

To The Pale

Written by

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The First Five
February 21st, 2021
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OVER BLACK

*I am sending you out as sheep in the
midst of wolves, so be wise as
serpents and innocent as doves...*

EXT. DIRT ROAD - EARLY MORNING.

We FADE IN on CHRISTINE HUNT (40's, auburn haired, her face lined from years of hard survival), she rides on horseback down a plain dirt road, a rusted wire fence runs alongside.

She has a rifle in a patched tan sleeve, wears a faded ball cap, and a ragged gore-tex jacket.

Ahead she notices A LONE SHEEP, a bold 3 spray painted into it's side. She nudges her horse.

EXT. GATE - MORNING.

Christine trots towards an open metal gate, deep tire tracks cut through and across. She pulls the reigns of her horse and kicks hard.

EXT. CRUMBLING HOMESTEAD - EARLY MORNING.

A worn two story ranch home. A squeaking rusted windmill turns over slowly in the breeze. Tire tracks cut through the yard, a dead border collie lays in front of the house, shot.

THROUGH A CRACKED RIFLE SCOPE

We peer at the windows, waiting for sign of life, but there are none. She checks the front door, it's cracked from blunt force, but not open.

EXT. BLUFF - EARLY MORNING.

Christine pulls her eye from the scope. She takes a deep breath, slings the weapon over her shoulder and begins the arduous climb down.

She descends cautiously, quietly. Her horse waits for her, untied, and without a proper saddle.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING.

A dark kitchen interior looks out into a bright but otherwise empty yard, the door and it's hinge, ripped out. Splintered wood and shell casings litter the bare wooden floors.

Christine steps into frame with her rifle in hand, she stalks quietly toward the open doorway.

EXT. YARD - MORNING.

Her eyes scan the yard as she crosses to the mangled entrance, she notices the deep tire tracks, wood fragments, half of a broken bronze door handle, spots of blood...

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING.

A slumped body lies against the opposite wall, his formerly white shirt ripped and stained a deep red from the close range shotgun blast. Casings surround him, but there is no weapon in his hand.

LOW:

Christine's worn boots step slowly towards.

UP:

Her stern face as she looks down.

ANGLE ON:

It's a 16 year old boy. She swallows, shakes her head, bends down, brushes the hair off his forehead.

CHRISTINE

(Sotto)

Oh god, Matty.

An unconscious facial twitch as she looks up towards the second story.

INT. STAIRWELL - MORNING.

Christine stares up a long row of narrow wooden stairs, rifle in hand, hesitating.

CHRISTINE

Becca?

...Silence...

CHRISTINE (cont'd)
(Sternly)
Ashley.

When no sound comes, the intense emotion wants to swallow her up, but she holds on. She glances backward, noticing a cabinet wedged between the front door and the wall.

She takes a tentative breath in, grips her rifle tighter then takes a step upward.

INT. UPPER LANDING - MORNING.

Christine pads slowly onto the last stair, she can already see what's she feared, the two bedroom doors have been kicked in.

In the further room she can see a dresser laying on it's side, it's contents spilled on the floor.

Her lip quivers as she turns to the darkened doorway of the nearer bedroom, she doesn't yet take a step, her fear holding her back.

She notices the splintered wood on the windowsill to her right, two bullet holes in the spidered glass of the window.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING.

Christine stands motionless in the empty doorway, the broken door on the floor between the bed and the wall.

As she looks further into the dark room, her eyes widen, the hairs on her neck begin to stand, her face tightens into a mask of fury.

The breath coming out of her nose wavers, staggered, tears coming into her eyes. We don't see what, only her reaction.

EXT. HOMESTEAD BACKYARD - DAY.

Two bodies lay face down in the dirt, the boy, and a woman...

Two holes have already been dug, we find Christine inside the pit of a third hole, her face red, tears streaming, but she keeps digging.

She drags the young boy into his grave, then looks at the third hole - *Where is she?*

She turns toward the outhouse, notices the door is cracked open.

EXT. OUTHOUSE - DAY.

A rifle tip opens the door, inside A DEAD MAN, a carving knife stuck into the center of his chest.

Christine turns quickly, spots tracks leading away from the home.

CHRISTINE
Ashley? ...Ashley?!

She starts to trot, then jog in that direction, finally it turns into a desperate, all out run.

Her eyes focused on the small footprints, until finally they stop - She finds the unmistakable TIRE TRACKS that lead off toward the horizon...

WIDE

Christine stares in their direction, only one thing on her mind, finding that girl.

FADE OUT:

TITLE OVER:

To The Pale

FADE IN:

EXT. WELL - AFTERNOON.

An old man, CLAYTON HUNT (80s, grizzled and weary) pulls a worn rope from the bottom of a well. He extracts a dented metal pail and pours the yellowed well water into a faded plastic container that's nearly full.

He leaves the bucket out, goes to cap his water jug when his dog starts to BARK.

We spot Christine galloping toward the nearby ranch house at a full clip. Clayton puts the plastic container into a wheelbarrow and leaves it, rushing off toward the house.

EXT. THE RANCH - FRONT PORCH - AFTERNOON.

Clayton hobbles up the front steps--

CLAYTON
Christine?

RAY (O.S.)
(Calling out)
Hey there!

Clayton turns to see a man on horseback, his son RAY (50's, rugged features, sun burnt and dust covered). Clayton waves a hand, while Ray continues towards.

RAY
Just stopping in before heading home,
where's Sis?

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
Dad?? DAD!

CLAYTON
Out here.

Christine emerges, her eyes widen upon sight of her brother.

CHRISTINE
Ray...

RAY
Hey, you check in on them yet? Just
about to head that direction.

Christine looks to her father, then back to her brother, unable to form a coherent sentence, she stutters...

The unspeakable has happened, how can she start. Ray slides down from his horse, just as Christine breaks, her shoulders heave--

RAY (cont'd)
Dad, what's wrong?

Clayton steps back, uncertain what's happening--

CLAYTON
Ch-Christine?