

THE LEGEND OF WILLIE TELBERG AND SON

First Ten Pages

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FADE IN:

SUPER: KANSAS - FALL 1865

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY

Two rabbits fornicate.

Elsewhere, a kitten hops playfully.

EXT. WOOD CABIN - DAY

A basic but well built wood cabin nestled in a glade 'midst some gently rolling hills.

Out front, an 1860's Union Flag on a slender log pole barely manages a flutter.

Wispy smoke from a chimney at one end of the cabin.

Ordered domesticity.

WILLIE (V.O.)

Remember now. Take him on the first shot, while he has other things on his mind.

The autumn air is punctuated by the FAINT SOUND of a GUNSHOT.

A nanny goat, bloated udder, tethered beneath a small tree out back of the cabin, BLEATS, looks up, alert.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY

Lying prone, camouflaged amidst some low brush, Black American WILLIE TELBERG (late 30s), a giant in all respects, ruffles the wispy hair of his son WALDO (12), Down Syndrome features, lying beside him, a calico bag by his side.

WILLIE

Get his friend another time.

Willie stands, cradles his Spencer lever action Repeater rifle, and gives Waldo a helping hand up.

He nods to his son's older model Springfield Muzzle loader which is almost as long as the lad is tall.

Waldo removes the percussion cap from the nipple, blows any dust clear of the Muzzle, shoulders the strap.

He turns, watches Willie remove the tube magazine from the butt stock, take out cartridges, put them in his belt, reinsert the empty tube into the butt-stock.

Willie picks up two brace of rabbits.

Waldo likewise scoops up a small guinea pig and tucks it inside his shirt, picks up the calico bag.

Beaming mile-wide smiles, father and son, weapons over shoulders, head off the short distance to collect their latest bounty.

WILLIE

Do us for the day, son. Give these little critters here a chance to make up their numbers.

Waldo nods.

WALDO

We did good today, eh Pa?

WILLIE

Well son. We did well.

Waldo mouths "well".

WILLIE

We surely did.

They collect their rabbits. Waldo beams, proud as Punch.

WILLIE

Best get our wares cleaned up. Those white ladies like their meat fresh. And there's not much of that around these parts since the war.

WALDO

Why that, Pa?

WILLIE

Like I say before, they lost a lot of their menfolk from all the fighting during that time.

WALDO

And they was giving the white ladies their meat, fresh, as they liked it, is what you sayin' Pa?

WILLIE
Put it that way, son, you'd be
telling the truth.

WALDO
So now us black menfolk --

WILLIE
We, son. We black menfolk.

WALDO
We gotta give it 'em, is what you
saying, Pa?

WILLIE
In a manner of speaking, son, in a
manner of speaking. It's what they
call "the market".

Waldo mouths "meat market" to himself.

WALDO
Better give those white ladies what
they hangin' out for, then.

WILLIE
And get you some money for your
reading books and make your school
teacher Mama proud.

EXT. LAURAVILLE MAIN STREET - DAY

A neat and tidy pioneering town: general store, hotel,
blacksmith, livery, church, bakery, a few cottages ...

TOWNSFOLK, mainly older white women, go about their business.

GENERAL STORE

On the facade above the veranda, a sign reads:

"LAURAVILLE GENERAL STORE: EST 1860 H & H. JOHANNSEN
PROPRIETORS"

On the timber boardwalk, two Old-Timers -- gray-bearded
CHESTER (70) and his wife GABBY (70) sit in rocking chairs
fashioned from small branches and saplings.

Surrounded by timber shavings, it's hard to tell one from the
other as they whittle away.

Gabby consults a fob watch attached to her pinafore.

GABBY

So what would you be wanting to do today, hon'?

CHESTER

Nothing, my sweet.

GABBY

But we did that yesterday.

CHESTER

Did we finish?

Gabby stops her whittling, blows away the shavings, holds up her stick to check its shape.

She squints off into the distance.

Chester follows her gaze, squints.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

WOMENFOLK wander the store, check fabrics, crockery, various vital supplies.

On a stool behind the counter, HARRIET JOHANNSEN (teens), in a world of her own, puts her mind to needlework on what could pass for an infant's Christening gown.

At one counter, storekeeper HANNAH JOHANNSEN (40s) contends with a grumpy OLDER WOMAN who scrutinizes her weigh up a supply of flour on the scales.

Husband HOWARD JOHANNSEN (40s) sporting a red apron emblazoned with a yellow letter "H" logo, attends to a line of women at a barrel of salted meat.

He chances a lascivious smile toward KATIE (late 30s), one of the younger, more attractive customers, next in line. She has a bit of the Celtic wench about her.

Howard treats Katie to an extra large portion of salted meat.

She gives him a seductive smile.

The other women in line tut-tut their disapproval.

Hannah hands over a bag of flour, shoots daggers at Howard.

GUNS FIRING, WHOOPING AND HOLLERING O.S.

Consternation among all those within the store.

EXT. LAURAVILLE MAIN STREET - DAY

Four horsemen, Rebels in remnants of Confederate Army uniforms, run riot.

Their leader, ALBERT GREESER (40s), in a Hardee hat, and his 'lieutenant', HECTOR (40s), oral hygiene wanting, in battered black Derby, front up to the General Store, dismount, grab their saddle bags.

Greeser addresses the two other riders: a hatless, weedy looking JEROME (late 20s) and the tall, strapping ISAAC (late teens), the makings of some bum-fluff on his chin.

GREESER

That ride done made me thirsty. See what the town has to offer.

The innocent Isaac lifts his tattered straw hat, vacantly scratches his head, doesn't comprehend.

GREESER

(to Jerome)

Educate the lad, will ya?

Greeser and Hector enter the store.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Greeser and Hector stomp to the counter, skittle the older WOMEN lined up.

GREESER

Salted meat.

Howard turns from Katie, puts on an unconvincing brave front.

HOWARD

Well, now sir, you might be out of luck ... considering there's been a bit of a run on --

Hector waves his pistol at Howard, approaches Katie with lascivious intent.

HECTOR

And whatever else you ladies might oblige us with.

But Katie will have none of his advances and squares her shoulders and chest to him, dislodges his black derby.

Hector thinks twice, adjusts his hat and goes to the barrel, dips a hand and takes the last piece of the salted meat.

Greaser throws his saddle bag to some of the other fretful women who deposit their supplies in them.

Greaser turns his attention to Harriet.

GREESER

And maybe something for desert.

He grabs Harriet's hand. She drops her needlework. He beckons her outside amidst the usual PLEAS from the women-folk.

Hannah tries to grab her daughter's other hand but to no avail. She turns to her husband.

HANNAH

Well don't just stand there.

Howard does just that.

Hannah lunges for something behind the counter but stops on the SOUND of a pistol being cocked.

Greaser holds his pistol to Harriet's head.

Hannah produces a parasol.

Greaser smiles, amused.

GREESER

Bad luck to use that inside.

Hector secures the saddle bags.

Greaser drags Harriet by the wrist.

Katie brazenly grabs her other hand.

A tug-o-war; Greaser wins, and the three tumble out the door.

Hannah lays into the less than heroic Howard with the parasol.

EXT. COUNTRY TRAIL - DAY

Willie, cleaned up and in laundered shirt, a bright red kerchief neatly tied around his neck, drives a rickety 2-wheeled market cart pulled by a large work horse, MACDUFF.

Alongside, Waldo, also spruced up with guinea pig on his shoulder, rides bare-back on ABE, a small, aging pony with a slight impediment -- a rear hoof tends to drag more than lift, and leaves a slight scar in the dirt.

WALDO

You give Mama her fresh meat when she wanted it, Pa?

Willie's eyes start, caught off-guard.

WILLIE

I guess I did young man. Yessir, I guess I did. If there's a lesson to be learned, sometimes mamas need extra special attention.

Willie observes his son digest this.

The SOUND of GUNFIRE and SHOUTING alerts them.

WILLIE

Stay close by, son.
(to the workhorse)
In your hands, MacDuff.

They trot on.

Lauraville comes into view.

Willie stops the cart.

WILLIE

Might be a good idea to hop aboard, son.

But Waldo raises his eyes to the commotion.

WALDO

Aw, pa. Can't I --?

WILLIE

Know what you're wanting, son. But on this occasion.

Reluctant, Waldo sidles up to the cart.

WILLIE

And tie Abe to the siding. Put your trust in MacDuff, son. He be a veteran of gunfire. Just another day for him.

EXT. LAURAVILLE MAIN STREET - DAY

SALOON

Jerome and Isaac outside the saloon, arms laden with bottles of whiskey, fire random shots in the air.

HARVEY JOHANNSON, Howard's twin brother, a Yellow apron with Red "H" logo, runs out after them and watches, helpless, as they stack up their saddle bags.

GENERAL STORE - VERANDA

Greaser man-handles Harriet across the veranda, the young teenager pleads for help from Katie and Hannah who follow with outstretched hands.

Chester, unperturbed by the mayhem, stops his whittling, shuffles to the edge of the veranda.

Greaser's eyes follow his gaze.

Willie and Waldo approach.

MAIN STREET

Hector secures his saddle bags over his horse, looks up at the new arrivals.

Greaser drags Harriet into the middle of the street.

The WHOLE TOWN gravitates to the street.

The Rebels all squint their eyes at the sight of Waldo.

HECTOR

Well, lookie here. We got ourselves
a new breed.

Willie's cart pulls to a stop.

GREESER

Been coupling with the Indians. One
of the privileges of liberation, I
suppose.

Waldo secures his pet guinea pig inside his shirt. It won't comply and pops its head out.

Willie nods towards Harriet's wrist straining under Greaser's grip.

WILLIE

You aiming to snap that off?

Greaser aims his pistol at Willie.

GREESER

Now tell me. You look like you be a God-fearing boy.

WILLIE

I am indeed, mister.

GREESER

Mister? Mister who?

WILLIE

I don't rightly know, sir, having never made your acquaintance.

GREESER

Name of Albert Greaser. Captain Albert Greaser. Confederate Engineers Corps. Ring a bell in that ol' head of yours?

Willie shakes his head.

Greaser beckons Isaac nearer. He pushes Harriet to him.

Their youthful eyes meet. Isaac blushes fleetingly, but straightens himself and acts the hardened rebel, keeps guard over her.

Greaser delves inside his shirt, pulls out a sheet of paper.

GREESER

You never seen one of them before?

He waves a crude "Wanted" poster for Willie to see.

INSERT: Hand-drawn portrait resembling Greaser.

WILLIE

Wanted? For what?

GREESER

Robbery and mayhem.

WILLIE

Nasty, nasty. But you wouldn't want to add Murder to that list, now, would you?

Greaser thinks about this.

GREESER

You just might have a point there, boy. You sound pretty clever for a colored boy.

He shoves the poster back inside his shirt and grabs Harriet's hand again, trains his gun on her.

GREESER

What's your name, boy?

Chester proclaims proudly:

CHESTER

That there be Mister Willie Telberg. An indispensable man in these here parts.

Greaser scans the gathered population - only a few males.

GREESER

(addresses Willie)

That so?

Willie shrugs.

GREESER

You be who he says you be?

Willie nods and in turn indicates Waldo.

WILLIE

And my son, Waldo.

CHESTER

Might not look it, but he be the sharpest shooter in the whole state of Kansas. Shoot a rabbit clean through the head at fifty paces.

GREESER

(refers to Waldo)

Don't look like he know one end of a gun from the other.

Chester shakes his head in disbelief, returns to his rocking chair and Gabby, and again whittles away.

Willie, eyes always on Greaser, reaches down toward his feet on the floor of the cart.

Greaser swings his weapon back at Willie.

Willie gingerly gathers up the rabbits and displays them.

WILLIE

We sell them to the lady folk. They like their meat nice and fresh.

GREESER

Do tell, now?

Hector walks over to Willie, takes a brace of rabbits, hind legs tied, examines them.

HECTOR

Clean as a whistle, no bullet holes.

GREESER

Clean through the head, like you say?

(to Waldo)

Where you learn to shoot like that, boy?

Willie intercedes.

WILLIE

Union Army. First Kansas Volunteers. And later the Seventy-ninth United States Colored Infantry.

Hector, consternation on face, whispers in Greaser's ear.

GREESER

You one of those black boys in blue coats fighting in the green lands of Missouri? That skirmish at Island Mound?

Willie nods, indifferent.

GREESER

Some fine young Southern boys met their maker that day. Maybe you responsible.

Jerome, moves around to Waldo, tries to take the guinea pig.

Willie goes to intervene but Jerome brandishes his pistol, takes possession of the animal, freaks out Waldo.

Greaser issues a sordid smile, holds up Harriet's hand.

GREESER

Think we can have us some fun here, boys.