

Part Nineteen

The chapter begins with a doctor unexpectedly acquiring a ferry on his way to California. He builds wealth through gold, silver, and jewelry alongside two men who helped him at the ferry. The men reside on the west bank, near a rudimentary fortification. Although the doctor claims to maintain a friendly relationship with the Yumas, Glanton, an experienced character, advises him against trusting Native Americans, insisting that any man who does is a fool. As tension escalates, the doctor grants Glanton and his men permission to fortify their position and charge their mountain howitzer.

Two days later, the Yumas launch a surprise attack on the ferry during a cargo operation. Brown and Long Webster fire the howitzer, creating a devastating effect on the Yumas. Following the chaos, Glanton and his men methodically kill wounded survivors, an act watched by ferry travelers, who are further traumatized as these men take scalps. The doctor witnesses this savagery and retreats to his quarters, where he remains isolated as Glanton exploits the situation, charging higher fares and robbing travelers.

Events intensify as a Kentucky company arrives but chooses not to engage with Glanton, subsequently journeying downstream where they meet a grim fate, captured by the Yumas. Meanwhile, during the festive celebration of Easter, the main characters observe the brutal slaughter of a straw effigy representing Judas by Sonorans, a reflection of the violent world around them.

As the days go on, Glanton enslaves Sonorans to help with fortifications, while indulging in the accumulation of wealth. David Brown, along with Long Webster and Toadvine, heads to San Diego to procure supplies. They successfully cross the desert and arrive drenched, with Brown eager to trade their coins for whiskey.

After a night of drudgery and drunkenness, Brown finds himself alone in a small hut with only a memory of the prior night's events. Attempting to retrieve his companions, he becomes embroiled in a power struggle with a local farrier over a fine shotgun, which he desires to have modified. The confrontation escalates, culminating in Brown taking matters into his own hands with threats and physical action, showcasing the characteristic brutality of life in this era.

He successfully modifies his gun amidst confrontational behavior towards authority figures, before meeting with Toadvine and Webster, leading to a display of their shared exhaustion and excitement about the ocean for the first time. The chapter concludes with a series of violent events following their reckless indulgence, illustrating the harsh, chaotic nature of their existence against the backdrop of a lawless frontier.