

Wild Dead

By

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FADE IN:

INT. NO NAME SALOON - DAY

This saloon is four walls and a creaking slat floor. Only the bar, five men and a few chairs occupy the place. A sad looking bartender uses his fingernail to scratch unidentifiable crud off of a cracked glass. Four gamblers silently play cards.

From outside, they hear the heavy sound of approaching footsteps. One by one, the gamblers stop and watch the door. The bartender slowly slinks down, hiding behind the bar.

The famous bandito, PUNCH ZEDILLO, steps into the doorway. He's large-bellied but strong looking. He's dirty and sweaty without end. After a moment, he is joined by two other banditos, EDUARDO and PICO.

Punch steps up to the bar. He glances around briefly looking for the bartender. He shrugs and pours himself a drink.

Eduardo and Pico, casually resting their hands on their holstered guns, position themselves near the gamblers. The gamblers are starting to get nervous.

PUNCH

I don't like to come to these dust towns. No money here. No girls. Nothing but dust.

Punch finishes his drink. He picks up a different bottle and pours himself another.

PUNCH

I'm looking for someone.

He downs the second drink and carries the bottle over to the table. He kicks the chair of an especially TIMID looking gambler. Timid gets up quickly and

rushes over to the far side of the table from Punch. Punch sits in the chair and kicks his feet up.

PUNCH

I heard he came through here.

TIMID

(stuttering)

He said you'd show up.

PUNCH

Where is he now?

TIMID

You might still be able to catch him. He said he wa-was going to Ma-ma-ma.

PUNCH

Say it, asshole!

TIMID

Masada.

EXT. LANDSCAPE - EVENING

We fall upon a mountain range; gray, ominous and beautiful. Below it is a lush plain. It's springtime, although the mountains try to deny it. The town of Masada sits near the foot of the mountains. The setting sun is throwing an orange glow over everything.

From over the horizon, a rider races toward the town. After a moment three other riders appear. It's Punch and his men. All are riding hard. After another moment, a fourth rider appears, following behind.

EXT. MASADA MAIN STREET - EVENING

Only a few townsfolk populate the street in these last few moments of daylight. As the first rider speeds through, the people all quickly disappear. Punch is gaining. The first rider's horse suddenly takes a tumble and the rider goes down.

The three remaining riders pull their horses to a stop. It's Punch, Pico and Eduardo. They dismount and slowly approach the downed rider. Punch slings a long shotgun over his shoulder.

The fallen rider picks himself off the ground and mumbles a curse at the horse as it gets up. This is TWO DIAMOND JEFFERSON. He's wiry and young, no more than twenty. A shaggy mop of light brown hair covers his eyes, which are known to melt ill-prepared young women's hearts. He's a gambler and certainly not a fighter. He brushes the dirt off himself and pretends not to care about the three banditos moving toward him.

The fourth rider, unnoticed, slows his horse as he enters the town and quietly dismounts. BAR JEFFERSON is all muscle and brawn. He's in his late twenties but looks far more weathered. A war veteran, he now makes his way as a gun for hire.

PUNCH

Hey little man! I believe you have something that belongs to me.

Two Diamond looks around.

TWO DIAMOND

Me? I don't think so.

PUNCH

Don't think you're so smart. I know you have it.

Two Diamond reaches under his shirt and pulls out a key tied around his neck.

TWO DIAMOND

This?

Bar walks closer to them. The three banditos are still oblivious to his presence. Bar removes his guns from their holsters.

PUNCH

You stole it.

TWO DIAMOND

I didn't steal it. I won it with a hell of a full house.

PUNCH

You won it from the asshole that stole it from me.

TWO DIAMOND

That is a problem. You should probably take that up with the asshole, not me.

PUNCH

I already killed him.

Bar levels his guns on the backs of the Eduardo and Pico.

TWO DIAMOND

Well, that is something all right.

PICO

Give up the key.

TWO DIAMOND

I'll sell it back to you. Fair price.

Punch takes a step toward Two Diamond. Two Diamond backs up.

PUNCH

Just kill him already.

Pico and Eduardo reach for their guns. Punch hears two gunshots and smiles broadly. He then realizes that Two Diamond wasn't hit. He turns around and is met with the two barrels of Bar's guns pressed against his fat face. Before he can react, Two Diamond pistol whips him from behind and knocks him out.

Eduardo and Pico are still standing. They begin to stagger. They finger the holes in their chests and examine the blood on their hands. They collapse in life-less heaps.

Bar holsters his guns. Two Diamond and Bar stare at each other. Two Diamond beams a smile and Bar spits off to the side.

TWO DIAMOND

Hey, brother.

BAR

Hey yourself.

TWO DIAMOND

Delivered like on the wings of an angel.

Bar takes a telegram out of his pocket.

BAR

Your faith in the telegram service is inspiring.

TWO DIAMOND

You're here, ain't ya?

Bar leans down and examines the two dead men and then looks Punch over.

BAR

So who did I just kill?

TWO DIAMOND

I don't know those two. They can't be worth anything. The fat one is Punch Zedillo.

BAR

I know he's Punch Zedillo. What's that key to?

TWO DIAMOND

Damned if I know. He's been dogging me around the state trying to get it back. Thought we'd have more time to prepare for him here. Set up an ambush. He caught up fast though.

BAR

You summon me to this cow shit town to kill some men on your behalf. I usually get paid for that little brother.

Bar's look starts to wither Two Diamond.

TWO DIAMOND

(trying to charm)

I'll give you the key? If you're nice, I'll even split the bounty on Punch Zedillo with you, Bar.

Bar shakes his head and takes in his surroundings, the empty street, now dark with the sun completely down. He listens to the air a moment.

BAR

(calling out)

I want it written that I killed these men under common law. They were fixed on murdering my brother. That understood?

The brothers hear creaking sidewalk boards. Out of the darkness steps SHERIFF COCHRANE. His face is gnarled, his arm mangled and lifeless by his side. He walks with a terrible limp.

COCHRANE

It will.

BAR

Good.

COCHRANE

We got law in this town. One of those laws is you bury who you kill. You can dig a grave yourself or you can hire a Chinese. Helps keep things peaceful. Men are less likely to pull their pieces if it's going to cost them money or get their hands dirty.

BAR

I had my fill of burying bodies in the war. We'll pay.

COCHRANE

Who'd you fight with, son?

BAR

Sherman. Infantry. You?

COCHRANE

Stuart's Cavalry.

COCHRANE

Hell of a thing that was.

BAR

Yeah.

COCHRANE

Anyways, the cemetery is at the east edge of town. The Chinese district is a bit north.

TWO DIAMOND

This town got any action?

COCHRANE

Saloon down at the end of this street. You'll find some action there.

TWO DIAMOND

That's all I need to know. Where can we stash those two while I'm earning the money to pay a Chinamen?

COCHRANE

In the livery. That should be fine.

BAR

And the live one? I'm taking him in for bounty.

COCHRANE

I got a cell at my office. We got a drunk in there now, a mean one. I'm not in the mood for trouble tonight. You can leave him tied in the livery with his friends. Tie him good. He gets loose and runs wild, I'm holding you two responsible.

BAR

Understood sheriff.

Bar removes Punch's bullet bandolier and picks up his shotgun. He hands them to the sheriff.

BAR

Keep 'em. I don't want to haul these around.

COCHRANE

All right. Keep it to just these two you're having to bury tonight.

Cochrane limps off.

TWO DIAMOND

That man's the fucking specter of death.

BAR

There are worse looking ones than him that made it through.

Bar removes a bottle from his saddle bag and takes a long drink.

INT. LIVERY - NIGHT

Two Diamond finishes tying up Punch. He's tied him in a complicated series of knots that anchors him to his two dead comrades.

TWO DIAMOND

(admiring his handiwork)

I could'a been a sailor.

Bar pulls the bandito's horses into the stalls of the stable. He notices the whiskey bottle from the saloon in Punch's saddle bag. He takes it.

BAR

We can board our horses here, too.

TWO DIAMOND

I like to keep my horse nearby.

Especially if I am gambling. You never know.

EXT. MASADA MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The brothers walk their horses down the empty street. Bar nurses the bottle of whiskey.

BAR

So what are you calling yourself now?

TWO DIAMOND

"Two Diamond!" I won five hundred dollars with a two of diamonds.

BAR

How?

TWO DIAMOND

The rules of that particular hand were rather complicated. Anyways, I got the nickname "Two Diamond" from that incident. It happened up in Spearfish.

BAR

What were you doing all the way up in Spearfish?

TWO DIAMOND

Well, gambling, Bar. I'm a gambler. Spearfish was booming for awhile. Silver was found nearby-

BAR

I know. I worked for a spell protecting a silver run from there to Helena.

TWO DIAMOND

We might have been there at the same time. Funny, huh? Why'd you quit? Too easy for you?

BAR

I didn't quit.

Bar finishes the bottle and tosses it aside.

BAR

"Two Diamond," huh? Stupid name.

TWO DIAMOND

"Bar" ain't your given name, brother. And when some New York book writer comes out to do a dime novel called "The Man They Call Two Diamond" you won't think it's so stupid then.

BAR

We'll see.

TWO DIAMOND

There better be some action in this town. Masada? Talk about stupid names.

They approach the saloon and can hear some muffled crowd noise from inside. The doorway is covered with a thick piece of burlap. The sign above the door reads "Last Chance Saloon."

TWO DIAMOND

And every goddamn town has a saloon named that. There better be some action.

They hitch their horses outside.

BAR

This whole town seems pretty dead.

Bar walks up to the door and pulls back the burlap.

INT. LAST CHANCE SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The saloon is bursting with action. There are several tables of poker and faro. Whores make the rounds. A player piano, an extreme novelty out west, plays music in the corner. A large painting of a Roman orgy decorates the wall above the bar. The slick-haired bartender, WOODY, greets them with just a nod.

Two Diamond smiles at Bar.

TWO DIAMOND

These are some lively dead folks.

At one of the tables, a man's luck runs out and he pushes away from the table.

TWO DIAMOND

I got some burying money to earn.

Two Diamond nearly skips over to the table. This man loves to gamble. Bar walks to the saloon's bar. This man needs to drink.

BAR

Whiskey.

Woody obliges.

INT. LIVERY - NIGHT

Punch shakes himself awake and stares into the lifeless face of Eduardo. He starts to scream but catches himself. He takes a moment and then-

PUNCH

You stupid bastards.

Punch struggles against the ropes. He looks around the room for anything he can use to free himself. Finally he sees a wooden post that has been knocked loose. A long nail sticks out. Punch begins to crawl, like a worm, dragging the two dead men with him.

INT. LAST CHANCE SALOON - NIGHT

Two Diamond looks at his cards. He has nothing. He eyes the other players. Finally he throws in a bet.

TWO DIAMOND

I'm in.

Bar saunters over, obviously feeling loose from all the whiskey.

BAR

(whispering)

Hey little brother.

TWO DIAMOND

(whispering)

Call me Two Diamond.

Bar shrugs.

BAR

Two Diamond, you got the burial money yet?

Two Diamond takes a few dollars from his pile and hands them to Bar.

TWO DIAMOND

Yeah. Now can I finish my hand?

BAR

You gonna be awhile? 'Cause I...

Bar directs his attention to the bar where a dark haired whore, RACHEL, is waiting. She looks a little rough but under all the dirt and abuse, you can tell she is a pretty girl.

TWO DIAMOND

Go ahead. Don't catch anything on your Johnson.

Two Diamond goes back to his cards.

BAR

(humbly)

Can I borrow some coin?

Two Diamond laughs and hands him a few coins. Bar tussles his brother's hair and walks back to Rachel.

TWO DIAMOND

All right, where's the bet, dammit?

The game continues.

INT. LAST CHANCE SALOON - RACHEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rachel leads Bar inside her spartan quarters. As they talk, they slowly undress.

RACHEL

So you killed two men?

BAR

Today.

RACHEL

Any reason?

BAR

They were going to kill my brother.

RACHEL

But you didn't kill the third one?

BAR

No. He's worth money. More money
alive. The other two, ain't worth
shit.

As he removes his shirt, she sees several scars on
his arms and torso. She runs her fingers over them.

RACHEL

You're lucky.

BAR

Yeah.

She finds a bullet wound on his front shoulder and
traces it around to the exit wound on his back.

BAR

That was my first one. Shiloh. I was
seventeen.

Rachel pulls down her top revealing a long scar above
her left breast.

RACHEL

This was my first. Virginia City. I
was thirteen.

He runs his finger over it. Then runs a hand through
her hair.

RACHEL

You ready?

BAR

Yeah.

He pulls her closer.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BASE - NIGHT

As the trees on the mountain give way to the plain, the sounds of cracking branches and tumbling rocks disturb the quiet. A man, MR. CARSON comes shambling through the brush.

His clothes are tattered rags hanging loosely from his body. In the darkness, his face is obscured. He moves slowly and stumbles. He stops when he reaches the thick grass of the plain. In the distance, a few lights from the town flicker. Mr. Carson begins to move toward them.