

The Devil's Kitchen

written by

I'm not the fig plucker,
Nor the fig plucker's' son,
But I'll pluck figs
Till the fig plucker comes.

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FADE IN:

EXT. COASTAL PATH - DUSK

A well-trodden dirt track. Severe drop to the sea on one side, dense trees made crooked by the prevailing coastal winds on the other.

A horse thunders by carrying GENTLEMAN (30's) and LADY (30's) draped in Victorian finery.

They anxiously look behind, no one there. Looking ahead they see the dark silhouette of a beastly figure in the road.

Gentleman desperately yanks on the reins, the horse rears, throws them off.

CRACK.

The Lady HOWLS. Her fibula juts from the skin.

CREATURES creep from the shadows of the tree line. Human-like, but twisted and warped. They move bizarrely.

Gentleman backs away.

LADY

Help me!

He doesn't, he flees.

Miss-step, he THUDS to the floor. Scrambling back to his feet, he looks back. Lady and the creatures have gone.

A diseased, boiled hand clamps over the Gentleman's mouth, muffling his screams. The creature snaps his neck.

INT. TAVERN - DUSK

GASPS from a group of PATRONS surrounding a STORYTELLER. Bearded and portly, he ushers his listeners in closer.

STORYTELLER

Don't you stray down by Clovelly bay. John Gregg and his hideous family, begotten by incest, creep from their caves, murder who they rob, and eat who they murder...

On a nearby table sit WALTER (22) and ALBERT (35). Both in tatty vests, shirts and long coats.

Walter leans back to listen to the storyteller's tale. Albert hits him on the chest.

WALTER

Ow! What you do that for?

ALBERT

Will you pay bloody attention!

Walter leans in close.

WALTER

Have you not 'eard the stories? I don't fancy being eaten by incestuous beasts!

Albert slaps him around the head.

WALTER

Ow! What you do that for?

ALBERT

Listen 'ere you feeble minded fool. These tales of "ghosts" and "ghouls" are fictions concocted by smugglers to keep away the prying eyes of those morons daft enough to believe 'em.

Walter looks hurt.

ALBERT

But, as it 'appens, these tales serve us. So, are you in?

Walter looks between Albert and the storyteller. Unsure. Eventually, he nods.

Albert slaps Walter on the back, downs his ale and abruptly stands.

ALBERT

Come, tide would've brought the goods in by now. We should act with haste before others find 'em.

EXT. TAVERN - DUSK

A sign hanging on the side of the tavern squeaks in the wind.

Albert strides at a confident pace. Walter trails behind.

A dark figure a way down the road approaches quickly. Walter stops, watches it.

Its pace quickens, waddling as it approaches. Wiry hair juts from its head as it rubs its grotesquely huge belly.

FEMALE VOICE

Walter! Thought I would find you in this piss hole!

The dark figure storms for Walter, It's HARRIET (23) dirty cotton dress hangs over her heavily pregnant belly.

HARRIET

Home, now!

Busted! Walter tries to talk, stumbles on the words.

Albert doubles back.

ALBERT

Harriet! You are positively glowing!

HARRIET

Bugger off, Albert. What nonsense have you gotten him involved in this time?

ALBERT

Some silly folk lost their cargo on the beach and we are helping clean it up. Calm yourself. Come, Walter.

Albert walks away.

HARRIET

Don't you tell me to be calm! Walter, just come home, please.

Torn in two, Walter looks between Albert and Harriet. He rubs Harriet's belly.

WALTER

A ship has wrecked down by the bay, we're just going to see what's washed up. We need the money.

HARRIET

Yes, we need the money, everyone needs money, Walter. We need you more. He's a hornswoggle, he'll get you in trouble.

WALTER

The farm doesn't pay well.

Walter contemplates, torn in two.

ALBERT (O.C.)
 Oi! Gibface, 'urry up.

WALTER
 Just this one, soon as this one is
 done, I'll part ways with him.

Walter kisses Harriet, then her belly. He hastens to catch up with Albert.

HARRIET
 Walter! Walter! Get back here!

Walter disappears into the darkness.

EXT. BEACH COVE - NIGHT

Small, surrounded by rocks and cliffs, secluded.

Out to sea, barely visible, the wreck of a clipper lodged between two sea stacks.

Splinters of wood and debris litter the beach. Amongst them, barrels and small crates.

Albert rolls a barrel towards Walter.

ALBERT
 Look 'ere. Brandy I reckon.

Walter stares at him.

ALBERT
 Well make yourself useful! Go check
 that crate over there, if it's
 French lace we're in the money.

Walter walks further down the beach to a crate nestled amongst some rocks.

He eyes up a nearby, menacingly dark, cave opening.

A hand snatches his leg, he tumbles to the ground.

The hand belongs to a SAILOR, soaked through, he's clinging on to life.

SAILOR
 Help me. The cave, monsters in the
 cave. Took the others. Help me.

WALTER
 What monsters? Don't worry--

BANG. Blood spurts from Sailors face.

Albert stands above him, Lancaster pistol still pointing at the dead sailor.

WALTER
What did you do?

Albert lowers the firearm.

ALBERT
Can't be 'avin any witnesses.

Albert walks away.

Walter charges after him, leaps on his back, snatches the pistol out of his hand.

Albert throws him onto the sand, kicks him in the face.

Walter crawls backward, holds his face.

ALBERT
What's gotten into you?

Albert stands with his back to the cave.

A hideous arm wraps around him from behind. Another hand, with long pointed nails, grab his face.

Walter flees as Albert is dragged into the cave.

Panting, Walter quickly looks where to go, spots some rocks by the water's edge and dives behind them.

A figure steps from the cave, this one walks taller, slightly more human than the others. He steps into the moonlight.

JOHN GREGG (40's) donned in what was once some fine apparel, they now correspond with his pale, scarred, zombie-esque skin.

With the aid of a cane, John Gregg strolls across the beach.

He points the cane to the dead sailor.

JOHN GREGG
(refined)
Here's one.

Two smaller creatures emerge from the cave. More animal like than John, long matted hair drapes over thin, pale boil ridden skin.

They grab the sailor and drag him towards the cave. One grabs the sailor's arm, takes a bite of his flesh.

John hits them with his cane.

JOHN GREGG

No, no, no. Prepare him first.
We're not animals.

John continues his stroll along the beach, searching.

ROCKS

Eyes closed, Walter shakes wildly, holds the pistol close to his chest.

He tries to quieten his breathing as behind him, John Gregg inches closer towards him.

BEACH

Gregg stops. Turns back around, heads towards the cave.

He glances down, something grabs his attention, footprints in the wet sand.

A menacing grin reveals his yellow pointed teeth. His eyes follow the footprint trail all the way to--

ROCKS

Walter opens his eyes, builds up the courage to look around the rocks. No one there. He breathes a sigh of relief.

As he turns back around, John Gregg stands in front of him. Smashes him across the head with a rock.

EXT. CLIFF TOP - NIGHT

Harriet looks down at the beach in horror as John Gregg drags Walter towards the cave.

She struggles back onto her horse, gallops away.

INT. CAVE ROOM - NIGHT

Wall mounted candles light the living room sized space.

At the centre, hanging upside down, is Walter. He opens his eyes, takes in his surroundings.

Body parts everywhere - lying on tables, pickled in jars, hanging from hooks like beef jerky. Men, women and children, no one spared.

He looks to his feet, tied, he tries to reach them.

JOHN GREGG (O.S.)
Oh, I thought you were dead.

John stands in the cave entrance.

WALTER
Please, let me go. I won't tell anyone.

John chuckles.

JOHN GREGG
I'm afraid I must refuse. I have a large family, and we must eat.

A CHILD (8) scrambles into the cave on all fours. Deformed and covered in sores, she takes a pickled hand from a jar, bites off one of the fingers.

WALTER
I work on a farm, I can bring you livestock, as much as you need!

John caresses a human carcass hanging from a hook.

JOHN GREGG
Eating one's kind corrupts the mind, body and soul. An affliction. But it is not only the cause, it is also the cure. Animals will not sustain us. No one leaves here alive.

John strokes the face of the child. Smiles to Walter and makes his leave.

Walter hangs, hopeless.

Child moves to a table and picks up Walter's pistol. Plays with it in her hands. An idea strikes.

WALTER
Do you want me to show you how to use that? Bring it here, I'll show you.

A moment of hesitation but curiosity prevails. The child shuffles across the floor and hands Walter the pistol.

Walter takes it, pulls himself up and shoots the rope binding him to the roof.

Walter THUMPS to the ground.

He scrambles to his feet. Child growls, bares her teeth, charges towards Walter.

WALTER
Stop, please.

Child leaps towards him-- BANG. Head shot, dead. Walter vomits. Composing himself, he flees out of the room and into--

CAVE HALLWAY

Long and narrow, dimly lit with candles.

Walter runs as fast as he can. A SCREAM from behind, Walter chances a glance.

Two adult creatures thunder his way, frothing at the mouth.

Walter picks up the pace. Gets to a T-junction, takes a left.

Footsteps behind him get louder, closer. Walter stumbles, hits the cave wall hard. Winces.

Footsteps up ahead, surrounded. Walter spots an opening to the left, he goes through into--

CAVE ROOM

Only one way in and out. Trapped.

Slumped in the only chair in the room, Albert. Behind him, a large pile of belongings, clothes, boots, watches, weapons.

WALTER
Albert!

He rushes over to him, lifts his head. SCREAMS. His face is gone, teeth marks at the edges of the flesh, chewed off.

Walter vomits again. Flees back out into--

CAVE HALLWAY

A glance both ways, where are they? he creeps forward, listens.

Faint footsteps behind, very close. Walter stops in his tracks.

Swallowing hard, he turns.

Face to face with a female creature, riddled with boils and missing a nose, she holds the dead creature Child in her arms. Blood falls from her eyes like tears.

She lets out a high pitched, ear piercing SCREAM.

Walter covers his ears as he flees in the opposite direction.

The hallway opens into a--

CAVERN

On the far side, moonlight shines through the cave opening.

A smile of hope from Walter, he runs.

As he crosses the cavern, dozens of creatures emerge from various passages, all give chase.

Walter can't help but look behind him, hits a small stalagmite, lands hard on his face, busting his nose.

He gets to his feet. In front of him stands John Gregg.

JOHN GREGG

I'll reiterate. No one--

BANG. Shot smacks into John's face. He falls backwards.

Pistol in hand, Walter dashes for the cave entrance.

EXT. CAVE

Walter runs into the moonlight and onto the sand.

Ahead of him on the other side of the beach, a dozen of the King's SOLDIERS atop a dozen horses.

Harriet pushes her way through them.

HARRIET

Walter? Walter!

Walter smiles.

But is grabbed around the neck from behind.

John Gregg puts his mouth close to Walters ear. His face bloody from the gunshot wound.

JOHN GREGG

No One leaves alive.

John slices open Walter's throat. He drops to the ground.

HARRIET

No!

The soldiers line up in a wall.

Creatures pour out of the cavern and line up behind John. Men, Women, children, all hideous and grotesque, they number forty.

Walter writhes in the sand clutching his throat, blood pours through his fingers. Gargles on his blood.

The soldiers charge as one disciplined line.

High pitched BATTLE CRIES from the creatures, they charge like the feral creatures they are. John Gregg leads the way.

They hop over Walter, leaving him all alone.

(O.C.) cries, screams, gunfire, sounds of the battle.

Walter is still, his eyes unblinking, blood-soaked sand surrounds his head.

FADE OUT.

THE END