

THRE RISE BEFORE

Written by

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RUMBLING, LOUD and DEEP, echoes through the empty void.

INT. CRUMBLING BUILDING - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Two large pale doors. Closed. Flickering lights. Shaking with the rest of the building. Large cracks creep closer from the side wall. WE CLOSE ON the doorknobs, rustling...

WHAM! The doors blast open. One man leads, ATLAS (30's), holding a sharp blade. Face unkept, dirt under the eyes, baggy clothes, stains all over. Behind him follows WARDEN (30's) - eyes locked ahead, pistol poised high. They continue forward to reveal:

PETE (50's) and JANE (30's) escorting an injured TANNER (30's).

FOCUS ON: a handcuff, connecting Jane and Tanner's hands. Tanner screams in agony as he's dragged to a close wall - a messy blood trail follows.

JANE
(to Pete; motioning head)
Here.

They place Tanner down, as:

ATLAS AND WARDEN

scope out the kitchen. Getting closer to the FAINT, CONSTANT BANGING they hear. They notice open cans, scattered along the countertop. Noodles, soup, beans.

More rattling. More shaking. More rumbling.

WARDEN
We need to get out of here man.

They come across a lone

DOOR

A label: "Pantry." The source of the banging.

Atlas and Warden share a knowing look as Warden steps to the side, hand on handle.

ATLAS
On three.
(a nod from Warden)
One... Two...
(MORE)

ATLAS (CONT'D)
 (locks eyes on door)
 Three!

The door swings open.

REVEAL: A man, thin, maybe too thin, clawing at the air. Eyes sunken back: gray, locked straight ahead: no thought in sight. His pale dry skin peeling. His legs slowly buckling. His breath raspy. Rotten brown meat clouds his teeth. Clothes torn to shreds, soaked in blood and... a large GAPING HOLE through his chest.

This man is dead.

Not sick. Not dressed up for Halloween. Dead.

Pieces of small intestines slip through the bits of visible bone, landing on the floor. This is Anatomy 101. He snarls, croaks, pushing past the doorway, beelining towards Atlas.

The man raises his arms up high, reaching out, shuffling faster. Atlas grips his blade tightly. The man closes in, opens his jaw wide.

SCHUNK! Atlas rips the blade out of the man's skull. Dark liquid flies everywhere.

No light gets snuffed out, no pupil's dilate, but the raspy breathing comes to a halt. He was just a reminder, of everything that's FALLEN.

Warden steps out. Looks at body... unfazed. They turn towards the open pantry, as:

TANNER

groans. Fidgety. Still handcuffed. A small circular wound punches through his right leg, bleeding profusely. Jane sits beside him.

TANNER
 (re: handcuffs)
 Is all of this really necessary?

Pete turns to him. Back pointed towards door.

PETE
 Not my choice. Besides...
 (leaning in)
 You did this to yourself.

Tanner scoffs - knows he's right.

PETE (CONT'D)

I wish things were different
Tanner, you know I do but... we
can't take chances anymore.

Jane agrees with her silence.

ATLAS AND WARDEN

stuff their bags with pantry items. Atlas grabs a small first
aid kit.

WARDEN

What are we doin'?

Atlas, confused. Stops filling his bag.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

Tanner's dangerous, why are we -
why are we still carrying him
around?

ATLAS

He's not dangerous, Warden-- Taking
food supplies isn't dangerous... We
got it under control.

WARDEN

Do we? Is cuffing one of our own to
him really the best idea? You
notice how every single time
there's a fuck-up we ignore the
problem like it won't bite us in
the ass later?

ATLAS

It's not like - It's not like he
can get up and run away. He's
monitored! Jane's done this stuff a
million times before! Wayy before
the outbreak. She can handle it.

WARDEN

Not this.

A beat, then:

WARDEN (CONT'D)

Listen, he's not gonna make it. We
all know that, okay. No matter what
I think of him, it's clear he's
dragging us down. We (can't get him
the medical attentio)--

ATLAS

(over)

He's gonna make it.

WARDEN

He's NOT GOING TO FUCKING MAKE IT!
I'm not saying we kill him - I'm
not saying that... But maybe we
leave him behind.

ATLAS

He's Gonna Make It.

WARDEN

Jesus fu... Atlas! He's gonna die,
and he's gonna turn, and he's gonna
get someone killed! You want that
(on your conscience?)--

ATLAS

(over)

HE'S GONNA MAKE IT!

Warden backs down, grabs more items as:

Jane looks towards the door. Sees: A man. Is this Atlas?
Warden? Someone else we know? No, it's--

JANE

A FALLEN!

Pete turns around frantically, reaches for his knife as:

A once living husk of human skin, a fallen, lunges, growling,
grabbing onto his front, knocking him down. Knife still
holstered. Pete squeals.

ATLAS AND WARDEN

turn around. Alert. They stop, zipping their bags up to rush
back in Pete's direction as:

Pete grapples with the undead, keeping it at a distance. The
fallen chomps it's teeth at his face, gnawing at the
emptiness of the air between them as:

Jane launches forward - yanked back towards Tanner's cuffed
hand. He smirks, slowly rising his cuffed arm in Jane's view.

Pete struggles. Pushes. Its teeth inch closer to his cheek.

Jane, frustrated, frantically scrambles her pockets. She
pulls out a HANDCUFF KEY. Tries for the keyhole.

Pete grunts, holding up this fallen with all his might. Atlas and Warden run in, far. Its jaw opens wide, its teeth slide down to his neck, SINKING IN.

WHACK! A BLOODIED BAT sticks to the base of its skull. The bits of blood and brains clump together like an adhesive, as it rises back up, dripping down onto Pete's face.

ELLE (40's) walks out with her bat, along with BOLOCK "BO" (30's) and ALEXANDRA (30's) from behind the door corner.

Jane unlocks the handcuffs. Tanner sighs in relief. Everyone noticing Pete's gushing red neck as he coughs up blood.

JANE

Pete!

Jane crawls over to Pete, using her hand to cover the bite mark on his neck. Holding his head up. He coughs words, but none clear enough to make out.

JANE (CONT'D)

(sobbing)

Pete, hang in there.

Alexandra stands near, covering her mouth, her eyes watering.

Warden unholsters his gun - Atlas noticing.

Pete's choking becomes softer. His eyes drift away.

JANE (CONT'D)

Pete. Pete?

His breathing stops. His muscles relaxed. His body motionless. Pete lies in a pool of his own blood, dead.

Jane takes this in, leaning into Pete for a moment, holding him tight. Everyone looks at each other, somberly... waiting.

A moment, as Pete's face grows pale, then: His lips twitch. His fingers scratch the floor beneath him. His light breath moving through the air. His full eyes turn dull and gray, looking directly at Jane.

Everyone is tense. Warden walks forward, cautious, but ready.

Jane tilts her head up, staring into Pete's lifeless eyes. His weak body brushing against hers as she pulls out her knife and stabs Pete in the skull.

Everyone relaxes.

