

# Redemption at Nail Creek

By : **ShadowHeartedCowboy**

James tried to make a new life for himself, but after saving a girl by killing an outlaw he returned to a life he tried to leave. Now, he has to decide. Either he can run from the past, or he can do what it takes to make a new life while keeping his own. Past and present will collide in a conflict that tests James' resolve and also makes him ask: Can a man with a bloody past have a life he wants with the one he loves, or will the past take everything from him?

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## Chapter One:

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1/2 He never knew what would happen when he pulled the trigger. 1/2 What he did know is that the outlaw he had in the sights of his Winchester had a price on his head that warranted his death. 1/2 The girl he took was nothing more than a ransom to the outlaw. 1/2 James held fast as he observed the outlaw's camp. 1/2 *I wonder what his plans may be with her.* James thought as he watched silently in the dead of the lonesome prairie night.

1/2 The outlaw walked to the edge of his fire and threw in another log to keep it alive. 1/2 "What you lookin' at?" he asked the young girl he took from the town, "You checkin' me out?" 1/2 The girl just stared at him. 1/2 She knew the danger she was in, but she couldn't help but feel calm. "No sir. 1/2 I was just wondering what made you decide that this here was a good place to camp. 1/2 Someone's coming for me. 1/2 Ain't nothin' you can do to stop it." 1/2 The outlaw let out a laugh, "I ain't afeared of no one. 1/2 No man in that town will save you if they know what is good for them."

1/2 James kept still as he listened to the outlaw and the girl talk. 1/2 He could never figure out what caused him to be so confident that no one was there. 1/2 "You should be careful what you say, my friend, fate has a way of haunting a man." James said to himself as he readied his rifle. 1/2 He was careful when he chose his spot. 1/2 He made sure that he wouldn't be seen as he crawled on the hill. 1/2 The outlaw was rumored to be a good shot so James was careful in his choice.

1/2 "What's your name?" asked the girl as she carefully watched the outlaw. 1/2 "The name's Walkings, Travis Walkings. 1/2 What be yours since you want to be so proper like." said Travis as he eyed her. 1/2 He never knew why, but for some reason he wanted this girl. 1/2 He felt like she was special. 1/2 "My name is Rosemary." said the girl, "Well Travis, I just wish for you to know that you will die tonight. 1/2 My father is the sheriff of Nail Creek, and he won't allow a coward like you to hurt me." 1/2 Travis laughed. 1/2 He never understood how a little girl could say things like that and expect an outlaw to be scared. 1/2 "Like I care," said Travis, "Once I reach River Canyon, my gang will make sure your daddy is greeted nice and proper. 1/2 I'll even make sure he sees you taken care of." 1/2 Rosemary started to get nervous, "What you mean by that?" 1/2 Travis stared at her, "I mean, I'll make sure he sees you soiled by everyone I see fit."

1/2 James had to fight the anger and fear that was swelling in him. 1/2 He recalled Sheriff Walburn saying that River Canyon was full of outlaws that followed a man by the name of Travis Walkings. 1/2 He also heard that the group was planning on coming to Nail Creek to make it their base. 1/2 "What is it you want me to do, Sheriff?" asked James. 1/2 "I want you to get my daughter back. 1/2 I also want your help with the Walkings gang. 1/2 They are a rough bunch, and I will need help. 1/2 You willing to help?" asked the sheriff.

1/2 James shook his head as he recalled the events that led to this moment. 1/2 He agreed to help, but now he was trying to figure out why. 1/2 What is Rosemary to him? 1/2 Why did he agree to help? 1/2 The questions bothered him for the hours he spent following Travis. 1/2 He decided that now was the time. 1/2 Now he needs to make the choice. 1/2 He can either kill Travis, or he could take him alive. 1/2 The choice wasn't hard for James.

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Rosemary tried to back away as Travis came at her. He decided to soil her now before he took her to the canyon. What better chance than now? He had her here, the canyon was a few miles down the dusty trail, and he figured no one was following. He regretted not checking after he saw the dust between him and Rosemary. He heard the gun shot, but couldn't see where it came from. Travis dove behind his saddle as he scanned the horizon. Daybreak was coming and that was all he'd need to find whoever took the shot. Little did he know, the gun man had other intentions. "Who's out there?" yelled Travis as he held his revolver ready. "My name is of no concern to you," yelled back James, "You'll be dead before you see me."

James cursed himself for not killing Travis with the first shot. He knew what should be done, but he couldn't take that shot. "Let the girl go and you'll be free to run." yelled James as he watched the outlaw carefully. "What makes you think I want to run?" asked Travis as he kept looking for the man that shot at him, "How about I kill her and then kill you?" That sounds more to my liking. James grinned when he heard the outlaw try to act tough. They always tried to make it seem like they were so hard core that they'd kill a girl. He met a few in the past and they all said that women and children weren't who they'd kill. James knew that Travis could be different though. He aimed again and yelled, "I was hoping you'd take my offer. I reckon it was pretty generous."

Rosemary watched as Travis' head exploded. She never saw a man killed before. She always was able to avoid such events when she was home. This man, this shooter, he killed an outlaw in front of her. Rosemary turned her head and hurled. The site sickened her. James stood up and for the first time. He regretted not giving a warning before a shot. He knew he scarred her. He also knew that this was only the beginning. Now, the others that Travis talked about would find him dead. They would also stop at nothing to take revenge on the shooter. Nail Creek was supposed to be his new beginning, but now it would be a new page his life. James never wanted to kill anyone ever again. Now, he realized that his dream would never come to fruition.

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