

THE SUN SLINGER

Series Title: The Sun Slinger

Episode: 1 - "Dead or Alive"

Genre: Western/Fantasy/Action

Tone: Suspenseful, magical, cinematic

Target Audience: YA 16+

PROLOGUE

OPENING SCROLL

White blend to light orange. Warm coloring but slightly ominous. Faint dots of sand drift across the white page.

CAPTION (AVERY):

They left me for dead to bleed out in the desert.

PANEL 1 [SLOW REVEAL, LONG VERTICAL PANEL]

Female hand emerges from out of the sand.

CAPTION (AVERY):

Jokes on them, I guess.

[SCROLL SPACE]

=== SCENE 1: EDGE OF THE DESERT, BETWEEN LAND AND SAND ===

PANEL 2 [ESTABLISHING SHOT]

Morning. Desert-like terrain but not quite the desert. Sky is blue against the brown scape of dirt mixed with sand.

They are on the edge, where desert meets land.

Man, GRAVE DIGGER (45, haggard, dismissive) dressed in a white uniform, is covering a hole in the dirt.

We can't see what's in the hole, but the hole is almost filled.

PANEL 3 [MEDIUM SHOT]

The Grave Digger leans on the shovel and lights a cigarette.

PANEL 4 [HIGH ANGLE]

Cigarette between the Grave Digger's fingers. We see a bit of white cloth still peeking from the covered hole.

PANEL 5 [MEDIUM SHOT]

The Grave Digger inhales the smoke.

SFX:

SHHHHHH

He holds the cigarette between his teeth and grabs the shovel again.

He begins scooping the last of the dirt on top of the white cloth in the hole.

PANEL 6 [SPLASH PANEL]

Suddenly, a hand reaches out and grabs the shovel.

SFX:

SHHHK

PANEL 7 [CLOSE UP]

The Grave Digger is shocked.

GRAVE DIGGER:

"What the -!?"

PANEL 8 [MOTION PANEL]

The Grave Digger jerks back on the shovel. The hand grips tighter and we see long brown hair (the back of a head) emerge from the hole. The woman is Avery (23, driven, wild).

PANEL 9 [LOW ANGLE]

The Grave Digger kicks the hand with his boot off the shovel.

SFX:

THWACK

PANEL 10 [FREEZE FRAME]

The Grave Digger raises the shovel to knock Avery in the head.

VOICE (OFF-PANEL) :

"Wait."

PANEL 11 [LONG VERTICAL PANEL]

Reveal WADE (28, rugged, wears a black cowboy hat) standing behind the Grave Digger. We cannot see his face in the shadow of the hat.

PANEL 12 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade crouches next to the hole to watch Avery struggle, but he does not help.

WADE :

"She's working."

PANEL 13 [TIGHT CLOSE UP]

Avery's claws further out of the earth. Dirt and sand between her fingers.

SFX:

SCRAPE

PANEL 14 [TIGHT CLOSE UP - HEARTBEAT PANEL]

A shoulder breaks the surface. Shirt fabric torn and dirty.

PANEL 15 [TIGHT CLOSE UP - HEARTBEAT PANEL]

Half of Avery's face emerges from the earth.

PANEL 16 [EXTREME CLOSE UP - BEAT PANEL]

Her eye. Green, wild, untenable. Pupil wide as she reaches.

PANEL 17 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade's face is revealed for the first time. There are cross-stitched scars under his eyes. He stares downward at Avery.

PANEL 18 [MEDIUM SHOT]

The Grave Digger raises the shovel.

PANEL 19 [BEAT PANEL - TIGHT ON WADE'S FACE]

He decides in a second.

PANEL 20 - [CLOSE UP]

Wade's hand seizes Avery's wrist.

PANEL 21 [WIDE SHOT]

Wade heaves Avery out of the hole onto the flat earth.

She falls on her hands and knees, long brown hair down her back under the desert sun.

PANEL 22 [LARGE VERTICAL PANEL]

Avery sits on her knees and tilts her head up toward the sky. She looks like she is soaking up every ounce of light shining from the blue.

Sand drifts around her, strangely suspended.

As we see her completely, we realize the front of her shirt is caked in dried blood.

PANEL 23 [CLOSE UP]

Avery's hand touches her chest where the blood is concentrated. It's as though she just realized she's been shot.

PANEL 24 [WIDE SHOT]

Suddenly, she falls backward and passes out on the sand.

PANEL 25 [TWO SHOT]

The Grave Digger sighs and leans against his shovel as he looks at Avery's body.

GRAVE DIGGER:

"Well, I'll be damned. When'd the world get so sloppy?"

PANEL 26 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade looks at the wound in her chest.

WADE:

"Looks like someone shot her."

PANEL 27 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Grave Digger is unphased. Now that he realizes she wasn't quite dead yet, he's bored.

GRAVE DIGGER:

"Guess she got lucky, huh? Those desert men usually got pretty good aim."

PANEL 28 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade examines her face.

WADE:

"Where'd she come from?"

PANEL 29 [MEDIUM SHOT]

GRAVE DIGGER:

"BreakPoint, out by the border. One of about ten cadets they sent me to bury."

PANEL 30 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade stands up and dusts himself off. He has decided something.

WADE:

"So, she's a solider."

PANEL 31 [MEDIUM SHOT]

The Grave Digger scratches his head.

GRAVE DIGGER:

"If you can call BreakPoint a post."

PANEL 32 [WIDE SHOT]

The Grave Digger watches as Wade throws Avery over his shoulder. He is annoyed.

GRAVE DIGGER:

"Just leave her."

PANEL 33 [WIDE SHOT]

Wade walks toward his horse through the haze of the desert. Avery is limp over his shoulder, and the Grave Digger is small behind him.

GRAVE DIGGER:

"She'll be dead in a week back at BreakPoint. Then I'll have to dig this hole all over again."

PANEL 34 [LOW ANGLE - LOOKING UP]

Wade settles Avery onto the horse. We see him from below. His silhouette is framed under the sky, blue and wide behind him.

PANEL 35 [LOW ANGLE]

Wade looks down at the Grave Digger from his horse. His face once again in the shadow of his hat.

WADE:

"Is that a bet?"

PANEL 36 [WIDE SHOT]

Wade rides away from the setting sun with Avery draped across the horse in front of him. The Grave Digger remains alone in the empty desert next to an open grave.

=== SCENE 2: THE SANCTUARY ===

Morning, easy, dappled sunlight. Green and yellow summer tinge of day. We are in a small, simple bedroom.

PANEL 37 [OVERHEAD SHOT]

Avery lies on her back on a small cot next to a half open window. Morning light falls across her face. She is sleeping.

PANEL 38 [WHITE SPACE - pause panel, dream/flashback begins, hazy, unclear]

PANEL 39 [LONG VERTICAL PANEL - FRAGMENTED]

Chaos of orange and black, unclear what's happening. Silhouettes running, hands reaching, smoke, fire, boots in sand. Images are stacked and fractured so it doesn't quite make a scene.

VOICE (OFF-PANEL):

"Move! Move! Move!"

AVERY:

"There's too many of them."

VOICE (OFF-PANEL):

"Get up! Get up! GET - "

PANEL 40 [EXPLOSION PANEL]

Sudden burst of orange like fire. Everything consumed in the white-orange.

SFX:

BOOM

PANEL 41 [CLOSE UP - PRESENT]

Avery jolts upright. Hands clench the cot sheets and her eyes are wide in the unfamiliar room. Her chest heaves and she is sweating from the dream.

SFX:

GASP

PANEL 42 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery sits in the bed. Sheets loose now in her hands. Her breathing slows and she notices the window with the morning light.

AVERY (THOUGHT):

It's morning.

PANEL 43 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery leans forward and presses her hand against the glass.

AVERY (THOUGHT):

I forgot how green the world was.

PANEL 44 [WIDE SHOT]

Avery looks toward the bedroom door. It is creaking from the breeze through the window.

SFX:

CREEAKK

AVERY (THOUGHT) :

Where am I?

PANEL 45 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery swivels her legs off the bed. She is wearing a long shirt, but her legs are bare. She is trying to place where she is.

AVERY (THOUGHT) :

There was a horse.

PANEL 46 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery looks out the crack in the bedroom door.

PANEL 47 [WIDE SHOT]

We see a long hallway. It looks old with chipped red paint and a worn carpet. The hall curves around so you can't see where it ends.

PANEL 48 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery opens the door wider. The breeze caresses her hair.

AVERY:

"Hello? Is anyone here?"

PANEL 49 [CLOSE UP]

Avery's feet as she walks. We see the wind follow her. It blows small glints of sand around her ankles and toes.

PANEL 50 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery walks down the hall. She is confused.

AVERY (THOUGHT) :

I remember riding through a field.

PANEL 51 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery stops at the end of the hall and sees that it leads to a massive entryway.

PANEL 52 [WIDE SHOT]

Avery appears to be in an old manor. There is a staircase leading to the second floor and old wooden furniture and a mirror in the entryway.

The large front doors are wide open to reveal the yellow-green of summer.

PANEL 53 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery sees the back of a man. It is Wade. He is sitting on the front step.

PANEL 54 [FULL SHOT]

Slight tendrils of wind blow sand around Avery's body as she watches Wade's figure. It's like the sand is somehow connected to her.

PANEL 55 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery's eyes widen as she recognizes the figure.

AVERY (THOUGHT) :

That's right, he took me with him. He pulled me out.

PANEL 56 [WHITE SPACE - PAUSE PANEL - FLASHBACK BEGINS]**AVERY (THOUGHT) :**

Out of the desert.

PANEL 57 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Afternoon in the real desert. Uninterrupted sand stretches infinite.

Avery sits under a single olive tree.

She wears a white t shirt and her grey uniform pants. She is under the only tree for miles.

VOICE (OFF-PANEL) :

"They will look for you now. They will not forget."

PANEL 58 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery doesn't look toward the voice. She stares straight ahead.

AVERY (light-hearted):

"So what? You're saying you've doomed me?"

PANEL 59 [OVERHEAD SHOT]

We see the yellow desert rolling outward framed against the pure blue sky. It is hot and desolate and empty but also beautiful.

Two shadows under the olive tree below signal people are there.

VOICE (OFF-PANEL):

"I told you I was a curse."

PANEL 60 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery smiles.

AVERY:

"I was doomed way before I met you."

PANEL 61 [MEDIUM SHOT]

In the foreground, a slip of a man's black shoes and pants sitting in the sand.

In the background, outlines of dilapidated buildings about 100 feet away. It is the sad remnants of a military base called BreakPoint.

VOICE (OFF-PANEL):

"You take nothing seriously, do you?"

PANEL 62 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery stares straight ahead.

AVERY:

"You're leaving me. Can't I try to make it alright?"

PANEL 63 [NARROW VERTICAL PANEL]

We see the trunk and branches of the olive tree.

VOICE (OFF-PANEL):

"Did you expect me to stay forever?"

PANEL 64 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery's face. She stares out at the sand, sprawling endless into the horizon

AVERY:

"I didn't ask for forever."

PANEL 65 [MEDIUM SHOT]

A man, SILAS (28 gold eyes, sharp features), looks at Avery straight on.

SILAS:

"Avery. They will never stop hunting you."

PANEL 66 [CLOSE UP]

Avery finally meets his eyes and something unspoken passes between them.

PANEL 67 [WHITE SPACE - PAUSE PANEL - BACK TO PRESENT]

PANEL 68 [MEDIUM SHOT]

SFX:

CRASH

MONA (72, small, matter of fact) has dropped a tray of dishes.

MONA:

"Well, there goes lunch."

PANEL 69 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery, startled, looks at Mona and the mess.

PANEL 70 [CLOSE UP]

Avery's hands picking up the pieces of broken dishes.

PANEL 71 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Mona regards Avery dryly, her eyes very keen.

MONA:

"You don't look half-bad awake."

PANEL 72 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery is on her knees collecting the broken dishes.

AVERY (laughs lightly):

"Is that a compliment? And I already owe you for the room."

PANEL 73 [WIDE SHOT]

Mona kneels to help.

MONA:

"This is a place of healing. No one owes anything."

PANEL 74 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery looks up surprised.

WADE (OFF-PANEL):

"Me on the other hand - you can pay me back later."

PANEL 75 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade leans on the door frame of the entry way. He watches Avery, looking bored.

Panel 76 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery stands, the broken pieces of dishes in her hands.

AVERY:

"You. I remember you."

PANEL 77 [MEDIUM SHOT]

WADE (yawning):

"I would hope so. I stopped that grave digger from bashing your head in."

PANEL 78 [EXTREME CLOSE UP]

Wade's eyes shift, cunning.

WADE:

"Some would say, you owe me your life."

PANEL 79 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery evaluates him, on edge.

AVERY:

"How much is a life worth to you?"

PANEL 80 [TWO SHOT]

Wade leans in closer to Avery and grins.

WADE:

"Depends. What can you give me?"

PANEL 81 [IMPACT SHOT]

Mona's hand slaps Wade on the side of his head.

SFX:

SMACK

Panel 82 [MEDIUM SHOT]

MONA:

"Now, now. Play nice, Wade. There's no price on her head."

PANEL 83 [CLOSE UP]

Avery's eyes widen.

AVERY:

"You're a bounty hunter?"

PANEL 84 [CLOSE UP]

Wade's hand grabs her shirt.

WADE:

"And you're bleeding."

PANEL 85 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery looks down and sees her wound has opened. Her shirt once again has turned red near her chest.

AVERY (THOUGHT):

Right. I'd forgotten.

PANEL 86 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade leans over her. It is unclear if he's concerned.

WADE:

"You're weak. You should lie down."

PANEL 87 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Avery shakes her head, gripping her chest. There is red on her skin now.

AVERY:

"It's nothing."

PANEL 88 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Wade uses his two fingers to mimic a gun pointed an inch from Avery's chest.

WADE:

"It's not nothing. Doc said two millimeters to the left and you'd be dead."

PANEL 89 [FULL SHOT]

Avery looks him directly in the eye, reminiscent of the intensity she had digging herself out of the grave. The wind spins sand around her face and through her hair.

AVERY:

"Well, I'll tell them to aim left next time."

PANEL 90 [CLOSE UP]

Something like understanding falls across Wade's face.

PANEL 91 [MEDIUM SHOT]

Suddenly, he smiles but it holds no warmth.

WADE:

"Can't let you do that. I'm supposed to deliver you alive."

END EPISODE