

HALOES ON THE MOON by Andy Froemke

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Genre: Western

Logline: This gothic Western tells the tale of four brothers who kill to possess Moon, a baby girl, only to have her grow up and uncover their violent secret and her true origin.

With torches flickering in the night sky, the townspeople of Stanton, Montana gather to witness the hanging of a woman. As the rope tightens around her neck, the story violently shifts to a remote trail amid the vast expanse of the western prairie. With the thunder and lightning of a summer storm, four brothers overtake a wagon and murder all the passengers...save one. A baby girl survives the attack and is taken away by the four men. And so our story begins...

With daybreak, we see another side to the four men. They care for their new charge with a stern but tender hand. Adopted as a daughter, the infant is given the name of Moon and becomes the center of the brothers' life on the farm. However, when the Sheriff rides out to their property to ask questions about the wagon's passengers, the brothers hide the child. And so a pattern of seclusion is established to protect the child...but from what?

As the child grows, so too do her questions about where she came from. And when the Sheriff surprises her late one night in the barn, her whole world is turned upside down. But before he can tell her the secret that ties them together, he is murdered by the brothers.

When she is old enough to ride, Moon begins to secretly venture farther and farther from the farm. And on one occasion comes across Chauncey, the son of the Sheriff. Not aware of their connection, Chauncey invites Moon to the one place she is forbidden to go... the town of Stanton. Disobeying the brothers for the first time in her life, Moon goes to town alone. While there, she hears rumors about her mother and begins to suspect everything she's been told up to then has been a lie. But before she can fully inquire into the events surrounding her mother's death by hanging, she is found and taken back to the farm by the brothers. But the frantic search to find her has taken its toll. Rutherford, the eldest brother, sustains life-ending injuries. And suddenly, a tension grows up between the frayed family unit. The brothers' control of Moon begins to wane, as she becomes more intent on discovering her true identity.

Coming across an old family photograph, Moon discovers the eerie resemblance she and her mother possess. Venturing once again into town, Moon is taken aside by the new Sheriff, Jess, who tells her of her mother's marriage to one of the brothers, her secret affair with the last sheriff, and how she came to be blamed for the murder of the sheriff's wife. While Moon processes what she's heard, Jess puts together a posse and heads to the farm with Chauncey to arrest the brothers. A shootout ensues leaving Jess and two of the brothers dead. Moon rides in at the last moment and finds herself torn between the life she once knew and the life that now stands before her. The lone remaining brother gives himself up.

In her final visit to the condemned brother, Moon breaks free of the past and ends the violent cycle borne of secrets and lies... her independence coming at the cost of her innocence.