

THE ADVENTURES OF BLACK MASK AND PALE RIDER
A TALE OF SIX GUN AND SORCERY
BY TIM HOLTORF



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Black Mask & Pale Rider, Shani Wennemein and Pania Alow are copywritten by Tim Holtorf 2009.

PART TWENTY-FOUR

Oxford, Mississippi, September 21, 1863

Shani looked around the office for a moment as she gathered her things together. She and Pania had been in the town for nearly two weeks. They'd gone from hunted outlaws to trusted peacemakers, in just two weeks. After Shani took down Dorval, life in Oxford grew much more peaceful. A new judge came in from Jackson, and the rest of Dorval's men were sent to trial. Some were given light sentences. Others, like Mitch and Gator, had enough evidence against them that they would share the same fate that they visited upon Joshua. Peace had returned to this little spot in the south.

Now it was time for the two elven gunslingers to move on.

Johnathon Caleb Walker stood in the doorway as Shani finished packing her things. He watched her as she gazed upon the silver star that she wore for those two weeks. It had become an extension of her, something that she didn't even take notice of. Sheriff Wennemein. It did have a ring to it. "Lotta people gonna be a bit disappointed that yer movin' on," he said in a somber tone.

Shani didn't look up, she merely shrugged in response. "Sometimes a person has ta do what they gotta do. I come ta this world lookin' fer adventure. I ended up doin' somethin' thet needed bein' done. Now it's time ta move on."

Walker pushed himself off the door frame and walked into the room and took a look around as he spoke. "Guess that's true 'nough. At least ya helped put people's minds at ease. Been a while since a man could walk down the streets o' this town an' see people smilin' without getting' that feelin' o' dread." He stood beside Shani, and even though his six foot seven frame towered above the elven gunslinger, he looked upon her as though she were ten feet tall. "Gonna be hard ta find a new Sheriff."

She moved to face the old gun hand fully, and

looked up into his eyes with a smile. Shani still held onto the silver star with delicate fingers, and for a brief moment, looked to it before reaching up and gently placed it on Walker's lapel. "No," she said in a quiet voice that held a small smile. "No, it ain't gonna be too hard ta find a new sheriff."



Shreveport, Louisiana, September 22, 1863

Armed guards circled the small camp that was set up just outside the small city of Shreveport. In recent years, it had come to this. Renegades from the north and sympathizers from the south had begun raiding slave traders, and freeing slaves. Owners who were putting slaves up for auction had the most to lose, as they had time and money invested in these slave auctions.

To Ezekiel Morgan, the politics didn't matter. He just waited things out, going from one master to another. He hoped, in time, that he might see some of these people who would free him or any of those he was caged with. Born in captivity, he did not know what freedom was. But he'd heard the stories. Perhaps one day, he might actually taste his own freedom.

He looked up as one delicately dressed man wandered through the camp. Behind him there was a small group that followed him, including a woman. A black woman, dressed in the oddest of clothes. The dress looked to be made of the finest silk, and coloured with all the colours of the rainbow; she wore a cloak and hood that hid her face, but still her eyes seemed to study each person carefully. She looked very fine, and very well kept. Maybe this slaver actually treated his slave better than some others, but he soon pushed that from his mind as the hair on the back of his neck stood up. He got a bad feeling from this woman. He wasn't sure what it was, but he only knew, she could not be trusted.