

"TWO SHADOWS"
Pilot Episode
Excerpt
"Bound to the Shadow"

EXT. COMANCHE ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Teepees shake in the wind. SUN-PETALS (F/25) sleeps, observed by her husband, CHIEF PONDERING-STORM (M/40), who sits near the fire that separates him from the partially open entrance to his teepee.

TWO-SHADOWS (6) stands in the doorway.

The firelight casts an ever-changing glow upon the child, their appearance seeming to shift from male to female. One moment a boy clad in deerskin leggings, the next a girl dressed in a deerskin dress.

A "vision" that holds The Chief's stare.

EXT. TRAVELING TROUPE'S CAMP - DAY

A makeshift stage emerges amidst the rugged landscape. ACTORS adjust their costumes, while others rehearse lines from "Measure for Measure."

ACTOR PLAYING CLAUDIO

Hold yer wonder, folks. He's got noble blood. If this here glass speaks true, I'll ride this fortunate wreck till it bucks me.

ACTOR PLAYING ISABELLA

I'm all my father's daughters, and sons to boot.

INT. TRAVELING TROUPE'S MAKEUP TENT - DAY

CORA, LISA, and JESSICA concoct homemade makeup, blending rouge from carmine, beetroot, and mulberry juice.

JESSICA

Give 'er a try, darlin'. It's a heavenly hue.

Cora applies some to her cheeks.

As Lisa chars a cork for eyeliner, Jessica searches a trunk for additional face powder.

A voice calls, "10 to Places!"

EXT. HILL BEHIND THE TROUPE'S STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jessica at a riverbank. She mixes cornstarch and chalk with water, crafting a base for face powder.

A SPLASH draws her attention. She spots Chief Pondering-Storm waist-deep in the water, holding a struggling Two-Shadows below the surface.

JESSICA

Wait! There's another way!

He ignores her.

JESSICA

If you don't want that child, I'll take 'em. I can't have one of my own. Please!

She reaches for Two-Shadows, but The Chief grabs her by the face and pushes her backward. He examines the makeup this leaves on his fingers.

Jessica watches him pull Two-Shadows out and run the makeup over the child's face. He points to his eyes, and then to the distance before he drags a finger across the child's throat.

JESSICA

I'll hide 'em. You've my solemn word.

He hands Two-Shadows to Jessica's protective embrace.

EXT. COMANCHE ENCAMPMENT - CLIFF - DUSK

Perched high on the canyon wall, SILENT-BIRD (F/35) looks on as Chief Pondering-Storm, and Sun-Petals continue an intense confrontation.' *Subtitled from Comanche:*

SUN-PETALS

Don't act as if we didn't name Two-Shadows together or accept their unique nature in unity.

PONDERING-STORM

Our child's true essence remains veiled. As Chief, my duty is to ensure our people's safety and stop the unknown from coursing through our tribe like a contagion.

SUN-PETALS

You will rue this decision.

PONDERING-STORM

Allow Two-Shadows to plague the white man. Let their nature seep into their midst but spare our own. You should take heart in your child being a living weapon against them. Perhaps that is their destiny and the wellspring of their greatness.

The wind roars, thrashing their hair and attire.

SUN-PETALS

I've uncovered your tracks and traced your course. I won't come back unaccompanied. I'll disclose everything, leaving you no reason to keep our truth concealed.

Chief Pondering-Storm pushes Sun-Petals off the cliff.

From where she spies, higher up, Silent-Bird ducks low and stays still, as Sun-Petals screams fall farther away.

INT. BONDURANT FARM - DAY

SUPER: TEXAS 1848

The Bondurant Family, PENNY (f/13,) NED (m/32), LILAC (28), and TED (m/11) eat stew. Ned and Lilac engage in a spirited exchange.

LILAC

Ned, I tell ya, take her with. A man's pride is the swiftest route to his empty pockets.

NED

If they need evidence of my skill, I'll just have to show 'em.

LILAC

You best not.

NED

A little demonstration ain't never hurt nobody.

LILAC

And what if they misinterpret the intent?

PENNY
Pa, I'm worried.

NED
No need to fret, Pen. What are you?

PENNY
A wonder.

NED
That's right.

LILAC
And what else?

PENNY
A lady.

LILAC
Precisely.

EXT. TEXAS COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK

Penny follows just behind Ned as they ride a steady pace.

PENNY
Why must we stay in town?

NED
Well, because it's gonna be dark,
that's why.

The vastness of the surrounding countryside becomes increasingly apparent as the trees and shrubs in the foreground become smaller and smaller.

The landscape stretches out further and further into the distance. The full expanse of the countryside, with Penny and Ned appearing as mere specks in the foreground.

EXT. KITE'S TAVERN - SAN ANTONIO - NIGHT

Still mounted, she watches Ned tie his horse to a post.

PENNY
Signal thrice to the moon if
there's trouble.

NED
And?

PENNY

Ride towards the path of least conflict.

NED

And if there's strife in every direction?

PENNY

Seek the most acceptable option. Father, how will you locate me?

NED

I'll hire a native tracker to find you, and then follow him to your whereabouts.

PENNY

Are you acquainted with a Native?

NED

I know plenty of native folks.

PENNY

No, you don't.

NED

Stay mounted, follow my instructions, and maybe I'll introduce you to 'em.

He enters the saloon. She dismounts, peering through gaps in the wooden exterior, keeping a watchful eye on her father.

INT. KITE'S TAVERN - DUSK

CURTIS KITE pours Ned a whiskey.

CURTIS

Thought you were off killin' Mexicans.

NED

I've been teachin' others to do the shit jobs.

CURTIS

I reckon there's worse things.

NED

Like farmin'.

CURTIS

How'd you escape the army if you were so prized?

NED

Drank my way out. Who's the toughest fella in here tonight?

CURTIS

Who's the meanest on the range?

NED

Well, shoot. Mikhail Beauregard might be a bit too ornery to tangle with. Best I show off my skills another night. Much obliged.

As Ned departs the bar, he passes a table where MIKHAIL BEAUREGARD (M/38) sits with his OUTLAW GANG.

MIKHAIL

Hold up! Were you hopin' to speak to me? You were talkin' about me, and now it looks like you're runnin' away.

NED

I mistook ya for another.

MIKHAIL

Who?

NED

John Tilton Powers.

MIKHAIL

I rode with John. We ain't cut from the same cloth. D'ya reckon all outlaws look alike?

NED

I know little 'bout outlaws or gangs, but I reckon there's less turnover if they shoot straight.

MIKHAIL

Yer lookin' to school me?

NED

No, sir. I'm hopin' to impress you enough to make you pay for my expertise.

MIKHAIL

What's that in your hand?

NED

A handbill.

MIKHAIL

A handbill! Let me see that.

Ned hands the flyer to the closest outlaw, who passes it down to Mikhail. He unrolls it, revealing the words: "SHOOTING LESSONS."

EXT. KITE'S TAVERN - DUSK

Ned finds himself flung from the saloon, landing on the dusty ground. He spies the hitching post and sees only his horse. Ned looks up at Mikhail who points a shooting iron at him.

NED

Standin' is a small mercy.

MIKHAIL

Bondurant, you teach shootin' lessons. I ain't dueling ya.

A gunshot echoes from up the street, and Mikhail's gun flies from his grip.

Outlaws brandish their firearms, seeking the shooter.

Penny charges down the main drag, her prairie dress and bonnet making it near impossible for the Outlaws to reckon she's the shooter - they keep searching for targets.

With each shot, she disarms another outlaw.

OUTLAW LEE

It's that gal!

As Penny nears, disarming them with expert aim, the outlaws fire back.

Mikhail pulls a second iron, targeting Penny. She yanks her horse's reins, making it slide. His shot misses.

A gunshot from somewhere behind the outlaws sends Penny tumbling from her saddle.

ELIZABETH BEAUREGARD (f/13) rides in, her gun at the ready.

Ned tries to draw on Elizabeth, but Mikhail kicks him, causing his gun to skid away.

MIKHAIL

Yer goin' to rue totin' that.

ELIZABETH

I reckon I might.

MIKHAIL

This ain't the place for this. Git on outta here.

Ignoring him, Elizabeth rides past the outlaws.

ELIZABETH

What kind of man gets bested by a prairie girl?

OUTLAW LEE

What kind of gal dresses as a boy?

Elizabeth shoots Outlaw Lee dead without a second thought, then trots to Penny, still on the ground, on her back. From her saddle, she spits to her right.

PENNY

You shouldn't engage in that activity.

ELIZABETH

Doin' what?

PENNY

Spitting. It isn't ladylike.

ELIZABETH

Well, you'd look a sight more fearsome wieldin' them guns if you weren't wearin' that dress.

PENNY

It's not legal to don men's attire.

ELIZABETH

Ain't lawful to ride down the street shootin', neither.

PENNY

Our sole intent was to provide shooting lessons. Did you target my shoulder intentionally?

ELIZABETH

You got a name?

PENNY

Penny.

ELIZABETH

Lucky for you, I've got a birthday approachin'. Ain't that right, Daddy?

MIKHAIL

Boys, let's tend to these two.

The outlaws help Penny and Ned to their feet.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Penny and Ned find themselves in the care of a GRUFF DOCTOR. The outlaw gang watches the scene unfold with keen interest. The doctor assesses Penny's wound.

DOCTOR

It's not too deep. She'll survive.

MIKHAIL

Good. She'll make a fine gift for Elizabeth's birthday.

PENNY

But I don't want to be her plaything.

MIKHAIL

Your Pa can hone my gang's shootin' skills, and you can bring my daughter joy. As long as you don't make her unhappy, I'll get you home when she's ready to let you go.

NED

My daughter ain't nobody's property.

EXT. KITE'S TAVERN - NIGHT

The outlaws prepare to depart, and Ned mounts his horse, watching Penny closely. She looks back at him with a blend of fear and determination.

NED

Pen, I'm gonna sort this out.

PENNY

Not if I sort it first.

NED

You keep your head low is what you do. I'll set things right.

PENNY

I will not disappoint you, Father.

Ned nods, watching as the outlaws mount their horses and disappear into the darkness.

INT. BEAUREGARD STRONGHOLD - ELIZABETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Elizabeth leads Penny into her room. The walls are adorned with guns and other weapons.

Penny stares.

ELIZABETH

You're lucky to be here, you know. Most people don't get to see the inside of Pa's stronghold.

EXT. BEAUREGARD STRONGHOLD - COURTYARD - DAY

Elizabeth and Penny play horse shoes. Penny and her equally match and both of them quite good.

ELIZABETH

Not half bad for a tender blossom.

PENNY

I am not your plaything.

ELIZABETH

We shall see, sweetheart.

EXT. BEAUREGARD STRONGHOLD - FIELD - DAY

In a clearing among rows of crops, Penny and Elizabeth practice their shooting skills. Elizabeth is better than average, but Penny is a total marksman, far superior.

ELIZABETH

Teach me how to do that.

PENNY

So you can kill me the next time?

ELIZABETH

I meant to aim for your shoulder.

PENNY

I suppose fortune favors me. First,
grasp it like this.

END EXCERPT

Thank you. For a full script, discussion, or pitch, please
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