

"LONG SHADOW WOMAN"

by
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Screen Story
Craig Clyde
&
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IN BLACK:

TITLE CARD FADES IN/OUT:

"When one teaches, two learn" -- Geronimo

 OLDER MAGGIE (O.S.)
They were the wind. Wild corsairs
skimming over a sea of sand and sage.

And the BLACK gives way to...

THE ARIZONA DESERT

An ocean of shimmering sand. The late afternoon sun
turning it every color from crimson to black.

Jagged peaks of the Sierra Madre rise in the distance to
defy a dark foreboding sky. Dust rises below as
something - or someone - approaches.

We FEEL, then FIND...

APACHE WARRIORS

racing toward the horizon! Pounding hooves, colorful
headbands, each clutches a copper-studded Winchester or
Spencer rifle.

At their head...

JAROSOMA

Chief of the Chiricahua. A magnetic sight, unambiguous
in his courage. Guiding his pony as though its grace and
power came - not from the animal - but from the rider.

 OLDER MAGGIE (O.S.)
...Every bit the equal of Genghis
Khan's hordes or Tarlton's Light
Brigade. Handsome, strong warriors
both daring and dangerous...

FADE TO:

EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Stately, imposing structure.

TITLE CARD: "Tucson, Arizona -- 1962"

Polished brass sprinkler head pops up from the ground,
begins to water the parched lawn.

JUMP CUT TO:

A DUSTY DESERTED STREET

where a saloon, livery stable, dry goods store and other crumbling buildings tilt against each other.

But there's something unsettling about it. The colors are too muted. The angles not quite in perspective as...

THE EDGES

of a narrow wooden PICTURE FRAME are revealed. This is a hand-colored photo, not reality.

THE SCRATCHING NEEDLE

from an ancient Victrola as it claws the music-less inner bands of a 78 record.

ECU OF PAPER

So close the pulp texture is visible as a hand, splotted with liver spots, writes gracefully.

The hand of MAGGIE MURDOCK. Mid-70's. Saddle leather skin and bone-white hair set off flashing china-blue eyes.

As she writes, she speaks out loud the words.

OLDER MAGGIE

But they were possessed of an honor and dignity unmatched by anything - or anyone - I've ever known in our so-called "civilized" world...

OLD BEN (O.S.)

Whatcha' doin'?

A crinkled cellophane apparition named OLD BEN, pokes his bald head around the corner.

OLDER MAGGIE

What's it look like I'm doing hammer-head?

OLD BEN

Dunno. That's how come I asked.

OLDER MAGGIE

I'm writing something for my grand daughter.

Various elderly denizens pass by, scarcely noticing one ELDERLY SOUL on her knees. Eyes closed, arms tangled in her aluminum walker.

OLD BEN

What?

OLDER MAGGIE

My life history for an anthropology class she's taking at the University. Not that it's any of your damned business!

OLD BEN

Heard talkin'. You talkin' to somebody?

OLDER MAGGIE

That's how I write, out loud.

(nothing)

Well, don't just stand there looking like an envelope without an address on it -- go away.

Old Ben throws up his hands, shuffles off. Maggie twirls an old, well-used fountain pen, begins again.

OLDER MAGGIE (CONT'D)

But the real story begins before that. In 1918. The great war had just ended and there was a man in my life. His name was Averell Hutchinson. He was ten years my senior, a full professor of Anthropology at Albion College in Michigan. I was hopelessly in love with him and for an 'unplucked' flower of...

(clears throat)

...almost forty years, that meant the world to me. Averell, and my work, were the two most important things in my life.

The parlor now fades as WE PULL OUT and...

DISSOLVE TO:

A LIBRARY BUILDING - DAY (SEPIA-FLASH-BACK)

Sheets of rain assault the university library building.

TITLE CARD: "Albion College, Michigan -- 1918"

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I was finishing genetic research on tribes of the Southwest. And that afternoon he told me he loved me.

Two FIGURES sprint through the deluge. Coats over their heads.

HUTCHINSON
I said...I love you!

The two drowned rats huddle under the colonnades out of the weather.

A younger Maggie, radiating that rare combination of beauty and innocence as her slender body angles against an older...

AVERELL HUTCHINSON

Razor-thin. All Adam's apple and ankles, with a beak-like nose, receding hairline and arrogant eyes.

MAGGIE
Again.

HUTCHINSON
What?

MAGGIE
Say it again.

HUTCHINSON
I love you.

He kisses her. She almost melts.

MAGGIE
I can never hear it enough.

HUTCHINSON
Here. To go with the locket.

In his hand, the fountain pen we've seen.

MAGGIE
You shouldn't have.

HUTCHINSON
I know. A little token of my love to help you finish your research.

She's giddy. Touches a LOCKET around her neck, then the pen. What could be more perfect?

MAGGIE
I love you more than you can imagine.
Do you know that?

HUTCHINSON
It's just a fountain pen, Margaret.

MAGGIE
First the locket, now this. Exquisite gifts from an exquisite man.

He's not comfortable with the closeness.

HUTCHINSON

Self-made man. Not exquisite. Just finish so I can verify it for publication.

MAGGIE

I will tonight.

HUTCHINSON

Good. Can't have my future wife losing out to some upstart research assistant.

MAGGIE

I'd be willing to lose everything just to be your wife.

She playfully ruffles his hair. He backs away, annoyed. Straightens his fragile 'comb-over'.

HUTCHINSON

Don't.

MAGGIE

I love you no matter how much hair you have.

She hit a nerve. He stiffens.

HUTCHINSON

I have a meeting.

MAGGIE

Don't leave. Please? Let's go somewhere and neck.

HUTCHINSON

You're incorrigible.

MAGGIE

Your fault.

He pecks her cheek. She doesn't let him get away with that. Grabs him, plants a doozy on his lips.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Don't forget how much I love you.

HUTCHINSON

(uncomfortable)

And don't you forget. I have to authenticate your research as soon as I have it --

(quickly)

-- To ensure you get the credit you deserve. Promise?

MAGGIE

You *do* love me, don't you?

HUTCHINSON

You know the answer to that.

He dissolves into the curtain of rain. She holds up the pen, fingers the locket. She's so happy she could cry.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I gave him all my research notes and papers the next day.

TIME DISSOLVE:

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Hutchinson is accepting an award for "his" research. Crowd thunders it's approval in applause.

Maggie stands in the back, devastated. Tries to hold back the tears.

EXT. CAMPUS COMMON - DAY

Hutchinson, surrounded by a knot of admiring colleagues, reporters, doesn't notice Maggie near the periphery.

REPORTER

When will you publish, Dr. Hutchinson?

HUTCHINSON

Already have, actually. Smithsonian next month.

COLLEAGUE

Who assisted you?

HUTCHINSON

No one. I've been working on Native American family structures for a decade. You know that, Henry.

The Colleague laughs, nods.

REPORTER

I understand there has been some talk that you may be offered the "Compton Chair" at the University once your study is published?

HUTCHINSON

So I've heard.

Quiet applause with hushed, impressed tones.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
 And you had no research assistance
 whatsoever, Dr. Hutchinson?

Crowd parts like a wound to expose her. Hutchinson's
 face creases into an arrogant frown.

HUTCHINSON
 None.

MAGGIE
 How can you say that!

HUTCHINSON
 Because it's true.

Maggie looks like she's been slugged in the stomach.
 Crowd buzzes, breaks up.

MAGGIE
 I have proof and I'm taking it to
 President Dickie.

HUTCHINSON
 Your word against mine.

MAGGIE
 I thought, you...

HUTCHINSON
 ...Were in love with you?
 (easy smile)
 Did you, really? I'm flattered.

He walks away without another word. She's heart-broken,
 destroyed, angry. And there's not a thing she can do.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Maggie is on the carpet, literally. Eyes wet with
 humiliated tears as Dr. Samuel Dickie, dresses her down.

The college President hands her the termination of
 employment papers as everything slowly...

FADES TO:

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - DAY

Rocks. Cactus. Occasional tree. Not a place you'd
 probably spend your summer vacation. Certainly worlds
 away from the verdant green of Michigan.

TITLE CARD: "Arizona/Mexico Border -- 1922"

The whipping wind gets louder and our...

PERSPECTIVE MOVES

slowly, inexorably across this dead place. Stops on a SERGIO LEONE CLOSE-UP of a really vile-looking man, his face hideously scarred. WIDER we see these are...

MEXICAN RENEGADES

about twenty waiting on a hillside overlooking the arroyo-scarred desert. Each a cut-throat. The scarred guy is their HEFE. He raises dented binoculars, focuses.

The object of his interest lets out a mournful shriek. The SOUTHERN PACIFIC limited some two miles distant.

The gang wants to take it but the "Hefe" shakes his head. Too far. Too fast. The men gesticulate, argue until El Hefe ends the discussion with a look. A very damned dangerous look.

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

Maggie stares out on the landscape blurring by when something catches her eye.

A fleeting glimpse of mounted riders. Almost romantic. Bit disquieting too as she pulls the shade.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Two years of rejection and discouragement had taken their toll. I'd lost my career, my friends, my youth -- and my illusions.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

The train belches steam, chugs out, leaving Maggie alone with her trunk. A yellowing faded sign reads, "Saguaro Junction, Arizona."

Not much of a place. Dusty. One main street with five storefronts. Livery garage, saloon, hardware drygoods store.

At the far end of the street a shack with a window. The US post office. Not the end of the world but you can see it from here.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Maggie dusts off her dress. No one in sight. Leans up to the mesh-covered window.

MAGGIE

Hello?

Fly buzzes.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Any one here?

POST MASTER (O.S.)

Who's askin'?

She tries to peer inside the musty building.

MAGGIE

Margaret Murdock. And I prefer to actually see the person with whom I'm conversing. If it's not too much trouble.

POST MASTER (O.S.)

Hold yer horses.

A grizzled, toothless old coot - smoking a brown "roll-your-own" - appears.

POST MASTER (CONT'D)

Whaddya' want, lady?

MAGGIE

Ma'am, not *lady*. Where are your manners?

POST MASTER

Musta' left 'em in my other pants.

He coughs, hawks a loogie out onto the dusty street. Shoves the cigarette back in his mouth.

POST MASTER (CONT'D)

So?

MAGGIE

I'm in need of transportation to my property at Sasabe`.

POST MASTER

And you come ta' the post office fer it?

(hoots)

Ain't that jes' like a woman!

She leans forward, her nose not an inch from his. Her voice, steel.

MAGGIE

I came *here* because I thought a United States Government official would be kind enough direct me. Apparently, I was mistaken on both counts.

Old guy looks at her like she just grew wings.

POST MASTER
 Right sparky ain't ya'?
 (jerks thumb)
 Earl's garage. End of the street.

He smiles. No teeth. Just gums. She retrieves her bags, heads down the street.

POST MASTER (CONT'D)
 (spits)
 Ma'am...

EXT. EARL'S GARAGE & LIVERY - DAY

Where we find EARL DAWSON. A tired man who's learned through hard experience that everything he knows about the world is probably wrong.

MAGGIE
 You have no vehicle you can rent me?

EARL
 Didn't I jes' say that?

VERLENE (O.S.)
 Who is it Earl?

EARL
 Customer, mebbe'.

VERLENE, his wife, waddles out. Female version of Earl. Looks at Maggie, surprised.

VERLENE
 A woman.

EARL
 New owner of Sasabe`. Kin ya' believe it?

VERLENE
 Whaddya' want with that god-forsaken piece of dirt?

MAGGIE
 It was bequeathed to me.

VERLENE
 Huh?

MAGGIE
 I inherited the property.

VERLENE
 Best "un-inherit" it if'n ya' got any sense.

EARL

Hell, you can spit across the border from Sasabe`, it's that close. Verlene's right. Either the "bandidos" or the "Apach'll" git ya'...and you'll wind up like all the rest.

MAGGIE

And how's that?

EARL

You don' wanna' know, missy.

MAGGIE

This is the 20th century.

EARL

Guess nobody tol' the Apach'.

VERLENE

Kill ya' as soon as look at ya'...or worse.

MAGGIE

You mean Apaches?

EARL

Leftovers from Geronimo and Mangus Colorado. Renegades mostly, hide out there in the Sierra Madre fightin' the Mex's and raidin' the whites here 'bouts. Ain't pretty what they do to 'em that they take captive neither.

VERLENE

He's right. I was a nurse durin' the war. I seen a lot a bad wounds but nothin' like them savages can do. You'd be better off anywhere but Sasabe'.

MAGGIE

Thank you for the warning. You must have some form of transportation I can hire?

Earl looks at her, then to Verlene.

SHOCK CUT:

MAGGIE'S HEAD

breaks FRAME, up and down, in rapid succession.

REVEAL:

She's on a MULE.

Bouncing through the punch-bowl cactus and sage dotting the landscape.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

My only relative was my grandfather, John David Murdock. I never knew him because he'd homesteaded in Arizona before I was born. When he passed away I learned he left me his ranch. Well, not really a ranch. More like...

EXT. RANCH HOUSE/CORRAL - DAY

Maggie stands in front of the weather-beaten building. No one for miles. Just her, the mule and her suitcases.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

...A broken-down house and corral with land attached. Sasabe'.

To the side, a well, the beams caked with dust. Maggie drops the bucket. In a moment a...'splash'.

OLDER MAGGIE

But it had a working well, which was more valuable than the entire five hundred acres that went with it.

She takes a deep breath, walks inside the crumbling structure.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Dry as Utah on Sunday. Furniture here and there, caked with dust and sand. Cupboards cob-webbed shut.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I was unmarried and out of a job. So I left my old world for a new one. I'm certain the Devil himself would rather rent out Sasabé and live in hell.

Maggie puts her hands on her hips. Eyes resolute.

SERIES OF SEQUENCES - SCENES - IMPRESSIONS:

-- Maggie pulling up bucket after bucket of water.

-- Scrubbing, cleaning, putting things in order.

-- Throwing straw and hay in the ramshackle barn.

-- Evening, wiping her brow, taking a sip of tea, looking at the amazing blooded sunset over the cactus.

-- Other days spent digging in the nearby foothills of the Sierra Madre for artifacts.

-- She has changed physically, no make-up, stringy fly-away hair. One thing's for sure, she's not trying to impress any men.

-- Another day, digging in a sand-hole that will pass for a garden.

-- Nailing shutters, fixing hinges.

-- A trip into Saguaro Junction for supplies.

-- Later, she drives a battered buckboard pulled by TWO MULES now. She has transportation anyway.

-- At the hardware store/combo saloon several of the men look at her curiously. She doesn't care.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

Oil lamp flickers. Maggie reads. In her lap a new friend, a small gray-tiger cat she strokes absently.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

By the end of the first month I had a new companion. Darwin.

She reads from the "Origin of the Species" by Charles Darwin. In the warm glow her face, weathered but handsome. Obvious she's getting used to fending for herself.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Maggie digs the hard-scrabble ground, trying to plant a garden. Darwin is on the porch, turns. Something. Maggie hears it now. Riders coming fast as...

MEXICAN RENEGADES

thunder up, dust swirling.

Maggie's frightened but hides it. Their leader is the hard-eyed El Hefe we've seen earlier. Regards her narrowly.

EL HEFE

Tien comida?

MAGGIE

What?

EL HEFE

(motions eating)

Comida...comida.

MAGGIE

Yes. I have food. Enough for *my* needs
-- not yours.

Whether the El Hefe understands the words or not, he understands the tone. Evil smile curls his lips. In a flash, he pulls a REVOLVER, fires! KA-BLAM!

Bullet ricochets next to Maggie's feet! She jumps six inches straight up, falls 'ass-over-teakettle'...skirt up around her knees.

Renegades howl at this. El Hefe motions and two men dismount, charge into the house. Reappear with flour, canned goods, etc.

He doffs his sombrero to Maggie, still on the ground.

EL HEFE

Muchas` Gracias` Señora.

MAGGIE

You son-of-a-b --!

Her words are choked off with dust as they gallop off. She dusts herself off. The look in her eye is one to be reckoned with.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HARDWARE/SALOON - DAY

Exact same look. Except now she's holding a large SMITH & WESSON 1917 double-action revolver in .45 caliber.

Aims at an imaginary target.

The "hardware" part of this establishment is separated from the "saloon" part by adjoining swinging doors. Over which, several bleary-eyed patrons watch with great interest.

MAGGIE

How much?

The clerk, VIRGIL, in his 30's but looks older. Yellow picket-fence teeth.

If all saloon-keepers were greaseballs Virgil would be their absolute ruler. Leans around her, spits. Misses the spittoon by at least a foot.

VIRGIL

Twenty-five dollars. Cash money.

MAGGIE

Ammunition?

He pulls out a box of fifty, plunks it on the counter.

VIRGIL
Dollar'n half.

MAGGIE
I'll take three.

Pulls her purse, counts out the coins carefully. Regards the tobacco-blotched floor, then Virgil's stained lip.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Stupid habit.

VIRGIL
You tried it?

MAGGIE
Of course not.

VIRGIL
Then ya' can't say, ken ya'?

He plays it up for the bar patrons watching. They laugh.

MAGGIE
I haven't jumped into a cactus patch naked either. But I still know it's stupid.

That gets 'oohs' and 'chuckles' from the onlookers. She scoops up her new firearm, ammunition, sweeps out.

Virgil smirks at the bar-flies.

VIRGIL
Waa'll, she's purty damned fulla' herself, ain't she?

Ad libs of agreement from the drunks. He spits again. Same result.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Maggie is working in the garden. The Smith & Wesson shoved through the belt she wears over her riding kulats.

RAWLINS (O.S.)
Mornin'.

Maggie pulls the gun, spins around, confronts all six-foot four inches of...

STAN RAWLINS

A rangy, raw-boned cowboy.

His chiseled granite face smiles out from under a swatch of unruly salt and pepper hair.

MAGGIE

Who the hell are you!

Rawlins allows a small smile to slip across his face.

RAWLINS

You gonna' shoot me for sayin' good mornin'?

MAGGIE

Still deciding.

RAWLINS

(taps his hat)

Stan Rawlins. Own the spread just north of you, over ta' Sierra Vista.

Maggie shoves the revolver back in her belt. Looks him over. Not a bad looking man.

MAGGIE

What do you want?

RAWLINS

Just a howdy.

Maggie's relaxes, somewhat chagrined at her over-reaction.

MAGGIE

Sorry. Last time someone visited it was a group of renegade low-lifes stealing my supplies.

Taps the revolver's walnut grip.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I've become more...careful.

RAWLINS

Heard you had visitors. We don't see many women alone out here on the border.

MAGGIE

So I've been told. Numerous times.

RAWLINS

You can expect that kind of trouble now and again. Words out about you bein' here. Always some who'll take advantage.

MAGGIE

They can try.

She tries to fix her hair.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Lemonade? Made it up fresh this morning.

RAWLINS

Be obliged.

MAGGIE

Good.

She motions to the door. He takes off his hat, dusts his pants and enters. She looks again. Not bad at all.

TIME CUT:

EXT. PORCH - LATER

Maggie and Rawlins sit on the porch looking at nothing in particular. Lemonade's nearly gone.

RAWLINS

Understand you inherited this place?

MAGGIE

That's correct.

RAWLINS

Don't mean to tell you your business, but livin' here, where you do...well, it's dangerous.

MAGGIE

Been told that as well.

RAWLINS

The Mexicans go back and forth like it was a highway...and the renegade Apache bands are always testin' us.

MAGGIE

What does that mean?

RAWLINS

Hit the ranches every now and again. Take horses, grain, guns...women.

MAGGIE

Abductions?

RAWLINS

Whites do the same thing. Like I said,
not exactly safe this close to the
border.

MAGGIE

Are you trying to get me to leave?

RAWLINS

Would it do any good?

MAGGIE

No. But I appreciate your concern.
I've been doing some research.

RAWLINS

Ma'am?

MAGGIE

Apache culture. I have a degree in
anthropology.

RAWLINS

What's that?

MAGGIE

Study of past civilizations.

RAWLINS

Oh.

MAGGIE

About as interesting as watching paint
dry.

RAWLINS

Wouldn't say that. It's just...
educated women are kinda' scarce
hereabouts.

MAGGIE

Really?

RAWLINS

Most are married or...
(a look)
...in another line a work.

MAGGIE

I'm not most women.

RAWLINS

Noticed that right off.

Rawlins nods to the SMITH AND WESSON on the table.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Know how to use that?

MAGGIE

I've been practicing.

RAWLINS

Any good?

MAGGIE

Better than I was.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Maggie and Rawlins stand facing a barrel cactus. She cocks the revolver, aims, fires with little effect.

Rawlins takes out his own well-used Colt, fans three quick shots.

BAM-BAM-BAM! The belly of the cactus erupts. You could cover all three holes with a quarter.

Maggie looks at him, impressed.

MAGGIE

Teach me to shoot like that?

RAWLINS

All in the wrist.

Sharp glance to see if he's teasing her. He's serious. Waggles his wrist.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Weapon needs to be an extension of your hand. Like pointin' your finger. Once you get the knack of it. You can hit anything.

She squares her shoulders, loads the revolver. He stands behind her, steadying her arm as she unconsciously leans into him.

TIME DISSOLVE:

EXT. DESERT - LATER

A lot of practice has gone on judging by the spent shell casings. Maggie aims, fires. KA-POW! KA-POW! Two ragged holes very close together.

MAGGIE

Like that?

RAWLINS

Just...like that.

He smiles and for the first time, in a long time, she smiles back. Eyes lock. Maggie breaks it, cheeks flushed.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Rawlins is mounted.

RAWLINS

Pleasure to meet you, Miss Murdock.

MAGGIE

Maggie. Believe we know each other well enough now.

RAWLINS

That we do. Sam. Would you mind if I was to stop by now and again? To see how you're doin', I mean?

MAGGIE

I wouldn't mind at all.

RAWLINS

Good.

She watches him leave. The cat looks up from the rocker.

MAGGIE

What do you think, Darwin?

Cat meows, stretches.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Yeah. Not bad at all.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS - DAWN (ESTABLISHING)

A burgeoning, almost iridescent, sky over these primordial throwbacks with burned rocky tops and gorged-out canyons.

EXT. DESERT ARROYO - DAY

Maggie digs in the small shaded arroyo half way up the mountain side.

She's made some "finds"...arrowheads, pottery bits, stone tools and such.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I had begun to excavate a site I felt was promising. Though I wasn't a teacher any longer, anthropology was still my passion.

A sound. She crawls to the top of the arroyo.

IN THE VALLEY BELOW

The Mexican Renegades we've seen earlier come up the draw. But they don't see the...

APACHE WAR PARTY

hidden in the adjoining rocks. An ambush!

Maggie hunkers down, both frightened and fascinated.

SEQUENCE OF CUTS - IMPRESSIONS - SCENES:

-- The Apaches fire, many of the Mexicans fall right then and there.

-- Indians swarm over the sporadically firing Mexicans, but it's a one-sided battle.

-- The Renegades dive for cover from the cloudburst of arrows showering down on them.

-- Arrows fired by the powerful Apache bows hit the Renegades with the power of rifle bullets.

-- Arms splinter like twigs, bandoleers are nailed to chests.

-- The Mexicans are decimated as arrows and bullets find their marks.

-- A macabre SLOW-MOTION dance of death for the bandit Renegades.

-- El Hefe, the man at Maggie's ranch and one other man are the only ones to escape.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I'd never seen men get killed before.
And when I did, it changed my mind
about such things. For some reason
there has always been some sort of
honor attached to warfare and the
killing of human beings. I don't know
why. As though it were a glory
integral to being a man. But I saw no
honor in the killing. It was ghastly.
Just blood, suffering...and death.

-- Then she sees Jarosoma!

-- His face is a map of his warrior existence; fierce, wild, fearless. He seems to rejoice in battle.

-- She gasps. Can't help it. The vision of this man has literally ripped the breath from her lungs.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

It was also the first time I saw Jarosoma. And I've never seen a man like him, before or since.

-- The Apaches quickly rifle through the Mexican's gear, taking ammunition, weapons.

-- Jarosoma motions and all thunder away like vengeful wraiths.

-- Maggie still cannot take her eyes from him. Even at this distance he's arresting.

-- When they've gone she sags against a rock, gulps from her canteen.

EXT. SAGUARO JUNCTION - ANOTHER DAY

Maggie hitches the team, goes into the dry goods store.

INT. DRY GOODS EMPORIUM - DAY

She nods to the owner, LEMUEL SORENSON. A round, bald little man with nervous eyes that dart back and forth like a barnyard bird.

MAGGIE

I need flour, bacon, sugar, salt, and coffee. Oh, some tea as well if you have it.

LEMUEL

Sure do.

(fills order)

You hear about the commotion out your way?

MAGGIE

You mean the fighting? Yes. I saw it.

LEMUEL

You seen it?

MAGGIE

I saw it.

RAWLINS (O.S.)

You alright?

Maggie turns. Rawlins stands in the doorway.

MAGGIE

I saw them -- they didn't see me.

RAWLINS

Won't be the last of it.

MAGGIE

We've had this discussion before.

RAWLINS

Have it again if I thought you'd listen.

MAGGIE

I've made up my mind.

Maggie scans the counter. Stack of magazines. One, a copy of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, sports a picture of Hutchinson on the cover.

Takes her breath for a moment. She winces.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Who reads "Scientific American" around here?

LEMUEL

Nobody. Got sent by mistake. Supposed ta' go ta' Tucson.

Masthead reads: "Albion College Professor Awarded Anthropology Grant" Her face hardens.

LEMUEL (CONT'D)

Someone you know?

MAGGIE

Knew.

She says it like most folks say "cancer." Both men feel her anger as she drops a nickel on the counter, rolls up the magazine.

RAWLINS

Don't get in the middle of them renegades again.

MAGGIE

Don't intend to.

She's gone. Lemuel and Rawlins share a look.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Maggie is pounding nails in the sagging fence railings when the Model 'A' pulls up.

TOM WILSON, 40's, dough-boy physique stuffed into a too-tight collar, gets out. Dusts off.

WILSON

Miss Murdock?

He notes the revolver shoved in her belt.

MAGGIE
That's right.

WILSON
(sticks out his hand)
Tom Wilson. Bureau of Indian Affairs.
San Carlos reservation.

She wipes her hand on her dress, takes it. Brushes the hair out of her eyes.

MAGGIE
The Indian Agent.

He pulls out a dog-eared notebook and pencil. Makes notes as they speak.

WILSON
I understand you witnessed the skirmish
between Apaches and Mexican nationals.

MAGGIE
More like a massacre.

WILSON
How many Apaches?

MAGGIE
Maybe a dozen. Showed no quarter.

WILSON
That'd be Jarosoma.

MAGGIE
Who?

WILSON
Chief of the renegades. Jarosoma.

MAGGIE
Why did they attack the Mexicans?

WILSON
Territory feud most likely. Both
renegades and Apache raid the border.
They can kill each other all they want.
Ain't my concern.

MAGGIE
What *is* your concern?

WILSON
Gettin' 'em back on the reservation or
killin' 'em. Don't matter which to me.

MAGGIE
Noble sentiment.

Wilson sees the look in her eye.

WILSON
They're a pain in the ass. Always have been. When Geronimo and his band come down a few of 'em, like Jarosoma, wouldn't come out with him. Figured whites owed 'em I guess. Now they just raid.

He walks over to the water bucket. Looks at the dipper.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Mind?

Maggie nods. He takes a dipper full, drinks. Wipes his mouth on his sleeve.

WILSON (CONT'D)
That'd be alright with me but they kill anybody gets in their way. I just got a dispatch from Washington sayin' the Mexican Army is sendin' out a detachment. Maybe that'll finally put an end to it.

MAGGIE
Have you tried negotiating with the Apache?

WILSON
Don't do any good. They live in the past.

MAGGIE
What do they want?

WILSON
Their land back. And that ain't gonna' happen. Hell, most of 'em don't even speak English or know how to write. Hopeless savages.

MAGGIE
Has anyone tried to change that?

WILSON
Waste of time.
(nods)
You shouldn't be out here alone.

MAGGIE
So I've heard.

WILSON

Well, you oughta' listen. You're right on the line here at Sasabe'. And if Jarosoma comes you ain't got no chance.

(nods)

Don't care how good you are with that pistol.

MAGGIE

Sasabe' and my research are all I have. I don't have a choice either.

WILSON

Sell out. Leave. Better'n' bein' killed...or worse.

He doffs his hat, pulls out.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Dead leaves scatter from twisted, skeletal cottonwoods tossing in the wind at the Apache's summer camp.

It's little more than a knot of thatched KOWA'S (*hogans*) with dogs sleeping in open door-ways.

Women and children gather in meager corn and berries which have been laid out on wood drying racks.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

Mexican REGULARS on the move. Maybe a dozen men on horseback, half dozen in a truck.

In the back of the vehicle a MACHINE GUN'S ugly black snout visible. On the lead horse, the scout -- El Hefe!

EXT. PORCH - DUSK

Maggie sits in her rocker. In her hands, the copy of the "Scientific American." Her face more hurt than angry.

Crickets and the occasional bird when another sound makes her look up. Gunfire! Distant but distinct. She peers into the gathering dark.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS - DUSK

The Mexican Army regulars attack the Apache encampment with bloody ferocity. Women holding babes, screaming as the automatic fire cuts them down.

No one is spared. The dead, dying and wounded litter the ground. El Hefe confers with a cruel-faced Army CAPTAIN.

INT. RANCH HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maggie is asleep. The revolver on the night-stand next to her. Suddenly, a commotion outside wakes her.

She yanks on a robe, revolver in hand, peers out at the moonlight dappled sage and mesquite.

HER POV:

Dust settling on a something - a FIGURE - at her gate!

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

She creeps around the side. Cautious. Unsure. Hand trembles but she continues undaunted.

The FIGURE sags. Small stature. Odd. She gets closer and gasps. A young APACHE boy -- wounded and bleeding!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The boy lays on the table. Wears only leather leggings and a loin-cloth. Ugly gunshot wound in his abdomen. Her face says it all. She's way over her head here.

EXT. DESERT - EARLY MORNING (ESTABLISHING)

Maggie's wagon is silhouetted against the red volcanic rocks, crimson. Saguaro cactus dot the early morning landscape like massive, spiny hieroglyphics.

EXT. EARL'S GARAGE/LIVERY - MORNING

Maggie jumps down, goes to the bandaged boy in the back. He's delirious. She marches over, pounds on the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

A large-busted woman, EMMA SCOTT, owner of the hotel, bustles in with hot water, linen, various ointments and salves.

Verlene bends over the boy.

EMMA

I've got more linen but no more bandages, Verlene.

Verlene may be rough around the edges but she knows her way around wounds. She probes the wound with a long forceps.

VERLENE

Bullet's lodged against his rib. He's lucky. Two inches over'n, he'd be dead.

MAGGIE
Can you get it out?

The boy moans, then screams, as Verlene lifts up a bloody lead bullet in the forceps. Drops it in a pan with a "clink."

VERLENE
Yeah.

MAGGIE
He'll live?

VERLENE
Long as infection don't set in. Change the dressin' every day.

MAGGIE
Me?

EARL
He's Apach'. Nobody'll take 'em. After he's up and around best git him over ta' San Carlos.

MAGGIE
The reservation?

VERLENE
Only ones who'll accept his kind.

EMMA
Probably put him in the prison infirmary.

MAGGIE
Prison! He's just a boy.

EARL
He's from them renegades. Biggins' or smallins' they put all the males in cells. Don't matter their age.

MAGGIE
He's a child!

Verlene rinses her hands in the tin bowl.

VERLENE
Missy, that there is a Chiricahua Apache warrior. He'll kill ya' as soon as look at ya'. Earl's right. Take him to San Carlos.

MAGGIE
This is the 20th century!

EMMA

Not out here. Mexican Regulars were the ones dumped him on you, rather than take care of him. Probably raided Jarosoma's camp in revenge.

EARL

And likely as not killed most of 'em and left the wounded, like this one. That's how they operate.

TIME CUT:

EXT. RANCH - ANOTHER DAY (ESTABLISHING)

Earl's old car drives up. He and Verlene help Maggie carry the boy inside.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Maggie directs Earl to the daybed she's set up in the kitchen.

VERLENE

You're makin' a mistake takin' this one in.

MAGGIE

I'll not have a boy put in the prison at San Carlos.

VERLENE

Won't change yer mind?

MAGGIE

No.

VERLENE

Suit yerself.

EARL

I'll let Stan Rawlins know. He'll look in on ya'.

MAGGIE

Thank you both.

VERLENE

We ain't done ya' no favors.

EARL

(touches his hat)

Ma'am.

EXT. JAROSOMA'S ENCAMPMENT - DAY

The Apache leader and his warriors ride up. Dismount. The dead scattered throughout what's left of the encampment.

Jarosoma nods to one - BLOOD-SHIRT - his 2nd in command. A massive figure, rippling with brutal power. A terrifying cruelty behind his eyes.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

Survivors?

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)

Some young were taken, maybe to the white eyes' village.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

My nephew?

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)

Blood trail. North.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

We will bury our dead then find our young ones.

Blood-Shirt nods, the rest fan out.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Maggie works in her garden. Hears something. Stands. Goes inside.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

She walks in. The daybed is empty. Covers thrown off. Maggie looks around, concerned. Suddenly, a knife is at her throat!

MAGGIE

Arrrgh!

The boy, his wound bleeding through the bandages! She spins away. He advances, then sags. Faint. Maggie grabs the knife, drags him to the day bed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

That is the last damned time you'll do that!

She runs out. In a moment, she slams back inside with a length of lariat. Ties him to the daybed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I save your life and you take a butcher knife to me!

Stands there, breath ragging in her throat, as frightened as she is angry.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Maggie's at a long wooden table. On it various artifacts, mostly Apache. Pottery, arrowheads and such.

The Boy, abdomen still wrapped, sits tied to a chair. His eyes burn. Maggie notes the dark scowl.

MAGGIE

Won't do any good to look at me like that.

Narrows his eyes, looks down. Maggie touches the ropes.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

If you'll act civilized. I'll untie you.

Silence.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What's your name?

Nothing. Points to herself.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I - am - Maggie. Can you say that? Maggie?

She pokes him in the chest. Then herself.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Who - are - you?
(still nothing)
Tu nombre?

Long beat, then...

MATEO

(almost inaudible)

Mateo'.

Maggie's surprised he answered.

MAGGIE

Mateo'? That's your name? Mateo'?

MATEO

(slight nod)

Mieyebo Ozuye.

(*Pronounced Myee-yaboo - Oozoo-yee)

MAGGIE

Myee...yaboo...oozoo-yee? What's that?

RAWLINS (O.S.)

Means 'warrior' in Chiricahua. *Mieyabo Ozuye* -- his way of introduc'in' himself.

Maggie turns to see Rawlins filling the door.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Just told you he's a warrior. You're supposed to be impressed.

MAGGIE

Oh.

(to Mateo)

I am impressed.

Mateo's eyes are sullen as Rawlins checks him over.

RAWLINS

Looks to be one of Jarosoma's.

MAGGIE

Didn't expect to see you.

RAWLINS

Earl told me. Figured I'd stop by.

MAGGIE

We're doing fine.

RAWLINS

(re: rope binding)

Yeah, I can see that.

MAGGIE

I will untie you.

(demonstrates)

Untie?

He nods. She unties him. His expression is dark, trying to decide whether to run or attack.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Make up your mind. Haven't got all day.

He takes a step, wilts.

RAWLINS

You took the fight out of him.

MAGGIE

Bullet did that.

She helps the boy to the daybed. Checks the bandages.
Softly brushes the dark hair from his eyes.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Haven't had much practice with
children.

RAWLINS

Seem to be doin' okay. But he ain't no
child. He's a man by their law and
he'll act like one when he's stronger.

MAGGIE

I know what you're going to say but I'm
not taking him to San Carlos.

RAWLINS

Wasn't gonna' say that.

She looks up.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Treat him like an adult, he'll respond
better. For awhile, anyways.

MATEO

(touches chest)

Yo soy hombre.

MAGGIE

Yes. Just heard. Haven't had a lot of
experience with...men...either. Most of
'em weren't worth a spit. Present
company excepted.

RAWLINS

Better be goin'.

MAGGIE

Already? I mean, you just got here.

RAWLINS

We're calvin' now. Can't be gone too
long. Coyotes and other varmints take
the newborns.

He puts on his hat.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Be back in a week or so.

MAGGIE

I'll...we'll...be here.

RAWLINS

(touches hat brim)

Ma'am.

He's gone. She looks at Mateo'.

MAGGIE
Now that's an...hombre'.

MATEO
Si, soy hombre.

MAGGIE
Not you. Him. Well, maybe you. Get
some rest.

He lays back, almost instantly asleep. She blows out the
oil lamp plunging the SCENE into DARKNESS.

EXT. ARIZONA/MEXICO BORDER - DAY

Burning daylight, hard reality as a squad of uniformed
Rurales ride through, sabres glinting in the sun.

They approach the mouth of a rocky canyon when the hard-
bitten Captain signals a stop.

He studies the jumble of hoofprints on the ground, turns
to an anxious-looking YOUNG RURALE.

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
An hour north. Maybe less.

YOUNG RURALE (SUBTITLE)
That's across the border, sir.

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
A line on a map. Nothing more.

YOUNG RURALE (SUBTITLE)
What about the American army?

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
You think Jarosoma worries about the
Americans? He will not escape again.

YOUNG RURALE (SUBTITLE)
But, the Commandante --

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
-- Will get my full report.
(pure hate)
*After ...I cut out Jarosoma's eyes with
my saber.*

He spurs his horse on. The young Lieutenant motioning
for the rest of the squad to follow.

The former renegade leader El Hefe wears the uniform of a
Rurale now.

Smiles wickedly at the Young Rurale, spurs his mount.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Maggie finishes hitching the wagon. Mateo waits. She nods and he climbs in slowly. Still sore. She climbs up beside him.

MAGGIE
Need to make you presentable.

Mateo' stares, silent. She nudges him.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Don't you speak when spoken to?

He doesn't understand.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Habla? Usted...comigo? Talk?

MATEO
Yo hablo.

MAGGIE
English please.

MATEO
I...spoke.

MAGGIE
Speak - not spoke. Right idea, wrong verb tense. Go on. Say it...'you can speak.'

MATEO
Yo can spick.

MAGGIE
Not 'spick' -- speeeek.

MATEO
Speeek...

MAGGIE
Speak...who?

MATEO
Mujer..?

MAGGIE
Not *woman*...my name, please.

MATEO
(darkens)
Maaa...geee.

MAGGIE
Thank you...Mateo'.

MATEO
Isdza'n t'aghaa...

(*Pronounced 'Eee-da-zan-tah-aah-gaa)

MAGGIE
What?

MATEO
Nada.

MAGGIE
(sounds it out)
Eee-da-zan...tah-aah-gaa?

The boy points at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Me? My name? What?

She repeats the words. Snaps the reins, mules pull the wagon out. As they get smaller we can still hear her repeating the Apache words.

EXT. DRYGOODS STORE - DAY

Maggie motions for Mateo' to follow. He does so reluctantly. A few townspeople stare, point.

INT. DRYGOODS STORE - DAY

Maggie has an armful of clothes, dungarees, work shirts. Holds a shirt up to him. He frowns.

LEMUEL
He won't wear it.

MAGGIE
Not your concern is it?

LEMUEL
Go naked first.

Virgil walks in, glares at the boy then Maggie.

VIRGIL
Heard ya' had a new customer, Lem.

LEMUEL
Uh, no, not new...uh, Miss Murdock is a regular.

Virgil saunters to Mateo', leans over.

VIRGIL
Like ta' cut my throat wouldn't ya'?

MAGGIE
If *he* doesn't, I'm sure we can find
someone who would.

Virgil frowns. The boy's dark, dangerous eyes make him
uncomfortable.

VIRGIL
Don' gimme' none a yer Apach' evil eye.

MAGGIE
Then don't give him a reason.
(to Lemuel)
Please ring these up.

Lemuel hurries behind the counter, opens the register.
Starts adding up the total.

VIRGIL
Better off ta' shoot him with that
blaster I sold ya'. Cut yer throat one
a these days.

MAGGIE
(deadpan)
Already tried.

That gets a look from Virgil. Maggie hands Mateo' the
trousers and shirt.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Put these on. Back there in the store
room. Go on.

Mateo' takes the clothing. Drops his leggings. Stands
there in nothing but his loin cloth. Defiant.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Suit yourself, big-chief no-pants. Put
'em on.

He does. Slowly. Too big.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Do you have anything smaller?

LEMUEL
Smallest I got.

MAGGIE
I'll need a belt.

LEMUEL

Sorry, none in stock right now. On
order outta' Bisbee but...
(voice trails off)

Virgil goes to a rope wheel, cuts a length. Tosses it to
Mateo'.

VIRGIL

Good 'nuff for his kind.

Maggie starts to tie it but Mateo' jumps back before she
can touch him.

MAGGIE

Alright. You do it.

Mateo' cinches the rope. She hands him the shirt. He
puts it on. Doesn't button it.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It's an improvement.
(pulls coin purse)
How much?

LEMUEL

Two dollars, twenty-seven cents.

She counts it out exactly. Lemuel puts it into the cash
register. She doesn't move. Makes him nervous.

LEMUEL (CONT'D)

Uh...somethin' else, Miss Murdock?

MAGGIE

A receipt.

VIRGIL

What fer?

MAGGIE

To prove I paid. Not that it's any of
your business.

VIRGIL

He knows ya' paid.

MAGGIE

In case he forgets.

Lemuel starts to scribble out a receipt. Pencil breaks.
Looks up like a lost puppy.

VIRGIL

Hell, make her fill it out, Lem.

LEMUEL

Not now, Virg.

Maggie pulls her fountain pen. Unscrews it slowly.
Hands it to Virgil.

MAGGIE

Why don't you fill it out for him?
(he blanches)
You can write?

Virgil's look darkens, cheeks flush.

VIRGIL

I can cypher. Ain't no good with
letters.

He stomps out.

LEMUEL

I'll be happy to --

MAGGIE

-- Never mind. Good day.

LEMUEL

Come back anytime, ma'am.

MAGGIE

I will. For the belt.

LEMUEL

'Course. End of the month, probably.

They leave as Lemuel mops his brow for the umpteenth
time. Certainly not a woman to cross.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Maggie puts the package in back. Mateo' climbs up and
she right next to him.

EMMA (O.S.)

Looks a whole lot better'n the last
time I seen him.

Emma walks up, gives the boy a once-over.

MAGGIE

Much better. Thanks to you.

EMMA

Still thinkin' you'll keep him?

MAGGIE

For the time being.

EMMA
Makin' a mistake.

MAGGIE
Wouldn't be the first time.

EMMA
Hope it ain't the last.

MAGGIE
So do I.

EMMA
Probably expect a visit from Wilson
again.

MAGGIE
Why?

EMMA
News travels fast when folks hear about
a white woman adopting an Apache.

MAGGIE
I haven't adopted him.

EMMA
Sure you have. Just don't know it.

MAGGIE
Good to see you, Emma.

Maggie snaps the reins, wagon rumbles out. Lemuel joins
Emma. Both watch for a beat.

LEMUEL
Think she can handle him?

EMMA
Lotta' hard bark on that one.

LEMUEL
Yeah. But hard enough to stop an arrow
or tomahawk?

He goes back in. Emma watches the wagon disappear. He
could be right.

EXT. ARIZONA/MEXICO BORDER - DAY

The Rurales' stop on a bluff overlooking the valley
beyond. A single marker designates the border. Nothing
more.

The Captain searches the horizon with binoculars. El
Hefe is on the ground, studying the tracks.

EL HEFE (SUBTITLE)
Four hours. Maybe less.

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
How many?

EL HEFE (SUBTITLE)
Ten, twelve. No more.

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
Jarosoma?

El Hefe points to the tracks.

EL HEFE (SUBTITLE)
Bloodshirt's horse.

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
But is Jarosoma with him?

EL HEFE (SUBTITLE)
Bloodshirt never leaves Jarosoma.

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
How can you be sure it's his horse?

EL HEFE (SUBTITLE)
Because. It used to be my horse.

CAPTAIN (SUBTITLE)
Where?

EL HEFE
(points)
Estados Unidos.

The Captain motions and the detachment thunders down the bluff and across the border.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Sam Rawlins rides up dismounts. Goes to the door, knocks. Maggie opens it. Motions him inside.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

She nods to the table.

MAGGIE
Coffee? Fresh made.

RAWLINS
Be obliged.

She pours him a cup.

MAGGIE
Don't have any more sugar. Honey,
though.

RAWLINS
Take it black, thanks.
(sips)
Good.

MAGGIE
Had a change of heart about Mateo'?

RAWLINS
Nope. Came to reason with you.

MAGGIE
Wasted your time.

RAWLINS
Like I said he ain't no boy, he's a
warrior.

MAGGIE
A "boy"...warrior.

RAWLINS
Might try to cut or kill ya' if he
decides it's necessary.

He says it like he were ordering breakfast.

MAGGIE
Already has.

Rawlins looks up, surprised.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
We understand each other better now.

RAWLINS
What happens when he's healed up?

MAGGIE
I'm not taking him to San Carlos.

RAWLINS
Haven't answered my question.

MAGGIE
I'm considering my options.

RAWLINS
From where I'm sittin' you don't appear
to have all that many.

MAGGIE
I'll manage.

RAWLINS
Adopt him?

MAGGIE
I don't know about that.

RAWLINS
Raise him?

Her eyes flash.

MAGGIE
I *don't know*, Sam. But I can't just
abandon him.

RAWLINS
And if his people come lookin' for him?

MAGGIE
Then...he'll go with them, I suppose.

RAWLINS
Before -- or after they kill ya'?

MAGGIE
More coffee?

Discussion's over. Rawlins gets his hat.

RAWLINS
You got sand Maggie Murdock, I'll give
ya' that.

MAGGIE
Don't need anymore sand.

RAWLINS
Have to do.

MAGGIE
What does...Isdza'n t'aghaa...mean?

RAWLINS
Name. More or less.

MAGGIE
What name?

RAWLINS
Where'd you hear it?

MAGGIE
Mateo'.

RAWLINS

Means...*woman who makes tall shadow in their parlance.* We'd probably say, "Long Shadow Woman."

MAGGIE

Long shadow woman? How odd.

RAWLINS

Not really. Means somebody who's always around...you know, makin' a "long shadow."

MAGGIE

Me.

RAWLINS

'Spect so.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

He goes to his saddle, pulls out a '94 Winchester carbine.

RAWLINS

Better take this.

MAGGIE

I have a gun.

RAWLINS

You have a pistol. Need somethin' that'll give you some distance *before* they get to you. Not after.

Reluctantly she takes the rifle as he mounts, then hands her a box of cartridges.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

I'll try to look in on you when I can.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

RAWLINS

I ain't done ya' no favors.

MAGGIE

You'll get your rifle back.

RAWLINS

I know. Just hope it's you that gives it to me.

He gallops off as Maggie examines the Winchester. Cycles the action. Something makes her turn. Mateo watches from the porch, eyes glued to the rifle.

MAGGIE
For hunting.

The boy says nothing as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE OF SCENES - SHOTS - IMPRESSIONS:

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

-- Mateo' feeds the mules under Maggie's watchful eye. Later, cleans out the lean-to stalls with a pitchfork.

-- She motions when he misses a pile of manure. He frowns, forks it over the fence.

INT. PARLOR - ANOTHER DAY

-- Maggie cleans. Sweeping. Hands the broom to Mateo' who looks at it like some alien appendage. She motions for him to try.

-- He does. Halting and unfamiliar but working at it. She nods, heads into the kitchen.

-- Mateo' continues sweeping, all the time studying the various items in the room...her books...silver candlesticks.

-- Cups, saucers, plates, knick-knacks and...

B&W PHOTOS:

-- Maggie as a child, with relatives.

-- Albion College with Hutchinson.

-- Finally, her at a SEASHORE.

Boy studies it trying to understand what and where it is.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
It's the ocean.

He wheels around. Guilty look.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
These are photographs.

He's confused. She tries to explain, gesturing.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Great water. Very big. Ocean.

MATEO
Ohhh...shun?

MAGGIE

That's right. Ocean. Big water.

She pulls out a map. Spreads it out on the table. Traces from the Arizona border to the Baja peninsula and finally the Pacific Ocean.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Pacific ocean. Great water. No land.
(points)

We are here. Arizona. The ocean is here, off the coast of California.

MATEO

Calee-forn...eeha?

MAGGIE

That's right. A state. In the United States. The state of Arizona.

MATEO

Are...zona?

She points to California again.

MAGGIE

Here?

MATEO

Calee...forn...eeha.

MAGGIE

And this?

MATEO

Ohhh...shun.

MAGGIE

That's right, the "Pacific" Ocean to be precise.

MATEO

Agua' grande, no?

MAGGIE

Agua' grande, yes. Very big water.

His eyes shine. She realizes he's like every child. Anxious to learn when motivated. She takes the broom, pulls out the chair.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Read it.

He can't obviously, but is totally absorbed nonetheless.

She watches, happy at this turn of events.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

Mateo' asleep on the daybed. The oil lamp flickers, fluttering from the breeze through newly hung curtains. Room glows like old gold. Warm. Inviting. The woman's touch.

Maggie pores over long unused anthropology books. Studying about the Apache, their words and symbols.

ATHABASCAN language according to the chapter heading.

She makes notes. Writes words. Silently mouthing to herself. She's the scholar again, unseen since her college days. Doing what she loves.

The calendar date is February, 1922.

QUICK TIME-LAPSE SEQUENCE:

CLOUDS

scurry across mutating skies of blue and gray.

SUMMER

blossoms with the rising and setting of the sun.

AUTUMN'S

alternate shades appear, rich reds and gold of the cottonwoods and higher up, the aspen.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Maggie leads Mateo' to the sagging timbers. Has a hammer, bucket of nails.

She takes a fallen fence rail, hammers it back to the post. Hands the hammer to Mateo', nods to the downed rails.

He takes the unfamiliar tool. Then a nail. Starts hammering.

EXT. PORCH - LATER

Maggie cleans green beans. Suddenly, a SCREAM! She runs to the corral where Mateo' jumps up and down, holding his thumb.

She swallows a smile, takes his hand, examines it.

MAGGIE

You'll live. Be careful.

Pantomimes. He understands but that doesn't make it hurt any less. Scowls. Grabs the hammer. Starts again.

EXT. CORRAL - LATE AFTERNOON

Fence is mended. Looks pretty good.

MAGGIE

Good work.

Takes his hand, shakes it. He watches dumbly.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm shaking your hand. Sign of respect.

(just a stare)

Respeito...entende'?

He nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Shake hand. Respect. You say it.

He takes her hand. Shakes it three times very solemnly.

MATEO

Ree...spect?

MAGGIE

Yes. My respect for you.

MATEO

Para' me?

MAGGIE

English, please.

MATEO

For...meee?

MAGGIE

For you.

She unclasps the locket from her neck.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Here.

Ties it around his neck.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

A gift. Out of respect.

He doesn't know how to respond. Touches it.

INT. PARLOR - ANOTHER NIGHT

Maggie and Mateo' at the table. A number of books opened in front of them as she reads by the flickering oil lamp.

Mateo' is engrossed trying to understand the words, helped by the pictures she refers to.

One is the *Scientific American* with Hutchinson picture.

MATEO

Same?

The boy points at the photo on the dresser.

MATEO (CONT'D)

Who eees...hombre'?

MAGGIE

A son-of-a-bitch.

She says it like she were telling him the sky is blue.

MATEO

Sono..fa...beetch..?

MAGGIE

Close enough.

Mateo nods. A new word. Files it away. He's learning.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Mateo' leads Maggie through the sage and cactus. Stopping, showing her sign and various footprints.

EXT. SMALL VALLEY - LATER

Mateo' squats in the dirt, explains what each mark and sign means as Maggie jots in her ever-present notebook.

He points out broken branches, the path some unseen traveler took.

Maggie absorbs it all, fascinated.

EXT. ARROYO - AFTERNOON

Mateo' demonstrates moving through the brush without making noise.

Maggie, not as adept, tries numerous times, finally able to do it silently.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - LATER

Maggie searches the brush and sage. Sees nothing. Looks closely. As she passes, Mateo' rises up from under the brush and dirt.

Perfectly concealed. Touches her shoulder. She jumps. Sees where he was, laughs.

He motions for her to try. She shrugs, burrows into the sand. In a moment she's totally concealed. He smiles.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

Mateo' is reading, haltingly, but reading. Maggie shows various words, pictures from her anthropology books.

Calendar is on September. Nearly seven months have passed.

EXT. GARDEN - ANOTHER DAY

Mateo' watches Maggie pull weeds. She motions for him to try. He shakes his head.

MAGGIE

If you're going eat it, you better learn to help take care of it.

MATEO

(scornful)

Trabajo' de mujeres.

MAGGIE

English please.

He thinks. Struggles. What are the words?

MATEO

Work...for women. Not man.

MAGGIE

I see. Beneath you, is it?

He folds his arms. Head high. Arrogant.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Maggie stirs a steaming pot of stew. Savory smell. Mateo' sits at the table. Anticipating.

Maggie laddles out the steaming broth into her bowl. None for Mateo'. Puts the pot back on the stove. Begins to eat.

Mateo's face is confused. Hurt. She continues eating. Makes slurping sounds to indicate how delicious it is.

MAGGIE
 (looks up)
 What?

He motions to the stew. Then to his empty bowl.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Oh, you want some?

He nods vigorously.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Woman work. Remember?

He cocks his head. Not quite sure what she's getting at. Maggie produces the hand-hoe from under the table. Makes a digging motion.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Woman work?

Now he gets it. Face darkens.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 When you help -- you eat. Trabajo'
 para comida? Yes?

He slams the chair back. Stalks out.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

Maggie walks out. Stretches. Surprised to see Mateo' digging with a vengeance in the garden. Large pile of weeds next to him. He's learning...

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

She places a plate of bacon and hot bread in front of him. He attacks it hungrily. An eating machine. Typical boy.

Maggie goes to the cupboard. Canned goods. Pretty good supply. Then the cooler next to the sink. Nearly empty.

MAGGIE
 We're going to need some fresh meat.

Mateo' brightens.

MATEO
 Anho gah!

MAGGIE
 What?

MATEO
 Anho. Anho...gah.

She goes to the parlor, brings back the book and starts thumbing through it.

MAGGIE

Animal...?

The boy thinks, then starts hopping around, his fingers above his head like ears. Pantomimes shooting an arrow, then the animal falling over.

Maggie brightens. Flips more pages.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Gah -- Rabbit!

(another page)

Anho, "hunt"...you're going to hunt rabbit for us?

He nods enthusiastic. She points to the rifle.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Too big for rabbit.

Mateo' realizes. Shakes his head. Makes motions that he will show her how Apache hunts rabbit.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Mateo' has a long branch he is whittling. Cutting off the knots and branches. Making it smoother. Straighter.

LATER

The stick is now perfectly straight. About three feet long. One end larger than the other. Essentially a club. But a good one.

She nods. Now what? Boy motions her to follow. Hurries inside, reappears with the pistol in her belt. Sees his look.

MAGGIE

Just in case.

Mateo' smiles, takes off as she hurries to keep up.

EXT. DESERT - NEAR DUSK

Maggie and Mateo' creeping through the sage and cactus. He has the club poised like a spear.

Listens. Touches his lips. Points to a clump of sage and brush. Mateo' creeps forward with perfect silence.

Maggie watches, fascinated.

Closer...suddenly he bolts! Raises the club, launches it with all his might.

The wood missile disappears into the undergrowth, Mateo' right behind it. In a moment he reappears holding a jack rabbit by the hind legs.

Maggie, impressed, bows slightly.

MAGGIE
Mateo'...great 'Anho'.

He beams.

EXT. DESERT - EVENING

A fire crackles in the sand. The cleaned rabbit on a makeshift spit. Roasting.

MAGGIE
Smells good.

He looks at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(touches nose)
Smell. What's the word?
(thinks)
Owayyeke. Good.

MATEO
Owayyeke! Gooood.

They smile at each other. Suddenly, Mateo' jumps up. Eyes search the gathering darkness.

MAGGIE
What?

MATEO
Cuidado!

Maggie spins around as...

TIME SLOWS TO A CRAWL:

A coyote pack! Snarling. Vicious. Streaking in to attack, attracted by the smell.

Maggie fumbles for the .45, drops it!

Mateo' springs into action, clutching his 'rabbit club.'

REGULAR-MOTION:

She retrieves the revolver, aims but can't fire because...

Mateo' is in the middle of the pack, swinging, jabbing, jumping over and around the snapping beasts.

Maggie stands, trying to get a shot.

Mateo' dives for the pack leader, a large male. Faster than quicksilver, has his hands around the beast's neck.

The boy is an avenging angel, hands trembling from the exertion as the animal snarls, trying to get away.

Maggie is mesmerized at what she is witnessing. This isn't the boy she has been teaching. This is warrior fighting for blood!

The coyote gurgles, blood appears on it's mouth as it drops over stone dead.

Mateo', covered with blood flecks, looks at her. Flames dance in his eyes. A warrior's EYES, as the...

MONTAGE ENDS:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - SUNRISE

The coyote carcass is flung onto the porch. Maggie and Mateo' stare at it, exhausted. Both covered with dirt and dried blood.

Mateo' goes inside, reappears with her butcher knife. Goes straight skinning the coyote. Adroit and skillful.

Maggie watches, new respect in her eyes.

MAGGIE
Thank you, Mateo'.

He cocks his head.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(motions to coyote)
For saving me.

He nods, touches the locket. As though to say this was *his* present to her. Realization dawns in her eyes.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Maggie wipes her hands on her apron, looks at Mateo' asleep on the daybed. Then out the window.

COYOTE pelt hangs on the railing, curing in the sun. She sniffs. Hide's starting to smell.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

She moves the hide to the corral when she hears an engine. Hurries inside, reappears with the pistol under her apron as the Ford pulls up, sputters to a stop.

It's Wilson with NOLAN LEDBETTER, late 20's, ramrod straight. Wears a badge and sidearm.

WILSON
Mornin', Miss Murdock.

MAGGIE
Mr. Wilson.

WILSON
(surveys the ranch)
Like what you've done with the place.

Chuckles at his own joke. Nothing.

WILSON (CONT'D)
Deputy Sheriff Ledbetter.

MAGGIE
Deputy.

Ledbetter touches his Stetson.

LEDBETTER
Ma'am.

WILSON
We've come for the Chiricahua.

Maggie is silent. Ledbetter glances at Wilson, then clocks the area, missing nothing.

WILSON (CONT'D)
He *is* here isn't he?

MAGGIE
Was. Ran off.

LEDBETTER
That so?

He walks to the coyote hide. Examines it. Maggie's mind racing.

MAGGIE
Raided my supplies. Had to shoot it.

LEDBETTER
(rubs the fur)
No bullet hole.

MAGGIE

Head shot. I skinned around it.

Sounds weak but she's sticking with it.

LEDBETTER

Shot and skinned a coyote by yourself?
For a single woman who just come out
here...you sure have a lotta' handy
skills already.

Stare down. Maggie gives as good as she gets.

MAGGIE

I'm a quick learner.

WILSON

You say the boy ran off?

MAGGIE

Week ago. He was hurt. I tended him
best I could.

WILSON

Yes, we were told. He healed?

MAGGIE

Enough to leave.
(glances at house)
I have work to do.

Ledbetter looks at the house, suddenly interested. Spots
the water bucket and dipper.

LEDBETTER

Mind if I get some water, ma'am?

MAGGIE

Well, if you...

He's already moving to the porch and the open door.
Takes the dipper, fills it. Drinks. Peers inside.
Seems like forever.

Maggie wipes her brow as nonchalantly as she can.
Ledbetter finally drops the dipper, comes back.

WILSON

If he does come back, please let us
know immediately.

MAGGIE

What will you do with him?
(quick)
When you find him?

LEDBETTER

Nothin' you need to worry yourself
over, ma'am.

They drive off and Maggie waits until they're out of
sight, before rushing inside.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Room's empty. She runs into the parlor. Same story. No
Mateo'. Goes in the bedroom. Reappears.

MAGGIE

(calls)

Mateo'...?

Nothing.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Where are you? Onde' esta'?

Still nothing. Looks at the desert. The wind sighs,
occasional sound of the mules in the corral. No more.

EXT. DESERT PLATEAU - LATE AFTERNOON

MATEO'S BARE FEET

walk in the hot sand. Wears only his rope-belted pants.
No shirt. Hair wrapped with a bandana. Checks the sun.
Dark soon. Ahead...

A CANOPY OF WHITE SANDSTONE

with vermillions streaks swirling through it. Looms like
a giant oyster shell. He crouches in it's shade.
Absently fingers the locket.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

He was going back to his people. His
'other' life. And the irony of it -- I
actually *had* told Wilson and the
Sheriff the truth. Almost funny. But
I couldn't laugh.

EXT. PORCH - ANOTHER DAY/DUSK

Cricket chorus. Occasional bird. Maggie rocks in her
chair. Obvious she's been searching. Dried sweat
stains. She doesn't care.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I looked for him the rest of that day
and most of the next three.
(wounded)
I suppose I knew all along where he
went. Just didn't want to admit it.

Darwin hops on her lap.

 OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
 I told myself it was best. I could get
 on with my research. But my
 heart...knew it was a lie.

Tears find their way down her dirty cheeks. No sound.
 Just the tears.

And the hurt...

 OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
 My luck never changed when it came to
 men. Young or old.

Her silhouetted form on the porch as the sun sinks.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

We HEAR a distant rustling. It gets closer. And louder.
 Becoming ominous. We are interlopers here and something
 is coming. Suddenly...

A MOCCASINED FOOT

rockets through the FRAME! Then the bronzed body, lean,
 muscled. Long-handled tomahawk in the belt. Bloodshirt!
 He's chasing...

THE YOUNG RURALE

eyes terrified! Sprints headlong through the sage and
 cactus. It's a race he's going to lose.

Blood-Shirt leaps onto a boulder, flies over, lands on
 the hapless soldier. The tomahawk blade glints in the
 early morning sun, streaks down.

The sickening thud of metal in bone and flesh. Like wet
 wood breaking. Bloodshirt pulls his scalping knife.

 JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)(O.S.)
 Leave him!

Blood-Shirt turns.

 BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
 My kill. I will take his hair.

 JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
 No. Time grows short.

He wheels the horse around. No more discussion. The
 chief has spoken. Blood-Shirt unhappily complies.

EXT. COLD CAMPSITE - LATER

The raiding party now passes what's left of the Rurale force that was pursuing them. Scattered bodies. But El Hefe isn't one of them as the Apache warriors pass by...

A CHARRED BODY

suspended over a now dead fire. Still strapped to the naked waist is the sword of the Mexican Captain!

EXT. DESERT HILLTOP - AFTERNOON

Mateo' scans the desert. Empty from horizon to horizon. He sags. His eyes remembering.

QUICK INSERT/PARLOR (FLASH-BACK)

Maggie and Mateo' at the table. Reading. Munching home-made bread and preserves.

BACK AS:

Mateo' straightens his shoulders, heads back the way he has just come.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

Maggie sits with Darwin. Sips tea, the open book in her lap forgotten, absently strokes the cat.

MAGGIE

Not the same is it, Darwin?

Cat purrs as she finishes the tea.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Let's call it a night.

She puts the cup in the cast iron sink. A muffled noise from outside makes her stop.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Cricket symphony and the occasional snort of the mules. Nothing more. Still. Too still as Maggie searches the dark.

MAGGIE

Who's there?

Just her own breathing. Clicks back the hammer of her revolver.

MATEO (O.S.)

(soft)

Mateo'...

She jumps. He's standing right next to her. She hugs him mightily. Quick once-over. Dirty but otherwise okay.

MAGGIE
I'll fix you something to eat.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

The boy is polishing off a plate of stew and bread.

MAGGIE
More?

Shakes his head.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
None left anyway.

She smiles and for the first time, he returns it followed by a gigantic yawn.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Sleep.

He needs no urging. Heads straight to the daybed, asleep when he hits the blanket. Maggie looks at him fondly.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
I was surprised at how much I had missed him.

EXT. BATTLE SITE - MORNING

Rawlins and Lebetter, along with some other men, walk through the desolation and bodies laid out.

RAWLINS
Revenge raid.

LEDBETTER
Headed south?

Rawlins shields his eyes from the blinding sun as if taking a reading from an imaginary sextant.

RAWLINS
Figure.

LEDBETTER
Means they'll have to pass by...

Both realize where the Apache will "pass by" at the same time. Rawlins spurs his horse.

LEDBETTER (CONT'D)
 Finish buryin' 'em then catch up with
 us.

One of the cowhands looks up.

COWHAND
 Where?

LEDBETTER
 Sasabe'.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Maggie feeds the mules. Mateo' brings water for them.
 Pours it into the trough.

MAGGIE
 Done. Time for your lesson.

MATEO
 Isdza'n t'aghaa, read to me?

MAGGIE
 (shakes head)
 You read.

She guides him back to the house. Almost to the porch
 when the boy stops dead in his tracks.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 What?

Holds his fingers to his lips. Nothing but the sighing
 wind.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 I don't hear --!

He claps his hand over her mouth, pulls her inside.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mateo' slams the door, puts a chair against it.

MAGGIE
 Mateo, what is it!

MATEO
 Hide!

MAGGIE
 What? Why?

Pulls her to the bedroom. Motions under the bed.

MATEO
Mata-la'!

MAGGIE
Huh?

MATEO
(finger across throat)
Kill!

MAGGIE
Who?

JAROSOMA (O.S.) (SUBTITLE)
Take her.

Blood Shirt's FACE fills the SCREEN! Fierce, painted.
Grabs her.

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
Uncle!

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
You are wounded?

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
Nearly healed.

He shows his healing scar.

MATEO (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)
Isdza'n t'aghaa tended my wounds.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
That is her name?

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
It is what I call her.

Jarosoma studies Maggie. His eyes not quite as fierce.
Blood-Shirt has no such look.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
I will gut this one.

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
No!

Maggie understands none of the words but all the intent.

MAGGIE
Get out of my house!

She breaks free, grabs for the revolver but Blood-Shirt
is too quick. She spins around.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Is Jarosoma also a thief!
 (spits the word)
 Ladrón!

Jarosoma scowls. Mateo' motions urgently.

MATEO
 Isdza'n t'aghaa, no talk! He chief.

Maggie never takes her eyes from Jarosoma's. Stare down and neither is blinking. Finally...

MAGGIE
 I don't care if he's the Sultan of the Sahara. This is my home.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
 Let me cut out her tongue and be done with it!

Jarosoma considers that. Mateo' is frantic. Eyes plead.

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 I owe her my life.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
 Return the weapon.

Blood-Shirt scowls, empties the cartridges from the cylinder, hands the revolver back to the surprised Maggie.

MAGGIE
 Well...thank you.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
 We go!

He sweeps out.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE) (CONT'D)
 (over shoulder)
 Bring her.

Blood-Shirt pushes her so hard she nearly falls. Gains her feet, glares. Blood-Shirt could care less, grabs her wrist, drags her out.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Maggie, kicking, swinging. Mateo' hurries to her.

MATEO
 No fight or kill.

She calms immediately. Brushes her hair back.

MAGGIE

Where are you taking me?

No answer as she's hoisted onto one of the mules, bareback.

A signal from Jarosoma, they thunder out. Maggie hanging on the mule's neck for dear life as we...

MATCH CUT:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - LATER

Rawlins studies the tracks. Looks up as Ledbetter appears from the house holding the Winchester.

LEDBETTER

Musta' been in a hurry if they left this. Either took her...or killed her.

RAWLINS

(re: corral)

One of the mules is gone. She's with 'em.

LEDBETTER

They come for the boy, then.

Rawlins stares at the distant mountains, nods.

RAWLINS

Reclaimin' what's theirs on the way back to Sierra Madre.

LEDBETTER

I'll telegraph Fort Huachuca when we get back.

RAWLINS

Do that.

Rawlins takes his Winchester, shoves it in the scabbard. Checks the saddle cinch.

LEDBETTER

You ain't thinkin' of goin' after her are ya'?

RAWLINS

Not until I stop by my place.

LEDBETTER

Plain suicide.

RAWLINS

Trail'll go cold. Only chance to track 'em is now.

LEDBETTER

Then what? Ask Jarosoma to hand her over?

RAWLINS

(slow smile)

Mebbe'. If I can't think of somethin' better.

LEDBETTER

Can't help you if you cross the border.

RAWLINS

Didn't ask you to.

He mounts, gallops out. Lebetter shakes his head.

LEDBETTER

(mutters)

Damn fool.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A single Apache WARRIOR from Jarosoma's band urges his pony through the rocks. The moon so low on the horizon, it looks like it's been hung on a nail.

EXT. FOOTHILLS - NIGHT

Maggie is tied to a Joshua tree. The empty .45 still in her waistband. She dozes.

MATEO

(softly)

Isdza'n t'aghaa. Here...

Mateo' offers her water. She smiles, gulps it.

MAGGIE

Thank you, Mateo'.

MATEO

You...be strong, yes?

MAGGIE

Wouldn't give them the pleasure of seeing me otherwise.

(he doesn't get it)

I'll be strong.

MATEO

Jarosoma send...warrior...go back.

MAGGIE

Why?

MATEO
White eye follows.

MAGGIE
How do you know?

MATEO
We know.

MAGGIE
What will he do, the one Jarosoma sent
back?

MATEO
(matter-of-fact)
Kill.

Mateo' disappears just as a WARRIOR SENTRY appears.
Checks her bindings. Satisfied, moves on. In the
distance a coyote howls...

EXT. COLD CAMP - NIGHT

Rawlins hears the same coyote. Horse is hobbled nearby
as he leans against a mesquite. Winchester across his
lap. No sleep tonight.

EXT. HIGH DESERT - SUNRISE

Jagged peaks of Sierra Madre look like they're on fire.

EXT. DESERT - MORNING

Rawlins' horse slowly heading toward us. Obvious he's
reading sign as...the CAMERA moves away, past the
mesquite and sage, until it comes to rest on...

A MOCCASINED FOOT

waiting. Absolutely still.

RAWLINS

rides closer, intent on the trail. Passes by. Silent as
smoke, the Warrior emerges bow in hand and pulls the
string back. Farther. Farther...when --

KA-BLAM!

The Warrior is slammed back! Lands in a cut string
sprawl.

Surprise still in his dead eyes...

RAWLINS' COLT

sticking out from under his arm -- pointed backward! He dismounts pistol cocked.

Looks at the Warrior's Pony, whose ears are barely visible above the sage.

That's how he knew. He takes the warrior's scalping knife, shoves it in his waistband.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Jarosoma motions the rest to continue. Looks back at the endless desert when Blood-Shirt joins him.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
You heard the shot?

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
Yes.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
I will wait, kill the white-eye myself.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
No. Isdza'n t'aghaa will stop him.

Jarosoma waves, they thunder out. One last look, Mateo's eyes sad as he follows them on her mule.

She watches him disappear. Takes stock of her situation. No water. No food. No way to free herself.

THE SUN

rising higher into the cloudless sky...

EXT. FOOTHILLS - MID-DAY

It's a blast furnace. Heat waves shimmer over the parched expanse. Maggie slumps, lips cracked, skin scalded red. Ants crawl on her legs.

MATCH DISSOLVE:

EXT. FOOTHILLS - LATER

Fly buzzes. No movement, then...her eyes open a crack. Rheumy, blood-shot. Struggle to focus.

Her POV dips to BLACK with each BLINK:

-- Endless desert.

BLACK

-- Something moved.

BLACK

-- A shape..?

BLACK

-- It's Rawlins!

BLACK

-- Knife blade flashes.

BLACK

-- Sky swirls through her vision like a drunken sailor,
then, nothing!

FADE TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - MAGIC

Maggie opens her eyes. She's covered with a bedroll.
Tries to raise up. Not happening.

RAWLINS (O.S.)

Lie still.

He leans into her VIEW.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Another hour you'da' been buzzard bait.

She tries to speak. Nothing comes out but a cracked
wheezing.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Tongue's swollen. Be a while 'fore you
can talk.

Holds up her revolver.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

What I can't figure, is how come
Jarosoma let you keep it.

MAGGIE

(barely audible)

The boy.

RAWLINS

Figured. Just a matter of time 'fore
he's in prison -- or dead.

Maggie's face tightens. What does that mean?

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

When he took *you*, kinda' changed things. Army's out on both sides of the border.

She raises up, fear in her eyes. He pushes her back gently.

RAWLINS (CONT'D)

Time's passed for Jarosoma's kind.

MAGGIE

(guttural)

What 'kind' is that? Human beings?

Rawlins frowns. Half-dead but she's still a pistol.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - DUSK

The sun setting on the bustling encampment high in the Sierra Madre.

Everyone hurries out to meet the returning warriors. Men in deerskin leggings, moccasins. Women wear short deerskin skirts, high boot-top moccasins.

Jarosoma strides to his KOWA, a dome shaped frame of cottonwood poles thatched with grass.

A VERY OLD WOMAN

appears from his kowa. This is AI-A'-TA. (**Pronounced "Eye-yaa-tah"*) Matriarchal head of the tribe and Jarosoma's mother.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)

You have found him?

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

The "Hunkachila" (*young man*) is with us. "Nagi Tanka" (*the great spirit*) smiled.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)

He is the same?

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

He has been with them for six moons. We will see.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)

Test him.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

Fix meat.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)

What will you do?

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

Eat.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)

With him! He is one of the white-eyes.
Not to be trusted!

Ai-a'-tah motions.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)

He will sleep with the dogs until the
council decides.

Blood-Shirt nods. Hurries toward Mateo'.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Apache tribal society is matriarchal.
And as such, the chief was determined
by his *matriarchal* line. Mateo' was of
Jarosoma and Ai-A'-Tah's line, he was
to be chief one day. But only if the
matriarch and the council deemed him
worthy to return to the tribe. That
was their law.

(beat)

He had lived with me and that meant he
was tainted unless he proved himself
through 'trial by ordeal'. If he
failed he would be outcast -- or
killed.

The people of the small band go back to their work and
chores.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Apache traditions and law were harsh,
forged over generations. The Apache
were regarded as such fearsome warriors
among the other pueblo tribes, they
became known as *Apachu* -- "the enemy".
That name stuck and their prowess as
warriors became legend.

Mateo' sits by the Kowa of Jarosoma, huddled about him
are other younger children as he recounts his adventure.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

But skilled as they were in war there
was one unchangeable truth. This small
band of hold-outs would never survive
the onset of the 20th century. The
frontier was gone, and with it, their
way of life. It was only a matter of
time.

(More)

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(long beat)

I had made up my mind this would not be
Mateo's fate.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SONORAN DESERT - SUNRISE (ESTABLISHING)

Epic beauty. Cobalt mountains beneath a glowering purple sky fringed with pink. As if the clouds were just too small for the immenseness of it all.

TITLE CARD: "One Month Later"

EXT. MAGGIE'S RANCH - EARLY MORNING

Maggie is on the porch, rustling about. She is packing a canvas rucksack. Clothing, food, and several BOOKS.

Her remaining mule stands saddled at the corral fence as she ties the pack to the saddle. Puts the revolver in the saddlebag, turns.

MAGGIE

Guess that's it. Appreciate you taking care of Darwin.

Verlene is at the gate holding the cat.

VERLENE

(clucks)

Just plain crazy, Maggie.

MAGGIE

So you've said - three times.

VERLENE

You're lookin' ta' git yourself killed.

MAGGIE

Maybe.

VERLENE

You're gonna' have problems at the very least.

MAGGIE

You know what my mother used to say?

VERLENE

What?

MAGGIE

Most problems in life we either marry,
or give birth to.

That makes Verlene snort.

VERLENE
She was right about that.

MAGGIE
I haven't done either.

VERLENE
What about the ranch and your
belongings? You know, if...
(voice trails off)

MAGGIE
...if they kill me?

Verlene looks down.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I've drawn up a paper.

She pulls a letter from her pocket. Hands it to Verlene.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Kind of a will, I suppose. I'm leaving
everything for you and Earl to share
with Stan Rawlins.

VERLENE
But your family..?

MAGGIE
I have no family.
(falters)
You helped me when no one else would.
I appreciate that. More than you know.
Land should be worth something with the
water rights and acreage.

VERLENE
How long? If you find 'em, I mean?

MAGGIE
I don't really know, Verlene.

VERLENE
Maybe you ought to wait 'til Spring.

MAGGIE
Army's out. I have to find Mateo'
before they do.

VERLENE
(a tear)
I wish...

Maggie smiles that rare smile of hers, then hugs her only
friend impulsively.

MAGGIE

I'll be alright. Wouldn't consider any other alternative. You know how I am when my mind's made up.

Verlene wipes the tear. Nods. Another hug. Maggie mounts the mule.

VERLENE

What do you want me to tell Rawlins?

MAGGIE

Nothing.

(smiles)

Do it myself when I get back.

She spurs the mule, trots off. Not the same woman. Leaner. Stronger. More confident. Verlene watches until she's out of sight.

EXT. BORDER - LATER

Maggie rides up. Stops. Pats the mule's neck.

MAGGIE

Ready for this?

Mule snorts.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Me either.

She snaps the reins, heads across the invisible barrier.

Passes the small geologic survey marker that designates the border of the US/MEXICO.

Nothing but desert and Sierra Madre in front of her as the wind picks up. On the far horizon a storm convenes.

EXT. MEXICAN ARMY POST - DAY (LONG SHOT)

A silhouetted FIGURE salutes the post COMMANDANTE, then motions to his detachment of armed riders.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Clouds move through, wind pushing them as *something*, surrounded by the white blankness, moves under the naked sun.

Heat waves distort our POV of this distant horizontal SMUDGE on the glaring sand.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

That 'smudge' is Maggie on her mule. Drinks from the canteen, shades her eyes, squints up at the Sierra Madre. Much larger now.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE FOOTHILLS - AFTERNOON

Maggie's duster is pulled tight, hat low across her face as she studies the ground. Her hand traces the sand then touches a small broken sage branch.

Pulls the dog-eared notebook, studies the notes and drawings she made when Mateo' taught her to read sign.

She pockets it, remounts, nosing the mule higher into the foothills and peaks beyond.

EXT. SMALL MOUNTAIN VALLEY CANYON - NIGHT

Small fire flickers in the wind. Maggie huddles beside it. Desert heat replaced by mountain chill. Coffee pot sits on a rock above the flames.

She sips from a blue metal cup. Finishes, throws the dregs on the fire which spits and hisses angry steam. Somewhere a coyote howls.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Colder as the mule climbs. Nostrils blowing steamy breath. Something catches Maggie's ear. Reins up. Pulls her binoculars.

BINOCULAR POV:

Endless expanse of the desert below, then -- movement! Mounted riders. Column stops. One dismounts, checks the trail. El Hefe!

EXT. FOOTHILLS - DAY

Each Rider carries a rifle, ammunition bandolier, sidearm, pineapple grenades.

Tied to one of the pack animals is a BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLE. Murderous men with bloody intentions.

EXT. SMALL CANYON - ANOTHER DAY

Aspen and pinion pine line the entrance as Maggie studies the canyon floor. Something has been here.

She pulls the .45 and a small knap-sack from the saddle bag.

The towering granite cliffs on either side, narrow her entrance with each step.

EXT. END OF CANYON - MAGIC

Sun is nearly gone as she stops. Nothing but trees and brush. She frowns.

Looks like a dead end as she clocks the area: brush, aspen, rock walls. Wait -- a flash!

A SLIVER OF LIGHT

winks through the leaves. An opening! Small enough to be hidden but large enough to allow horse and rider through.

EXT. HIDDEN VALLEY - DUSK

Maggie watches silently behind the rocks. Below her, Jarosoma's camp.

Small, bustling with activity. She settles in, glancing at the disappearing SUN, which...

MATCH DISSOLVES TO:

THE MOON

Then down to find Maggie in the exact same position. She's waited patiently for hours. Peers down at the camp.

HER POV:

A roaring fire surrounded by the entire village, all watching something.

EXT. CAMP PERIMETER - NIGHT

Blood-Shirt makes signs, speaks to the WARRIOR circle nearest the fire. Ai-A'-Tah stands with Jarosoma, the only woman in the circle.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)

Mateo' has taken the white ways. He is not worthy to be called one of us now.

Ai-A'-Tah whispers to Jarosoma. He nods.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

Who agrees with Blood-Shirt?

The camp WARRIORS nod their assent. It's almost unanimous. Jarosoma nods. He's not happy.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)

He is from the blood line of chiefs to the Chiricahua.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)

Cho-Kon-En is of Ai-A-Tah's line. He is entitled to challenge.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

Then, it will be decided.

Mateo' comes forward. Bare to the waist. Carries a war club. Another young man...

CHO-KON-EN

appears. He is older and bigger than Mateo'.

Maggie hasn't understood all the words, but understands what is about to happen. Holds her breath.

IN CUTS:

-- The boys circle one another. Cho-Kon-En moves first. Swift, sure. Swings his club at Mateo', who barely ducks the blow.

-- Mateo' rolls away, kicks out, tripping the bigger lad, both grappling for supremacy, rolling.

-- The Warriors in the circle grunt and gesture for their favorites. Most for Cho-Kon-En.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I learned later what this combat meant. It was all I could do *not* to intervene. Of course, that was out of the question. But I was coming to realize how much I cared for Mateo'...

-- Mateo' gains his feet, throws a round-house punch which catches Cho-Kon-En on the shoulder -- he stumbles but doesn't go down.

-- Jarosoma and Ai-A'-Tah watch intently.

-- Cho-Kon-En's turn, he pivots, lashes out with his foot, catches Mateo' in the solar-plexus and the boy goes down hard.

-- Maggie almost calls out, catches herself.

-- Mateo' lies there, wind knocked out of him, as Cho-Kon-En advances for the deciding blow.

-- Cho-Kon-En raises his war club to strike when Mateo' jabs with his. Doubles the larger boy over. He was 'doping' him!

-- Warriors now cheer, exchange wagers, this is getting good, Blood-Shirt's expression dark, glowering.

-- The young men swing, duck, grapple, roll. It's a see-saw battle, both 'blooded' and becoming winded with each exchange.

-- Back and forth, until it's obvious the larger boy will prevail.

-- Jarosoma and Ai-A'-Tah exchange a glance.

-- Blood-Shirt's eyes glint expectantly.

-- Mateo', bloody, on his knees, cannot move, waiting for the final assault.

SLOW MOTION:

-- Cho-Kon-En launches himself as.

-- Mateo' suddenly falls back, feet extended, catches the FLYING BODY on his heels, pushes Cho-Kon-En on over.

REGULAR MOTION:

-- Cho-Kon-En lands hard, aired out as Mateo' is over him in an instant, war club ready to strike!

-- All watch with hushed anticipation.

-- Mateo' starts to strike.

-- Cho-Kon-En's eyes widen in terror at the coming death blow!

-- But Mateo' stops his swing less than an inch from Cho-Kon-En's head!

-- Lowers the club. Looks at Jarosoma and Ai-A'-Tah.

-- The Matriarch smiles faintly. Jarosoma nods. It is over.

Maggie sags behind the rock from her vantage point, great relief. Her hand slips off the butt of the .45.

She would have intervened!

Mateo' extends his hand to Cho-Kon-En, who bats it away angrily, crawls to his feet.

Blood-Shirt's look is downright murderous.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
I knew what I had to do.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - PRE-DAWN

Maggie slips quietly to one of the Kowas. Enters.

INT. KOWA - PRE-DAWN

Mateo' sleeps alone. She touches him softly. His eyes open wide with surprise. Before he can speak...

 MAGGIE
 (hoarse whisper)
Mateo', come with me.

The boy starts to protest but she touches the locket he still wears, motions.

EXT. KOWA - PRE-DAWN

The boy is torn. Maggie touches his arm, gently tugs him with her.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - PRE-DAWN

They are nearly to the canyon entrance when Mateo' stops.

 MATEO
 (shakes head)
Must...stay.

 MAGGIE
But you are outcast now.

 MATEO
These...my people.

 MAGGIE
I will be 'your people.'

Long look between them. They start to move again, when...

BLOOD-SHIRT

is there! He backhands her so hard she topples. Mateo' jumps to intervene but is restrained by other warriors, including Cho-Kon-En.

 AI-A'-TAH (O.S.) (SUBTITLE)
Bring her.

Maggie is hauled up.

 BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
She must die!

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 No! I owe her my life.
 (to Ai-A'-Tah)
 It is our law.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)
 She has discovered our location.

Mateo' is crushed. Maggie beginning to realize what this means. For the first time we see a hint of fear in her eyes.

EXT. JAROSOMA'S KOWA - SUNRISE

As they are brought up he emerges. Looks at the old Matriarch.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
 I will convene the council.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)
 To decide what? She has broken sacred ground.

Maggie is catching some of this. Has to think fast.

MAGGIE
 Let me fight for my life!

Blood-Shirt slaps her, splits the lip, blood trickles down.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
 Quiet woman!

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)
 (to Mateo')
 What did she say?

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 She demands the right of combat. Death or freedom.

That surprises everyone. Even the old woman raises her eyebrows.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)
 With who?

All eyes on Maggie now.

MATEO
 Who you fight?

MAGGIE
 (nods to Ai-A'-Tah)
 Let her decide.

The old woman understands. Considers.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)
This one has fierce spirit.

BLOOD-SHIRT (SUBTITLE)
She must die.

The old matriarch ruminates over her decision. Starts to open her mouth when...

KA-BLAM! A bullet takes her high in the chest! She crumples.

SERIES OF TABLEAUS:

-- El-Hefe and his men swoop down like avenging wraiths!

-- Jarosoma, Blood-Shirt and others scramble for their weapons.

-- Blood-Shirt drops Maggie's revolver as he goes for his rifle...

-- The camp confronts the mounted Mexicans, firing, grappling, dying.

-- Rifles fire creating a FLASHES of LIGHT illuminating the tableau of Apaches and Mexicans in their death fight.

-- The strobe of rifle fire provides targets for an ensuing volley of shots from the Renegades.

-- Utter confusion as the savage fire cuts through the camp.

-- Maggie shoves Mateo' behind her. She snatches the .45 and loads it quickly.

-- The pattern repeats itself -- rifle fire illuminating a silhouetted targets on both sides, then another murderous VOLLEY.

-- Suddenly a new SOUND -- a dull roar that grows, becoming an explosive...BBRRRRAPPPPP!

-- Unbelievably, kowa poles EXPLODE INTO SPLINTERS!

-- Men, women all go down as the Browning automatic rifle unleashes a metal storm!

-- Raking the village with murderous ferocity, shredding tent-poles, felling brush, churning the ground, stitching a path of destruction.

-- Blood-Shirt whirls, flings his tomahawk.

-- It finds the chest of one of the Renegades, who gurgles and falls over.

-- Blood-Shirt lets out a blood-curdling scream, his scalping knife in hand just as...

-- The BAR's fusillade finds him, bullets chewing up his chest, he's dead when he hits the ground!

-- Maggie gapes at the fire-belching metal dragon.

-- Jarosoma, Winchester in hand, tears toward the Renegades and FROM THIS MOMENT ON NEVER STOPS MOVING!

-- He changes pace and direction repeatedly, ducking, weaving, firing, never giving a stationary target.

-- He slams a Renegade in the face with the butt of his now empty rifle, never stopping, never giving quarter, grabs a fallen rifle, continues his murderous rampage.

-- Maggie finishes loading her pistol.

-- A young apache GIRL runs to Maggie for protection but is cut down before she can make it, her blood smearing Maggie's hand.

-- Enraged, Maggie locks eyes with the man who fired the shot.

-- It's a moment of recognition - El Hefe! - her eyes burn with a wounded, feral vengeance.

SLOW-MOTION:

-- Maggie and El Hefe both fire! Smoke and flame!

REGULAR-MOTION:

-- El Hefe's shot goes wide - Maggie's topples him backward onto the ground in a cut-string sprawl!

-- Jarosoma notes this, his eyes full of new respect for this woman...

-- He yells, directs his warriors with renewed vigor as the tide turns against the Renegades.

-- The renegades, leaderless, try to run but are cut down one by one.

-- ALL SOUND fades to complete and utter SILENCE.

-- People running, firing, dying as...

OUR PERSPECTIVE

rises above this carnage to the mountain peaks glowing with the coming sunrise.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - LATER

The tribe has gathered. Somber. Stoic. Loss and desolation on every face.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I had taken a life. That realization began to settle into my brain. But it was only one of many lives taken and lost that night.

INT. JAROSOMA'S KOWA - MORNING

The tribal Medicine Man chants softly, wafting sacred smoke over the covered form of Ai-A'-Tah. She's dying. Summons Jarosoma, croaks something in his ear.

He motions to Maggie who kneels to examine the old woman.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Ai-A'-Tah was mortally wounded. I knew there was nothing I could do.

(beat)

So did she.

Old woman summons her remaining strength, pulls Maggie close, whispers...

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)

You were sent here.

Maggie looks to Mateo' who repeats the words.

MATEO

White-eye sent to us. Sign from ancestors.

MAGGIE

White eye?

MATEO

You.

MAGGIE

Oh.

Ai-A'-Tah continues, voice rasping, weaker.

MATEO

You...brave in...battle.

He listens, then chatters something to the Old One, who nods.

MAGGIE

What?

MATEO

She say for "Long Shadow Woman" teach
all our people...same how teach me.

MAGGIE

Me? Teach?

MATEO

First, Jarosoma.

Maggie looks. Jarosoma is not pleased. Stalks out.

MAGGIE

I don't' think he wants to.

AI-A'-TAH (SUBTITLE)

Tell her to be strong. He will listen.

Maggie touches her gently. The languages are different
but the bond between the two women isn't.

The old woman smiles faintly then stops breathing. Just
like that. Eyes open, glazed over.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Two hours ago she considered killing
me. Now, *she* was dead.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - MAGIC

The camp is assembled. The women beat drums, drone the
'death chant'.

The men watch as the old woman's body is wrapped in
blankets, laid on a travois behind a pony.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Mourning for the revered one lasted
three days.

EXT. HILLSIDE - ANOTHER DAY

A burial mound of stones. Ai-A'-Tah's final resting
place.

Medicine Man chants, wafts smoke with eagle feathers.
Maggie watches with the women.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I learned later that the old woman's
decree was final -- and mandatory.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY (TIME-LAPSE)

Clouds streak through the leaden sky as a storm convenes on the horizon. Winter has come.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - DAY

Dusting of snow as smoke rises from the kowas. Cold wind shutters through the small valley. Few bundled up souls braving the elements.

INT. JAROSOMA'S KOWA - DAY

Maggie faces the stone-faced Chief.

MAGGIE

Tell him I can't teach him if he won't listen.

Mateo' sits across from his uncle. Tries to reason but Jarosoma wants none of it. Maggie holds out her hand.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Hand. That's the word. You say it..."hand."

Nothing. She frowns. Looks at Mateo'.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What's the word for hand?

MATEO

Bigan.

(*Pronounced "bee-ga-han")

MAGGIE

Bigan. Hand. Understand? Same thing. Different word.

She's had enough.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

That's it! You know what? Jarosoma is a chief alright. A chief pain-in-the-ass!

Mateo' blinks. Eyes wide.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Tell him that!

MATEO

But --

MAGGIE

-- tell him! Word for word.

Mateo' looks like he might faint.

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 Long shadow woman say...
 (hates this)
 ...Jarosoma great pain in her ass!

Long tortured beat. No one moves or breathes. Suddenly Jarosoma explodes in paroxysms of laughter.

Loud blasts followed by pronounced 'snorts.'

INTERCUT - OUTSIDE KOWA

People stop, listen. Look at one another.

Mateo' and Maggie watch speechless until Jarosoma regains his composure.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
 Finally "woman-who-nags" speaks truth.

MAGGIE
 What? What did he say?

MATEO
 Uh...he say...you speak...true.
 (corrects himself)
 No...truth. Speak truth.

MAGGIE
 Then ask him what he wants?

MATEO
 (confused)
 What?

MAGGIE
 What does Jarosoma want? From me?
 Does he expect me to teach him and your
 people -- or not?

Mateo' turns to translate but Jarosoma holds up his hand.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
 Leave us.

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 But how will --?

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
 Do as I say.

The boy shrugs, leaves. Maggie's bewildered now.

MAGGIE
 (mutters)
 Now what...? Hand puppets?

JAROSOMA
 (English)
 Talk, easier.

You could knock Maggie over with a hot kiss and a cold breakfast.

MAGGIE
 You speak English!

JAROSOMA
 Some.

MAGGIE
 Then why in the hell did you let me prattle on like some addle-brained school girl!

JAROSOMA
 To learn your heart.

She stops. That makes perfect sense actually.

MAGGIE
 There's nothing I can teach you.

JAROSOMA
 Teach words on paper.

MAGGIE
 Writing? You want to read?

JAROSOMA
 Apache speak missionary tongue.

MAGGIE
 Missionary?

JAROSOMA
 Holy man in long robe.

MAGGIE
 The Catholic padres.

He goes to a wrapped leather roll. Carefully retrieves two books -- a bible in Spanish and an English McGuffey Reader.

More to this man than she thought.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Yours?

JAROSOMA

The revered one. She knew. You teach?

MAGGIE

Yes. You *and* your people.

New understanding between them.

SERIES OF SCENES - SHOTS - IMPRESSIONS:

INT. KOWA - DAY

Maggie teaches the children and some women from the McGuffy reader and the anthropology books she brought.

She's fashioned a writing board from a leather WAR SHIELD. Writes on it with her finger.

Dips into a clay/chalk compound which wipes away with a cloth. The kids and women practice the letters in the dirt.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Mountains emerge, shrouded in blue mist like a Chinese water color. Air crisp. Cold.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - DAY

Maggie and Jarosoma walk through the village. She points out things, he answers. Give and take.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Jarosoma taught me their ways. He was a very intelligent man who cared deeply for his people. He would often ask me whether more white men would come to take their land. I told him I didn't know. That wasn't the truth. Not the whole truth anyway and I think he knew it, though he never said a word.

(beat)

He was right about one thing, without knowledge the Apache would not survive. I promised myself I'd do everything in my power to change that.

MEXICAN ARMY POST - DAY

The weather, though cold, is nothing like that of the high mountain Apache village. Post is busy with activity.

INT. COMMANDANT QUARTERS - DAY

The COMMANDANTE and an American Cavalry COLONEL hover over a map.

AMERICAN COLONEL
 My scouts lost the trail here.
 (points)
 North face of the Sierra Madre. We
 know the woman's with him -- or was.

COMMANDANTE
 Very difficult terrain.

AMERICAN COLONEL
 I'd go up there, but I don't have
 jurisdiction. That's why we need your
 help.

COMMANDANTE
 Yes, I have been informed.

AMERICAN COLONEL
 Won't be easy.

COMMANDANTE
 No.

AMERICAN COLONEL
 Think you can find him?

COMMANDANTE
 I will find Jarosoma and the American
 woman...if she lives.

He pulls his ornate officer's dagger.

AMERICAN COLONEL
 Either way you're gonna' have a fight
 on your hands.

COMMANDANTE
 One I intend to win. And stop
 Jarosoma...

He slams the blade into the map with a vengeance.

COMMANDANTE (CONT'D)
 Once and for all!

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - ANOTHER DAY

Cold. The winter wind a howling gale as the men return
 from a hunt.

They have but a few rabbits, some grouse and quail. So
 little to feed so many.

Maggie watches them come in as she writes in her journal.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Jarosoma is right about their existence here. They starve and freeze in the winter. They cannot grow crops at these altitudes. Nor can they risk settling lower. Because as Apache, they would be hunted down and killed without mercy on either side of the border.

INT. TEACHING KOWA - DAY

Maggie's class has grown. Some of the men are learning with the children and women.

Jarosoma watches, quietly pleased with the progress they are making.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - DAY

Maggie goes with the hunting party. They are stalking deer but the weather is harsh, cold.

EXT. MOUNTAIN VALLEY - LATER

The hunting party returns. Empty-handed. No game.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS - DAY

The winter is fading. More sun as Spring begins to blossom on the higher ranges.

INT. TEACHING KOWA - DAY

The children have made real progress as have some of the adults. Mateo' helps the younger ones while Maggie oversees the tutoring.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - DAY

Maggie wanders through the camp, observing the people work and their lives.

She notes with interest as the women weave reeds and grass into baskets. She watches a warrior paint a design on a newly made leather shield.

IN THE NOTEBOOK

She sketches a good rendition of the work she's observed.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - ANOTHER NIGHT

The hunters have finally been successful. A deer, skinned and the carcass roasting on the open flames as the tribe celebrates the hunt.

Maggie scribbling more notes.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

The hunting party had finally brought down a stag. There was much rejoicing. I was constantly amazed how they survive. They are indeed a hardy and stalwart people.

She closes the notebook.

JAROSOMA (O.S.)

You make writing?

MAGGIE

(jumps up)

Yes, I'm keeping a record of my time spent with you.

JAROSOMA

What do you write?

MAGGIE

How the Apache live. Your customs, way of life...

JAROSOMA

(motions)

Read these words.

Maggie's embarrassed now, blushes. Not sure how her observations will be taken.

JAROSOMA (CONT'D)

I will listen.

MAGGIE

Alright...

She thumbs through the pages. Stops, reads:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

"...I am continually surprised at the resilience and strength of the Chiricahua.

(beat)

Our society doesn't understand their way of life and we don't realize how much integrity and courage they have. Not only for one another but for the natural world in which they live."

Jarosoma struggles to understand all the words.

JAROSOMA

What does mean...int-aay-gree-tee?

MAGGIE
Integrity. It means honest...true.

Motions for her to continue.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
"Nothing we have been told, or believe about the Apache is valid. They are not blood-thirsty savages, nor beggars, nor thieves. But I fear...

(a look)

...Jarosoma and his people will suffer terribly when the inevitable expansion of our so-called civilized society overtakes them.

(beat)

He is a strong, capable leader but his way of life is..."

She stops again, hesitant.

JAROSOMA
Speak.

MAGGIE
"...His way of life is doomed. And I fear that none of the Apache will survive to carry on their proud traditions and culture."

Jarosoma's face is impassive. Nothing for a long beat. When he finally speaks, the voice is quiet.

JAROSOMA
Your heart sees many things, Long-Shadow Woman.

MAGGIE
I'm probably wrong.

JAROSOMA
No. You write true words.

He thumbs the pages, carefully notes her drawings.

JAROSOMA (CONT'D)
You will tell these things to all white-eyes?

MAGGIE
If I can. To change what my people believe about the Chiricahua.

JAROSOMA
They will listen?

MAGGIE

I don't know.

He leaves. Maggie turns the book over in her hands.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

But we both knew what white men would do.

(beat)

What they had always done.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

The desert is calm. Then a low rumbling. Deep. Dangerous. Birds fly. Reptiles run for cover as...

TRUCKS FILLED

with Mexican Army Regulars appear. A brigade, bristling with arms, rumbles toward the Sierra Madre. The Commandante in the lead truck.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Sun is out. Spring in the air. Maggie and Mateo' walk toward the 'teaching' kowa for the morning lessons.

MATEO

Jarosoma is pleased, Isdza'n t'aghaa.

MAGGIE

Yes, I believe he is. Your English has improved.

MATEO

I practice...
(what's the word)
...many much.

MAGGIE

(smiles)
Very much.

MATEO

Yes. Practice "very much"

MAGGIE

What will your people do?

He's unsure what she's asking.

MATEO

Live.

MAGGIE

The army will come now that winter is over.

MATEO

I protect you.

She smiles, touched at his courage and caring.

MAGGIE

I know you will, Mateo'. You are a great warrior and very brave.

(he glows)

I fear for your people. The white man's army is powerful.

MATEO

We will fight.

MAGGIE

That's what worries me.

She enters the Kowa, leaving Mateo' to wonder at her words.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE - DAY

Glass GLINTS, flares LENS as we see slowly its source... Binoculars held by Rawlins, studying the foothills below.

BINOCULAR POV:

The Mexican Army trucks grind to a halt. SOLDIERS scramble out, fall into formation.

The Commandante motions several rear trucks to unload.

Horses and pack animals pour out. Behind one vehicle a field howitzer. Another has a heavy machine gun.

EXT. CANYON STREAM - DAY

A dog from the Apache village laps water. Suddenly his head jerks up. Intent, then lets out a 'yelp', scurries into the brush.

The soldiers gallop up. El Hefe checks the ground. Motions to the Commandante who deploys the troops.

They scatter setting up firing positions.

FROM AN OVERHANG

Unseen by the soldiers, Rawlins watches. Then silently makes his way down.

EXT. APACHE VILLAGE - DAY

Kids stare in disbelief. Warriors grab weapons, fierce looks. Women gather little ones out of Rawlins' way as he slowly rides in.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I'd never met any man I considered worth two-hoots in hell before I came to Sasabe'. And now, in one year, I'd met more real men than the previous forty.

Rawlins, covered on all sides by drawn weapons, slowly dismounts. Maggie comes out of the teaching kowa. Looks at him, stunned.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

He'd come all that way to find me. Again.

Warriors shove him down, pin his arms, rifles leveled as Jarosoma waves them back.

MAGGIE

What are you doing here!

RAWLINS

(faint smile)

I was in the neighborhood.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

You know him?

MAGGIE

Yes.

Rawlins looks at her, surprised.

RAWLINS

Picked up the lingo, huh?

MAGGIE

Be quiet.

(to Jarosoma)

He is my friend.

The Warriors are ready to slit his throat but Jarosoma motions Rawlins to his feet.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)

Speak.

RAWLINS (SUBTITLE)

Mexican Army comes for the woman.

JAROSOMA

(in English)

She is not one of them.

RAWLINS

They're doin' it as a favor to the Americans.

The people buzz at this. Frightened looks.

JAROSOMA
How many rifles?

RAWLINS
Over a hundred. Got a machine gun and
a cannon too. You can't take 'em head
on.

JAROSOMA
When?

RAWLINS
Already here. Just the other side of
the canyon.

MAGGIE
What can he do?

RAWLINS
Fight or surrender.

Maggie turns to Jarosoma, her face intent.

MAGGIE
Let me talk to the soldiers.

JAROSOMA
No talk.

MAGGIE
You're people will be slaughtered.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
They will die free.

She didn't quite get that. Looks at Rawlins.

RAWLINS
He ain't runnin'.

Maggie is horrified. Mateo' nods his agreement as
Jarosoma starts directs his warriors.

MAGGIE
Can't you make him understand?

RAWLINS
He understands. You don't.

MAGGIE
Yes, I do. Men are pig-headed!

End of conversation. She marches to the teaching Kowa.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Alive with fevered activity. Men, women and children make ready. Jarosoma directs them. All who can fight, will.

EXT. HORSE REMUDA - DAY

Maggie appears, strides to her mule. Starts to bridle it.

RAWLINS

Didn't come all this way to watch you get yourself killed.

MAGGIE

And I didn't come all this way to watch these people get killed either.

No reasoning with her when her mind's set.

RAWLINS

You are, without a doubt, the most hard-headed female I've ever come across.

MAGGIE

And you have all the virtues I dislike but none of the vices I admire.

Jarosoma points to the mule.

JAROSOMA

You stay.

MAGGIE

No. You stay. I am going to stop this nonsense once and for all.

She snaps the reins, gallops off. Rawlins looks at Jarosoma.

RAWLINS

Kinda' like talkin' to the mule, ain't it?

Jarosoma signals and his warriors mount up.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS - DAY

The Mexican Brigade thunders up toward the pass.

Their horses, spit flying from the mouths, the incredible musculature of their chests, wild look in the eyes.

Commandante has that same look. No quarter will be asked. None will be given.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - LATER

The soldiers, rank after disciplined rank, not one sideways look. Not one sound.

On either side canyon walls rise like some primordial soul, limitless, dark.

The Commandante raises his hand. Column halts. The soldiers look around, then upward.

THEIR POV:

Apache warriors on the cliffs above. Completely surrounding the boxed in Soldiers below. Winchesters aimed. Bows taut.

COMMANDANTE (SUBTITLE)

Take cover!

Commandante motions his soldiers to dismount. They hastily form skirmish positions.

Rifle bolts 'clacking' hollowly as they chamber rounds. Commandante pulls his pistol, waits for the coming fusillade. No one breathes. No one moves. Tortured silence.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Turn back.

Every eye turns to Maggie as she rides out and dismounts.

COMMANDANTE

(in English)

We will protect you.

MAGGIE

I don't need protecting. I came here of my own free will to teach these people. Please go back.

The Commandante is surprised.

COMMANDANTE

I was told you had been abducted.

MAGGIE

You were misinformed. No more bloodshed. Let it stop here. Now.

(motions)

There is nothing of value here. Your own people don't even want this land.

(beat)

Besides, the Apache were here before you or me.

COMMANDANTE

I have my orders.

MAGGIE

Were you ordered to die?

Good question. Especially considering his situation.

COMMANDANTE

I was ordered to free you and capture Jarosoma if possible.

MAGGIE

It's not possible. Not without great blood-shed on both sides. And it will accomplish nothing.

The Commandante is torn.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm free to come or go as I choose. Isn't that enough?

COMMANDANTE

What about our people? Jarosoma attacks them in their fields and towns. I cannot allow that to continue.

MAGGIE

I will speak to Jarosoma. If he gives his word, will you allow him to remain here in peace?

COMMANDANTE

That is not for me to decide.

MAGGIE

Who then?

COMMANDANTE

My superiors.

MAGGIE

Alright. Then I will talk to your superiors.

Her words hang in the air. The Commandante's moved by her argument. Long moment, then he signals the troops to mount up and move out.

COMMANDANTE

We will wait two days. At Agua Caliente.

One last look up to Jarosoma. He motions to her, wheels his horse around.

EXT. APACHE CAMP - DAY

Maggie stands with Rawlins, Jarosoma and Mateo'.

RAWLINS
And if they say no?

MAGGIE
They won't.

RAWLINS
Sure of that, are you?

MAGGIE
Confident.
(to Jarosoma)
Will you agree?

JAROSOMA
I do not trust soldiers.

MAGGIE
I know. But you can trust me.

He is unconvinced.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
If the Army agrees, I will take Mateo'
and a few of the other young ones with
me. I will teach them so they may
return and teach the others.
(long beat)
Allow them this opportunity, Jarosoma.
So they can survive in our world -- and
their own.

The Apache chief looks into her eyes long and hard. Then
at Mateo'.

JAROSOMA (SUBTITLE)
You would go with Long Shadow Woman?

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
She speaks true. I will protect the
young ones.

Jarosoma nods.

JAROSOMA
White-eyes keep word -- I keep word.

MAGGIE
Fair enough.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE FEET

of children walking through the sand. The youngest of the Apache Village as we now SEE the small procession.

They follow behind Maggie on her mule. Rawlins rides in front with Mateo'.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I met with the commanding general of the Army in northern Mexico. He didn't want to leave Jarosoma in the Sierra Madre...

INT. GENERAL'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASH-BACK)

Maggie stands in front of the PIG-FACED GENERAL. The man sweats effusively as she gives him 'what for.'

Jabs her finger, pounds the desk.

The other OFFICERS shrink back as she gives them all hell.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

...But I finally convinced him it would be in the best interest of all concerned. Especially the children.

One last look, walks out. The officers and the Pig-Faced General sigh with relief.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Maggie and the children are working on grammar lessons. The kids, fresh-faced, clean clothes, and bright eyes.

Mateo' helps her, cleaning the chalkboard she's purchased. Helping the younger ones with their penmanship.

A HOME-MADE SIGN

hangs askew above the porch. Reads: "Sasabe' Indian School" Maggie Murdock, prop.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

The children learned quickly. They were bright and young adapting easily to the language and numbers.

(beat)

It was so gratifying.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - EVENING

Maggie reads to the little brood. Mateo' next to her. She hands him the book.

WE SEE it's "Anne of Green Gables". He reads. The little ones listen with rapt attention.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
They were sponges. The more I gave,
the more they absorbed.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In her nightgown, she writes laboriously in a journal
Her notes of the experience, an anthropological paper on
the Chiricahua.

THROUGH THE DOORWAY

a dozen little bedrolls spread out on the wood floor.
Each one holding a snoring child.

EXT. SAGUARO JUNCTION - DAY

Maggie leads the trailing line of children, tallest to
shortest in lock step to the dry goods store.

Towns people stare, point, whisper.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
Folks didn't take to my little group of
brown-faced students at first...

Maggie stops. Turns, motions. The kids all smile, bow
to the people. Then, just like little soldiers, fall in
line again behind her.

The women, especially Emma and Verlene are touched.
Smile in spite of themselves.

Earl frowns. Verlene gives him a shot in the ribs with
her elbow.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
...But in time they came to feel better
about it. So did I. My life had
changed so much since I'd left Michigan
and come to the desert...

EXT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

Small town of Douglas, Arizona. County seat. In front
of the building Maggie's little students stand patiently,
each dressed in clean white shirts, trousers and skirts.

Mateo' has become a handsome young man. He keeps charge
of the children when one little girl tugs at his sleeve.

LITTLE GIRL (SUBTITLE)
When?

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 Soon. Be patient.

LITTLE GIRL (SUBTITLE)
 Are they doing something to Isdza'n
 t'aghaa?

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 No.
 (stops)
 Well, yes. In a way.

Before he can say more Maggie appears on the arm of Stan Rawlins. Ledbetter, Wilson, Emma, Verlene and Earl throw a little rice. Newlyweds!

On Maggie's finger a small gold band. The kids are non-plussed.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
 ...One of those changes, I never
 dreamed would be possible. Stan
 Rawlins asked me to marry him.

The kids look at the rice on the ground.

LITTLE GIRL (SUBTITLE)
 Is it ruined?

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 What?

LITTLE GIRL (SUBTITLE)
 The rice they throw away.

Maggie on Rawlins' arm, sweeps by. Smiles at the kids.

MATEO (SUBTITLE)
 (shrugs)
 Must be.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
 As though I'd never had a life before
 Sasabe'. The old Maggie Murdock was
 gone forever.
 (beat)
 Although not totally forgotten.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. ALBION CAMPUS COMMON - ANOTHER DAY

A crowd of people and onlookers watch as on the erected stage Maggie Murdock Rawlins receives an award.

She's surrounded by dignitaries from the school and government.

TITLE CARD: "Albion College -- 1933"

IN THE FRONT ROW

are Mateo' and Rawlins dressed in suits and starched collars. Both look uncomfortable.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
My work with the Chiricahua was
recognized by the Anthropological
Department as well as the National
Society.

Now we see, one of the on-lookers is none other than a bald and worn Averell Hutchinson. He scowls with anger and envy.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
It was a great honor. One I had never
expected.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - AFTERNOON

Maggie is surrounded by admiring colleagues, officials and such. She is uncomfortable with the adulation but happy nonetheless.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
After so many years to return to
Albion, made me realize how my life had
come full circle.
(beat)
And not just mine...

IN THE CORNER

Rawlins and Mateo' sit holding punch glasses, tug incessantly at their stiff collars.

Maggie motions to Mateo', who reluctantly joins her, after being elbowed by Rawlins.

MAGGIE
And this is Mateo'.

The crowd "oohs" and "aahhs" over the handsome young man.

MAN
"The" Mateo' from your paper to the
Smithsonian?

MAGGIE
(beams)
I'm very proud of him.

WOMAN
 (clucks to Mateo')
 What do you think of all this?

He looks at Maggie, not sure what to say.

MAGGIE
 Well, what do you think?

MATEO
 I think...
 (a look)
 I would rather be tracking the "fii" in
 the Sierra.

*(*Pronounced: "Eee-Yah-Hee" with guttural inflection)*

The well-wishers have no idea what that means.

MAGGIE
 Eee-Yah-Hee -- literally "free horse or
 animal" from the Athabascan dialect. A
 wild mustang.

Everyone smiles, nods, clucks appreciatively.

HUTCHINSON (O.S.)
 Not, unlike your young protegee', eh?

Crowd parts like a wound to reveal Hutchinson. His face
 lined in a permanent scowl. Maggie is surprised to see
 him, even more so at the physical change.

MAGGIE
 An apt analogy.

HUTCHINSON
 I understand you've been offered a full
 professorship.

MAGGIE
 Yes.

He blanches. The crowd buzzes.

HUTCHINSON
 Well, it seems living in squalor with
 savages has finally provided the
 recognition you've always craved.

MAGGIE
 At least it is *my* research. Which,
 unlike yours, wasn't plagiarized.

Her words cut to the quick. Muffled whispers.

HUTCHINSON

That again? I suppose when one has delusions of adequacy, they must tear down the work of others.

Rawlins comes over. Time to change the subject.

RAWLINS

Probably oughta' be goin'.

She takes Mateo's arm to leave but Hutchinson steps in front of them. Looks into Mateo's eyes.

HUTCHINSON

A savage is a savage no matter what you try to teach them.

MATEO

So is a skunk.

Crowd laughs. Hutchinson reddens.

HUTCHINSON

At least my skin isn't the same color as one.

Mateo' starts for him but Maggie steps between them. Leans an inch from Hutchinson's face.

MAGGIE

(quietly)

Averell, you once told me you're a self-made man. And you are. One who worships his creator.

She turns on her heel, Rawlins and Mateo' follow.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

I didn't take the teaching position.

Crowd moves away from the scowling Hutchinson as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW SCHOOL BUILDING - ANOTHER DAY

Maggie's corrals are gone, this modern structure in it's place. A placard tells us it is an accredited Indian school.

Mateo', grown, is the instructor an attractive young Chiricahua woman by his side. His wife.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)

Sam and I raised money for the school, and eventually students from all the tribes learned there.

An older Maggie and Rawlins sit on the porch. Happy and content.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SASABE' - DAY

A small plot of ground behind the ranch house where Maggie, Mateo' and dozens of others pay their respects at a just-completed funeral.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
I lost Sam in 1947. Love of my life,
and one of only three *real* men I've
ever known...

Mateo', wife and three children are with her.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
...One, of course, was your father,
Mateo'. After he got his degree in
engineering, he left Sasabe' to accept
a position at Arizona State University.
I'm so proud of him...

Maggie's eyes, still as blue as ever beneath the graying hair, fill with tears as the SCENE...

FADES TO:

A MOUNTAIN PEAK

Where a lone warrior on horseback is silhouetted against a setting blood-red sun.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
...The other was Jarosoma, in every
sense of the word. His love for the
Chiricahua endowed his people with a
priceless gift, knowledge...

CAMERA slowly begins to pull out. The rider etched against the majesty of Sierra Madre and endless Sonoran desert.

OLDER MAGGIE (V.O.)
...He stayed in the Sierra Madre long
after the band was re-settled at San
Carlos. Mateo' did ride up and find
him in later years. He told me the
proud old warrior was singing his death
song...

INT. NURSING HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

The same sun is setting. Casts warm shafts on the stack of papers Maggie has written. She remembers a moment, finishes.

OLDER MAGGIE

I know this is more than you need for your assignment dear one, but I wanted you to know the real story. Unvarnished and naked. The way it happened. You and I may not be blood kin but your father is the son I never had. I couldn't love him more if he were. Remember your heritage. Pass it on to your children. I love you...

She signs it. Carefully screws back on the fountain pen cap. Sets it on the small stack of handwritten pages. She leans back.

Her eyes warm, tearing just a bit as she smiles and the warm gold of the room slowly...

FADES TO:

A FULL SCREEN CRAWL OVER BLACK:

"Maggie Murdock Rawlins was buried at her beloved Sasabe'. She is still regarded as the preeminent biographer of the Chiricahua, a nation who continues to struggle for survival even today, more than a century after their dominance in the American Southwest ended."