

Dealt the Devil's Hand

By

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The forest floor is blanketed with snow. Icy wind HOWLS through tree branches.

ADDISON GOODSTEAD is perched against a tree. His wide-brimmed hat covers the upper half of his face.

A worn leather satchel and pistol lie next to him. Grimacing he cautiously repositions himself to sit upright.

Addison lets out a grunt and grabs at his stomach. He lifts open his wet fur coat revealing a bullet wound a quarter inch away from his belly button.

ADDISON
Worthless ole cow shit almost had
herself a bullseye.

Addison begins to chuckle. We see him stiffen and begin to cough.

He nestles against the tree and moves his pistol closer.

A faint SNAP is heard somewhere off in the distance. Addison doesn't take notice.

A much louder CRACK cuts through the trees and wind. Addison looks up and surveys his surroundings.

The CRUNCHING of boots in the snow is getting closer in proximity.

Addison wields the rusty weapon lying by his side.

A rotund figure walks past Addison. He carefully CLICKS the hammer back.

In a flash, the figure turns around and shoots Addison in the shoulder of his pistol arm.

He shouts and drops the weapon.

MAUDE, a rosy and round woman, approaches the wounded man.

She has a repeater slung over her back, a pistol in hand, and a large bundle of rope in another.

MAUDE

(smiling)

You had me with my back turned and
still didn't get the draw on me.

Addison removes his scarf and is using it to blot the hole in
his shoulder.

Droplets of blood stain the pale snow.

ADDISON

(through clenched teeth)

Only chance I had.

MAUDE

You are one tough son-a-bitch to
track.

ADDISON

You still found me, though.

Maude picks up his gun and stores it in her coat pocket.

MAUDE

Want some gin? It'll make the pain all
gone.

ADDISON

No thanks, I wanna go with a clear
mind.

MAUDE

Wise for a man with a drib of sense in
em. I hear God looks down on those who
meet Him with the spirits in em.

ADDISON

I don't think I will be seeing much of
Him once I'm gone.

Maude sits down next to the dying man, dropping the rope and
repeater.

She snags a flask out of her coat and takes a long drink.

MAUDE

You ain't even gonna try to go without
a fight?

ADDISON

I suppose I had my tries. Just did a moment ago and look what good it did me. Don't look like I'm going to outrun the devil this time. I've made peace with my mind.

MAUDE

Well, let's get to it.

The large woman gets up off the ground picking up the rope and rifle.

MAUDE (CONT'D)

I'mma go get Betsy.

Maude trudges past the tree where Addison is resting against. She returns a moment later leading a horse by the reins.

Maude slings the rope around a heavy tree branch.

MAUDE

You picked a decent tree, friend.

Addison looks up at the tree with tears swelling in his eyes. He pats the bark just above his head.

Maude ties the rope into a noose. It swings in the wind above the steady horse.

MAUDE (CONT'D)

Need help?

ADDISON

I can manage.

The bloody man coughs and stumbles up off the crisp ground. He swings one leg over the horse and finds his place on the saddle.

MAUDE

Any last words? No one that matters will hear em, but you might find solace.

ADDISON

I'm not a bad man, Maude. I've been
dealt a bad hand is all... That's not
to say what I did to yer Missy was
right. I am sorry.

Tears are streaming down Maude's face. She slaps the horses
butt and Betsy runs off.

The man is thrust off the horse and his neck SNAPS.

Maude walks away to retrieve her horse.