

YOUNG RIDERS
"Special delivery"

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YOUNG RIDERS

"Special Delivery"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - MORNING, DAY ONE

EMMA is checking herself in the MIRROR and likes what she sees.

Emma's cousin SARA comes into the REFLECTION.

SARA

You look beautiful, Emma.

EMMA

Well, it's nice to look like lady once in awhile instead of a worn out station tender.

INT. FOYER - MORNING, DAY ONE

as EMMA and SARA descend. SARA is eight months pregnant.

EMMA

I really wish you'd reconsider. There's some fine ladies in town I'd like you to meet. Seeing people might do you good.

SARA

I know, but I'm not feeling well. This baby-

There's a KNOCK on the door. The KID pokes his head in.

EMMA

Come in, Kid, the shirts are on my chair...
(gestures into parlor)
...already to go.

KID comes in. His hair is wet and he is wearing dress pants A towel is draped around his neck. He goes and gets the shirts.

KID

Thanks, Emma.

KID heads out the DOOR, then turns back to them with a big grin.

KID (CONT'D)

Ah, the Sheriff is just comin' in. Boy, he sure looks all dandied up! Wonder who he's tryin' to impress?

EMMA shoos the KID out.

EMMA

Go on, git. I swear these boys never give me a moment's peace.

SARA

Is this the fellow you were tellin' me about?

EXT. PORCH - MORNING, DAY ONE

EMMA and SARA step out as SAM pulls up in a buckboard.

SAM sets the break, jumps down and goes to the PORCH. He is in his Sunday-best.

SAM

(tipping hat)

Emma. Good to see you.

EMMA

Good to see you to, Sam. This is my cousin, Sara. She's gonna stay for awhile.

SAM

How do you do. Sorry `bout the loss of your husband. From what Emma tells me, sounds like he was a good man.

SARA

Thank you, he was. I just thank God I'm carrying his son- or I suppose it could be a girl- anyways, I still have a part of him.

INT. BUNK HOUSE - MORNING, DAY ONE

showing HICKOK sulking at the TABLE, watching a wetheaded CODY slip on his boots at his BUNK.

HICKOK

Ain't fair. Why would my turn to ride out come up on the day of the Blue Creek Hullabaloo. I was really-

KID enters, tossing a shirt at CODY.

Through the open door, LOU is visible leaning against the post on BUNKHOUSE PORCH.

KID

(to Cody)

Here ya go.

KID goes to his Bunk to finish dressing.

CODY

(slipping on shirt)

Thanks, Kid. Yessiree! We're gonna have a grand ol' time. Poor, poor Hickok. It's a shame. And I got my eye on that pretty little Blond I saw the other day.

HICKOK

Don't you dare! I spied her first!

KID sighs, shaking head and goes outside.

EXT. BUNKHOUSE PORCH - MORNING, DAY ONE

where KID goes up to LOU, still leaning against the post.

KID

Sure ya don't want to come? It could be fun.

LOU

Yeah, just what I need- a bunch of girls pining after me.

KID

But you don't haveta dance. Git in a couple hands of poker with me.

LOU

You ain't gonna dance?

KID

Nahh, I ain't the dancin' sort. Not like them.

The arguing grows louder from inside the BUNKHOUSE.

CODY (OC)

Possession is 9/10ths of the law! You ain't gonna be there!

HICKOK (OC)

I spied her first! She's mine!

LOU nods, deciding.

LOU

Alright, I'll go. Suppose I should put on my best. Ya gotta `nother clean shirt I can wear?

LOU and KID go into the BUNKHOUSE.

KID

Cut it out, you two!

INT. BUNKHOUSE - MORNING, DAY ONE

where HICKOK and CODY are at each other's throats. They break up as LOU and KID enter.

KID gets another shirt out for LOU and tosses it to her.

LOU catches the shirt and goes up to HICKOK.

LOU

Hickok, you owe me, can I git it from ya now?

HICKOK

(resigned, gives Cody one last shove)

I suppose...

(goes and gets out purse)

You gonna play a couple hands?

LOU

Yeah, try to win some.

HICKOK

Well, here then...

(gives her an extra bill)

...play a hand on me and we'll split the take.

LOU

Thanks, Hickok! I'll do my best.

HICKOK

One of us might as well have fun.

CODY

(smoothes down hair)

Now, about the Blond I was tellin' ya about.

Prettiest blue eyes- like the sky. I just-

TEASPOON

Blond `ill haveta wait, Cody.

TEASPOON enters carrying a package. BUCK follows.

BUCK goes past TEASPOON to his BUNK and starts to change.

TEASPOON (CONT'D)

Buck brought this here package- come all the way from Wash-ing-ton D.C.. It's gotta go upta Fort Reno, special delivery. Now I know that's off the route, but there's a bonus in it for ya. Figure the only fair way was ta give it to the next rider up after HICKOK and that means you.

CODY

What!?

HICKOK smiles gleefully as TEASPOON hands CODY the package.

TEASPOON

Now ya don't have to thank me, its an easy ride for a bonus and all, but a job's a job. Shouldn't take no more then a day or two. I'll try to make it up ta the rest of the boys, here.

CODY

Damn it all! Ain't fair!

CODY storms out with the package. TEASPOON can't understand why he's upset.

HICKOK

Poor, poor Cody.

BUCK

(looks between the Kid and HICKOK)

Was this about a pretty little Blond with eyes as blue as the sky?

KID is surprised. HICKOK'S eyes narrow.

KID

How'd ya know?

HICKOK

Yeah, what of her?

BUCK shrugs with a knowing smile as he puts his best shirt on.

EXT. PORCH - MORNING, DAY ONE

EMMA and SAM are talking. SARA comes out carrying a pie.

CODY gallops by, madder than hell.

SAM

Whoa, who lit a fire under him? Well, Emma, we best be on our way.

EMMA

Are you sure you don't want to come?

SARA

I'll be fine. I just need to rest. But you promised to enter my pie in the contest.

EMMA

That's right...

(takes pie)

And the prize money will go to the baby, like I said. Now, Ike should be coming in some time soon. He'll be tired and won't go into town. I've asked him to stay in the house with you. Just holler if you need him.

SARA

I'll be fine. Now go on! Have a good time.

EXT. BLUE CREEK - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

where SAM is escorting EMMA along.

SAM

Your cousin seems to be holding up well.

EMMA

Yeah, she puts up a good front. It's hard though. I'm just glad she's gonna stay here to have the baby so I can help her.

SAM

So she is gonna stay?

EMMA

Just to have the baby- then she'll head back East. She doesn't want to live here with me and she won't go on. Gonna sell the track of land from here, so pass the word along.

SAM

Well, it's about time for the pie contest and since I'm officiation'...

They pass by BUCK, who has the PRETTY LITTLE BLOND on his arm.

BLOND

Is it true what they say about Indians?

BUCK

I don't know. What do they say?

BLOND

(with mock shyness)

You know, that they're- that they keep these harems of women because one women isn't enough?

BUCK stops dead in his tracks, speechless. He gulps as she bats her eyes innocently. Finally, he takes her arm again.

BUCK

I think the pie contest is about to begin...

They pass by KID and LOU.

KID

Well, it look like Buck won out with the pretty little blond.

LOU

Just as well, or there'd never be any peace between Hickok and Cody.

KID

So, ya glad ya came, Mister?

LOU

Yes, Sir! Most I've won in a long time. `Sides... I always like bein' with ya, Kid.

KID

Me too.

(awkward silence)

Oh, I think it's time for the contest. Let's see how Sara's pie does.

EXT. EMMA'S STABLES - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

where HICKOK is leading his horse out to be ready when the rider comes in. He is startled by a SHOT fired near the HOUSE.

HICKOK starts for the HOUSE, drawing his gun.

He comes around the CORNER and sees SARA slumped over the WELL, clutching her belly with one hand. A rifle is on the GROUND beside her.

HICKOK

Sara!

HICKOK dashes up to her. She is gasping and in pain, feeling the contractions.

SARA

I was tryin' to get some water... stabbin' pain... I tried- I tried to holler- I, oh my God, the pain! Please...

HICKOK

Alright, alright. We gotta get ya up to bed.

HICKOK scoops SARA up in his arms and heads for the HOUSE.

INT. PARLOR - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

where HICKOK enters, carrying SARA. He takes her to the nearest COUCH and lays her down.

SARA

My baby- I can't loose the baby!

HICKOK

You ain't goin' to. Not if I can help it...

SARA curls up to get relief.

HICKOK (CONT'D)

...You need a doctor.

HICKOK turns and starts for the DOOR.

SARA

No! Don't- don't leave me! You gotta help me, please!

He comes back to the COUCH.

HICKOK

But you need a doctor. I've never- I don't- I can't-

SARA

I'll tell you- I tell you what to do. I've just got to rest now. Maybe the contractions will stop. Please, just stay with me.

HICKOK

Alright, I'll stay. It ain't right- you need a doctor- but I'll stay. Just rest up now. Maybe that's all ya need is just rest.

HICKOK pulls up a CHAIR and takes her hand.

SARA feels the strength of his hand, takes a deep breath, and closes her eyes to relax. She doesn't see HICKOK'S concern.

EXT. BLUE CREEK, PIE CONTEST PLATFORM - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

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SAM is addressing the CROWD. Behind him is a TABLE laden with pies and several distinguished, portly GENTLEMEN.

KID and LOU come up by BUCK and BLOND, who are near the edge.

SAM

...And after much careful deliberation, the winner is... Pie #3...

SAM goes to the TABLE and opens the envelope by Pie #3.

SAM (CONT'D)

...Belonging to Mrs Sara Gilmore!

LOU, KID and BUCK cheer as EMMA gets on the PLATFORM.

SAM (CONT'D)

Acceptin' for her cousin is Miss Emma Shannon of the Pony Express.

EMMA proudly takes the prize money.

EXT. HILLY AREA AND WAGON CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

showing CODY riding hard. A faint sound catches his ear and he slows to listen. It's the faint SOUND OF A WAILING baby.

CODY turns his horse to follow it. He tops a BLUFF and sees WAGON stopped in a clearing.

CODY approaches it cautiously with gun drawn.

Coming around the WAGON, he sees a CAMPSITE.

A MAN is lying on the ground a little ways off. Closer to the DYING FIRE lies a WOMEN.

A 15 month old toddler girl BETSY is squatting by the MAN, hitting his face to wake him up. She straightens, waddles to the WOMAN and squats to hit her on the face, all the while WAILING.

CODY'S face registers shock, realizing they must be dead. BETSY starts to go back to the MAN as CODY jumps off.

CODY

What in the hell happened here?!

BETSY is startled by his voice and CRIES even louder.

CODY goes to the WOMAN. BETSY waddles back and hits her face to show him she won't wake up. CODY crouches down and touches the body.

CODY (CONT'D)

Just as I was afraid, she's dead. He's probably too.

CODY stands up, realizing the dilemma.

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CODY (CONT'D)

And it looks like you're the only one left...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

CODY is looking down at BETSY and then around.

CODY
...Well, we're vulnerable out in the open like
this. I guess I gotta take you with.

CODY notices a locket on the WOMEN. He takes it off and reads
inside.

CODY (CONT'D)
"To my darling Betsy". I guess Betsy was your
Maw. I don't know what else to call ya.

He pockets the locket.

BETSY stops CRYING and lifts her arms to him, indicating she wants
to be picked up. CODY moves around the BODY to get BETSY.

CODY (CONT'D)
Whoa! You stink! I don't know nuthin' `bout`
these kinda things! Now what?

EXT. BLUE CREEK, PIE CONTEST PLATFORM - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

KID is sitting at the TABLE with two other BOYS in front of pies.
LOU is near by watching. One SEAT is still empty and the JUDGE is
acting as barker.

JUDGE
Just one more! We just need one more!

KID spots BUCK strolling by with BLOND.

KID
(pointing)
There. He'll do it.

JUDGE
Him?

KID nods.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
You there! How's your appetite?!

BUCK glares at KID, not liking to be part of a spectacle. LOU joins
in the fun by sauntering to him like a tough boy.

BUCK
I eat my share.

JUDGE
Well! Here's your chance to eat more than your
share! For the grnd prize, step right up here!

LOU
(punching him on arm)
Yeah, lessee if ya can hold your own.

EVERYONE is watching him, including the BLOND. Reluctantly, BUCK goes up and sits down next to KID.

BUCK
(whispering)
I will get you for this.

Four matronly WOMEN drape sheets around them for bibs.

KID
(whispering back)
Awww c'mon, have some fun.

BUCK
(between smiling teeth)
This is not my idea of fun.

JUDGE
Gentleman! The rules are simple! Hands behind your back and the first one to eat their pie wins!
(draws pistol)
On you're mark...get set...go!

The JUDGE FIRES and the BOYS dive into their pies. LOU encourages them on.

LOU
Come on! You can do it! Eat! Eat!

BUCK finishes his pie first. The JUDGE grabs his hand and hoists it up. LOU whoops it up as the CROWD cheers.

JUDGE
And the winner!

BUCK stands up and wipes the pie off his face.

CROWD cheers louder. BLOND rushes up to him.

KID and the other BOYS stand up, wiping their faces.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Well, there ya go, folks! The Pony Express can hold their own with pies! And here is your prize!

WOMAN comes out carrying another pie.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
A special apple pie made by our very own Abigail McFirsten!

BUCK just shakes his head and groans while LOU laughs hard. KID is done cleaning his face.

KID

Well, for someone who didn't wanna do it, ya sure packed it a way quick. Congratulations!

BUCK

Which is why I really don't want this one.

BUCK slams the pie in KID'S face and starts laughing.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

SARA is in BED trying to sleep. The contractions have stopped and they were able to move her up. There is still pain, however.

SARA opens her eyes and sees HICKOK is still there and smiles weakly. He has taken off his coat and pulled a CHAIR up by the BED.

SARA

You're still here.

HICKOK

Course I am. Feelin' better?

SARA shakes her head, grimacing. She takes a deep calming breath.

SARA

Tell me about yourself, James.

HICKOK

(blushes, shrugs shyly)

Ain't much to tell. Tell me about your husband.

SARA lays back, staring at the CEILING and reminiscing.

SARA

Andrew was just like you...

(glances at HICKOK, then looks away)

...strong, but kind and gentle. We use to sit by the fire at night. He'd read to me-

SARA turns back on her side, facing him, her eyes gleaming.

SARA (CONT'D)

Read to me now.

HICKOK is startled by the request.

HICKOK

I don't read much. Lou's been tryin' to show me, but...

SARA grimaces in pain, then takes a deep breath. HICKOK looks around.

All that's insight is her Bible on the NIGHT STAND. He picks it up.

SARA

Please. Psalm 23.

HICKOK opens the Bible where the marker was.

HICKOK

(clears throat, then squints at page)
"The...Lord is- my...shep-, shep-herd, shepherd.
I shall- not want. He make-th, maketh me
to...lie down in green.."

SARA sighs as she transfers all her attention to him.

EXT. WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

CODY riding along at a walk. BETSY is in front of him, clutching the horn with one hand and his soft hat with the other.

CODY

I'll take ya to the Fort. Someone'll wanna take ya there. Some woman dyin' for a baby. Can't see why women keep havin' babies. It's too much work. Took me a helllluv a long time to change your clothes!

BETSY slumps forward and looses her grip as she is getting sleepy. CODY struggles with the reigns and keeping her on, which slows them more.

CODY (CONT'D)

Am I borin' ya? Come on, Betsy, wake up! We can't stop out here for a nap. We gotta keep goin'.

CODY stops the horse, puts his hand to his eyes to block the sun and looks around.

CODY (CONT'D)

Think you'll ever gimme my hat back? Nah, we can't stop here. It's too open, not safe.

BETSY rubs her eyes and slumps back against him. CODY sighs in exasperation.

EXT. EMMA'A STATION - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

where a tired IKE comes riding in. He starts worrying when he sees there is no waiting rider to pass the mail to. He reigns in, looking around.

HICKOK sticks his head out of a TOP FLOOR WINDOW.

HICKOK

Ike! Up here!

IKE signs and holds up the mail bag.

HICKOK (CONT'D)

It's Sara! Somethin's wrong with the baby.

IKE responds with a sign.

HICKOK (CONT'D)

Yeah, its bad! Now git goin'! Git the doctor and Emma!

IKE nods and starts off.

HICKOK ducks his head back in and closes the WINDOW.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

HICKOK turns from the WINDOW back to SARA.

HICKOK

Ike's gonna git help. You just keep hanging on.

HICKOK takes her hand again and she clutches it in pain.

EXT. WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

CODY has doubled his blanket around BETSY and then strapped her to him. She is sleeping since she doesn't have to hold on as they ride along at a better pace.

CODY is wearing his much crumpled hat and grumbling to himself.

CODY

My new hat! Don't care if its soft n cuddly. It ain't a teddy bear. Ain't gonna git your pudgy little fingers on it again! Babies!...

EXT. BLUE CREEK STREET - LATE AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

showing KID and LOU crossing the STREET, laughing and talking as LOU counts her winnings. They stop as they see IKE come in.

LOU

Here comes Ike. Boy, I would have been too tired to come after a long run.

IKE reins in by them and they see he is anxious.

KID

Ike, what is it? What's wrong?

IKE signs.

KID (CONT'D)

Now?!

LOU

Ike, you didn't leave her there alone, did ya?

IKE signs.

KID
Good! HICKOK stayed. Someone'll have to take the mail. You got the bag with ya?

IKE hands KID the mail bag.

KID (CONT'D)
Lou, you-

LOU
(reaching for bag)
I'll take it.

KID
No, I'm up next. You git Emma and git her back to the house.

LOU nods and runs off.

KID (CONT'D)
(pointing down street)
Katie's hitched down there.

IKE nods and extends his hand. The KID uses it as leverage to jump on in back of him.

They cantor down to the horse.

As they reach KATIE, KID jumps off, jumps on KATIE and heads off into the dusk.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON, DAY ONE

SARA is biting her lip trying to keep from crying out. HICKOK is finishing the last Psalm.

HICKOK
(proudly)
"Let everything that hath breath praiseth the Lord." Shall I go on to Pra-? Pro-verbs? I'm-

SARA cries out and HICKOK jumps up.

HICKOK (CONT'D)
The pain's gittin' worse.

SARA nods, tears and sweat streaming down her face.

SARA
Yes... the contractions started. I think- I think the baby's comin'!

HICKOK
(goes to the window and looks out)
Damn it! Where are they!

SARA
You gotta help me! I can't- I can't loose the baby!

HICKOK

(coming back to Sara, taking her hand again)
We won't! Now tell me what to do.

SARA

Catch the- catch the baby as it comes-Make sure
it breaths! Boil some water-need a knife... for
the cord.

HICKOK

Alright, I've gotta knife. I'll go git the
water. You'll be alright?

SARA

Hurry! Just- hurry!

EXT. CODY'S CAMPSITE - EVENING, DAY ONE

A FIRE is going with a small animal roasting over it.

BETSY is sitting on the BLANKET nearby, hugging his hat as CODY
goes through the saddle bag. He is on the other side of the horse
from her.

CODY

Just stay there, Betsy. Don't wander off.
(pops head up)
Still there?

BETSY laughs when she sees his head pop up from behind the horse.

CODY (CONT'D)

Are you laughin' at me?
(looks back down)
Lessee, what can I feed her? Betsy, how `bout
some jerky?

BETSY laughs again.

CODY (CONT'D)

Alotta help you are. Good thing I caught that
ground hog.

CODY looks down again and quickly pops back up. BETSY laughs again.
He comes around to her with some biscuits. He doesn't realize she
thought he was playing peek-a-boo from behind the horse.

CODY (CONT'D)

What is so funny? Good thing I packed some
biscuits. Here ya go.

He hands her a biscuit and starts fixing the ground hog.

BETSY stares at the big, hard biscuit and then holds it up to him.

CODY (CONT'D)

No, you're suppose to eat it. Oh, hang on a
minute.

He takes the biscuit, breaks it up into little pieces and places them in her lap. She starts eating happily.

CODY (CONT'D)

Yeah, Emma's a good cook! I looove her biscuits- all big and fluffy...

CODY starts cutting pieces of the animal and extends her a leg.

CODY (CONT'D)

Here we go, here's a leg for ya.

BETSY looks at it and then looks at him waiting. He also notices she is a mess with crumbs all over her.

CODY (CONT'D)

I gotta cut this up, too? Boy, you eat messy and I ain't got more clothes for ya. What can I...?

He looks down at his new bandanna and takes it from his neck.

CODY (CONT'D)

Hat's ruined, might as well ruin this.

He ties the bandanna around her neck like a bib.

He then takes the leg and cuts the meat off and puts it on his plate. The plate goes in front of her.

BETSY picks up a piece and extends it to him.

CODY (CONT'D)

No, that's yours. I got my own.

She shoves it in her mouth and eats the rest.

CODY gets the canteen out, pours some water into his tin and hands it to her. She tries to drink, but spills most of it.

CODY (CONT'D)

Oh, no! I guess I shoulda helped ya.

(holds cup for her)

That works better. Damn, this is a chore! When do I gotta eat?

INT. BLUE CREEK BARN DANCE - EVENING, DAY ONE

where LOU bursts in. The place is CROWDED and a SQUARE DANCE is in full swing. She strains to look through the CROWD.

LOU sees BUCK and BLOND off to the side in a CORNER where she is trying to teach him to dance.

BLOND

Step two-three, step two- no, it's the right foot.

BUCK
I'm sorry. I'm not use to this kind of dance.
Maybe if we just watch?

BLOND
(pouting)
Nooo! You can do it. Just-

LOU dashes up.

LOU
Buck! Where's Emma?!

BUCK
(points to square dance)
Out there. What's wrong?

LOU starts off and shouts back over her shoulder.

LOU
Sara's baby's comin'! You git Emma. I'll git
Teaspoon. Ike's out with the horses.

BUCK
I've gotta go.

BUCK disappears into the CROWD as BLOND stamps her foot.

EXT. CODY'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT, DAY ONE

where CODY is laying BETSY down on his BLANKET. She is still
clutching his hat. He gets up and sits down by his saddle.

CODY
Okay, Betsy, g'night.

BETSY sits up and starts to CRY.

CODY (CONT'D)
Oh, please Betsy! We gotta git some sleep! We
gotta git an early start mornin'.

She is still CRYING.

CODY (CONT'D)
Alright! I tell ya a story. Babies like stories.
Lessee, I was ridin' through Indian territory. I
had a real important package from... ah... the
President!

The CRYING gets louder.

CODY (CONT'D)
Awwww, c'mon Betsy! Ya can't cry all night!

BETSY extends her arms to him, wanting to be picked up. He goes and
picks her up. Once she is in his arms she snuggles and lays her
head on his shoulder.

CODY (CONT'D)

Great, just great! How am I supposed to sleep?

NEW ANGLE -

showing the FIRE getting low. CODY is laying against his saddle with BETSY snuggled against him. She is sound asleep.

CODY (CONT'D)

How am I supposed to sleep with a baby all over me? I need this.

Carefully, he extracts his hat from her hands. She moves and he holds his breath, thinking she's going to wake up.

BETSY settles a bit and grabs the fringe of his coat. CODY sighs, settling back and putting the hat over his face.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - NIGHT, DAY ONE

where HICKOK and SARA are in the midst of delivery.

HICKOK

Now! Push! Give it all you got... I got the head! Damn it's so small! Come on... almost! Shoulder's out...

SARA gives one more heave then falls back on the pillows exhausted. The silence is broken by the first CRY of the baby.

SARA

How is the baby- my baby?

HICKOK

Ten fingers, ten toes... It looks like everything's there. It's such a tiny bugger! And... it's a boy!

SARA starts to cry out of joy and exhaustion. HICKOK hands her the baby he has wrapped in a blanket.

SARA

Andrew James...

HICKOK is beside himself, overwhelmed by what has happened.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CODY'S CAMPSITE - MORNING, DAY TWO

where BETSY is awake, running her fingers through the fringe on his coat. CODY is SNORING under the hat.

Finally, BETSY slowly lifts up the hat and peeks underneath. CODY wakes with a start while BETSY laughs.

INT. PARLOR - MORNING, DAY TWO

where HICKOK and EMMA are pacing, waiting. They look ragged from a long night.

HICKOK stops as he sees the DOCTOR come down. They go to him.

DOCTOR

(to Emma)

You did a fine job. Wouldn't have done any different.

EMMA

(gestures to HICKOK)

I didn't. He did.

DOCTOR does a double take.

FRONT DOOR opens and SAM, LOU, IKE, and BUCK enter.

HICKOK

And the baby?

SAM

How are they?

DOCTOR shakes head.

DOCTOR

Heartbeat's weak, breathing ragged. Its really small, came too soon. If it makes it through the week, it'd be a miracle. There's nothing more I can do.

EMMA

Thank you, Doctor. Come have some breakfast before you head back.

HICKOK

May I see her now?

DOCTOR

Sure, she's fine. Just needs to rest some.

HICKOK goes up the stairs. EMMA surveys the rest of them.

EMMA

Where's Mr Spoon?

BUCK

Ah, he hasn't come back yet. We couldn't find him.

IKE signs.

LOU

Yeah, I suppose he's sleepin' it off somewheres.

EMMA

Well, I suppose there wasn't much he could do anyhow.

(directly to Sam)

I do appreciate you all comin' back though. Let's get you all some breakfast.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - MORNING, DAY TWO

showing HICKOK knock on the door.

SARA (OC)

Come in.

HICKOK enters.

SARA is propped up in bed holding the baby. She is delighted to see him as he goes and pulls the CHAIR back up to her BEDSIDE. Then her face turns to worry.

SARA

He's so small, James.

HICKOK

Well, yeah, but he's got fightin' spirit! Just like his maw.

HICKOK brushes a stray hair off her face as she smiles at him.

EMMA enters, carrying a bowl. She stops as she watches HICKOK'S action and looks concerned. Finally, she continues in.

EMMA

Well, you seem to be holdin' up. I brought ya some soup.

SARA looks at EMMA then at HICKOK, reluctant to let go of the baby.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Here, I can take the baby.

EMMA starts to put the bowl down, but HICKOK beats her to it.

HICKOK

Oh, I got the little fella.

SARA gives the baby to HICKOK and takes the soup.

She watches, smiling with contentment as HICKOK settles back in the chair.

HICKOK (CONT'D)

(soft voice to the baby)

Look at that! I can hold you with one hand. But someday you'll be as big as me! I can teach you to ride...

EMMA is forgotten.

INT. STAIRWAY - LATE MORNING, DAY TWO

EMMA is at the bottom gazing up. SAM comes up beside her.

SAM

The baby will pull through. Doin' fine so far.

EMMA

Hickok's been up there since-

SAM

Well I'm sure he's feelin' a mighty responsibility- deliverin' the baby and all.

EMMA

I'm afraid he's becomin' too attached to-

SAM

To your sister.

EMMA

Don't git me wrong- Hickok's a good boy- but its not right. She's vulnerable now and he's just overwhelmed. Instant family... but he ain't ready to settle down.

EXT. WILDERNESS - AFTERNOON, DAY TWO

CODY is riding along with BETSY strapped to him as before.

CODY

I couldn't do it, Betsy. I just couldn't leave ya with a fort-whore. You're much better off with me.

CODY spots an INDIAN WAR PARTY in the distance.

CODY (CONT'D)

Damn it all... I don't think they seen us yet.

He heads for some BRUSH to hide behind. BETSY clutches his hat even tighter, sensing the danger.

CODY (CONT'D)

Okay, Betsy, this isn't peek-a-boo or nothin'. This is serious. Ya gotta stay real quite like and they'll pass us by.

BETSY stares at him with wide eyes, but she seems to understand.

The WAR PARTY passes them by. CODY waits until he's sure they are long gone and then he heads out.

CODY (CONT'D)

We did it, Betsy! You did good. I think we make a pretty good team! I just need my own hat...

EXT. BUNKHOUSE PORCH - AFTERNOON, DAY TWO

where BUCK is sitting on the STEPS making a small leather medicine bag.

LOU and IKE come out of the BUNKHOUSE. IKE sits down next to BUCK while LOU remains standing near by.

LOU

Whatta ya doin'?

IKE signs.

LOU (CONT'D)

Medicine bag? Like what you've got?

BUCK

It's for protection.

LOU sees EMMA come out of the HOUSE and start towards them.

She goes and meets EMMA half way.

LOU

How's the baby?

EMMA

Still breathin'. I `spect you boys will be gittin' hungry for supper.

LOU

I can do it.

EMMA looks surprised.

LOU (CONT'D)

You go be with Sara so's Hickok can come down and eat. He's been up there all day.

EMMA

You noticed too?

LOU nods.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You sure?

LOU

(shrugs shoulders)

Sure, I've fixed up grub before.

EMMA

You're a good boy, Lou.

LOU turns away to suppress a smile.

BUCK passes them and on his way to the HOUSE.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON, DAY TWO

SARA is sleeping. There is a small BASKET beside her which has the baby. HICKOK is slumped down in the CHAIR dozing.

BUCK enters unheard.

As he puts the medicine bag in the BASKET, HICKOK jerks up.

He is shocked anyone got past him without hearing it. BUCK puts a finger to his lips so she isn't disturbed.

HICKOK gets up and they go to stand BY THE DOOR.

HICKOK

What is that?

BUCK

A medicine bag.

HICKOK

Like you have?

BUCK nods.

BUCK

It protects and brings good to the wearer.

HICKOK

I really don't take much stock in spiritual things. I suppose anything that can help...

HICKOK goes back to the CHAIR.

BUCK sees that he is smitten with SARA and the baby. EMMA enters and they exchange concerned looks.

INT. BUNK HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON, DAY TWO

where LOU sets the pot down on the TABLE. IKE, BUCK, SAM and TEASPOON help themselves.

TEASPOON is looking a little ragged. HICKOK is talking a mile a minute.

HICKOK

...and then she pushed and there it was in my hands. I'm tellin' ya, its a miracle. All that pain, and then, and then this little fella. Andrew James, that's for me. That tiny little-

LOU

Hickok! Women've been givin' birth for hundreds of years.

IKE signs.

BUCK

That's right, all the time.

HICKOK

I know it, but not to me! Its just amazin'. And its so tiny...

(then quite voice in awe)

...it's gonna grow up to be a boy.

LOU rolls her eyes and sighs.

HICKOK (CONT'D)

I'm gonna teach him how to shoot, how to ride...

Concerned looks are exchanged that HICKOK doesn't see.

TEASPOON

Speakin' of riding. Cody's sure takin' his time.

BUCK

I wonder what's keepin' `em?

IKE smirks and signs.

TEASPOON

Well, some of them fort-whores can git pretty wild. I remember one by Fort Bridger. Lessee, what was her name? Etta, it was-

HICKOK gets up. He's barely touched his plate.

HICKOK

Thank's Lou. I best be gittin' back to Sara.

More concerned looks. SAM just shakes his head.

EXT. CODY'S CAMPSITE - EVENING, DAY TWO

CODY and BETSY are by the FIRE.

CODY

Good thing I got some food at the fort. Though I reckon it ain't gonna be as good as Emma's.

He takes his bandanna from his neck and puts it around her for a bib. BETSY claps her hands.

CODY (CONT'D)

That's right! It's chow time.

CODY breaks up some bread and meat, on puts it on the plate and sets it down in front of her. They have established a routine.

BETSY takes a chunk and extends it to him.

CODY (CONT'D)

No, Betsy, that's yours. I got my own.

She pops it in her mouth and starts eating.
CODY pours some water into the tin.

CODY (CONT'D)

Now you let me know when ya want some water and I'll help ya.

(starts eating)

Not bad, but not as good as Emma's. Wait'll ya taste Emma's cookin', Betsy! Sure is somethin' ta look forward to after a long ride.

BETSY stops eating and points to the cup.

CODY (CONT'D)

Water? Okay.

He helps her with the water. Then they both continue eating.

EXT. PORCH - EVENING, DAY TWO

showing EMMA with SAM, who is getting ready to leave.

SAM

The way he was talkin'- you might be right.

EMMA

I was afraid so. Well thanks, Sam for everything.

SAM

Lemme know how it goes. G'night, Emma.

EXT. CODY'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT, DAY TWO

CODY is sitting up against his SADDLE with BETSY on his lap facing him. He is holding her hands, obviously taken with her.

CODY

Okay, Betsy, we'll git you ready for ridin', so when your legs are long enough, you'll be all ready!

He bounces her on his lap playing horsy.

CODY (CONT'D)

Your ridin' after those bad guys on your speedy horse, just like Lou!

BETSY is laughing.

CODY (CONT'D)

And you jump over a log! They're gittin' away! We gotta move faster.

He moves his legs faster and she laughs even more

CODY (CONT'D)

And they turn to the left! And they turn to the right! Closer and closer! You catch them!

One final bounce and CODY stops. BETSY laughs and claps.

CODY (CONT'D)

Then what? Well, lessee, Hickok would probably wanna shoot `em.

BETSY listens intently with big eyes.

CODY (CONT'D)

But then the Kid would probably say we gotta tie `em up and leave `em for the sheriff. And Lou would be eyein' `im cause Lou's really a girl. Shhh, ya gotta keep it a secret. We promised so's she could keep ridin'. And Ike would be signing away, flappin' his arms at us all. Buck use ta haveta translate, but now we all know what he's sayin' with his hands.

BETSY starts yawning and rubbing her eyes.

CODY (CONT'D)

Buck's another character. He's a real half Indian. They're all characters, I tell ya. Wait'll ya see `em. The only reason I stick around is cause they need me! Well, its about time ya got sleepy. I didn't know entertainin' babies was such hard work.

He settles down against the SADDLE with her. She grabs a handful of fringe.

CODY (CONT'D)

(fondly)
G'night, Betsy.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT, DAY TWO

SARA is still sleeping with the BASKET beside her.

HICKOK is asleep in the CHAIR.

Suddenly, he jerks up and looks around, startled. He sees SARA is fine and smiles. Then he looks in the basket.

EXT. EMMA'S STATION - LATE NIGHT, DAY TWO

showing a dark and quite place. Suddenly, there is a SCREAM. Lights appear in the HOUSE and in the BUNKHOUSE.

TEASPOON comes out of the TACK HOUSE with a rifle.

YOUNG RIDERS:"Delivery", King - ACT THREE 29.

IKE, BUCK and LOU dash out of the BUNKHOUSE, guns drawn and start for the HOUSE.

They're on the PORCH as the DOOR opens.

HICKOK comes out carrying the BASKET which has a blanket over it. Tears are streaming down his face.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. LITTLE MOUND - MORNING, DAY THREE

EMMA, LOU, IKE, BUCK and TEASPOON are turning away from a little MOUND and heading back to the HOUSE. The mound has a cross by it from which hangs the medicine bag.

IKE lags, seeing HICKOK is still staring down at the MOUND.

IKE goes back to him and puts a hand on his shoulder. He starts to sign, but HICKOK shrugs him off.

HICKOK

Lemme alone.

IKE nods moves off sorrowfully.

EXT. CODY'S CAMPSITE - MORNING, DAY THREE

showing CODY sleeping under his hat. It doesn't sound like real SNORING coming from under the hat. BETSY is awake and yanks on his fringe. He doesn't move.

BETSY sits up and peeks under the hat. CODY doesn't move.

BETSY stands up, her face showing some alarm. She whips the hat off and CODY springs up and grabs her.

CODY

Peek-a-boo!

BETSY SQUEALS with delight as he swings her around.

CODY (CONT'D)

Off we go home, go home, go home!

He swings her around and then stops. He holds her close as he realizes he will have to give her up.

EXT. LITTLE MOUND - LATE MORNING, DAY THREE

HICKOK is sitting beside the MOUND.

BUCK and IKE approach and crouch down on each side of him. HICKOK is ready to talk.

HICKOK

(still looking at mound)

He just came and went. There was so much I wanted to do for him.

BUCK

But you did do a lot for the time he had. You brought him into the world.

HICKOK shrugs, it's not enough

IKE signs. BUCK nods in agreement.

BUCK (CONT'D)

And you cared for him. Somethin' more then some
of us ever had.

HICKOK looks up, first at BUCK and then at IKE. IKE nods to back
the statement.

HICKOK extends his hands to them both. They smile, get up and help
him up. He points to the medicine bag.

HICKOK

That thing of yours didn't work.

BUCK

Everything has its own purpose.

HICKOK shrugs and they walk away.

INT. HALLWAY, STAIRS AND PARLOR - AFTERNOON, DAY THREE

EMMA is closing the DOOR. Her face shows real concern.

EMMA goes down the STAIRS and into the PARLOR. LOU is waiting for
her.

LOU

How is she?

EMMA

She just lays there. Won't talk-

EMMA is interrupted by the DOOR opening. HICKOK comes in, followed
by IKE and BUCK.

HICKOK

How is she?

EMMA

She won't talk, won't cry. Nuthing.

HICKOK

Do you think she'd talk to me?

EMMA shrugs her shoulders, resigned.

EMMA

Give it a try, Hickok. Maybe she will.

INT. SARA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON, DAY THREE

HICKOK knocks on the DOOR. When there's no answer, he goes in
slowly.

SARA is laying on her other side facing the WALL.

HICKOK

Sara?

No response. HICKOK pulls the CHAIR up and sits down as he had been. He sees the Bible.

HICKOK (CONT'D)

Sara, how about if I read to you?

No response.

HICKOK (CONT'D)

Please say somethin', Sara. I feel the same way.

SARA

(small voice)

I've lost everything... Andrew... the baby...

HICKOK

But you haven't lost me. I told you I wouldn't leave you. I told you I'd help you.

Suddenly SARA turns on him with rage.

SARA

You said you'd help and now my baby is dead! Get out! I don't need your kind of help!

HICKOK backs out of the CHAIR shocked.

INT. HOUSE PARLOR - AFTERNOON, DAY THREE

where LOU, EMMA, BUCK and IKE hear the SHOUTING. HICKOK comes running down the stairs and out the DOOR.

BUCK and IKE start after him, but LOU stops them.

EMMA

I think you'd best leave him be now. That kind of rejectin' is hard.

EXT. BUNKHOUSE PORCH - AFTERNOON, DAY THREE

where IKE, BUCK, LOU and TEASPOON watch HICKOK ride out.

In the distance another rider is seen approaching at a walk.

BUCK

(standing up, squinting)

Looks like Cody. He's sure travelin' slow.

EVERYONE else stands up. IKE signs.

TEASPOON

Doesn't act like he's hurt.

They watch as HICKOK gallops by CODY, slows, circles around him, then starts back with him.

LOU

What is that in front of him?

BUCK squints, then turns back to them puzzled.

BUCK

It looks like a little girl.

LOU

What?! Are you sure?

TEASPOON

What in tarnations?

BUCK

Well, look for yourself.

LOU and IKE run off to meet him, followed by BUCK and TEASPOON.

They all crowd around CODY with BETSY as he walks in with HICKOK.

LOU

Well, William F. Cody! We didn't know you were a daddy!

IKE is excitedly signing questions.

TEASPOON

(seriously)

Ya shoulda told us ya had a family, son.

HICKOK jumps off his horse, then takes CODY'S reigns. CODY jumps off with BETSY. HICKOK leads the horses away having heard the story.

BETSY hugs CODY close as he heads for the BUNKHOUSE. LOU, BUCK and IKE follow.

TEASPOON turns for the HOUSE to get EMMA.

CODY

(to Betsy, rubbing her back soothingly)
There, there, pun'kin. We'll get ya some real food and settle ya down.

LOU

Well?! Who is she?

BUCK

Who's her mother?

INT. BUNKHOUSE - AFTERNOON, DAY THREE

as CODY enters carrying BETSY, followed by LOU, IKE and BUCK. CODY sets BETSY down on the edge of the TABLE and heads for the STOVE.

CODY

Got any oatmeal or stew or somethin'? We're both starved.

BETSY sits clutching CODY'S hat as she stares up at the trio.

IKE smiles warmly. BETSY smiles back and lifts her arms to him, indicating she wants to be picked up. IKE scoops her up.

LOU

She's so cute. Aren't ya, darlin'.

CODY stars banging pots around. LOU goes and shoves him from the STOVE.

CODY

And she could probably do with some milk.

LOU

Never mind the milk! I'll get ya some stew, just tell us about her!

EMMA, TEASPOON and HICKOK enter.

EMMA

I'll git it. Thanks, Lou.

CODY and LOU go back to the group. BETSY sees CODY and wants him to hold her. CODY takes her and sits down with her on his lap.

EVERYONE else sits down at the TABLE with them.

TEASPOON

Now, ya want to tell us `bout yer little friend here?

CODY

This is Betsy. Well, that's what I've been callin' `er. It was her maw's name.

EMMA sets a plate of stew down in front of him and hands him a napkin. CODY ties it around BETSY'S neck while talking.

CODY (CONT'D)

(matter-of-fact, use to the routine)

Lessee. I think it was half way to Fort Reno. I heard this cryin'-

BETSY grabs a meat chunk and holds it up to him.

CODY (CONT'D)

No, that's yours, Betsy. Anyhow, I found this campsite-

EMMA brings over a cup of milk. CODY takes it without thinking and holds it for BETSY to drink from.

CODY (CONT'D)

-and her maw and paw were dead. Poor Betsy here, was the only one left alive.

HICKOK and EMMA exchange glances.

CODY stops as he sees everyone staring with shock and surprise at how he's taking care of her.

CODY (CONT'D)

What are ya starin' at? Betsy and I have been through a lot together!

BUCK

Right, Paw.

INT. PARLOR - AFTERNOON, DAY THREE

LOU and BUCK are sitting on the COUCH watching IKE and BETSY. IKE is sitting on the FLOOR. BETSY is standing next to him stroking his bald head.

CODY, TEASPOON and EMMA are by the STAIRS.

TEASPOON

I'd say this works out the best all around.

CODY

Do you think she'll take her?

EMMA

(looking up stairs, smiling)

There's your answer.

They turn to see HICKOK helping SARA down the STAIRS and into the PARLOR.

CODY dashes around them and scoops up BETSY. He gives her a long hard hug and then presents her to SARA.

CODY

Betsy, this is Sara. She's gonna take care of you from now on.

SARA suddenly feels unsure of herself.

BETSY seems to understand. She gives CODY a long look and then holds her arms out to SARA. SARA starts crying and takes her.

CODY remembers the locket and pulls it out of his pocket. He hands it to SARA.

CODY (CONT'D)

Oh, she should have this.

SARA takes the locket.

SARA

When she's older, I will tell her about her real parents... and about the man who found her.

CODY and HICKOK exchange glances, the feeling of loss is mutual.

EXT. STATION - MORNING, DAY FOUR

SARA with BETSY, EMMA and TEASPOON are riding out on the buckboard. SARA is waving good-bye to LOU, IKE and BUCK who are on the PORCH.

CODY and HICKOK are holding the GATE open and wave as the buckboard passes through. They close the GATE behind them and watch the buckboard.

HICKOK

I feel like I've lost another family.

CODY

Yeah, know whatcha you mean. They kinda grow on ya.

HICKOK

I think its gonna be along while before I settle down again. A real long while.

CODY

Me too.

They turn away and head for the BUNKHOUSE.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - AFTERNOON, DAY FOUR

LOU, IKE, BUCK, HICKOK and CODY are around the TABLE, eating supper. HICKOK and CODY have been talking a mile-a-minute.

CODY

...and then she reached those chubby, cute little fingers and-

HICKOK

..and then she pushed up with and I delivered him. Andrew James, after me-

IKE signs.

LOU

Yeah, I guess this's all we'll be hearing now. Nothin' but a bunch of nannies.

CODY and HICKOK stop, subdued. TEASPOON calls from outside.

TEASPOON (OC)

Rider comin' in!

LOU jumps up and grabs her coat and hat.

LOU

I'm up- see ya later!

IKE stops her and signs with a smirk.

LOU (CONT'D)

I ain't lookin' for no babies!

KID enters with TEASPOON as LOU dashes out.

TEASPOON

No, no more babies! This here's the Pony Express, not some dang nursery.

KID

(over shoulder to Teaspoon)

Babies?! I thought Sara just had one?

IKE and BUCK look at each other and then at HICKOK and CODY start in again bragging about their babies.

BUCK gets up and offers his CHAIR to KID.

KID (CONT'D)

So tell me what happened.

CODY and HICKOK stop gabbing as BUCK puts on his hat and coat.

CODY

Where ya off to, Buck?

BUCK

Oh, I've heard this story enough already and I'm not up for another day yet- just thought I'd take a ride into town.

IKE signs.

KID

Oh! The Blond!

TEASPOON

There's a blond? Now what else did I miss?

CODY and HICKOK start to get up outraged. Their eyes lock in combat until the same idea dawns on them. They quickly sit down, subdued.

ALL are surprised at the sudden change.

CODY

Probably wants ta git married...

HICKOK

Probably wanna start a family real quick...

CODY

Lotsa kids...

CODY and HICKOK shudder at the thought and then hunker down over their stew.

HICKOK

I don't know no Blond.

CODY

Nope, me neither... safer that way.

HICKOK

Yep.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

YOUNG RIDERS:"Delivery", King - ACT FOUR 38.

THE END

Dedicated To
Elizabeth Audrey Finck
also known as
Betsy