

El Paso

by
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Based on the song 'El Paso'
Written by Marty Robbins

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A dry barren desert. This is El Paso, Texas. 1854.

In the distance, two horse-bound riders kick up dust in their wake. Far ahead of them is a canyon.

Closer now... we can hear shouting and laughing. They're brothers... are they racing each other??

BOY 1

He's not gonna stop!

BOY 2

Sure he will! You're the boss, not him!

TYLER CALE, 12, the younger and slighter of the two, doesn't seem convinced.

TYLER

Jesse, when I get my hands on you... I'm gonna kill you!

JESSE CALE, 14, ruggedly handsome, laughs.

JESSE

I told you I'd teach you to ride!

Tyler, panicked, kicks the horse in the ribs, and it TAKES OFF!

JESSE pulls at his reigns, and comes to a sliding halt as he watches Tyler and his horse leave him behind.

JESSE

Whoa...

He laughs to himself as Tyler disappears in a plume of hot desert dirt.

He pulls a gold pocket watch from his vest, peers at it for a moment.

Then, to Tyler, knowing he's way to far to hear him:

JESSE

Five minutes, brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyler's horse is charging madly now, and Tyler's tears have made muddy little trails on his dirty face.

He wipes at them frantically, but he can't see.

He can't see that his frightened horse has rushed them up a steep rocky incline. The canyon is coming at them fast.

Tyler tries in vain to regain his composure.

TYLER

Please stop. Please.

His horse isn't listening, and Tyler's heartbeat is as loud to him as the thundering hoofbeats of his stallion.

Suddenly, he breaks through the dust-- and sees the ledge coming at him, fast.

TYLER

Horse shit...

He jerks his head around, surveying the terrain to his left and right. Should he jump?

No. That'd be suicide. A broken leg, at best.

Closer. It's now or never.

Tyler's horse stamps his feet, sliding to an immediate stop, right at the very edge of the expanse.

Tyler's momentum shoots him from the horse-- he flies off at an odd angle.

As the dust settles around the horse's hooves, we see no sign of Tyler. Only his horse, and the wide canyon.

Seconds later, Jesse arrives. At first he's confused, but as he looks around for his brother, his confusion turns to panic.

JESSE

You... dumb horse! Oh God, this isn't happening...

He's afraid to look over the ledge. He's afraid he'll see Tyler broken body at the bottom.

Ten feet down from the ledge, Tyler is whimpering, hanging from a twisted root by his belt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jesse jumps down to his stomach, reaching over the edge of the cliff, and tries to reach Tyler. No luck.

JESSE

Tyler, look at me. You gotta give me your hand.

Tyler is oblivious. He's crying to himself.

JESSE

Tyler! LOOK at me!

Tyler looks up.

JESSE

I'm not going to let you fall. I got you.

Tyler is coming out of his shock a bit. He's shaking, but he's ok. Well, except for the fact that he's hanging from the side of a very tall canyon by only his belt.

TYLER

You promise?

Clods of dirt come loose as the exposed root begins to bend and come loose under Tyler's weight.

In his panic, he starts to squirm, trying desperately to turn around, to grab the cliff and hold on.

JESSE

Tyler, god damn it-- hold still. I told you I got you.

Tyler stops fighting. He holds his arms as high above his head as he can, reaching toward his brother.

Sweat is pouring from Jesse's forehead now. He's scared, but he can't let his little brother see it.

The root SNAPS, and Tyler scrambles for the ledge, but his hands grab nothing but falling dirt.

Jesse jumps after him, and grabs Tyler by his wrist.

He's got him. Tyler looks at him, dazed.

JESSE

Told ya.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Jesse is at an awkward, impossible angle to have not fallen, let alone catch his brother.

JESSE
(up, to his horse) Pull,
Francisco! Pull!

FRANCISCO snorts, then begins to BACK UP.

Jesse has tied a rope to his saddle, and around his waist.

The two brothers emerge from the side of the ledge, bruised and filthy, but safe.

Jesse looks at his little brother.

JESSE
All you had to do was say 'whoa'--

Tyler SLUGS Jesse right in the mouth.

TYLER
You son of a bitch...!

Tyler takes another swing at him, but this time Jesse backs up and pushes him, using Tyler's violent motion to knock him to the ground.

Tyler grabs at Jesse's feet, and YANKS. Jesse stumbles, and falls too.

The two brothers fight it out.

INT. BARROOM - NIGHT

Title card: "El Paso, Present Day. 1864."

Tyler, now grown, is sitting at a table playing cards with three other men. They look dangerous.

Tyler looks drunk.

TYLER
Listen, Danny. There's no need for
name-calling. If you lose, I'll
let you keep your horse.

He motions to the other man at the table.

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CONTINUED:

DAN

You keep laughing. We'll see who laughs last.

TYLER

(slurring) Left's laugh-- laugh's letter... I can't even say that.

The other poker player speaks up. JULES FARGIS, 35.

JULES

Shut up, both of you. I call.

Tyler looks drunkenly surprised, as Jules lays down his cards.

TYLER

I wasn't ready.

Dan lays his cards down. Nothing.

TYLER

(pointing at Dan's cards) That's not good, is it?

JULES

What you got, Cale?

TYLER

What I got... is this.

Tyler lays down a FULL HOUSE.

The other men blanch.

JULES

You... piece of shi---

TYLER

I said, no name-calling. This is a gentleman's game, is it not?

DAN

No! You're a damn chea--

TYLER

-- Brilliant poker player.

Dan loses it. He FLIPS the TABLE, and grabs Tyler.

DAN

(whispers to Tyler)
I'm going to kill you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A big BOOM from outside the bar ROCKS the room.

Everyone stops, and looks around. What was that??

Tyler takes the opportunity to HEADBUTT Dan, and LEAPS over the table. He bolts for the front door, opens it. Then pauses.

TYLER

He was going to say 'cheater',
wasn't he??

A CRASH beside his head breaks his reverie.

Dan, blocked by other cowboys, is throwing bottles at Tyler.

TYLER

(yelling over the din) You can
keep your horse!