

Lost Journey

By

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FADE IN:

INT. BARN - EVENING

CHARLES is tightening the last straps of his saddle against the stomach of his Choctaw horse. He is young though one would be hard pressed to guess his age. His face has seen better days. He is wearing a ten-gallon hat, and a 6-shooter rests upon his left hip. After he finishes clasping the last strap, he makes some final adjustments to the saddle itself. He lets out a sorrowful sigh as he does so.

The eerie Howl of a PRAIRIE WOLF stops Charles from the task at hand. He makes his way over to the door of the barn and looks in the direction from which the howl came. Unable to see anything, he turns and begins to make his way back to the horse. As he does so, the horse becomes jumping as the sound of another Howl fills the still air.

Charles walks to the horse and whispers something in his ear. The horse begins to calm at the sound of his voice. A mournful smile creeps over Charles' face as he begins to untie the horse from one of the pillars of the barn. As he climbs onto the horse with the reins in hand, he looks concerned as the horse lets out a soft NEIGH.

He turns to see a PRAIRIE WOLF sitting in the doorway of the barn. The Prairie wolf has a dark red hair which is starting to look rather stringy. Its bright piercing yellow eyes are able to read right through anyone. He sits there like a beloved family dog.

CHARLES  
Thought you left?

PRAIRIE WOLF  
Couldn't bring myself to lose sight of you friend.

PAUSE

So what's your destination?

CHARLES  
I have some unfinished business to take care of.

PRAIRIE WOLF  
Hm.

Charles notices the Prairie Wolf watching him as he makes himself comfortable in the saddle. After doing so, he looks

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into the eyes of the Prairie Wolf with an hatred that makes the Prairie Wolf sardonically smile.

CHARLES

So...am I to guess what has brought you here?

PRAIRIE WOLF

Why the need to depart from here dear friend?

CHARLES

There is something I have to -

PRAIRIE WOLF

Do you really need to act like this Charles? I thought we were past these petty lies.

Charles moves the horse closer to the Prairie Wolf without taking his eyes off of it. They stare at for a few moments without saying anything. The Prairie Wolf suddenly jumps at the sound of Charles cocking the 6-shooter.

CHARLES

My business is no concern of yours.

PRAIRIE WOLF

It always has been Charles. Now, how can you really bring yourself to leave? You still have so much to take care of.

CHARLES

What is left for me here?

PRAIRIE WOLF

Your family for one. And what about the others who are counting on you? Can really bring yourself to let these people come to a bitter end?

CHARLES

I taught them well. They will survive without me.

PRAIRIE WOLF

Possibly. But can you imagine a life without any one of them?

PAUSE

CHARLES

There's only one way to find out.

Charles whips the reins rather forcefully as he begins to steer the horse out through the barn door. He holds his head high as he passes the Prairie Wolf on his way out of the door. This causes the Prairie Wolf to let out a HOWL of sorrow as he follows suit a few moments later.

EXT. YARD - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Charles pulls the horse to a stop just to the east side of an old farm house. The two-story house is rustic with a porch that extends the entire length. The red paint is beginning to peel from weather damage. A heavy darkness can be seen filling the front door and the windows on either side. A tombstone can be seen onto a small on the other side of the house.

After taking it in, Charles guides the horse to the other end of the house. As he approaches the tombstone, he becomes aware of a EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL perched atop of it. Charles takes the revolver out of the holster and fires a shot into the sky in hopes that it will scare it off. The Eurasian Eagle-Owl lets out a squawk as it turns to look at Charles.

The feathers of the EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL are black and brown. Though she has lived well beyond his years, she is as fit as anyone younger than herself. Her orange eyes are the only things that show any type of emotion towards the world around her. A long scar can be seen running across the middle of her chest.

EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL

Looks like your planning on riding somewhere Charles. Any ideas on to where you might be heading?

CHARLES

Not a clue.

EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL

Doesn't that frighten you at all?

BEAT

CHARLES

Staying here scares me even more.

EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL

Staying here at least will give you some sort-

Both Charles and Eurasian Eagle-Owl become startled by Prairie Wolf suddenly appearing from behind a cactus not too far from them. As he begins to approach them, Prairie Wolf begins to grin rather wide for any wolf. His fangs are white as snow and sharp as a razor. A few of his lower teeth have begun to rotting away. The Eurasian Eagle-Owl jumps suddenly as a loud BANG rings across the night sky.

The Eurasian Eagle-Owl quickly turns to look at Charles just as he is place in 6-shooter back into its holster which rests on his left hip. She quickly turns just in time to see the Prairie Wolf run off scared towards the barn.

CHARLES

It had to be done.

PAUSE

EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL

So what's next move then Charles?

CHARLES

I plan to find the one's reasonable for what happened here tonight.

EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL

Are you sure you're prepared to find what ever it is your searching for?

CHARLES

What are you trying to tell me my friend?

EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL

What I am asking is this...are you certain you are ready to face whatever it is you are looking for?

Charles moves closer to the tombstone without ever taking his eyes off of Eurasian Eagle-Owl. As he does so, he becomes aware that there are hints of green in the Owl's eyes. Charles lets out a SIGH as he stares down at the Owl for a few moments. He is quite startled as the Owl flies up and sits on the head of the horse. The horse is unaware of what is going on and does not flinch under the talons of the Owl.

CHARLES

This must be done.

Charles pulls the reigns and begins to move the horse

around the side of the tombstone towards the other side of the hill. Eurasian Eagle-Owl watches him for a few moments before looking back towards the house. She then turns her gaze back and looks at Charles' weary eyes.

EURASIAN EAGLE-OWL

Aren't you afraid of what might happen to you?

CHARLES

I can handle anything that comes-

Charles has only gone a short distance, he hears a faint SHOUTING coming from behind him. He stops the horse and turns it back towards the house. As he squints in the darkness to see what ever it was, he is surprised to see someone leaning over the railing of the porch waving to him. He turns to ask the Owl who it might be but is shocked to see the Owl no longer on the horse's head in front of him.

As he looks back towards the house, Charles contemplates what his next move will be. After a few moments, he turns begins to move towards the house. A hint of disappointment sets in as he thinks to himself over the choice he just made.

Surprise fills his posture as Charles realizes that the person who called him back is his wife Sarah. He brings the horse to a stop without realizing he is doing so. A look of acceptance has set into Sarah's face as she watches him approach her.

Sarah is 45 years old. Her rough exterior and razor sharp mind put her well ahead of even the most educated man. She is wearing a faded blue dress and boots that have seen better days. Her teal-green eyes seem both piercing yet delicate given any situation. Her long brown hair is gently blowing in a soft breeze that has begun.

SARAH

Let's talk Charles. There's much to discuss.

Sarah turns and heads inside the house with an intensity Charles has seen only in the most harden men. Her FOOTSTEPS, thumping rather loudly, are the only things heard in the night. Charles watches all of this with the feeling of a guilty child. He shakes his head after a moment to lose the groggy feeling and brings the horse closer to the house.

Charles slips off the horse with as little effort as someone half his age. Upon getting his balance, he takes the reigns of the horse and ties them to the hitching post next to the steps that lead up to the porch. He then makes his way up the porch stairs towards the door, kicking any loose dirt off of his boots with each step.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Charles takes off his hat as he slowly steps into the house. He begins to place the hat on a peg in the wall as he kicks the door shut with the heel of his boot. Realizing he has not been for awhile, he slowly begins to take everything in.

Along the wall across from him is a fireplace with a few burnt pieces of wood. A small fire is grasping for its first few breaths of life. A large chair and a smaller rocking chair frame the fireplace on either side. A well sized table and a few chairs are just to the left of Charles. A large knife is resting upon the far side of the table. A stair case that leads to the second floor divides the kitchen from the rest of the house.

Sarah comes into the family room from the kitchen carrying a rather large cup of coffee. She sets it upon the table as she makes her way over to the rocking chair. She slowly sits into it and begins to rock rather slowly as she gazes into the fire.

CHARLES

So Sarah, what is -

SARAH

Come over and sit next to me  
Charles. I would like to look upon  
you once more.

Charles slowly makes his way over to the empty chair next to Sarah. As he passes the table, he grabs the cup of coffee in hopes that it will help him hide any nervous feelings about the situation. He takes a few sips out of the cup as he reaches the chair.

He sits in the chair and looks Sarah a few times over as he places the cup of coffee on the floor. Charles begins to relax as he lets out a deep SIGH of nervous relieve as he becomes comfortable in the chair. He suddenly jumps in fear as Sarah looks at him with such a intensity that he has never seen in her.

CHARLES

So...what is there left to say?

SARAH

Have you already forgotten my sweet. Let's talk once more before you leave.

CHARLES

What's left to talk about? We know what must be done.

SARAH

I know what you intend to do Charles. You know I would not condone such a thing.

CHARLES

Why don't you--

A HOWL from the Prairie Wolf can be heard coming in through the window by the front door. Charles turns and gazes into the darkness that lies just on the other side of the room. As he turns back, he sees Sarah looking at him with a warm smile on her face. This begins to lighten his mood again as he begins to think back on their life together.

BEAT

SARAH

Do you not fathom the consequences of the choices you have made tonight? Will continue to make from this day forth?

CHARLES

I have this feeling' you won't let me rest in peace?

SARAH

If you knew me as well as you claim, you would know I could never let you continue down this path which you find yourself.

CHARLES

Do you realize what I've done? Have you forgotten what these hands are able to accomplish?

SARAH

That is no concern of mine. All you need to do is ask for one small thing.

CHARLES

But can it really be so simply?

SARAH

Offer me the confession that you know Charles. And in turn, you will be able to find what it is you seek.

BEAT

CHARLES

Pity...sympathy...forgiveness are things I do not wish to find.

SARAH

Charles, I know one thing you fear is judgment. You know I hate to see you torture yourself with the thing that troubles your heart. I will always be here for you.

Charles jumps as a few WILD SCREAMS come from outside the house behind them. He quickly gets up and makes his way over to the window. He grabs the knife off of the table as he passes it. After reaching the window, he quickly looks back and forth in hopes of finding the source of the sound.

Angry with himself for not being able to find the source, he turns and storms back to the chair with the fury of a young child. After sitting down, Charles takes the knife and places it inside his left boot flesh against his calf.

PAUSE

CHARLES

Like that animal out there, these hands have brought down someone they have cared for.

SARAH

Alright?...Are you sure that's not what they were meant to do?

Charles turns to look up at Sarah with a sense of virtue that has begun to take hold. He reaches out to take her hand in his and waits for her with his palm wide open. She slowly places her hand in his as she continues to gaze into his eyes. He is taken aback by the cold nature of her hands.

SARAH(CON.T)

Agony is not a bedfellow for the

misery you place yourself in. What you did was not murder.

CHARLES  
By who's standards?

SARAH  
Protecting a life is not a sin Charles. You did what anyone would have done given the situation.

CHARLES  
But I took a life.

SARAH  
But not the soul.

CHARLES  
Is there a difference?

Charles becomes startled as the front door suddenly BANGS open with surprising force. As he begins to calm down, he slowly notices that Prairie Wolf has begun to make his way inside the house. As he watches all of this, he realizes that Prairie Wolf is carrying something in its mouth.

Unable to see what it is, Charles rises from the chair and meets Prairie Wolf half way. As he reaches Prairie Wolf he becomes shocked to see that the Eurasian Eagle-Owl is limp in its mouth. He is unable to say anything as he watches the Prairie Wolf drop the corpse at his feet.

PRAIRIE WOLF  
Did you think I would let you leave us so empty handed my friend?

Prairie Wolf lets out a sinister laugh as he steps over the corpse and continues to make his way towards Charles. As he does so, he slowly begins to stumble over himself. He finally comes to a rest at Charles' feet as his laughter begins to fade. As he lets out his last breath, he looks up at Charles one last time; his eyes having become a eerie mixture of red and yellow.

Charles places the revolver back its holster without taking his eyes of the bodies of either the Prairie Wolf or the Eurasian Eagle-Owl. After a moment, he turns back to look at Sarah and is startled to see that she has suddenly disappeared from her chair. He quickly looks around the room to see if he can find her, but is unable to do so.

He lets out a SIGH of annoyance as he turns back to look at the two animals at his feet. Charles suddenly picks up the

corpse of the Prairie Wolf and brings it over to his chair by the fire.

He drops the body in front of him as he sits down in his chair. Without taking his eyes off of the body, he reaches into his left boot and pulls the big knife out. He suddenly thrusts the knife into the belly of the Prairie Wolf and begins to skin it. Every so often, he throws an internal organ into the waning flames of the fire.

EXT. YARD - EARLY MORNING

Charles comes out of the house with the pelt of the Prairie Wolf in one hand and the body of the Eurasian Eagle-Owl cradled under his other arm. The blood on his hands has begun to crack from the heat of the fire. A sense of acceptance as set into his posture as he looks out towards the horizon.

After coming around, he slowly begins to make his way towards the horse. He places the body of the Eurasian Eagle-Owl by the front of the horse before tying the Prairie Wolf pelt onto the back of the saddle. Satisfied with his work, he reaches back down and picks up the body of the Eurasian-Eagle Owl.

Upon straightening himself, Charles turns and makes his way over to the tombstone on the hill by the house. His pacing becomes slows as he nears the foot of the grave that lies in front of the tombstone. He pauses for a brief moment as he reads the inscription on the tombstone before making his next move.

He lowers to his knees without taking his eyes off of the inscription. Charles tries to force back the tears that have begun to well in his eyes. One tear falls down his cheek, carving a track in the dust upon his face. He quickly wipes it away with the back of his hand in some hope that no one has seen him.

Charles places the body of the Eurasian-Eagle Owl next to him before digging out a small hole on top of the grave site. Unconcerned of his surroundings, Charles finds himself HUMMING a tune as he places the body of the Eurasian-Eagle Owl inside the new hole. He slightly pauses before filling the hole back in with the dirt. The tune he is HUMMING turns into something slightly mournful.

He forces himself back onto his feet as he takes in his work. Satisfied with what he has done, Charles turns and quickly makes his way back to the horse. He flings open the saddle bag and begins to rummage for something. Finding

what he was looking for, he pulls out a bottle of alcohol, and a small box of matches.

Charles bounds up the few porch steps, and comes to stop right in front of the door. He forcefully throws the bottle inside towards the back of the room. The horse jumps at the loud CRASH the bottle makes when it hits the floor. Charles pays no attention to this as he strikes a match along the door frame then tosses it inside the house.

He turns and makes his way to the horse without looking back as the flames begin to engulf the house; placing the box of matches in a breast pocket of his shirt as he does so. A sense of relief begins to set in as he makes the few strides to reach the horse.

He begins to hum a song under his breath as he unties the reigns from the hitching post in which the horse is tied too. The horse begins to calm down as he begins to pay attention to Charles' voice. This causes Charles to pick up the beat of the song he continues to hum.

After stroking the horse's mane for a few moments, Charles slides up and into the saddle without a care in the world. He then turns the horse around and begins to ride towards the barn. He brings the horse to a stop just a few feet short of the barn door.

Without taking his eyes off of the barn, Charles grabs the box of matches from his shirt pocket. He quickly strikes a match and tosses it towards the barn. The hint of a smile crosses his face as he watches the door catch fire.

He turns the horse around and heads towards the hill on the far side of the house. As he reaches the tombstone, he comes to a stop and looks back towards the house for one final look. Satisfaction sets in as he watches the flames begin to eat away the porch.

Feeling proud of what he has done, Charles turns the horse around and continues to ride from the ranch. He begins to feel that someone is watching him, so he brings the horse to a stop a good distance from the ranch. He climbs down from the horse and takes a few steps back towards the house without missing a beat. He is suddenly started to see the silhouette of the Eurasian-Eagle Owl perched on the top of the tombstone.

CHARLES  
Goodbye...old friend.

Charles smiles to himself as he turns and makes his way

back to the horse. He climbs into the saddle with a new found vigor. He takes in the scenery around him as he decides what to do next. Coming to a decision, Charles begins to make his way towards the next rising hill that lies in front of him.

FADE OUT

The End