

SHADOW OF DEATH

By

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INT. SALOON - NIGHT

SEBASTIAN, 40's, RILEY, 30's, JUDE, 60's, and CHARLIE, 20's, sit at a table playing poker. All the men have holstered revolvers on their sides.

The Saloon is quite large, filled with a dozen tables scattered around the room, a large bar on the far left, and a giant staircase leading to a second balcony level, occupied by three bedroom doors. The saloon is lit with many kerosene lamps.

There are a few bystanders at the bar, and several more at tables all around the saloon.

Sebastian takes a careful peek at his cards.

SEBASTIAN

Call.

JUDE

Read em' an' weep,
Sebastian. Three fours.

SEBASTIAN

That's a beauty hand, Jude, but
unfortunately for you I aint fond
of losin. Full house.

Sebastian pulls the small pile of coins closer to him with a smile. Jude has to double check the cards a few times, a look of disbelief refusing to leave his face.

JUDE

You cheated.

RILEY

He didn't cheat you old bag. Whose
dealer?

Charlie starts dealing the cards out.

The center door at the top of the stairs opens, and the Saloon's prostitute, PAULA, mid 20's, exits with her long amber curls bouncing on her shoulders. A MAN walks out behind her, buttoning his shirt. She strides down the stairs, her head held high.

PAULA

Any more takers?

She gets a few whistles and curious glances, but nothing more.

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PAULA

Come on, boys, a gal's gotta get her whiskey somehow!

JUDE

Hell, honey, you can just have my whiskey.

Paula approaches him and whispers in his ear.

PAULA

These clothes aint comin off if those pockets aint full.

JUDE

I reckon you give me five minutes, they'll be full again.

PAULA

You sure bout that, partner?

SEBASTIAN

We aint interested, Paula.

PAULA

Fuck you, Sebastian. This aint got nothin to do with you.

SEBASTIAN

These boys promised me some information over our private game of poker. I aint gonna get it if they got you ridin em like an apache.

Paula walks around the table to Sebastian, slowly pushes her hand down his arm, and then snatches a coin from his pile.

PAULA

I'm thirsty.

She strolls over to the bar.

SEBASTIAN

So, boys, let's have it.

RILEY

Listen, Sebastian, we'll tell you what's been whispered round, but I can't promise you its got any sense of truth about it. They just whispers.

SEBASTIAN

Riley, you said there's someone lookin' for me. I don't give a damn if it is just whispers, I need to know.

RILEY

Alright. Some say he's a bounty hunter. And then theres those that say he's, well, somethin else.

SEBASTIAN

What do you mean, "somethin else?" Like a Lawman?

JUDE

No. Not like a lawman.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The trees sway slowly and quietly in the dark of night.

JUDE (V.O.)

They say he's like the black night's wind. You don't see him, and you don't hear him, but he's there.

There is a fast and sharp movement.

INT. SALOON

Sebastian fingers his coins as he peers cautiously at the story tellers.

SEBASTIAN

You reckon he aint a bounty hunter, and he aint a lawman, so what is he?

RILEY

Again, Sebastian, this is just whisper. But the stories are that he aint even a man.

EXT. PATH - NIGHT

PREACHER, 50's, a rough looking man dressed all in black, with twin revolvers holstered around his belt, moves calmly along a path on the outskirts of the forest.

RILEY (V.O.)

Legend tells that he descended from Lucifer himself. And he aint seekin justice. He's seekin due payment.

INT. SALOON

Sebastian scratches at his beard, eying the men fiercely.

JUDE

They say when he comes, he don't bring mercy.

EXT. PATH

Preacher continues to move through the night, the Saloon now visible in the distance.

JUDE (V.O.)

He's the judge, the jury, and the executioner.

INT. SALOON

Sebastian's hand is now resting on his revolver. He looks from Riley to Jude, back to Riley.

SEBASTIAN

This sounds like a load of horse shit.

JUDE

That may be. But for not beleivin in it, you sure as shit look awful pestered about it.

RILEY

Give him a break, Jude, we just told the man that death was knockin on his door. Listen, Sebastian, Whether the story's true or not, we still don't even know if you're the one he's lookin' for. There aint

(MORE)

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RILEY (cont'd)
only one Sebastian in the entire
town.

SEBASTIAN
What's this man's name?

EXT. PATH

Preacher is very close to the saloon now.

JUDE (V.O.)
They call him Preacher.

INT. SALOON

SEBASTIAN
Preacher?

RILEY
I reckon it's cause after every
soul he takes, he crosses his chest
and prays.

SEBASTIAN
Prays for what?

RILEY
Redemption maybe.

CHARLIE
I gotta piss.

Charlie approaches the Saloon exit.

EXT. SALOON

Charlie exits the Saloon just as Preacher arrives. Without
warning, Preacher smoothly pulls out a revolver and SHOTS
Charlie in the head.

INT. SALOON

Everyone in the saloon jumps with a start, and pulls out
their revolvers. Suddenly, a gust of wind blows out the
kerosene lanterns and the room goes black. The doors of the
saloon slowly CREAK open, and CREAK closed.

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SEBASTIAN

Get those god damned lamps lit!

Several lamps go on around the Saloon, but when Riley lights his lantern, Preacher is standing behind him. He grabs Riley's head and snaps his neck.

Sebastian and Jude FIRE at Preacher, but he is gone. Suddenly, there are two gun SHOTS and Jude crashes to the ground as Sebastian SCREAMS in agony: he was shot in his firing hand.

The BARTENDER pulls a shotgun out from under the bar as Preacher shoots the remaining bystanders in the saloon. Preacher appears behind the bartender and CRACKS him in the head with his elbow, the shotgun sliding out of his hands onto the bar. Paula, trembling in the corner, see's a revolver on the ground in front of her and picks it up.

As she aims it at Preacher, he picks up the Shotgun in one hand and shoves it in her face.

PREACHER

You aim that at me, you best be ready to pull the trigger.

The pistol shakes violently in her grip, and she drops it.

PREACHER

Get outa here.

Whimpering, she stumbles over bodies and broken bottles and other various objects as she moves as fast as she can out of the Saloon, not looking back.

Suddenly, the far left door upstairs bursts open, a young MAN wearing only his undergarments and holding a pistol charging out. As he takes aim at the only man left standing, Preacher swiftly shoots him in the chest, dead.

Preacher calmly approaches Sebastian who is clambering away from him, maneuvering around objects, and holding his bloody hand. He finally finds an upright chair and pulls himself into it, quivering in pain and fear. Preacher sits down beside him and places his revolver on the table, the barrel aimed at Sebastian's heart.

PREACHER

You ready?

SEBASTIAN

Why? Why me? Why now?

PREACHER

You had a path, and you strayed from it. I don't make the rules, Sebastian. I just enforce 'em.

SEBASTIAN

I don't deserve this.

PREACHER

There comes a time in your life when you hit the very bottom, and there aint no diggin your way out. You drop to your knees, press your hands together, and call out to the heavens, "Please, God, help me." And he looks down at you. And then he looks away.

SEBASTIAN

What does that even mean?

PREACHER

It means you don't matter to him anymore.

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

There is a gunshot and approaching footsteps heard from inside the saloon before preacher exits the saloon holstering his revolvers. He walks away crossing his chest.

PREACHER

As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil.

THE END