

White Rider

# White Rider

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A strange rider comes into a quiet town and causes some trouble, but all might not be what it seems like.



Published on  
**Booksie**

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## White Rider

Russel used to be a quiet fellow. I remember the smile on his lips when he used to come around and tell me his stories. He was just like one of them younglings, fascinated with the world and whatnot. Always coming and going, like the wind. The man didn't have a care in the world. He used to come around, order a bottle of whisky and talk about his crops. Born and raised a farmer, he had a house in the vicinity. He spent most of his days here in the counter of my bar. There ain't no one, ever had a problem with old Russel.

But Life gives, and life takes. And just like his crops, old Russel was nearing the time of his harvest.

It was a cold monday morning when the stranger first arrived. A foreigner, liked to dress all fancy, like one of them bounty hunters from the border. Used to go around town on a white horse. As a matter of fact, for a man who spent days under the heat of the Sun, his face was incredibly pale, almost as pale as his horse. I'm now convinced, that maybe he was no man at all. No, that thing spent almost a week lurking around town. Never uttered a single word. Make no mistake, that was death itself, and it had come to collect some debts.

The first couple of days, the stranger just kept to himself, smoking outside near the stables. He liked to spend time there, near the horses. Sometimes i would look out the window of my bar just to find him out there looking in. Like he was capable of looking through the walls, watching the movements of everyone inside. At night, no one knew where he was. The day he arrived i asked Kenny, the innkeeper if the new guy was settling in and his answer was: "What new guy?"

Looking back, maybe he slept with his horse, maybe he liked to sleep on the ground. Or maybe he just vanished, like dust on the wind. Irregardless, every morning there he was again. It wasn't until his third day here that stuff started going wrong. Some of the guys here at the bar, well, they were a bit of troublemakers. Liked to break stuff, liked to get drunk, and occasionally they liked to make bets. Now there is nothing wrong with betting, it's all a good bit of fun. And God knows i myself have made my fair share thanks to these poor schmucks. But that was the wrong bet to make. They made a bet on who among them could make the new guy talk. As soon as they left the bar, that was the last i heard of them. Butch, down from the market later told me that they spent the whole day bothering him, hitting him with rocks and yelling at him. The next morning they were just gone, no bodies, no nothing.

Later that day, Russel came into the bar. He had his double-barreled shotgun in his hands and came looking for trouble. Talk about one hell of a day.

He was convinced them Howard boys were responsible for killing his cattle and ruining his crops. I took him to the back and gave him a cold drink to calm him down. After all, his attention was turned towards the wrong group of guys. The Howard boys were among the small group that had vanished in the previous night. I promised him i would get to the bottom of this, little did i know then, that bottom was about right for where we'd be standing.

Even after all the time i spent calming Russel down, he just wouldn't back down. He was sure someone had destroyed his lands on purpose. He was now turning his attention towards the stranger (and so was i). He went outside, despite all my warnings, threatening the new guy. As per usual, he only gave him a blank look in return. Now call me paranoid, but i had seen this happen once and was sure it was going to happen again, so that night i made a small trip to Russel's farm in the outskirts of town. God, how i regret that day, i still have many sleepless nights on account of what i saw.

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Russel was right, someone had tempered with his farm alright. It smelled like death. The animals, once treading happily along the fences, were split in chunks, and their meat was spread all around the ground, like a pack of wolves had just decided to feast on them but regretted that decision halfway. It was the stuff of nightmares alright, but it was about to get even worse.

The crops were in no better shape, but it was by then that i heard the screams. Screams resembling those of a pig being slaughtered. I entered the barn, and there he laid, my friend, Russel. With his belly split open and the stranger with his fingers in his intestines. He was being eaten alive.

I have never been a hero, once a group of bandits robbed me and my bar and even though i had a shotgun under the counter, i was the first one handing them Money. I have no problem admitting iâ m a coward. So thatâ s what i did, i ran. As fast as i could and had it not been by this extreme act of selfishness i believe i would of been lying there besides my friend.

I have told this story year after year, and people call me crazy. Iâ m just that funny nutty bartender across town. The stranger left town and was never seen again. The few people that knew him were either gone or too busy to care. Itâ s just an old manâ s tale now, filled with wonder, horror and excitement. 3 years have gone by since i last saw his pale ghoulish face. But i know, that one day, one cold monday morning, a strange rider in a white horse will come to town. And when he does, heâ ll be looking for me, and death will follow.

Life gives and Life takes.

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