

Part Five

In the moonlit darkness of a desolate landscape, a man, stained with blood and the remnants of battle, rose from the slaughter. Amidst the chaos, he noticed the distant glow of fires and the sounds of a haunting chant from where the savages had retreated. He moved cautiously through the remains of the battle, where remnants of both animals and men lay sprawled. Under the stars, he set off southward, navigating the rough terrain.

As daylight broke, he reached rocky outcroppings, where he encountered Sproule, another survivor. Sproule was injured, his sleeve soaked with blood, and in their conversation, they shared details of their escape from the horrors behind them. They identified the mysterious attackers as an unknown tribe and expressed concern over their violent nature.

Seeking shelter from the sun, they found a place to rest before continuing along a war trail. As they journeyed, they stumbled upon gruesome remnants—a village emptied of life, children hanged from mesquite trees, and dead animals littering the streets. The atmosphere was thick with death, and their desperation grew as they explored the wreckage of a village, finding only silence and decay where life once thrived.

Sproule's condition worsened, bringing discussions about heading back to Texas, even as their hopes faded. They debated the risks of returning or staying put as Sproule coughed, revealing the severity of his illness. The kid decided to scout for essentials and ventured deeper into the village, scavenging for food while Sproule remained behind, weary and disheartened.

The kid found supplies in a desolate home and returned to Sproule only to discover his absence. After searching, he found Sproule in a church, where the horrifying sight of dead bodies faced him—a stark tangible reminder of their dire circumstances. They resolved to leave as darkness neared, only for the reality of their situation to sink deeper: they were alone, thirsting for survival amid a landscape marred by violence and despair.

As they traveled into the night, the haunting images of their encounters lingered on, their paths now intertwined with the grim tale of those who came before them .