

**EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY**

The Arthur Reid Gang's wagon train is rumbling down the forest path. There are five covered wagons, three pulled by horses and the two remaining tied to the hitches of two of the first three. Some men are walking alongside the train while others sit in the wagons, driving the horses. ARTHUR REID sits at the head of the train atop of a large, black horse. He wears a long, dark coat and a wide-brimmed open crown hat tied with a crimson red ribbon. A dirtied vest that had once been expensive wraps his torso tight, and a wide belt is pulled up tight on his waist; two pistols are hanging from it, one on either side – they are big, with long barrels. He's a grizzled man of about forty or fifty, with cold, hard eyes and a scratchy beard cropped close to his chin.

He is glancing around, peering through the trees warily. He turns slightly when he hears JESSE PATTON approaching on his horse. He's younger, about thirty, wearing a grey vest over a ratty, white shirt. A bowler hat on his head has a bullet hole in it, which he's stuck a rolled up card into. JESSE slows to match ARTHUR'S pace and looks at him with worry in his face.

JESSE

We've been riding a while, Arthur. Pardon my saying, but I don't think they're here.

ARTHUR

(Certain)

They're here, Jesse.

They ride for a moment in silence, then JESSE leans a little closer to ARTHUR.

JESSE

When we pass into Oregon, you buy me a drink.

ARTHUR  
(Looks at him)  
Why's that?

JESSE  
'Cause I'm thirsty, Arthur. (That's not all) And 'cause we're not gonna find the Rangers, which means I'll be right, and if I'm right, then you buy me a drink... 'cause you're wrong.

ARTHUR  
(Chuckles)  
You're talking too much.

HECTOR  
(Yelling from the wagon)  
He does that all the time.

They both turn to look at HECTOR ALVAREZ, who is driving the closest wagon. He's from Texas, and wears a thin mustache and thin-rimmed glasses made of something that looks like gold. A scarf around his neck is tucked into the collar of his shirt like an ascot, patterned with flowery designs.

ARTHUR  
I know. I've just learned to ignore him.

JESSE  
(Insulted)  
Ignore? What's that shit?

HECTOR  
(Laughing)  
Calm down, *pendejo*. You're gonna scare the Rangers away.

JESSE  
There's no Rangers on this road.

They go on in silence for another moment. There's a noise from the trees, and ARTHUR looks at HECTOR, nodding before turning

his horse and plunging into the brush. JESSE, flustered, follows him, snapping the reins and entering the tree cover. HECTOR, now alone, turns to look behind him at the train and waves forward another man on a horse, who comes to take ARTHUR's place. As he passes, he looks down at HECTOR.

MAN

What's that about, Hector?

HECTOR

(Smiling)

Rangers. They'll meet us again at the bridge.

He snaps his reins and continues driving the wagon.

**EXT. ANOTHER FOREST ROAD - DAY**

JESSE and ARTHUR are picking through the bush. ARTHUR gets frustrated as his horse begins to struggle.

ARTHUR

Shit. Dismount.

He does so, and JESSE follows suit. They start to walk, stepping over bushes and roots, then bend down to peer through the trees at the road ahead. There are Red Rangers astride horses riding around, hollering. In the middle of the storm of dust and hoofbeats stands a man and a woman, cowering away.

One of the Rangers slows and dismounts, approaching the two and wrenching the woman away from the man, who tries to fight back.

RANGER

Son of a bitch.

He pulls out a pistol and shoots the man. The woman screams in horror as her partner falls to the floor, bleeding from a wound in his neck. Blood comes sputtering out of his mouth as he trembles, then dies, going still. ELIZABETH FOX, the woman,

tries to fight the Ranger, but he overpowers her, throwing her onto the ground. Around them, the other Rangers slow their horses and dismount, surrounding ELIZABETH.

RANGER  
She's pretty.

RANGER 2  
Yeah.

The first Ranger kneels, grasping ELIZABETH's arm so she can't crawl away. She bites his hand and he screams, falling down, clutching his bleeding fingers. Ranger 2 grabs ELIZABETH and she kicks him in the leg. He gasps, but doesn't let go.

RANGER 3  
Get her tied down!

They both grab her, pulling her through the dirt while she flails around.

RANGER 2  
Tie her where?

RANGER 3  
(Frustrated)  
I don't know... Just hold her down!

RANGER 2 kneels on ELIZABETH's one arm while holding down the other. She spits at him multiple times, and he slaps her face.

RANGER 3  
Hold her down!

RANGER 2  
What about the money?

RANGER 3  
Later. (He smiles) She's first. Get her sleeves off.

His forehead blows out in a shower of red, then his shirt front turns to bloody ribbons as a second bullet hits him in the back, burrowing through his torso. His lifeless body falls to the floor with a smack and a cloud of dust. RANGER 2 looks up, scrambling for his gun as JESSE and ARTHUR emerge from the bushes. JESSE fires and misses, then ARTHUR fires, hitting RANGER 2 in the arm. The gun falls from his hand and he rolls around in pain. JESSE runs over and stands right over him, pointing the pistol at his head. A spatter of blood follows the gunshot, then JESSE looks around for any living victims. The first RANGER with the bitten hand is still alive, pleading. ARTHUR, as he's surveying the site, quickly points his gun and fires, killing the Ranger, then he continues to look around.

The horses have run off, leaving a trail of dust. A moment passes as everything settles, then JESSE looks down at ELIZABETH, who stares, wide-eyed at him in terror. She's around his age, with disheveled brown hair and pretty, bright eyes. Her blue dress is torn and covered in dirt, and she takes a moment to adjust the shoulders so it doesn't fall off. JESSE holsters his pistol. He's clearly enamored with her immediately, but he tries to hide it. He clears his throat.

ELIZABETH

(Wary)

If you're gonna kill me, just kill me... Don't do anything else.

JESSE

(His eyes narrow)

Kill you? Darling, why would I kill you?

ARTHUR

(From off)

Jesse!

JESSE turns slightly in irritation towards the call, then focuses again on ELIZABETH. He then surveys the scene.

JESSE

(Pointing)

Was this your wagon?

ELIZABETH suddenly remembers that her partner was just shot and looks around for his body. When she sees it, she starts to cry, and JESSE stands there, uncomfortable, looking around.

JESSE

Miss...

ARTHUR

(From off)

Jesse! Get over here!

JESSE

(Turning to yell)

The woman's crying, Arthur!

ARTHUR

(From off)

I don't give a shit what she's doing! Get over here now!

JESSE

(Yelling)

You want me to leave her here? What if she runs?

ARTHUR

(From off)

Where to? She's got no one but us now! Get over here!

JESSE reluctantly turns away after glancing one more time at ELIZABETH, who is still crying, and walks over to the wagon, where ARTHUR has found a locked chest. His cold eyes fix JESSE with a stare of frustration.

ARTHUR

Locked.

JESSE  
Break it.

ARTHUR  
Break it? You got a hammer?

JESSE  
No, Arthur, just-

He grabs the lock, then takes the butt of his pistol, smashing it. It doesn't break. He lets it go, irritated, and holsters the gun.

ARTHUR  
Ask the girl.

JESSE looks at him for a moment, then turns to walk back to ELIZABETH, who is waiting. She's finished crying now, and looks up at JESSE with reddened eyes.

JESSE  
(Uncomfortable)  
Miss... would you... uh... happen to have the key? To that trunk there? (Point) It's your wagon, I'm thinking, so-

ELIZABETH  
Are you thieves?

JESSE  
(Flustered)  
I... no, ma'am. We just... uh... want to have a look at the-

ELIZABETH  
(Vexed)  
You're robbing me.

JESSE  
(Pointedly)  
We're not robbing you, miss.

ELIZABETH

Why not kill me? Why save me, then rob me? (Beat) If you want the key you can rip it off my dead body.

She gets up and starts to walk off, turning back to glance at him. He doesn't follow, so she stops and turns fully to face him. They stand, staring at each other.

ELIZABETH

Shoot me! Kill me!

JESSE squints his eyes and chews on nothing. He pulls out his revolver and aims it at ELIZABETH, who gasps slightly, tensing her body as she stares down the gun. JESSE doesn't fire. The tension builds as nothing happens. JESSE pulls back the hammer. ELIZABETH waits, staring wide-eyed. Around the wagon, ARTHUR steps out to watch. We see him in the background, blurry. He doesn't interfere. Camera on the trigger. JESSE pulls it, but the gun clicks. The revolver is empty. JESSE smiles.

JESSE

I told you, darling. I'm not here to kill you.

ELIZABETH doesn't move. She only blinks, unable to speak. JESSE walks over to her, and she stays. When he reaches her, he looks into her eyes and again chews on nothing as he squints, examining her. She waits, staring right back.

JESSE

Key, darling.

ELIZABETH

(Stubborn)

I don't have it.

JESSE

Where is it?



ELIZABETH

(Hesitant)

It's not here. Not on me, nor on him. (Point to partner)

JESSE

(Persistent)

Where is it?

ELIZABETH

(Pause)

Castelier.

JESSE

Castelier? Oregon?

ELIZABETH

This is the trail to Oregon.

JESSE thinks about that. They stare at each other for another moment. There is tension between them.

JESSE

If I let you go, where'll you run off to?

ELIZABETH

(She hadn't considered that)

I... Castelier, most likely.

JESSE

(Secretly happy about that)

Well, ain't that interesting. We're heading the same way.

ELIZABETH

You think I want to go with you? Are you an idiot?

Back by the wagon, ARTHUR shakes his head and walks back around to the chest, disappearing behind the wagon.

JESSE

I mean... Why not? (She walks around him and back towards the wagon) Hey! Where are you going?

ELIZABETH

To find a horse.

JESSE follows her, flustered. She's intent on her goal.

JESSE

Where? Where's a horse, huh?

ELIZABETH

I'll find one of the ones that ran.

JESSE

Hey!

He grabs her arm and spins her around. She scowls up at him and shakes him off before he can say anything.

ARTHUR

Where's the key, Jesse?

JESSE turns. ARTHUR is right there, still standing by the chest.

JESSE

She doesn't have it. It's in Castelier.

ARTHUR turns to watch ELIZABETH as she storms away. He leans off of the wagon and stands up straight, calling after her.

ARTHUR

Don't go too far, miss!

She stops, then slowly turns around.

ARTHUR (Cont.)

What's in the box?

ELIZABETH

I don't know. It's a bank carriage. Only the bank can open the box.

ARTHUR

Then it's armored?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

ARTHUR considers that. ELIZABETH waits to see if either are going to say any more, then she turns away again, but ARTHUR's voice stops her.

ARTHUR

It's in Castelier? This bank?

She nods and looks at JESSE, then back to ARTHUR. He has a plan, and his cold eyes are calculating as he stares at ELIZABETH.

ARTHUR (Cont.)

Don't walk too far, then, miss. It's a ways back to the wagon train... You're with us now, for the time being.

He takes the butt of his pistol and starts bashing the box, knocking it free from the bolts holding it to the wagon. Now off, he picks it up and drops it into JESSE's arms, then starts to walk back to where the horses are hidden. ELIZABETH turns to JESSE, a questioning look on her face.

ELIZABETH

What is this? Who are you people?

JESSE

(Pause)

The Arthur Reid Gang, Darling.

He smiles, then follows ARTHUR into the brush. ELIZABETH turns back to survey the scene once more. We see the dead Rangers and the wrecked carriage, as well as the body of her partner. She reluctantly follows the two men into the treeline.