

THE SILVER CROSS

A bounty hunter must protect a woman whose husband he killed years earlier.

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EXT. DESERT - EVENING

A malicious wind tears at a long, black overcoat. Angry clouds build along the horizon. Lightning strikes. Seconds later, thunder BOOMS. A horse SNORTS and CLOPS in the sand.

Boots wrapped with knives. Colt .45 in a hip holster. Sticks of dynamite tucked into a belt. Strong jaw. Eyepatch covering a nasty scar. FLINT would be handsome if it weren't for his past. His eye narrows beneath a black stetson.

EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

A gaping black cavern looms within a rock formation.

Alongside the MOANING wind, the SOUND of something being DRAGGED across the sand. A body in a burlap sack being pulled by a rope. Lightening flashes.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
(whispering)  
Flint.

The body stops. We follow the rope to... Flint scanning the rock formation. Looking for the voice. He finds nothing.

Looks down at his hand. It's trembling. A ferocious gust of wind swipes at him. He peers up. The storm rages overhead. Thunder BOOMS. He spits. Grabs the rope with both hands. Resumes pulling the body toward the cave.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Flint sits at a CRACKLING fire chewing beef jerky. Seems unsettled. The dead body in the burlap sack lies on the other side of the fire. He glares at it. The wind WHISTLES.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
(whispering)  
It's time.

His hand drops to his Colt. He rises to one knee. Stares at the cave mouth. Lightening flashes, revealing the shadow of a woman against the cave wall--the MESSENGER. Thunder BOOMS.

The Messenger's chin and lips appear next to his ear.

MESSENGER  
(whispering)  
Now!

He draws one of the knives strapped to his boot. Slices at where her's face was, but nobody's there. He stands. Looks around. Nothing. His breathing gets heavier.

A WOMAN'S LAUGHTER echoes through the cave and escapes into the desert. He draws the Colt. Strides toward the cave mouth.

EXT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

A hurricane-like, HOWLING wind bombards Flint. The clouds swirl as if a tornado is forming. No sign of the Messenger. Lightening cuts through the clouds. The WOMAN'S LAUGHTER dances in the wind. He grabs his hat. Draws his gaze upward.

The clouds light up in bright turquoise. A single bolt of lightening strikes. Hits Flint in the chest. He collapses. GROANS. Losing consciousness.

BLACK SCREEN

MESSENGER  
(whispering)  
Find the widow.

FLINT'S POV

Hazy. Out-of-focus. Intermittent. First, darkness. Then...

The Messenger's silhouette, backlit by a brilliant white light, stands over him.

WOMAN  
(whispering)  
Give her this.

Darkness again. Pitch black for a brief second before...

She's back, looming over him. The blinding light shines behind her shadowy figure. He aims the Colt at her.

Her hands lift his left hand. She presses something into it.

INT. CAVE - MORNING

Flint awakens with a start. Sits up breathing heavy. Everything seems normal. His horse offers a good morning SNORT. He looks at the Colt in his right hand, and then lifts his left. He's holding something. He slowly opens his fingers to reveal a small, silver cross at the end of a string.

EXT. SMALL WESTERN TOWN - DAY

A dirt street bordered by wood buildings. Empty, except a few onlookers in doorways.

Flint rides through town dragging the burlap sack behind his horse. Stops outside the jail. Dismounts.

GATLING GARY, an ogre-like giant with a Gatling gun surgically implanted where his right forearm used to be, walks to the edge of the jail's porch. Acknowledges Flint.

Flint lifts the dead body onto his shoulder. Enters the jail.

INT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

A large room with two cells. A skeleton reclines on a cot in one of them.

SHERIFF DEVILLAIN sits behind a huge desk. Handsome, in a lecherous way. Has an over-sized, gaudy badge. Grins like a hyena circling a gazelle's carcass.

Beside Devillain stands ARROW, a lithe American Indian woman covered in war paint. FANCY DUDE leans against a cell. East-coast dandy's getup: coat with tails, purple scarf, bowler.

Flint dumps the burlap sack onto the wood floorboards.

DEVILLAIN

Mr. Flint! And... Harold Plunkett?

Flint nods. Devillain tosses him a bag of coins. Flint turns to leave.

DEVILLAIN (CONT'D)

Got another job for you.

FLINT

No thanks.

DEVILLAIN

You remember Abner Matheson?

Flint stops. If we could see his heart, it'd be pounding.

DEVILLAIN (CONT'D)

His widow's back.

Flint looks back at Devillain, whose grin vanishes.

DEVILLAIN (CONT'D)

She must have found it. I want it.

CLOSE ON Flint's hand. It's trembling. He grips the Colt so nobody notices.

DEVILLAIN (CONT'D)  
I'll pay double what I paid for  
Plunkett.

Flint shakes his head: "No." Walks out the front door.  
Devillain scowls. He's not used to being denied.

DEVILLAIN (CONT'D)  
(calling after him)  
Triple, then!

EXT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Flint mounts his horse. Rides off.

Devillain, Arrow, and Fancy Dude saunter outside to watch  
Flint leave. Devillain seethes. His lip curls.

DEVILLAIN  
Bounty hunter turnin' down easy  
money? Hell hath surely frozen  
over. No matter. We'll get it  
ourselves.

EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING RANCH - DUSK

Flint stands, looking down at the big farmhouse that sits in  
the center of the property. Lanterns on inside.

The Messenger's chin and lips appear beside Flint's ear.

MESSENGER  
(whispering)  
When the time is right. No sooner.

Flint doesn't bother looking. He knows nobody's there.

INT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Large room. Black stove. Long wood table flanked by benches.

AUDREY MATHESON--early thirties, attractive, wearing men's  
clothes, a hard worker. Putting dinner on the table. LOUISE,  
7, and CHARLIE, 9, wait to eat.

AUDREY  
Say grace, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Bow your head, Louise.

Louise and Charlie bow their heads. A CHIME sounds. All eyes jump to the wind chime hanging in the corner of the room.

AUDREY

Back to your room! Go on!

The kids scramble out of the room. Audrey grabs the double-barrel shotgun next to the door and slips out onto the porch.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Flint kneels. A line of string, about a foot off the ground, stretches across the dirt. He tugs on it. A faint CHIME sounds inside the house. Flint looks up. Audrey's silhouette looms in the doorframe, shotgun firmly planted in her shoulder and aimed at him.

AUDREY

This is private property!

Flint pulls his horse forward.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

That's far enough! Another step and I'll shoot!

FLINT

Just lookin' to talk, ma'am.

Audrey scans all the weaponry strapped to his body.

AUDREY

You don't seem like the talking type.

Flint removes his arsenal. The Colt, the knives and dynamite, even the sawed-off shotgun strapped to his horse's saddle. Sets them all in the dirt. Waits...

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Who are you? What do you want?

FLINT

Just a word.

AUDREY

About what?

FLINT

The cross.

AUDREY

I don't know anything about that.

FLINT

Sheriff thinks you do.

AUDREY

You tell him to leave me be!

Flint steps closer to the porch. Audrey backs away.

FLINT

He's comin'. Don't worry. I'll be here when he does.

She looks doubtful, but lowers the shotgun slightly.

INT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Flint, politely hatless, sits at the dinner table. Audrey stands off to the side. Shotgun within reach. The kids watch from the doorway to their room. Audrey's eyes remain transfixed on Flint as he eats.

AUDREY

I don't have it. My husband hid it. Took its location to his grave.

FLINT

Why does Sheriff Devillain want it?

AUDREY

Why do men want anything? Some people believe in awfully tall tales.

Flint takes another bite of his food.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

It didn't do Abner a lick of good. I don't ever care to see it again.

Flint puts down his fork. Stands. Puts his hat back on.

FLINT

I'll keep an eye out.

He walks to the door. Opens it.

AUDREY

Why are you doin' this?

FLINT  
Some of them tales is true.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - NIGHT

Flint sits in a rocking chair. Hat pulled low. All his weaponry back on. Sawed-off shotgun across his lap. The silver cross rests in his palm. He stares at it. When the front door CREAKS open, his fingers close around it.

Audrey comes out. Leans against a support beam. Hesitates.

AUDREY  
What's your name?

He peers out into the darkness. His face hardens. He stands. The CHIMES inside the house sound. Audrey's head snaps up.

Fancy Dude, Gatling Gary, and Sheriff Devillain ride toward the farmhouse. Flint looks to the ridge. Arrow's there.

The kids appear in the doorway.

LOUISE  
Momma! Momma! Who is it?

AUDREY  
Go to your rooms! Don't come out!  
You here? Stay there!

Audrey ushers them back inside. Grabs her shotgun.

Flint stands. Slips the silver cross into his coat pocket. Walks to the edge of the porch.

Devillain and posse spread out. Stop about fifty feet away. Devillain rides closer. Leans over the saddle horn.

DEVILLAIN  
Well, well. This here's a sight.

AUDREY  
I don't have it. I don't know where  
it is.

DEVILLAIN  
If only I believed that, my dear.

FLINT  
Move on, Sheriff. She don't have  
it.

Devillain grins. Shakes his head.

DEVILLAIN

She payin' you more than I offered  
to, Flint?

Flint steps down off the porch. Spits.

DEVILLAIN (CONT'D)

Does she know?

Flint's eye narrows. He glances back at Audrey.

DEVILLAIN (CONT'D)

Flint, Flint, Flint... You really  
ought to have told her.

(to Audrey)

Darlin', your little guard dog here  
is a bounty hunter. Matter of fact,  
the very same bounty hunter who  
killed your husband.

The color drains out of Audrey's face. Fury slowly replaces  
it. She backs away. Lifts her shotgun. Flint turns to her.  
Tears flood Audrey's eyes.

AUDREY

(quietly)

Is that true?

Flint just stares.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

(to Flint)

You stay away from me! I don't need  
your help. Go! Get outta here!

DEVILLAIN

Now that we've exchanged  
pleasantries... Let's chat about  
that cross.

AUDREY

(shouting)

I don't have it! I don't know where  
it is!

DEVILLAIN

(shouting to his men)

Search the house!

Gatling Gary and Fancy Dude approach. Gatling Gary smiles at  
Flint, who aims the sawed-off shotgun at him.

FLINT  
 (shouting)  
 Call 'em off, Devillain!

ON DEVILLAIN

The sheriff's grin melts into a hatred-filled scowl.

DEVILLAIN  
 (shouting)  
 Kill him, boys!

ON THE PLAIN

Gatling Gary points his forearm at Flint. The Gatling gun spins, WHIRRING. SPRAT-AT-AT-AT! Bullets fly.

Flint ducks. Bullets hit the ground all around him, kicking up dust. He fires the sawed-off. BOOM!

It forces Gatling Gary to veer off course.

Fancy Dude lifts a blunderbuss. Takes aim at Flint. KA-BOOM!

Flint takes it in the chest. Flies backward.

ON FLINT

Struggling to breathe. His left hand slips into his coat pocket. Pulls out the cross. He presses it into his palm.

MESSENGER (O.S.)  
 (whispering)  
 Get up, Flint.

He pushes himself up to his knee. Draws a stick of dynamite.

ON THE PLAIN

Gatling Gary comes around for another pass. Takes aim at Audrey on the porch. His arm WHIRS.

Flint, now standing, hurls the now lit stick of dynamite.

KA-BOOM! The dynamite EXPLODES right in front of Gatling Gary. His arm jerks upward as the Gatling gun fires. SPAT-AT-AT-AT. The bullets fly wildly into the night sky. The ogre of a man falls back off the horse with a THUD. Dead.

ON FANCY DUDE

Fancy Dude locks in on Audrey. Draws an old dueling pistol. Takes aim. His horse charges toward the porch.

ON FLINT

Flint draws his Colt. Bolts for the porch. Fires as he runs.

ON THE PLAIN

One of Flint's bullets wings Fancy Dude. He yanks the reigns. Turns toward Flint. Levels the dueling pistol at him. Flint and Fancy Dude fire at the same time.

ON FLINT

He takes the bullet in the torso. Stops. Looks down. Then looks up at Fancy Dude.

ON FANCY DUDE

Eyes wide. He's been hit. He tumbles off his horse. Dead.

ON DEVILLAIN

The sheriff snarls. Flint isn't hurt. Realization hits. Devillain's face contorts in rage.

DEVILLAIN  
(shouting)  
Flint!

ON FLINT

He turns to face the sheriff. Determined. Jaw locked.

ON THE PORCH

The farmhouse door swings open. Arrow appears. Grabs Audrey by the neck. Puts a knife to her throat. Audrey SCREAMS.

ON THE PLAIN

Flint and Devillain are drawn to the porch. Devillain LAUGHS.

DEVILLAIN

Give it to me, Flint. Give me the  
cross or she dies!

ON FLINT

He stares at Audrey, then back at Devillain. Swallows.

Beside Flint's ear, the Messenger's chin and lips:

MESSENGER

(whispering)  
Give it to him.

Flint frowns, hesitant. He slowly holds the silver cross out  
at arms length. It dangles from the string.

Devillain trots over. Snatches it from Flint. Grins broadly.  
Kisses the silver cross. Holds it up high. LAUGHS.

POV FROM THE PORCH

Arrow holds Audrey hostage. Flint stands watching Devillain,  
who raises the silver cross triumphantly.

A WOMAN'S LAUGHTER. All eyes are drawn to the ridge--to the  
Messenger's silhouette. She raises her hands.

ON DEVILLAIN

His grin fades. The cross begins to glow with a turquoise  
hue. He stares, transfixed. Then, an invisible force yanks it  
out of his hand. It levitates in the air above him. He gapes.

POV FROM THE RIDGE

The cross rises into the sky. Bolts of lightening arc out  
from it. SIZZLES and SNAPS. Then... two thick bolts of  
lightening strike like rattlesnakes. One plunges into  
Devillain. The other into Arrow. They both SCREAM. Arrow  
collapses. Devillain topples off his horse.

ON FLINT

Watches Devillain fall. Then stares at the cross. The  
turquoise glow fades. It drops to the dirt. He walks to it.  
Picks it up. Looks back to the ridge. The Messenger is gone.

Her chin and lips appear next to Flint's ear.

MESSENGER  
(whispering)  
Now. Give it to her.

ON THE PORCH

Audrey leans against the support beam. Breathing heavy.  
Staring at Arrow, who's lying face down, dead.

Flint climbs the stairs up to her side. They exchange a long  
look. Flint lifts her right hand. Places the cross inside it.

FLINT  
Some tall tales are true.

Flint turns. Walks down the stairs to his horse. Mounts.

AUDREY  
Flint!

Audrey runs to him. Stops. Looks up. Her eyes meet his. A  
tear trickles down her cheek.

AUDREY (CONT'D)  
I forgive you.

His jaw muscles tighten. He looks away. Forces his gaze back  
to her. He nods his thanks. Then, coaxes his horse forward.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

A fire writhes and SNAPS, casting long shadows.

Flint stands over the flames, Colt .45 in hand. He stares at  
the pistol. Then tosses it into the fire.

He turns to the cave wall. Reaches into his belt. The  
dynamite is gone. In its place, a simple wooden cross. He  
pulls the cross out. Pauses to consider it as he did the  
Colt.

He sets it upright on a slight outcropping of rock on the  
cave wall. Stares at it. Takes a knee. The knives are no  
longer wrapped around his boot. He removes his hat. Bows his  
head. Closes his eyes.

Amongst the other dancing shadows on the cave wall, the  
Messenger's shadow watches over Flint as he prays.

FADE OUT.

