

JONES (CONT'D)

Then the two soldiers who brought him here must have been sick too, because they came running like wild boars and just started biting the men. Not just biting but...eating the men.

Jebediah squints skeptically.

JONES (CONT'D)

I know it sounds crazy, but the men that got bit must have picked the disease, because they started acting just like the ones that bit them. By the time we mounted a defense, half the men were infected, screaming nonsense.

He wants to say more, but movement in the barracks catches his eye. Slowly, the sick soldier from Epitaph emerges. Jones backs away reflexively. Jebediah draws his pistol and fires a round into the undead's leg. Hobbled, it keeps approaching.

Jebediah fires another round, this time through the heart. No effect. When the undead is within arm's length, Jebediah fires into its skull. It drops dead.

JEBEDIAH

Jones. Have the men police these bodies, then line up any of our wounded against the wall.

Jones nods and barks orders to soldiers who go about stacking bodies and helping wounded to move to a wall. Meanwhile, Jebediah examines the gruesome undead he just shot as well as the carnage around him. Finally--

JONES

Sir, the men have done as you asked. What are we going to do with the wounded?

Jebediah shoots him a grim look, then whispers something to him before addressing the men who rush to stand at attention.

JEBEDIAH

Men, we are all seasoned veterans of the great war that tore this nation in two. By now, you could have all retired back to your farms, back to your families. But each one of you chose to stay on. You have your reasons, as do I.

(MORE)

JEBEDIAH (CONT'D)

But I believe in my heart that
beneath your motivations is a
desire to protect this land from
any threat!

The company cheers.

JEBEDIAH (CONT'D)

Well, men, that threat is here!

(motions to fort)

Here, within these walls a disease
so dangerous, it turned good men
into monsters.

(points to body pile)

Here, in this pile of poor soldiers
whose minds and bodies were taken
by this plague.

(points to wounded men)

And there, our brothers in arms,
wounded, and no doubt afflicted by
the very sickness that threatens us
all! And their sacrifice will not
be forgotten.

The wounded men against the wall suddenly freeze and look at
each other. Jebediah nods at Jones.

JONES

Firing squad! Ready!

A portion of the front line of men aim their rifles at the
wounded men. A Private who is nursing a bite on his hand
breaks ranks--

PRIVATE

WAIT!

JONES

Aim!

PRIVATE

WAIT! For pity's sake! Captain!
Please!

Jebediah looks at the rest of the men who either watch in
disbelief or look away.

JONES

F--

JEBEDIAH

HOLD!

(pause)

What's your name, soldier?

PRIVATE
Dodson, sir.

JEBEDIAH
Private Dodson. You are already
dead. Execution is a small mercy
compared to the monstrous fate
awaiting you.

PRIVATE/DODSON
I feel fine, sir!

JONES
Your infected! You'll change!
You'll kill us all!

DODSON
Then...cut off my arm! Just like it
was gangrene!

Other soldiers look to Jebediah, eyes pleading to consider
the ostensibly reasonable idea.

JONES
Sir, you saw what these things are!
We can't take that chance!

DODSON
Please! I don't want to die!

JONES
GIVE THE ORDER, SIR!

DODSON
PLEASE! PLEASE! OH GOD, PLEASE!

Jebediah looks like he might spare Dodson's life, but then
the wounded soldier next to Dodson, bitten on the neck,
rushes the firing squad with feral hunger. The firing squad
fires instinctively, killing all wounded, including Dodson.

An eerie silence falls on the courtyard as the smoke clears
and the company reconciles events with their morals. Then--

JONES
Look!

Dodson and the wounded all slowly rise as undead. Every face
in the company hardens, their minds made up. They raise their
rifles and put the undead down. Jebediah mounts his horse.

JEBEDIAH
Are you men with me?!

The company cheers with unwavering resolve.

JEBEDIAH (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Jones. Where did you say
these soldiers came from?

EXT. SALLY'S SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Zeke and Sally watch as men herd infected people and undead into an abandoned store front a little ways down the street. Other men are busy boarding up the windows. Occasionally, an arm breaks through a window and is pushed back in.

Townsfolk scurry along, afraid to be outdoors. Zeke and Sally go inside, locking the door to the saloon. Sally shrieks. Staring at her through a window is Bill. He has a greenish tint to his skin, and green bile spills from his lips.

He looks at her through green eyes, but he doesn't appear to see her. Instead, he touches the window with his hand. It thumps. He moves along and touches again. Thump. He continues thumping across the front until he starts moving out of view.

Nevertheless, the soft thumps can be heard as he moves around the perimeter. It fades, but then turns into loud banging.

SALLY
What the hell is that?

The banging comes from the secret entrance in the rear. Zeke grabs his shotgun and approaches cautiously with Sally behind him, pistol drawn. They nod to each other, and Sally quickly unbars the doors while Zeke throws them open, revealing--

SAM
Whoa! Whoa!

INT. DOC MURPHY'S - CONTINUOUS

Carl sits on a chair while Doc Murphy finishes bandaging his hand. Carl keeps looking over at Molly, who is strapped down on a table. She writhes. On the other table, the Small Girl is strapped down. She's bandaged, but wild as ever.

Stan, Everett, and Ray watch her with morbid curiosity.

CARL
Doc, I don't know what got into
her. She never harmed nobody.

DOC MURPHY
Don't worry about that now. Let's
just get you fixed up.

CARL
It's a miracle, right, Doc? God
brought my Molly back to me.

DOC MURPHY
(sighs)
Something certainly special
happened. Now, you're good to go.

CARL
I ain't leaving my Molly.

Doc Murphy looks over at Stan.

STAN
Carl, why don't you wait outside?
We got to talk to the Doc about
some things.
(beat)
Ray, you mind keeping Carl company?

It takes Ray a moment to take his eyes off the Small Girl.

RAY
Uh...sure, Sheriff. C'mon Mr. Carl.
Let's let the law handle this.

Ray takes Carl by the arm and leads him out.

STAN
OK, Doc, what is this?

Doc Murphy walks over to the Small Girl and shakes his head.

DOC MURPHY
I don't understand it. She's
missing so much skin and muscle, I
don't know why she's not screaming
in agony. And her fever is
impossibly high.

EVERETT
Yeah, I can feel the heat from
here.

DOC MURPHY
I've only seen a fever that high
once before. There was a soldier in
town. Very sick man. Scary sick.

He walks over to Molly.

DOC MURPHY (CONT'D)

And this one...I can't explain. No heartbeat. No breath. No dilation of the pupils. She's dead in all ways but one. I don't know how this is happening.

STAN

Some kind of disease?

DOC MURPHY

Diseases affect the living. I've never seen it affect a corpse.

Suddenly, the Small Girl on the other table begins breathing rapidly and sounds labored. Before Doc Murphy can get to her, she expires, exhaling a death rattle. Doc Murphy presses his stethoscope to her chest. He sighs.

DOC MURPHY (CONT'D)

Dammit. It's always terrible when the young ones go.

There's a moment of silence as the three men stare at the floor. Then Doc Murphy puts his hand across the Small Girl's eyes to shut them. As he pulls his hand away, the Small Girl's eyes flash open and she bites at Doc Murphy.

He manages to snap his hand back in time, but falls down in surprise. Everett and Stan rush to his side. Now the Small Girl behaves just like Molly, slowly writhing. The men all stare in consternation.

EXT. DOC MURPHY'S - MINUTES LATER

The men emerge, shaking off what they just saw. Everett sees Carl being consoled by Ray.

EVERETT

(to Stan)

We're gonna have to put the girls in with the rest.

STAN

(sighs)

Yeah, I'll talk to him.

Stan walks over to Carl to speak privately. Carl breaks down in tears. Everett pulls Doc Murphy aside.

EVERETT

Doc, no offense, but this seems bigger than any of us can handle.

DOC MURPHY

None taken. And agreed.

EVERETT

You mind sending your wife to telegraph for some help?

DOC MURPHY

Uh, I'll do it. Claudette's a little under the weather.

(off Everett's look)

It's nothing. Touch of exhaustion.

EVERETT

Any help is appreciated.

Doc hurries off. Everett sees Maggie near the jail, holding Tommy. Everett approaches them.

MAGGIE

Everett, what's happening? Tommy is terrified, and I admit, so am I.

EVERETT

We're still trying to figure it out. Just the same, I hope you'll stay in town. That farm of yours will take me some time to get to you if something happens.

Maggie can't help but feel flattered. Reassured, she smiles.

MAGGIE

Alright. We'll get a room tonight.

Promise you'll stop by?

(beat)

For Tommy's sake.

Everett nods, never breaking eye contact.

INT. JAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Everett walks in and immediately heads to the gun rack. He reloads his gun and stocks his gun belt. Long watches him with a steely gaze. Finally--

LONG

Stay of execution, Marshal?

Everett doesn't miss a beat with what he's doing.

EVERETT
It isn't safe to travel.

Long steps to the bars and leans on them.

LONG
From what I've seen, it isn't safe
to stay, either.

Loaded for bear, Everett heads to the door.

EVERETT
Well, we're staying. So get
comfortable.

LONG
Watch your back, Marshal!

Everett exits, slamming the door behind him.

LONG (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Watch your back.