

HALLIE. Oh Jesus, Bert. Don't make me pretend and read 'em. Just tell me what they say.

BARRICUNE. This one's addressed to a Mr Foster. Also found this.

*(He holds up a leather bound black book.)*

HALLIE. A Bible?

BARRICUNE. A law book.

HALLIE. What's he want with a law book out here?

BARRICUNE. Seems he's transporting a small library; all kinds of books in here.

*(JIM returns.)*

JIM. Doc ain't coming. Says he's too busy with the plague.

HALLIE. That man is damn near useless.

JIM. Says to keep his wounds clean and get water in him. If he's still alive by sunset then the Doc might be able to come and have a look.

HALLIE. Well I'm damned if I'm gonna have him lying here all day.

BARRICUNE. Listen, Reverend. You got any of that hot sauce you were serving with them sausages?

JIM. I kept a couple o' jars for myself.

BARRICUNE. How about you fetch that out.

*(JIM does. BERT grabs a mug and pours some coffee in, some whiskey and a lot of the hot sauce.)*

Alright. If this doesn't work then he's already lost.

*(He holds FOSTER's nose and pours the mixture into his mouth.)*

Stand back.

*(FOSTER chokes awake, clutching his throat. The concoction sprays from his mouth.)*

Well, look at that.

HALLIE. I reckon that Doc's gettin' paid too much.

FOSTER. Water...

JIM. I'll get it.

*(JIM heads off.)*

BARRICUNE. A regular miracle wouldn't you say, Reverend?

JIM. That I would.

FOSTER. Water...

HALLIE. It's coming. Hold on a minute.

FOSTER. My throat.

BARRICUNE. Give it a couple of hours and it won't be your throat you're worryin' about. That stuff'll burn a hole right through your ass.

*(JIM returns. He pours water from the jug into a glass which he offers for FOSTER.)*

*(FOSTER downs it in one and then pulls the jug from JIM's hands and gulps down the water, spilling it down himself.)*

*(Slowly he turns to take in the room and the strangers staring at him. His eyes land on BARRICUNE.)*

Want me to shoot you after all?

FOSTER. No. There's something I want to do first.

HALLIE. You ain't doing anything anytime soon. You're lucky to be alive.

FOSTER. I don't feel so lucky.

HALLIE. If Bert hadn't found you lying out there you'd be crow's food by now.

BARRICUNE. I ain't convinced he was worth the effort. I had to walk him on the saddle for near half an hour to get water. And God knows I loathe walking.

HALLIE. Mr Foster is it?

FOSTER. Yeah. Ransome... Ranse.

HALLIE. What you doin' out this way, Mr Foster? I'm guessin' with that accent this ain't your normal locale?

FOSTER. I was heading west.

BARRICUNE. Well you've arrived. How you findin' it so far?

HALLIE. Where you from?

FOSTER. New York.

BARRICUNE. Well, you've come a long way.

HALLIE. God knows why. What you lookin' for here, Foster?

BARRICUNE. Other than sunburn and a broken jaw?

FOSTER. I'm not sure.

HALLIE. Fame and fortune perhaps? Ain't that why everyone comes west?

FOSTER. Like I said, I'm not sure.

BARRICUNE. Perhaps you'll know once you've found it, Mr Foster.

FOSTER. What's that?

BARRICUNE. Your purpose.

FOSTER. Purpose?

BARRICUNE. Yeah. Like becomin' a punchin' bag. Looks like you can take a pretty good beatin'.

HALLIE. What happened out there, Foster? Why are you in this shape?

FOSTER. Like he says, I took a beating.

HALLIE. You ask for it?

FOSTER. What?

HALLIE. Did you deserve it? You shoot your mouth off? You try and cheat someone?

FOSTER. I didn't deserve it.

BARRICUNE. You know I respect a man who puts his hands up and take responsibility after a fight.

HALLIE. You ever taken responsibility, Barricune?

BARRICUNE. If I'm in the wrong and I asked for it – threw the first punch – yeah, I'll hold my hands up.

HALLIE. I'd like to see that.

FOSTER. I didn't throw any punches.

HALLIE. None at all?

BARRICUNE. Not even once you'd been hit the first time?

FOSTER. No.

BARRICUNE. Well that's where you went wrong.

HALLIE. So what happened?

FOSTER. I tried to stand up for an old guy. He was getting pushed around by a group of men alongside the road as I came past.

BARRICUNE. Well that sounds like askin' for it in my book.

HALLIE. What d'they want from him?

FOSTER. I don't know. Looked like sport.

HALLIE. Sport?

FOSTER. The wrong kind of sport. He was a black fella – the old guy – he was coloured. It looked like it was going the wrong way. The wrong kind of fun.

BARRICUNE. A regular Good Samaritan.

FOSTER. They turned on me and I guess he must have made a run for it.

HALLIE. How'd you get away?

FOSTER. I guess they reckoned I was dead enough.

BARRICUNE. You would have been if I'd not found you.

FOSTER. So you keep sayin'.

HALLIE. Now listen, Mr Foster. I ain't in the habit of putting myself in the line of fire. I need to know if there's any chance these fellas might come looking for you here.

FOSTER. No one's looking for me.

HALLIE. Well there's that at least.

*(JIM heads off to the store room.)*

FOSTER. But I am looking for someone.

HALLIE. You see that, Bert? I've seen that look before. That's the look a man gets right before he goes out and gets himself shot.

BARRICUNE. No one here's gonna help you look for trouble.

FOSTER. It's not trouble I'm after. How about you send for the sheriff? I'll start there.

BARRICUNE. Fat lot of use that'll do you. But I'll send for the Marshal if it'll ease your soul. Well, Jackson, I'll bid my farewells.