's too far away.

Plank, Jonas, pick him up.

We'll cover you.

What is it?

Something's up, ma'am,

but I can't make it out.

- What's happened?

- There's a horse out there.
We'll know in a few minutes.
Jimmy, come on.
Cole Smith's.
Maybe he got through first.
He never got through nowhere.
That's Cole Smith's horse.
- Then Rick got through.
- Could be, ma'am.
You know what this means.
Smith's men won't be coming.
- What do we do now?
- Only one thing we can do.
Get out there
and try to find them ourselves.
- A fat chance we got of doing that.
- I didn't say it was a good chance.
Well, ain't we got a little problem
of getting out of here first?
How about it, Plank?
We might be able to bust through
if we can get by their patrols...
...after dark, of course.
- Lf they hold off till then.
- How much time do you think we have left?
We're all right
as long as them smoke signals is there.
Once we're through the mountains, Craigie
and the others can pick up the trail.
What others?
You ain't gonna try busting through
with a girl and a wounded blue-belly?
What do you suggest?
Tapping them on the head?
Leave them here.
Besides, maybe the Yankee lieutenant
got through.
If Cole Smith couldn't make it,
I wouldn't bet no money on a blue-belly.
Craigie, if we get through, you and
that trooper can get her to the settlement?
Sure can, captain.
We'll pull out tonight.
Lafe?

Hadn't we better saddle up just in...
In case?
Maybe you better.
Oh, and give... Give Craigie
and the trooper back their guns.
Saddle up.
Captain.
When the soldiers get here,
you won't do anything foolish, will you?
How do you mean?
I know what Rick said
about wanting to see you shot.
But he was angry then.
Once we're all safe at the fort,
he'll feel differently, really.
- I'm sure he will.
- I'll make them understand...
...none of this would have happened
if it hadn't been for you saving my life.
The soldiers wouldn't have found you,
or the Indians, or any of this.
"Lf," that's a big word.
But it's true, Lafe.
That's strange...
...back home,
if I'd called a man by his first name...
...after only knowing him for two days,
people would have been shocked.
Back home, you wouldn't have spent
two days with him on a mountain.
That's true.
Three days ago I thought this was
the most beautiful country I'd seen.
You will again, when this is all over.
People forget.
Something happens
and you think you'll never get over it.
But you do.
You couldn't go on living if you didn't.
Remember that.
You're trying to tell me
you think Rick's been killed.
Rick made it.
I know he did.

I never thought

I'd envy a Yankee anything.

- Because I believe in someone?

- Yes.

There must be a girl somewhere
who feels the same about you.

- There was.

- Well, she'll be waiting then too.

She died.

- I'm sorry.

- It was a long time ago.

When this is over and you're back on
that plantation you were telling me about...

...with the white cotton fields
and the river...

...you'll find someone again.

- Any change out there?

- No, sir.

Why don't you get rid of that dog?

All he does is lap up water.

It's my ration,

I can do with it what I want.

First dog I ever saw

that gets dumber instead of smarter.

- Why don't you leave the kid alone?

- He's no kid.

Jimmy's grown up, ain't you heard?

- He's got himself a girl.

- Why don't you shut your big mouth?

We will talk about something else, huh?

What's the matter? You soft on her too?

I told you, we will not discuss the lady.

Lady? What's wrong with you two?

Acting like schoolboys

over a Yankee tramp.

Leave him alone.

- We're outnumbered enough...

Get away from me.

- That crazy kid ought to...

- Shut up.

I don't care what you do

when this is over.

You can blow your fool heads off

if you want to.

But until then, you'll act like soldiers.

Understand?

Yes, sir.

Hey, Lafe!

Looks like Man Dog's forcing your hand.

Craigie, you and the trooper get ready.

There's the dust cloud. Three of them.

Well, Lafe, which is it? Fight or run?

I don't see that it makes
much difference now.

If we stay here, they'll massacre us all.

The other way at least we got a chance.

- Some chance.

- It's better than no chance at all.

- Lf we scatter, some of us might make it.

- The lady wouldn't.

- There's one way she could.

- How?

If we stick together and lead them away
from The Rock, she might get away.

And what happens to the rest of you?

- Nothing that wouldn't happen anyway.

- I won't let you do that.

Captain.

I can see them now, war paint and all.

- Well, what do you say?

- It's up to me too, and I say, no.

You can hold out up here
until help comes.

They know there's only eight of us.

We couldn't stop them.

Well, then let's do what he said.

Everybody take the same chance.

I guess I've changed my mind.

Pap?

As far as I'm concerned,
you're still in charge.

- This isn't an order.

- It is with me.

- I'm with you.

- Count me in.

- Me too.

- Jonas?

We better hurry, they're closing in fast.

Let's get going.
I never thought it would end this way.
There never was any other way.
We just put it off a while.
- The trooper's readying
the horses, captain. Good.
We'll swing north. Be sure they're
after us before you take off.
- Once you start, don't stop.
- Don't worry about that.
We'll draw them as far away as we can.
So long, old-timer.
Good luck.
All set, Lafe.
At least we won't go sneaking around.
Might as well let them know who we are.
- Probably never seen a Confederate flag.
- They'll see one now.
You think you could keep Spot with you?
He's really awful smart
and he won't cause you no trouble.
You do what the lady tells you now, Spot.
Spotty, come here. Spotty.
It worked.
- Hurry, you must save them.
- They drew the Indians into the canyon.
Corporal, look after Miss Carter.
Forward!
Looks like the end of the line.
They've seen our backs.
Let's show them our faces.
Fan out!
By volley. Ready.
Fire.
Charge!
Sergeant Ash.
- Yes, sir.
- Take this up to The Rock and raise it.
A Confederate flag?
- You heard me, raise it.
- Yes, sir.
Draw sabers.
Present sabers.