

SOLDIER #1

Yes, sir. We come from Epitaph.
Half a day's ride from here.

WATCH COMMANDER

I know it. Go on.

SOLDIER #1

Well, sir. We got a soldier that
came down with something awful. The
local doctor couldn't fix him, so
we thought we'd bring him here.

(beat)

But he passed a few hours ago. The
fort was closer than town, so we
came here.

One of the men on watch walks to the back of the cart and
flips the blanket back. The sick soldier is dead. The
watchman nods at the watch commander.

WATCH COMMANDER

Bring him in. Put him in the
infirmary for now, then get some
chow. We'll let the Lieutenant
Major decide what to do next when
he arrives in the morning.

INT. FORT BLISS - INFIRMARY - MINUTES LATER

The soldiers from Epitaph carry the body in still wrapped in
a blanket and lay it on table. They exit. As they leave, an
arm escapes from under the blanket and dangles over the side
of the table.

INT. UNDERTAKER'S - CONTINUOUS

An arm dangles from a body lying on a table. Mortimer
approaches and puts the arm back at the side of the body.
It's Bao, still dressed in his bloody clothes. The bodies of
the posse lie near him. Mortimer goes to a different table.

He dips his rag into his bucket of water that he fetched from
the water pump and uses the rag to wipe the blood off a naked
body lying on a table. Other naked bodies show they have been
recently cleaned. Mortimer takes a step and stubs his toe.

He howls in pain.

INT. OLD SHACK - CONTINUOUS

The old man who bought the Waters of Life from Petrov howls in delight as he dangles the bottle in front of his roommate, another old man. The first old man laughs as he snatches the bottle away and downs it. He lies down on a cot to sleep.

The other old man makes a face and goes to his cot to sleep. He turns on his side, grumbling. Then he turns again to lay on his back, clutching his hands to his chest.

INT. MODEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The homely woman who bought the Love Potion holds it to her chest, shuts her eyes, and breathes deeply before drinking it. She sets the bottle down next to a small framed portrait on her nightstand and smiles. She blows out a candle.

INT. NEAT BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A match is struck and it lights a small lantern, revealing Ms. Stapleton in her bedroom. She opens a book and begins reading it in bed. She reaches over to a wooden cup and drinks some water. She frowns at the taste, but finishes it.

She turns on her side to get better light.

INT. PROSPECTORS' SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Bud lies in his cot, trying to sleep. He turns on his side toward a faint green glow in the center of the room. It's the wheelbarrow full of green crystals. It pulsates in the dark. Bud shudders, coated in sweat. His dog bite bleeds.

On the other side of the room in his own cot is Bill, facing away from the crystals. He is also sweating profusely, trying to sleep. He clenches his fists tight and then relaxes them, revealing green glowing specks in his palm.

EXT. 9 LIVES - VERANDA - CONTINUOUS

A courtesan marvels at the green particles glowing in her palm from the passing meteorite. People are still gathered outside in the street, getting coated by the green dust. The courtesan goes inside.

INT. 9 LIVES - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

In the dim hallway the courtesan lights up like she's covered in glitter. A patron sees her and grins. When she looks at him, her eyes flash and lock on him with a predator's gaze. She charges at the man, and he's taken aback for a moment.

The courtesan kisses him deeply and he relaxes as he kisses her back. They run together to a vacant bedroom, passing Rebecca and Stan who run toward a different room.

INT. 9 LIVES - REBECCA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca shuts the door and locks it, then turns around and pushes Stan onto the bed. She climbs on top of him and begins playfully unbuttoning his shirt. He takes her hands and caresses them. She looks at him, concerned.

REBECCA

What's the matter?

Stan is quiet for a long moment, eyes closed. He kisses her fingers and holds her hands to his chest. When he opens his eyes, they're filled with sincerity.

STAN

I think I love you.

He caresses her cheek and pulls her close to kiss her.

EXT. 9 LIVES - THE NEXT MORNING

Stan comes out looking like a new man. Men who pass by give him knowing smiles. Stan is about to walk off when a voice calls from above.

REBECCA

Yoohoo! Sheriff! Don't forget this.

Rebecca, wearing nothing but a bed sheet to hide her modesty, dangles Stan's Sheriff's star over the railing. She let's it go and Stan catches it with chagrin. She blows him a kiss before scurrying inside. Stan begins his day.

INT. UNDERTAKER'S - MINUTES LATER

Stan saunters into the shop. Mortimer is asleep with his head down on a desk. He's been busy. Most of the bodies are cleaned and dressed except Bao. Stan coughs loudly, and Mortimer jumps up.

STAN
Morning Mortimer!

MORTIMER
Morning Sheriff.

He stretches and his back cracks. Stan inspects the bodies.

STAN
You been at it all night?

MORTIMER
Yes, sir. Least I could do for the families. They want a burial today. Last one to do is the outlaw.

He fishes coins from his apron pocket and places a couple over the eyes of a corpse then moves to another one.

STAN
(RE: Bao)
Yeah, I don't care if you clean him up. No amount of scrubbing will ever get the dirt off.

Mortimer moves to the body of a little girl. Her mouth is open, and Mortimer tries closing it. It opens again. Mortimer shrugs and puts a coin over one of her eyes. Outside riders can be heard approaching, whooping and hollering.

The commotion draws Stan's attention, and he hurries past Mortimer, bumping him, and he drops a coin in the little girl's mouth by accident. He sighs, and goes to the window.

EXT. UNDERTAKER'S - CONTINUOUS

Stan looks down the road to see a handful of men on horses dragging something behind them. As they pass townsfolk, they cheer and jeer. Stan runs up to meet the riders.

EXT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

STAN
Carl, what's all this about?

CARL
We got him, Sheriff! We got that Indian bastard been killing our people. We aim to make him pay!

Behind Carl, Stan can see the Bandit Leader on the ground. His hands are bound by rope that is held by Carl who has obviously dragged the Bandit Leader for some distance.

STAN

What about the rest of his gang?

CARL

(beat)

They didn't make it.

(dismounts)

I would have killed this one too, but I wanted the town to see that there's still some law in these parts. Let's string him up!

Everett emerges from the jail. Stan gives him a glance.

STAN

(beat)

Get some wood and nails! We need a hanging post right here!

Men immediately jump into action to construct the makeshift gallows. Everett strides up to Stan.

EVERETT

That's it? No judge? No jury?

STAN

This is a town matter, Marshall. You've got your justice; so do we.

As the gallows is assembled in short order, Stan undoes the rope around the Bandit Leader's hands then ties the man's hands behind his back. Stan motions to some men to carry the Bandit Leader to the gallows. The men do so.

Once there, the Bandit Leader's head is placed in a noose, and men help lift the Bandit Leader onto a horse. The noose is pulled tight and the rope is tied to the gallows post. The Bandit Leader rouses to see the gathering crowd.

Among the people are Zeke, Sally, Chief Red Feather, Rebecca, Ray, and Maggie. Even Long can see what's happening from the little window in his cell. Stan approaches, pistol drawn.

STAN (CONT'D)

You got any last words, outlaw?

The Bandit Leader turns his head to Stan, but it's unclear if he understands. He sees Chief Red Feather motion with his hand, telling him to speak. The Bandit Leader acknowledges and begins speaking in his native tongue.

TOWNSFOLK #1
What's he saying?

TOWNSFOLK #2
I don't understand!

TOWNSFOLK #3
Yeah, what's he saying, Sheriff?

STAN
Christ Almighty.
(beat)
Chief! Get over here!

After a moment, Chief Red Feather makes his way forward.

STAN (CONT'D)
Do you know what he's saying?
(Chief nods)
Good. Translate.

The Bandit Leader looks at Chief Red Feather for direction. Chief motions to keep speaking.

CHIEF RED FEATHER
(translating)
I am...Hides in Shadow. My tribe are great hunters. We hunt the buffalo. Then we hunt you, the White Man. We hunt you because you steal our lands and poison our people with your sickness. And you tempt us with your fire water, but never sharing. Instead, you make us work for you. Clean. Clean always!

The Bandit Leader looks at Chief Red Feather, suspicious of the translation until Chief nods to continue.

CHIEF RED FEATHER (CONT'D)
(translating)
Now, the great hunt is over. You have killed my people. Now, I am the last. But I am not alone. When I breathe my last, my ancestors will rise up to avenge me. The spirits of the dead will punish you for what you have done. You will know fear.

The Bandit Leader falls silent. Stan rolls his eyes and raises his pistol, about to fire in the air--

FATHER ESPINOZA

Wait! Wait!

He pushes his way through the crowd. Stan sighs.

STAN

What is it, Padre?

FATHER ESPINOZA

Let me give him his last rites.

STAN

I don't think this man is a
Christian, Father.

FATHER ESPINOZA

That does not matter in the eyes of
the Lord. Everyone deserves God's
love.

Stan waves halfheartedly, and Father Espinoza prays quietly for a few moments. When he finally crosses himself and genuflects, the crowd cheers.

TOWNSFOLK #2

Get on with it!

The crowd roars in approval. Stan raises his pistol and fires into the air. The horse beneath the Bandit Leader rides away in fear, but the Bandit Leader is pulled off by the noose. He dangles helplessly from the gallows, choking and swinging.

The crowd watches in macabre amazement as the last bits of life finally leave the Bandit Leader, and he's just a swinging corpse at the end of a rope. Carl nods in vigorous approval. The crowd disperses.

MAGGIE

Oh, that was so awful. Ray, have
you ever seen anything like that?

RAY

Yes, ma'am. Many times. Too many.

He walks off, upset. Maggie lets him go. She sees Everett across the way look up at the body then at the ground. He shakes his head.

INT. UNDERTAKER'S - CONTINUOUS

Mortimer goes back to work. He approaches the body of the small girl and is about to fish out the coin from her mouth when he hears people outside talking in passing.

TOWNSFOLK #1

You believe any of that hogwash
about the dead rising?

TOWNSFOLK #3

Of course not. Only Jesus can bring
back the dead.

Mortimer looks around at the corpses for any signs of movement. Then he remembers the coin in the mouth. He brings his fingers closer. Closer. He leans his face in to look inside. Closer. Closer. He darts his fingers inside!

He fishes out the coin without any issue and laughs at his own silly fear. He places the coin over the other eye of the little girl and walks away. After a moment, the little girl's mouth snaps shut in a biting motion.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ms. Stapleton sits at her desk at the front of the classroom with her head down. The children sitting at their desks all watch her silently with worry on their faces.

TOMMY

Ms. Stapleton, are you OK?

Ms. Stapleton lifts her head. She is pale and sweaty, eyes sunken ringed by disturbing black circles.

MS. STAPLETON

I'm fine, Tommy.

She stands and courageously walks to the chalkboard.

MS. STAPLETON (CONT'D)

Today, we'll work on penmanship.

The first letter is 'A'.

(she writes)

'A' is for...

She collapses. Students rise in concern, but all they see are Ms. Stapleton's legs from behind the desk convulsing. A small girl approaches to help. Ms. Stapleton goes still as the small girl approaches her. Ms. Stapleton rises threateningly.

MS. STAPLETON (CONT'D)

'A' is for 'apple'.

She lunges at the small girl who screams as Ms. Stapleton takes her to the floor and begins biting at her face, taking a chunk of cheek. Then again, a piece of ear. Then again. And again. The other children flee, screaming in terror.

INT. OLD SHACK - CONTINUOUS

The second old man who didn't drink the Waters of Life rouses from his sleep to the sound of rhythmic thumping. He slowly wakes to look for the source. Standing at the foot of his cot is the first old man, smashing his face into the wall.

A bloody smear has already formed at the point of impact. When a new spurt of blood escapes the first old man's face, the second old man can't stifle a gasp. The first old man suddenly stops moving. He slowly turns, revealing his face.

It's a mangled mess of broken bone and flattened features. Then with unexpected speed and ferocity, the first old man leaps onto the second old man who cries out.

EXT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

A woman comes running down the street, screaming--

SARAH
Help! Help!

Stan is immediately alert and approaches Sarah.

STAN
What's the matter?

SARAH
There's a crazed man chasing us!

STAN
Us?

Jimmy comes running down the street, yelling. Behind him is Bud, foaming at the mouth and chasing almost on all fours at times. He claws at Jimmy who just barely escapes reach.

STAN (CONT'D)
Marshal! I might need your help.

Everett strides over and the two men draw pistols. Jimmy runs up, out of breath. He stands with Sarah behind the lawmen. Bud stops just short. He looks and acts like a wild animal.

STAN (CONT'D)
Easy there, Bud. Just calm down.

Bud's arm is a dark red and black. The bandage has come loose, revealing a festering wound.

EVERETT

Hell. If he's got rabies, we gotta put him down.

STAN

I ain't ever seen rabies like this.

Curious onlookers have formed a circle around Bud. He swipes at them if they're close enough.

EVERETT

It's your call. It's a town matter.

Stan grimaces and aims his pistol. He shoots a round into Bud's chest through his heart. He falls to the ground, dead. People step forward for a better look at the body.

STAN

Stay back! This man is sick.

Maggie runs up to Everett and grabs his arm.

MAGGIE

Oh my God. That's awful. I knew him. He worked for me a bit.

EVERETT

I'm sorry you had to see that.

Tiny screams interrupt them, and they see school children running towards them from the opposite direction.

MAGGIE

Tommy?

Children run to the parents they can find or any place that feels safe. They are out of their minds with terror. Tommy runs to Maggie and grabs her waist with both arms.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Tommy, tell me what's wrong?!

Tommy can't bring himself to speak. He just sobs. Maggie shakes him, and he finally points. Everyone looks to see Ms. Stapleton walking toward them slowly, occasionally biting another chunk out of the small girl in her arms.

Ms. Stapleton's face is bloody, and chunks of child flesh dot her chin. Everett's face twists in horror. Stan can't believe what he's seeing. The small girl in Ms. Stapleton's arms suddenly struggles and moans in pain.

EVERETT

Good Lord, she's alive!
(draws pistol)
You put her down this instant!

Stan approaches from a different angle, pistol drawn as well. Ms. Stapleton stops, acknowledging them for the first time. She drops the small girl unceremoniously and just stands there. Stan and Everett approach cautiously.

Ms. Stapleton flicks her eyes on Everett.

MS. STAPLETON

'B' is for 'boy'.

She runs full speed at Everett with her jaw hanging unnaturally wide. Everett is so stunned that he doesn't fire. Ms. Stapleton is almost upon him when a shot rings out and she drops on the ground, dead. Stan lowers his smoking gun.

Everett comes to his senses and runs to the small girl. He turns her over to see half her face missing as well as parts of her arm and shoulder. Everett's face is a mix of unquenchable rage and unending compassion. The girl stirs.

SMALL GIRL

'C' is for 'cat'.

She claws at Everett's face like a wild animal, oblivious to her wounds. Everett does everything he can to hold her away from him. Suddenly, the girl is pulled away. It's Ray. He holds the girl on the ground, face down but still thrashing.

RAY

I gotcha Marshal! This girl done
lost her mind!

Everett stands to collect himself. He sees Stan examining Ms. Stapleton. In the distance, Mortimer stumbles backward outside of his shop.

MORTIMER

Uh...Sheriff! Sheriff!

He falls in the dirt, but gets up quickly. Following him are the corpses of the posse and Carl's family. They shuffle forward slowly. They moan softly, but it sounds like settled gas pushed out of their bodies by this unexpected movement.

STAN

Everett.
(beat)
What the hell is going on?

Bud's body begins to convulse, causing some townsfolk to jump. Ms. Stapleton begins to writhe, and Stan steps away. Everett and Stan slowly look up to see the Bandit Leader hanging from the noose, struggling against his restraints.

EXT. UNDERTAKER'S - CONTINUOUS

As people back away from the newly risen posse and others, the last corpse to emerge is the little girl. She catches Carl's attention. He falls to his knees, tearing up.

CARL

Molly? Oh my God.

Molly begins to move in Carl's direction. Carl opens his arms to her. She opens her mouth when she's close, bearing teeth.

INT. FORT BLISS - BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

Soldier #1 rouses his fellow soldier from Epitaph.

SOLDIER #1

C'mon. Get up. We're missing chow.

The other soldier gets up to get dressed while Soldier #1 steps into the hallway. In one direction, he can see the mess hall and hears the din of breakfast. He glances in the other direction toward the infirmary. He does a double take.

In the doorway is the dead Epitaph soldier, now risen.

SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)

What in blazes? You died!

At the sound of a human voice, the dead soldier stumbles forward, swaying side to side like on a ship in rough sea.