

HUNG MY HEAD

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

A military space transport ship flies past the stars from the empty blackness. She wears old patches for older wounds.

She tilts forward towards a planet. Her nose grows red and heat waves blossom from the bow.

EXT. DEPOT STATION - DAY

The depot appears much like an earth railroad station from the late 1800's with worn wooden sidewalks.

The ship lands.

The passengers fight to get to the fresh air. CREWS unload crates and animals.

A hologram TICKET AGENT with a constant smile operates an office mid-station. He assists clients while they claim cargo and purchase passage.

CALBREX MCGREGOR (61) thin but strong, his worn shoes scuffed, steps into the open doorway and blocks the bright sunlight with his hand. The heavy scars of a past battle wound stand out.

He carries one small backpack, a tablet, and a canvas duffle bag.

A WOMAN and her small son, JERRY, 5, step into the light. The small son runs out and steps off the ramp. He begins to fall to the ground.

Calbrex catches him before he hits the ground.

Woman

Thank you, Jerry please stay with me.

Calbrex nods to her.

BART JOHNSON (28) big smile, bounces on his toes. He hugs the LOCALS and PASSENGERS when they step from the ramp.

BART

Hi, hi there, welcome, welcome to my city. Gonna have fun. Yeah, yeah you are. Happy to see you...

Calbrex watches the locals greet, hug Bart; while the passengers try to keep clear of him.

The Ticket Agent smiles and his mouth moves. The LOUDSPEAKER ECHOES.

TICKET AGENT

Welcome, newcomers, to the city of Litkosh. Please give a warm welcome to our esteemed Mayor, Heinrich Giles.

Mayor HEINRICH GILES (53) barrel-chested, steps on the platform.

He wears a pressed shirt and necktie with a golden clasp. A gold-crest ring occupies his little finger.

He forces a raspy voice.

GILES

Thank you, welcome to our fair city of Litkosh.

LEIGH GILES (36) stands by her husband, hands at the waist of her bright dress.

Her perfect blonde hair, with bangs that cover her top eyelids, reflects the bright sunlight.

GILES (CONT'D)

We may be the furthest outpost from your birthplace, but please consider us your new home.

The newcomers gather, listen to Giles while the locals go on about their business. Many mouth the words they've heard so many times before.

GILES (CONT'D)

We pride ourselves in fulfilling your every need. If you need help finding your accommodations...

Giles indicates and gives a quick wink to, MS. LILY (28).

She is an attractive woman and wears a bright light-blue plastic vest over a low-cut form-fitting silk blouse, a mid-length skirt and sea-green cowboy boots.

GILES (CONT'D)

... please see my personal assistant, Ms. Lily, stationed to my right.

Newcomers surround Ms. Lily. She smiles, addresses everyone's issues, hands each a clear sheet of glass the size of a tablet.

One newcomer holds it up and looks through it. Text appears and marks the streets, merchants, and highlights of the city.

After everyone else has gone. Calbrex steps forward and addresses her.

CALBREX

Good day, Ms. Lily. I am Calbrex McGregor. I'm not sure if you have any accommodations for me.

MS. LILY

I don't see your name. Could it be under some department? Is this your final destination?

Ms. Lily smiles and scans her tablet.

CALBREX

I was given the impression there is no destination beyond here.

MS. LILY

True. I don't see you on the transport manifest.

CALBREX

I came to replace Jacques Baptist; I'm the new Preacher.

Ms. Lily pulls on her vest and covers the revealing blouse.

MS. LILY

We received word someone would be coming, but we have no name.

She looks around, and only a few workers wander about.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

I believe I'm finished here. Would you allow me to show you to your quarters?

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - DAY

Ms. Lily and Calbrex the main street of Litkosh. Empty, neglected and boarded buildings line the street. Many of the business signs include the name: "GILES".

CALBREX

By the look of these signs, the mayor has a few investments.

MS. LILY

Mayor Giles is generous.

CALBREX

How did the mayor come about his credits?

Ms. Lily and Calbrex turn a corner and continue to walk.

MS. LILY

He's never really mentioned it.

CALBREX

Have you been here long?

MS. LILY

A few rotations now.

A few citizens pass by, nod, and move on.

CALBREX

What about the rest of the townsfolk?

MS. LILY

People come and go. Most stay for a while, then move onto another adventure.

CALBREX

Have you made many friends here?

The space between the buildings increases.

MS. LILY

You'll find people here are friendly.

More dead weeds and more boarded windows.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

In fact, there's a women's craft group that meets every Wednesday, a very talkative bunch.

CALBREX

What kind of crafts do they make?

MS. LILY

Some sew or paint, some knit. A few
cutup pictures and make some kinda
memory books.

A simple building stands in the distance.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

I don't understand why they don't
just save them on their tablets
like everybody else.

She stops and tilts her head.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

I think most of the women come to
gossip about their husbands or
boyfriends; how they would prefer
to live someplace else.

They stand in front of the simple building with overgrown
weeds, dead bushes, shuddered windows and an empty bell
tower.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

Here it is, home sweet home.

Calbrex picks at the peeling paint.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

I don't think it was used much
before Jacques' accident.

EXT. DEPOT STATION - LATER

NAHUM BRAY (30) with messy clothes and unkempt hair, pushes
and prods the cattle from the transport.

Nahum hoots, hollers, and pokes the last few cattle into a
holding pen with an electric prod. He locks the gate behind
them and smiles.

ADELBERT FINICK (23) looks more like an accountant than an
animal manager. He is clean cut with his shirt tucked in; the
top button secured, glasses and polished brown riding boots
complete his attire.

He stands with a scanner tablet in hand and CLICKS away while
he counts the animals and notes their tags.

NAHUM

You the transfer manager?

ADELBERT
Adelbert Finick, at your service.

NAHUM
Good Adelbert, where do I get paid?

ADELBERT
Your name, please?

NAHUM
Nahum Bray, from Attowic animal
transfers.

Adelbert CLICKS and flicks through the documents on his
tablet.

ADELBERT
Ah yes, Mr. Bray. You can pick up
your credits at the animal transfer
office tomorrow morning.

Adelbert points at the main street.

ADELBERT (CONT'D)
That's down the street to the left.
A rather large red plastered
building with white doors.

NAHUM
What do you mean tomorrow?

ADELBERT
As you may know, the animals must
be checked by a Vet to certify they
are healthy and --

Nahum steps close to Adelbert; he leans over and looks to
him.

NAHUM
I don't think you realize the
seriousness of this moment. I have
been living with these animals ...

Nahum steps closer.

NAHUM (CONT'D)
...for six weeks so you and your
kind can have milk for breakfast
and steaks for supper.

Another step.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

That means I have not had a refreshing drink for over four months, and I'm really thirsty.

Adelbert steps back; types on his tablet.

ADELBERT

I... ah... I can arrange an advance at the June Bug.

Nahum tilts his head and squints at Adelbert.

ADELBERT (CONT'D)

That's the pub next to the animal transfer office.

He points back to the street.

ADELBERT (CONT'D)

Its a quaint establishment with mediocre food, a bathhouse and high quality locally bottled spirits.

He taps some more on the tablet.

ADELBERT (CONT'D)

There, 300 credits in your name. Simply speak with the manager and she will take care of your needs.

NAHUM

300? I was thinking more like 900.

ADELBERT

I can assure you it has reasonable pricing.

Nahum steps back a bit, smiles and slaps Adelbert on his back.

NAHUM

Good prices for a good stiff drink. What more can a man ask?

INT. KITCHEN RECTOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Calbrex opens the interior shutters. Light beams through dirty windows. Dust mites float in the air.

In a small kitchen; the open cupboards are empty except for mice droppings. Two chairs face each other; a simple wooden table separates them.

Calbrex looks to the open doorway. Ms. Lily stands outside her hand over her mouth and nose.

CALBREX

Not really suited for entertaining
is it?

MS. LILY

I didn't think preachers do much
entertaining?

CALBREX

Not that anyone speaks of.

INT. JUNE BUG - DAY

A polished wooden bar runs in front of a mirrored wall. It reflects liquor on glass shelves. Leather bar stools hold only a FEW CUSTOMERS.

LOUD NEW AGE/WESTERN MUSIC played by a HOLOGRAM GROUP, drowns out all conversations.

The front door opens. Light peeps through the dark environment. Soft table lamps reflect in the smoky haze.

Nahum steps inside and smiles when he spies the liquor.

NAHUM

Just what the doctor ordered.

He finds an empty table near the back, sees a WAITRESS and raises his hand.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

'xcuse me. Could I get a drink?

She makes her way to him.

WAITRESS

What'll it be?

NAHUM

What's the best you've got?

WAITRESS

Does it really matter?

NAHUM

How 'bout a smooth-whiskey and a
steak, medium rare?

EXT. HOLDING PENS, DEPOT - DAY

Mayor Giles, Adelbert, and two ranch hands, ROY and DALE, watch an old veterinarian, COY WITHERS (73) whose face looks like tanned animal hides, checks the cattle.

Bart stands on the fence. He pets and talks to the animals.

BART

I'm happy to see you too...

Coy pushes his way through the cattle back to Giles, Adelbert, and the hands.

COY

I tell ya Henry; these animals are getting older every shipment. Those two in the corner,

He points to a couple of skinny cows.

COY (CONT'D)

...the ones twitching. They might make it one or two days at the most. The rest are good to go.

Giles, places a hand on Adelbert's shoulder.

GILES

Adelbert looks like we're having a barbecue. Send the sick ones over to Zac at the June Bug.

ADELBERT

What would you like us to do with the rest sir?

GILES

Same as always, half to my herd, half to the city herd.

INT. BEDROOM, RECTOR'S HOME - NIGHT

Calbrex enters a humble room, only one closet with one shelf. A single bar stretches below the shelf big enough for a dozen hangers.

The light flickers from a lamp with a faded shade. Calbrex tries to fix the loose cord.

The light steadies. He places his duffle bag on the bed, removes his tablet, a few personal items, and less than a dozen shirts and pants.

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - NIGHT

Nahum stumbles from the pub. He staggers to the corner and blows chunks on his boots.

He coughs a few times, wipes his mouth with his sleeve, and wanders away.

INT DINING ROOM, GILES' MANSION - NIGHT

Giles, Leigh, and guests, sit at a long table covered by a white tablecloth where fine china holds steaks, salads, and raspberry cheesecake.

Tall crystal wine glasses, toasting flutes, and champagne glasses cradle various drinks.

SHERIFF WHITNEY (52) tall, thin, and soft-spoken sits next to IAN JOHNSTON (70) an overweight man in a tight suit.

GILES

Then I told him, "Sir that is not my brand, I only drink refined Scotch."

The crowd laughs.

IAN

So tell me Henry, when do you see another business trip like that to a civilized planet?

GILES

You mean this isn't a civilized planet? What do you think Whitney?

WHITNEY

If we were more civilized, I might be out of a job.

The gentlemen laugh.

IAN

But then who would we pay our commissions too?

WHITNEY

Pay? I think you're behind a little Ian.

The laughter grows.

EXT. HOLDING PENS, DEPOT - NIGHT

Nahum wallows to the pens. He grasps the fence to keep his balance.

NAHUM

Adelbert! Hey, Adelbert where are you? I need more credits. The Junie Bug cut me off. Adelbert!

Bart hurries to Nahum.

BART

Shh, Shh, you'll wake the cows.

NAHUM

What the hell are you talking about? Adelbert, I need to see you!

Bart grabs Nahum and tries to put his hand over his mouth.

BART

No, no, quiet, they need to sleep.

Nahum slaps Bart's hands and face.

NAHUM

Get away from me!

Bart struggles harder to quiet Nahum.

The skirmish raises the animal's nerves.

The cattle begin to shuffle about and make noise. They bump one another. They joust for position, away from the clamor of the fight.

Roy approaches the noise.

ROY

What's going on?

Finally, Nahum punches Bart hard and knocks him to the ground.

NAHUM

Stay away from me you freak!

Bart is pure rage.

Next to a haystack stands a shovel, he grabs it and rushes towards Nahum.

BART
I said be quiet!

He strikes at Nahum hitting his raised arms and shoulder. He hits Nahum in the head hard. The blow knocks Nahum to the ground. *

Bart swings again, and again.

Nahum rolls away and turns over his weapon drawn. *

BANG! BANG!

Bart staggers back, falls to the ground; dead.

Blood from new wounds rolls onto Nahum's face. He still holds his weapon towards the silent Bart. *

Roy runs away.

EXT. HOLDING PENS, DEPOT - LATER *

Adelbert, Roy, and a few others mingle around the corral.

Sheriff Whitney stands in his long suit coat and listens to Roy.

WHITNEY
And that's it? That's all you saw.

ROY
He was beating Bart bad and Bart tried to defend himself. Then he just shot him.

Whitney walks to where Nahum sits on the ground by the haystack. His face, neck and shirt covered in blood.

WHITNEY
Well son, we need you to come down to my office, see if we can sort this out.

NAHUM
Like I told ya Sheriff, he just attacked me. I had to defend myself. Don't ya believe me?

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nahum lays on a thin mattress his face to the wall in a dusty cell with cobwebs in the corners.

His eyes are black and swollen. His nose twisted to the right, and blood crusted on him.

He takes a short breath, wincing with pain, he holds his ribs.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

*

Whitney stands and comforts Ms. Lily. Tears wet his shirt.

Calbrex KNOCKS, and enters the room.

CALBREX

Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Whitney signals Calbrex to enter. He turns his attention to Ms. Lily.

WHITNEY

Why don't you go home now, I'll let you know how things play out; OK?

Ms. Lily just shakes her head. She hides her tears and leaves.

CALBREX

She seems quite upset.

WHITNEY

Her brother was killed last night. That kind of thing does tend to upset most people. How can I help you?

Calbrex extends his hand to Whitney.

CALBREX

My name is Calbrex McGregor; I'm a Preacher new to this town. Just wanted to introduce myself. Can I ask, what happened? Was there some kinda accident?

WHITNEY

I don't think what happened last night was much of an accident. Unless you call too much alcohol, a quick temper and a loaded gun an accident.

CALBREX

The follies and weaknesses of men can cause accidents.

Whitney sits on the corner of his desk.

WHITNEY

When a man draws his weapon and kills another, well, it's no accident.

CALBREX

Then are you holding that man here? May I see him?

WHITNEY

He's had a hard night, so I'm not sure he's up to visitors. I suppose it would be all right.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Whitney and Calbrex enter and find Nahum. He sits on the edge of his bed.

Nahum holds his side and struggles to breathe.

WHITNEY

Bray you have a visitor. I'll give you ten minutes.

Whitney leaves the room.

Calbrex grabs a chair and sits. He looks through the electronic bars at Nahum.

CALBREX

My name is Calbrex McGregor I'm a preacher. Mind if we talk?

No answer.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Could you tell me what happened last night?

NAHUM

Preacher huh? Don't remember the last time a Preacher came to see me.

Nahum shifts his weight, winces.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

'Bout last night? Don't remember much about that.

CALBREX

How'd you get the black eyes?

NAHUM

Not sure, 'cept someone just kept screaming, then they'd hit me. Curse, then hit me again.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY HALL - DAY

Giles sits in an opulent dark-wooded office behind a large desk. Calbrex stands; paces about between the desk and the leather chairs, which face it.

Giles holds a tablet.

GILES

I have the Sheriff's report. I am confident Sheriff Whitney conducted the investigation properly.

Giles leans back in his chair changing the subject.

GILES (CONT'D)

It's a damn shame. A fine young man cut down in his prime; a young man who by his very character gave hope and encouragement to this community.

CALBREX

I can see his life gave something to those who knew him, and that is not the point to which we are discussing.

Calbrex leans into Giles.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

The prisoner was beaten and suffered from the hands of someone else's misdeeds!

GILES

It is my understanding the injuries were the results of the accused resisting arrest. Not uncommon for a drunken man.

CALBREX

Has anyone spoken with his family, made them aware of what has happened?

Leigh enters with a platter of sandwiches and drinks. She arranges them on a small table near the end of the chairs.

GILES

We have never had to deal with a murder before. Things like this don't happen around here. The community and I are trying to figure out how best to cope with this for everyone's foremost concerns and interests.

Leigh steps forward.

LEIGH

Would you care to join the mayor for some lunch? It's roast beef, or I could get you something else.

CALBREX

Thank you, no. I need to be leaving.

GILES

I understand the concern you may feel, and I assure you he will have a fair trial.

Giles stands and walks around the desk.

GILES (CONT'D)

All the facts will come out. But these things take time. It will be six, maybe seven months at the soonest before any judge can even get to Litkosh.

Giles takes a sandwich from the platter.

GILES (CONT'D)

I will keep myself abreast of the situation and have someone try to find the accused's family. Is that a fair start?

CALBREX

Nahum.

GILES

Nay what?

CALBREX

The accused. His name is Nahum.

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - DAY

Calbrex stands outside a general store. In his hands, paper flyers. Citizens walk by, and he smiles when he offers each an announcement.

Ian approaches, Calbrex offers him a flyer.

CALBREX

Could I invite you to a memorial service?

Ian looks inquisitively at the flyer.

IAN

People just post something like this on the town's communication link.

CALBREX

It's a notice for Bart Johnson; the young man who died recently.

IAN

You mean who was murdered don't ya?

Calbrex stands unmoved.

CALBREX

Perhaps you will come and bring a friend or two. I just thought if I invited everyone, it would be more personal, help with the healing.

IAN

Murder always is personal, isn't it?

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Soft New Age music wafts out from the two carved wooden doors. Held open by a stone, each placed at the corner of the door.

TOWNSFOLK enter in small groups

INT. FOYER, CHURCH - DAY

Calbrex stands inside the main open doors, dressed in rather regular clothes.

His khaki pants worn at the knees; his white shirt buttoned to the collar with sleeves rolled to the elbow.

He offers a handshake to those who will take it and offers each a reverent greeting.

CALBREX

Welcome, thank you for coming. I'm glad you could be here.

Each person files in tentative. Curious and cautious they find their seats.

INT. NAVE, CHURCH - LATER

Mayor Giles and his wife Leigh, sit on one side. Ms. Lily and the Sheriff sit on the other side of the front row.

A few flower wreaths stand guard. A reminder of the past events.

Calbrex steps to the podium, he touches his tablet, and the music softly fades out.

CALBREX

Thank you all for coming. I know most of you do not know me so if I may introduce myself.

He offers a warm smile.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

My name is Calbrex McGregor, I am a Spiritual Leader, Shepherd, or Preacher; whichever you prefer.

The audience sits frozen.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I have come to Litkosh with the hope that I can help offer peace to all who seek it.

A few people begin to relax with his calm words.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I am sure we will have time to get to know each other better as you like.

Calbrex sees a few smiles among the crowd.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Today we are here not for social pleasantries, but to honor the memory of a young man.

His eulogy takes a more somber tone.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Mr. Bart Johnson, a young man, who
was been taken from us to soon. I
did not know Mr. Johnson,

Ms. Lily wipes a tear from her eye.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

... in fact I only saw him once at
the depot. His exuberance for life
and loving acceptance of everyone
was evident in his actions.

A few heads nod in agreement.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I did witness how his life affected
this town. I understand he gave
hope and encouragement to all.

Calbrex begins to step away from the podium. His speech takes
a friendly tone.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

That everyone was his friend, his
very best friend, and animals were
his closest companions.

A few heads bow and tears begin to flow.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

You may have known; it was his love
for these animals that kept Bart at
the holding pens many nights.

Heads nod in acknowledgement.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

One thing we do know is his
concern, his love for all of us,
both man and beast, will be missed.

The emotions overcome Ms. Lily. Her shoulders shake.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

One death, even our death is not
the final part of our existence.
Not only for Bart but all of us.

He steps back to the podium.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
His physical burdens have been
lifted from his weary shoulders.

Calbrex smiles and looks in the faces of those who listen.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
We all suffer from the loss of a
dear friend. But we have an example
of kindness he left for us.

Calbrex holds his arms out to the congregation.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Please join me in a simple prayer
of thanksgiving, of peace, of
comfort. For Bart, for us,

He steps close to the podium and folds his hands together.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
...and for the man accused of
Bart's death, Nahum Bray.

His last words strike at those in attendance. They look back
and forth to each other.

Calbrex bows his head.

Ian Johnston jumps to his feet.

IAN
Hold on a second Preacher. Did I
hear you right? Do you want us to
pray for a killer?

CALBREX
We all need forgiveness sir, to
find our own peace.

IAN
Well, I'll be go to hell. That boy
killed Bart in cold blood! And
you're praying for him?

Ian turns and addresses the crowd.

IAN (CONT'D)
We should pray the justice of Hell
comes quickly to that sorry son-of-
a-bitch!

The audience erupts into shouts while their grief turns to anger, focused on Calbrex. Many start toward him with their fists held high.

INT. NAVE, CHURCH - LATER

Pews and flowers lie about the disheveled room. Through the open doors, a breeze blows the crumpled invitations across the floor.

Calbrex sits on the steps to the podium, his head in his hands.

LEIGH (O.S.)

I guess this was not the healing meeting you hoped for.

She stands in the doorway, no longer dressed in black mourning attire.

CALBREX

Not exactly.

Leigh makes her way through the maze of debris and damage.

LEIGH

Sometimes things like this force us to remember our own losses, faults and struggles.

CALBREX

Have there been many deaths here?

LEIGH

What do people call you?

CALBREX

Preacher. Shepherd. I prefer Calbrex or Cal.

She sits on the front pew across from Calbrex.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Titles give us illusions of something we can't live up to.

She retrieves a flower from the floor and studies it.

LEIGH

Cal, these folks are here for a variety of reasons. Some are opportunists, seekers, come to the last frontier. Some are here for love.

She holds the flower to her nose and enjoys the fragrance.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Most are just running from their
own past in hopes it will die. Some
are even hiding from their future.

CALBREX

What is your reason?

Leigh stands and picks a wreath. She returns it to its stand
and admires it for a moment.

LEIGH

Flowers are beautiful And
intriguing; so exquisite And
fragrant.

She straightens the arrangement.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

They give us such great pleasure,
we often forget how once picked;
they have no hope for their own
future.

She rescues another wreath from the floor, replaces it to a
stand.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Bart is, Ms. Lily's brother. She
brought him here hoping to find a
small town with animals he could
care for.

She straightens another arrangement.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

I think that's partly why everyone
is so upset by his death.

CALBREX

Why, does that mean there's no one
left to take care of the animals?

Leigh stops; looks Calbrex in the eye.

LEIGH

They are not just animals.

She starts to lift an overturned pew. Calbrex jumps and helps
turn it upright.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Perhaps that is why you are here,
to help them.

CALBREX

I don't believe the town, and I
have commenced in a very positive
direction.

LEIGH

But the two of you have started.

Leigh has now made her way back to the open doors.

CALBREX

You never mentioned; why you are
here.

She only smiles and walks out.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nahum lies on his bed, the door opens.

Calbrex enters a box in hand.

CALBREX

Good evening. I thought you might
like some warm soup.

NAHUM

I'll take any food at this point.

Calbrex hands him the box. Nahum opens it and pulls out a
small loaf of bread and a thermos bottle of hot soup.

He bites the bread and chases it with gulps of the soup.

CALBREX

I never realized my cooking was
that appealing.

NAHUM

First real food I've had since I
got here.

CALBREX

You mean they haven't fed you?

NAHUM

Protein or some kinda energy bars.
They must be dehydrated or
something water sure swells 'em.

Calbrex waits while Nahum consumes the food.

CALBREX

Nahum, may I ask you a few questions?

NAHUM

Already told the Sheriff everything.

CALBREX

Yes, you did. I was wondering about you. Who you are and why did you come here?

NAHUM

That's simple. I'm a wrangler, from parts unknown they say.

He takes a bite of bread.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

Hired by a livestock company to bring a load of live cattle.

Calbrex chooses his words carefully.

CALBREX

Where did you grow up? Why do you carry a weapon? Have you ever had peace in your life?

Nahum stops eating, stares at Calbrex.

NAHUM

What does any of that matter?

CALBREX

I'm just trying to find out a little bit more about you, as a person.

NAHUM

This person is who you see Preacher. My upbringing' is none of your damn business.

CALBREX

I don't mean to pry ...

Nahum throws the unfinished food and box at Calbrex. It hits the bars while the food hits Calbrex.

NAHUM

Then don't!

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Calbrex stands and wipes food remnants from his clothes.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

Nice look Preacher.

The Sheriff walks across the street. Calbrex notices he carries a few protein bars.

CALBREX

Had I known I would be wearing it I might have fixed something with less color.

WHITNEY

Come on I'll make sure it gets in your mouth.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

VIOLET, the hostess/waitress, stands behind the counter. She creates tomorrow's special on a whiteboard.

She adds steam to a cartoon bowl of soup and vines to the border.

WHITNEY

We've had criminals before; it always costs more to feed and medicate them than we can afford.

A half eaten meal of steak and potatoes sit before Whitney. Calbrex has an untouched salad with wilted vegetables.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Medical costs are passed onto the prisoner's family, as Nahum has no local family who pays for it?

Whitney takes another bite and talks through the chews.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Look around, most of the businesses are failing. There's just not a strong tax base to support a jail.

CALBREX

A decent meal isn't that expensive?

WHITNEY

No, one meal is not. Even three or four that's OK too.

Whitney points with his loaded fork.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

The real problem, is the judge takes so long to get here we have to feed and baby-sit these individuals for months.

Calbrex looks at the half eaten steak while Whitney pushes his plate aside.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Hey Violet, can we get some pie?

VIOLET

Only have peach.

WHITNEY

That'll be just fine. I wish I could do more; I truly do but my hands are tied.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHURCH- DAY

The neglected cemetery sits behind the church building, north from the Rector's house.

Ms. Lily carries flowers and walks through the small cemetery. She tip-toes between the faded and crooked headstones.

She stops to read a few then makes her way to a new mound. The only one with flowers.

MS. LILY

These flowers are nice. I know you like sunflowers but they're a little too expensive...

Ms. Lily sits. She removes some wilted flowers from the grave and replaces them with the fresh daisies and orchids in a new short earth-toned vase.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

I'm going back to work next week; The mayor says I can take all the time I need.

She adjusts the flowers to widen the arrangement.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)
But, it's like nobody but me knows
where things go. Mama used to say
that was job security.

Calbrex stands and looks out from the Rector's kitchen
window; plate and dish towel froze in his hand.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)
Do you remember Mama? The way she
used to fuss over us; how she'd get
down and play with you.

She continues to straighten the flowers and create the
perfect arrangement.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)
And those little toy animals you
loved. I guess this makes me the
last of our family.

The tears come when she brushes the grave clean from leaves.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)
That's all right 'cause I can come
and see you anytime.

Calbrex, unnoticed turns away.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Calbrex takes another meager meal to the jail, and finds the
electronic bars gone.

Nahum stands by his bed. A man stands next to him. Nahum
lifts his arms and breaths deep.

DOC LAURIE
That's good, how's the rib pain?

NAHUM
A little stiff but no pain.

DOC LAURIE
Looks like you're healing nicely.

Nahum notices Calbrex in the doorway.

NAHUM
Hey Preacher, I'd like you to meet
my new best friend. What's your
name again?

The Doc offers his hand to Calbrex.

DOC LAURIE

Doctor Laurie, I'm pleased to make your acquaintance.

CALBREX

Calbrex McGregor, the pleasure's all mine Doctor.

DOC LAURIE

So you're the new Preacher. I've heard good things about you.

Doc makes notes on a tablet.

CALBREX

I hope they're true. Nahum, I brought you some dinner.

NAHUM

Thanks Preacher but the Doc beat ya to it. He said I have a benefiter.

Nahum indicates the remains of a large steak dinner.

DOC LAURIE

Benefactor. I received a communicate with several credits instructing me to take care of Nahum. The only provision was that I feed him well.

CALBREX

Looks like you've done that. If I may ask, who is the benefactor?

DOC LAURIE

They did not give a name. There are some nice people in this town as I am sure you will find out.

Doc begins to gather his tools and the dishes.

DOC LAURIE (CONT'D)

Well Nahum, I must be off. Preacher, if you would like to see to his other needs I'm sure it would be appreciated.

INT. LITKOSH GENERAL STORE - DAY

Racks full of impulse purchases, gum, mints, stomach medications, and Twinkies in time-worn packages adorn the counter.

Folks meander through the aisles and visit; some shop.

Calbrex enters. The locals notice and conversation stop when he passes.

He lands at the front counter. Petros (23) a young man with full wavy dark hair, stands behind the counter fixated on a computer game he plays on his tablet.

A DECLINING MUSICAL SCALE fades out when he loses the game.

CALBREX

That doesn't sound good.

PETROS

I hate this game.

CALBREX

Then why do you play it?

PETROS

Boss says it's based on the thrill of rewards.

CALBREX

Immediate satisfaction impulses, you win quickly, and the emotional reward keeps you coming back for more.

PETROS

Not today. How can I help you?

Calbrex holds his own tablet and begins to read.

CALBREX

I need to find some exterior paint, a paint sprayer, sandpaper, glue, a few things like that.

PETROS

We always have white and gray paint in stock, any other color we need to order the tone making ingredients.

Petros walks around the counter.

PETROS (CONT'D)

Paint sprayers are illegal here because of some stupid air quality law. The other stuff you can find in the back, towards your left.

CALBREX

How long does a paint order take?

PETROS

'Bout four months. There's some color samples back by the rollers if you want to take a look.

Calbrex meanders through the aisles, he examines a few items.

Near the back he finds the paint supplies and paint poles; most dusty.

Calbrex examines the paint chip samples; holds them and tries to distinguish their colors.

He takes the chips closer to the window and continues to consider them.

A nearby office door stands slightly ajar. Voices drift out.

IAN (O.S.)

.. I understand completely, the sooner this killing mess is cleaned up, the sooner we're off the radar.

GILES (O.S.)

And we can get back to normal.

Calbrex moves closer to the door.

IAN (O.S.)

What is normal around here anymore?

GILES (O.S.)

Normal is business as usual. We move the products we make the credits.

IAN (O.S.)

What about this Preacher guy?

GILES (O.S.)

Once this Nahum character is out of the picture, the Preacher will lose his pet project.

Calbrex shakes his head.

GILES (CONT'D)

He'll get bored and move on just like everyone else. Patience is a virtue I'm told; we'll be fine.

Calbrex's head hangs and shakes back and forth.

CALBREX

(sotto)

Maybe it is a useless cause.

The door opens; Giles and Calbrex stand face-to-face.

PETROS (V.O.)

What's useless?

Petros stands at the end of the aisle.

GILES

Yes what's useless preacher?

CALBREX

Trying to choose a good paint color, to many choices.

FOOTSTEPS and CHATTER rise ...

INT. COUNCIL ROOM, CITY HALL - DAY

The council room bulges with the crowd. Some in fancy dress, some carry lunches and drinks.

Giles sits at his spot front and center. He reviews a procedural book. The council member's seats remain empty.

Ms. Lily sits at the recorders desk and turns on the computers, double-checks the equipment, etc. Ian sits in the front row.

Calbrex stands near the back wall hidden beside a large heavy framed portrait of the founding fathers.

Giles retrieves his mic/earpiece, places it over his ear.

GILES

Ms. Lily is this thing --

MIC FEEDBACK squeals, everyone pulls a face of pain and covers their ears.

Ms. Lily quickly adjusts the equipment.

Mayor Giles tries again.

GILES (CONT'D)

All right how's this now?

Heads nod.

GILES (CONT'D)

I just wish we had this kind of attendance at the budget meetings.

A few smiles and chuckles.

GILES (CONT'D)

As you all know today is a sad milestone for Litkosh. Today we have scheduled the beginning of our first murder trial.

Everyone's eyes, are fixed on Giles.

GILES (CONT'D)

Something I had hoped you fine folks would never have to see or experience.

He works his political charm.

GILES (CONT'D)

As we are all new to this the Regional Judge, Ira Zalman, will explain how this will proceed, Your Honor.

IRA ZALMAN (65) with white hair and a smooth face, walks from the side of the room. He stops in front of Giles and surveys the crowd.

ZALMAN

Looks like there is considerable curiosity in the law today.

He paces the floor.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

There are only two things I require during these proceedings. One, you are quiet and respectful.

He looks everyone in the eye.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

There will be no outbursts in my court. It is my understanding that many of you may be called...

He paces again.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

As a witness to the crime or as a witness to the character of those individuals involved.

Everyone looks around and to each other.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

That entails my second requirement. I ask all of you to speak the truth, to be sure of your words, clear in your memories.

Zalman waits, his eyes focus on each and everyone one.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

And to not be misguided by pressure or the words of others.

He then turns and walks to the mayor's seat.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

Now Mayor Giles if you will join the others in the gallery we will begin.

Giles gathers his items and moves to sit next to Ms. Lily.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

Sheriff if you can bring in the accused we'll get started.

INT. COUNCIL ROOM, CITY HALL - LATER

Nahum sits at the defense table alone.

A group of jurors sit on one side of the room.

A big picture of Bart smiling rests on a stand along with pictures of the blood-soaked ground, and a gun.

Adelbert sits on the stand.

The jury of townsfolk listen intently. SAMUEL BOREEN (40) the Prosecutor, paces while Adelbert speaks.

ADELBERT

He didn't really say anything threatening; it was just the way he stood over me and demanded payment.

SAMUEL

So he intimidated you into changing your payment policy, for his personal gain?

LATER

The June Bug waitress in on the stand.

WAITRESS

He did drink up most all of his credits pretty quick; in fact, we had to cut him off.

SAMUEL

What did the defendant say when this happened?

WAITRESS

I don't use that kinda language; I can tell ya he was not too pleased.

LATER

Roy testifies on the stand.

ROY

I was just there to fill up the watering trough for the night, when I heard this yell and fighting.

LATER

Sheriff Whitney testifies.

WHITNEY

Whenever a man gets into a fight, there's bound to be some blood and bruising.

LATER

Doc Laurie gives his report.

DOC LAURIE

By then most of the swelling had subsided, gone down. So, I really can't say for certain what caused the injuries.

SAMUEL

But they could have been from the fight.

DOC LAURIE
I suppose so.

SAMUEL
No further questions.

Zalman looks out the window to the darkness.

ZALMAN
In light of the time, we will
adjourn for the evening. We will
resume at 0900 tomorrow morning.

His gavel STRIKES the desk.

EXT. CITY HALL - NIGHT

Calbrex stands by watching the last few stragglers exit the building.

Leigh steps out, pauses, and smiles at Calbrex.

LEIGH
There hasn't been this much
excitement for years; any opinions
on today's events?

CALBREX
Everybody likes a good show.

LEIGH
I'm not sure any of this is good.

CALBREX
Don't misunderstand me, I don't
find the death of anyone or the
discussion of it very pleasant.

Giles exits, steps past Leigh.

GILES
You coming?

Her smile disappears. She nods to Calbrex and obediently follows her husband.

INT. GILES' MANSION, DININGROOM - NIGHT

The two eat in silence.

GILES
Seems you've taken a sweetness to
the New Preacher.

LEIGH

Just trying to be friendly that's all.

GILES

Think you need more friends?

She continues eating.

GILES (CONT'D)

I get a feelin' he's not likely to stay too long. Maybe you best not get his hopes up.

INT. COUNCIL ROOM, CITY HALL - DAY

Once again the room is full. Zalman sits at his spot, so do the jurors. Nahum watches, bored by the whole court and trial thing.

Calbrex, the constant observer, stands in the same place.

Samuel stands, listens to Ms. Lily testify through her tears.

MS. LILY

We thought this would be good for Bart, a quiet place where folks care about one another.

Her story moves the gallery.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

Where his situation would be accepted, maybe even appreciated.

SAMUEL

And did you find that here, with the good folks of Litkosh?

His arm makes a sweeping gesture to the gallery.

MS. LILY

Yes, yes we did. Bart loved it here.

SAMUEL

No further questions your honor.

ZALMAN

You may step down.

Samuel helps Ms. Lily across the room.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

Mr. Bray as you have chosen to represent yourself and, therefore have no counsel.

Nahum listens.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

Would you like to cross-examine that is question any of the witnesses? You do have that right.

Nahum stands and looks around.

NAHUM

Your Honor, I understand this is supposed to be a two-sided argument, but clearly there is no one but me,

Nahum saunters out and sits on the front of the table.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

...to say anything good in my behalf. So I'd like to get this over with.

He strolls around mimicking Samuel's pacing.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

For although my condition and judgment were afflicted by the spirits of the bottle,

He leans on the judge's counter.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

I have no defense except to say the honest truth. He attacked me. He attacked me over sleeping bovines.

Nahum walks towards and addresses the gallery.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

This Bart, no matter what his condition, wound up dead, as a result of his weird love of cattle.

Nahum slumps back into his chair.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

So let's just get this over with and send me off to jail or whatever you jury people want to do with me.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY HALL - NIGHT

Around the conference table Giles, Zalman, Whitney, and Ian gather. Leigh serves drinks to the group while they discuss the possible outcome.

ZALMAN

Well, of course, the jury will find him guilty. The real question is what do you do with him then?

IAN

I thought you just take him back with you, and we're done with him.

ZALMAN

That used to be the case but with more criminals and fewer jails, no more transfers, he's your problem.

GILES

We can't have some killer living here. Do you know what it costs to feed and house those who does not contribute by work?

ZALMAN

Rare as it is now days, I can still sentence him to death, and then he's only God's problem.

Leigh turns around quickly.

LEIGH

Isn't that a bit barbaric?

She musters the courage.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

I mean what's the difference between what Nahum did to Bart and the man who kills him?

GILES

Leigh, please!

WHITNEY

She's right Henry. I've never seen a pleasant death.

GILES

We're not talking about death as much as the cost of housing a freeloader.

ZALMAN

Death is always cheaper than housing.

INT. COUNCIL ROOM, CITY HALL - DAY

Everyone leans forward in their seats.

Nahum stands and faces the judge.

ZALMAN

Nahum Bray, you have been found guilty of murder by a jury of your peers.

No one even breathes.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

You are hereby sentenced to die an executioner will be assigned and,

Calbrex shakes his head.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

... you will be hanged by the neck until dead. You have the right to appeal although I somehow doubt you will take it.

NAHUM

Don't see no need.

ZALMAN

Then, this court is adjourned.

His gavel falls, the gallery jumps to their feet. The room erupts with both cheers and astonishment.

Whitney escorts Nahum out the side door.

Ms. Lily weeps and is comforted by those around her.

Calbrex hangs his head, shakes it slightly back and forth.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Calbrex's hat and shirt are wet with sweat from his labors. He rakes the dead grass and piles weeds in a cart.

Whitney strolls to the church.

He stands and watches the Preacher.

WHITNEY

Looks like you've taken on quite a task here. I would suggest grass for a golf green, but I guess that's not in the plans.

Calbrex takes a break and walks to Whitney.

CALBREX

I'm never sure which would get the most use. Although it has been a while since I played a round.

WHITNEY

Why's that?

CALBREX

I spend just as much time in the rough and water as I do buying new golf balls.

WHITNEY

Never had much of a chance for the game, but I do think the green grass is pretty.

CALBREX

May I offer you a drink or refreshment of some kind?

Whitney looks to the ground for a moment, contemplating, then removes his hat.

WHITNEY

I appreciate the offer, but it's not me who's thirsty. Seems the trial and the reality of what's to come has inspired young Nahum.

Whitney looks out into the desert, then back to Calbrex.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

He wondered if you could come spend some time with him.

Whitney turns his hat in a nervous manner.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Nothing like an appointment with the maker, makes a man think about what he's done.

CALBREX

Of course, how about this
afternoon?

Calbrex wipes the sweat with a small towel.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

The heat starts frying my brains
about that time. I'd hate to fall
into that pile of dryness.

WHITNEY

I'll let him know you're coming.

Whitney replaces his hat.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

I don't think it's the heat from
the afternoon sun he's worrying
'bout.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nahum turns on his heels, and paces. His eyes darting about
the room.

Calbrex sits in a chair. He listens intently.

NAHUM

What chance did I have? No child
deserves to be treated like that.

CALBREX

Most parents try their best to
provide. Most children do not
suffer as you have.

NAHUM

That's what I should've told 'em.
It's not my fault I was saddled
with evil deeds from the start. You
understand don't ya.

CALBREX

More than you know.

Calbrex takes a long sigh.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Can I tell you something most
people don't know?

(MORE)

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Now my life has lasted about twice as long as yours, and hard as it may be to believe, I have learned a few things.

NAHUM

Preachers are supposed too, aren't ya? I mean all that reading and meditating or whatever you do.

Nahum sits on the mattress.

Now Calbrex begins to pace.

CALBREX

No one is born religious. I have not been a Preacher all my life.

Calbrex looks out the window to the sky.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Sometimes it takes a powerful act to help a man look elsewhere for strength.

NAHUM

So what happened?

CALBREX

I will tell you if you swear it stays between you and me. Nobody else needs to know. Swear?

Nahum sits on his bed, like a child who listens to a bedtime story.

NAHUM

Sure I swear.

Calbrex hesitates, and looks for honesty in Nahum's eyes.

CALBREX

My past is not that different from yours. See I never knew my father, never even knew his name.

Calbrex continues to pace.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

My mother was a bit of a wonder in her own right. She told fortunes, read cards, had visions for people. We moved a lot, she said it was for the opportunities.

Calbrex turns back to the window.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Truth be told, I think she was
always running from one thing and
trying to find something else.

He takes a deep breath and sighs.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Finally, one day she moved on
without me.

NAHUM
Damn that's cold.

CALBREX
I think she figured her
responsibilities were up. Maybe she
did find something better.

He turns back to Nahum.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Anyway, I learned to fend for
myself, mostly stealing and doing
favors for unsavory type
characters.

He sits again.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Then one day a judge gave me a
choice, join the military, or go to
prison.

The door opens, and Whitney interrupts.

WHITNEY
Sorry Preacher, I have a meeting,
can't leave you here alone.

CALBREX
I understand. Thanks for the visit
Nahum.

Calbrex steps to the door.

NAHUM
Hey, wait then what happened?

CALBREX
Maybe next time; here try reading
to pass the time.

He hands Nahum his tablet.

NAHUM
What do I read?

CALBREX
Just start you'll find something.

INT. KITCHEN, RECTOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The soft moonlight beams through the open window; bounces on the floor and table.

A ladle interrupts a steaming pot's rising vapors. Calbrex retrieves the broth.

He sits at the table, folds his hands and lowers his head for a moment. A large book lies open next to him. He blow across the spoon and takes a sip, and returns to the book.

He turns a page Calbrex stops and looks at his hand. He turns it slowly. The moonlight reflects on the scars.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Calbrex wears his work clothes. He's stained hat in his hand.

Whitney leans back on his chair. He listens to Calbrex explains his plan.

CALBREX
You see his cost would be offset by the labor he performs. The city might actually earn money.

WHITNEY
It's not that I don't appreciate the thought but, how do we protect the citizens, what if he runs off?

CALBREX
Where can he run to, the desert? He's smart enough to know he'd be dead in a couple of days.

WHITNEY
He'd need a guard.

CALBREX
I'm happy to fill that capacity.

WHITNEY

I'll talk to the mayor and town council; they're all for making money.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nahum, in just his underwear, sleeps atop the mattress. Drool has pooled on his pillow. Calbrex's tablet lies on the floor under his hanging hand.

Whitney walks into the room and stands watching for a moment.

WHITNEY

Time to rise and shine, princess.
You got yourself a job.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHURCH - DAY

Calbrex works on the grounds while Whitney and Nahum approach.

WHITNEY

Here you go Preacher. He's all yours.

Whitney steps closer to make a point.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

But if he runs off you get to take his place in the gray bar hotel, called the proxy law. That's the deal the city council agreed to.

CALBREX

I understand and agree to those terms. Well, Nahum you ready to turn some dirt?

NAHUM

Do I have a choice?

WHITNEY

Not really.

He walks away and throws a departing comment.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Work him hard as you like but have him back for supper.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHURCH - LATER

Nahum, shirtless and sweaty, empties the cart of dried weeds onto the pile. He looks out to the desert and back at the open door to the Rector's house.

He rests for a moment then returns to his labors.

Calbrex carries a jug and two mismatched glasses.

CALBREX
Ready for a break?

NAHUM
How 'bout an afternoon nap?

Calbrex sits in the shade offered by the Church. He pours water into the two glasses and offers one to Nahum.

He downs it quickly, then holds it out for another fill. Calbrex pours again. Nahum notices his hands.

CALBREX
I appreciate your help today.

NAHUM
Just glad to be in the open. Can I ask you a question?

CALBREX
About your reading?

NAHUM
No, about your hands; how'd they get all gnarled up?

Calbrex pauses, then speaks.

CALBREX
Remember I told you I joined the military? Some of my prior experiences came in handy.

Calbrex takes a drink himself.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
I could sneak into any place, do recon, plant bombs, and be back before anybody knew.

He refills Nahum's glass.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

You grow up fast and hard in the military. You lose who you are and become what they want you to be.

Calbrex walks to the shade of the building.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I became a young, eager, ruthless killing machine.

NAHUM

That's a long stretch to being a Preacher?

He sits, and Nahum quickly follows.

CALBREX

After my time was up I became a soldier of fortune. You had enough money, I'd do your warring for you. It didn't matter the cause or where the fight was.

EXT. FOREST - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A group of hunter-gathers forage for food.

CALBREX (V.O.)

Then we took a contract to help this settlement.

At the river some fill jars with water, others carry the filled jars back to the village.

CALBREX (V.O.)

The tribe lived in the mountains overlooking the city.

A young Calbrex and other Soldiers dressed in forest camouflage and face paint, watch the tribe from the trees and bushes.

CALBREX (V.O.)

We were told they were some organized social experiment of communal living.

The tribes gather their things, and walk away.

CALBREX (V.O.)

A communist or fascist group with plans to kill the town.

(MORE)

CALBREX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We were told they were holding
raiding parties, destroying the
town's trading station, burning
homes and such.

The soldiers back into the Forest.

CALBREX (V.O.)

Making it impossible to do business
or even survive. We were given the
task to take them out.

The soldiers gather around a tablet drawing plans and
silently communicating between them.

CALBREX (V.O.)

We scouted the tribe and planned
our one big late night surprise
attack.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The soldiers crawl and sneak towards the village, their
weapons ready.

CALBREX (V.O.)

The night came, and we crawled into
position. We had twenty soldiers
and more weapons than fifty men
needed.

The soldiers open fire on the village.

CALBREX (V.O.)

When the time came, we rained down
death and destruction with a
vengeance.

Weapons discharge, and grenades explode. Tribesmen rush
forward with spears, slingshots, and bows and arrows.

CALBREX (V.O.)

People ran out of these huts, and
we just cut 'em down.

The villager's bodies explode from the rain of terror and
death. Some soldiers smile; the carnage continues.

A flaming ball flies zigzag through the air, explodes amongst
the soldiers. Igniting most of them.

CALBREX (V.O.)

Then a misfired fireball landed
next to the largest group of us.

(MORE)

CALBREX (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It exploded and covered us with a
flash of orange flames.

Men scream in agony, flail about, everyone on fire.

CALBREX (V.O.)
All but five died; the survivors
wished they had.

The tribe's leader, ENCAUZAR stands and directs the actions
of the villagers. They cautiously check the soldiers and move
them to their huts.

CALBREX (V.O.)
Their leader, a small stout man,
named Encauzar, ordered others to
take us into their huts.

INT. TRIBAL HUT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Wounded soldiers wear broad-leaf bandages. Women change the
forest dressings and feed broth to those who can eat.

A Shaman waves a fan of leaves that give white smoke into the
air.

A young woman tends to Calbrex while he suffers.

CALBREX (V.O.)
We were told we laid there for
three months, they treated us for
broken bones, shock, and lots of
burns.

EXT. FOREST VILLAGE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A large table covered with food rests mid-village. Some
musicians play forest instruments. Other villagers dance with
their children.

CALBREX (V.O.)
When we recovered enough to leave,
they covered our heads with
flowers.

The villagers offer beaded trinkets, baskets of fruit, flower
crowns to the soldiers.

CALBREX (V.O.)
They held a feast; even gave thanks
for our survival.

The young woman kisses his cheek.

Young Calbrex climbs a hill and waves to the village. His attention goes to his freshly scarred hand.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Calbrex looks at the same hand.

NAHUM

What happened to the tribe?

CALBREX

The next time the soldiers came,
Encauzar and all his people, faced
them in a field.

EXT. FORREST VILLAGE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The tribe walks into a field. They wear crowns of flowers,
and carry baskets of fruit.

CALBREX (V.O.)

With crowns of flowers on their
heads and baskets of fruit in their
outstretched arms;

They kneel to the ground and begin a solemn chant.

CALBREX (V.O.)

They laid face down in the grass
and chanted a prayer of
thanksgiving...

Soldiers rush towards the tribe, begin firing their weapons
indiscriminately.

CALBREX (V.O.)

Only a few survived. Turns out the
government just wanted the tribe's
land and minerals.

The soldiers walk among the field of bodies.

CALBREX (V.O.)

They lied; slaughtered a peaceful
people, who gladly died for their
peaceful beliefs.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHURCH - DAY

Calbrex pours more water for Nahum.

CALBREX

You ask why I became a Preacher --
to try and pay penance for my own
heavy sins.

NAHUM

How does one pay for his sins?

CALBREX

I think for each of us its
different.

He stands, looks to Nahum.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

A wise man once stated, "If you do
this unto the least of these, my
brethren, you do it unto me."

He looks to the small finch singing from a tree.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

So for me, it is with love and
charity for everyone, forgiving
everyone. For me it is by serving
others, and I pray it's enough.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nahum sits on his mattress and reads from the tablet. The
cell now very organized with his clothes folded neatly in a
pile.

Whitney brings in a box of food and looks through it.

WHITNEY

Somebody sure wants to fatten you
up. Everything a growing boy needs
except a moon pie.

NAHUM

Sheriff, do you believe in a higher
being?

WHITNEY

Why, you think that higher being is
sending this for ya?

NAHUM

Could I get a pad of paper and pen?

EXT. CHURCH

Nahum and Calbrex sit in the shade drinking water and eating snacks. Calbrex looks over a list of several hand-written pages.

NAHUM

I figured if I write 'em all down,
maybe I could work them off too.
Like you said, penitence for my bad
deeds.

CALBREX

This is an impressive list. Why the
change of heart?

NAHUM

I figured, if after all the bad
things you done, you can find some
peace maybe I can too.

Still looking over the list.

CALBREX

The congregational offerings have
been quite slim. I don't think I
can afford to pay for all the work
this is going to require.

NAHUM

Maybe I could do work for other
people around town too? Then we
both could win.

EXT. HOLDING PENS, DEPOT - DAY

We hear GRUNTS and GROANS.

With inquisitive looks on their faces, Dale and Roy lean on
the top rail of the enclosure looking into the pens.

Adelbert strides to the boys.

ADELBERT

I came as soon as I heard the news.

He too looks into the corral.

ADELBERT (CONT'D)

What are they doing?

ROY

Said something about penitence. Not sure what they meant by that, but they haven't stopped for the last two hours.

Nahum and Calbrex clean the holding pens, shovel manure, and place it in a cart. They push the cart to a field and dump onto a large pile.

Adelbert steps gentle in the pens and faces Calbrex.

ADELBERT

Preacher what are you two doing?

CALBREX

It appears we're cleaning up your holding pens.

ADELBERT

Who authorized this?

CALBREX

It was just one of the funny ideas that come upon a man.

He indicates Nahum.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Nahum here is working to help pay for his prison expenses. I hoped it would be all right with you.

ADELBERT

I will need to speak with Mayor Giles about this.

CALBREX

If you're not happy with his work. I could have him put it back.

Adelbert looks at the huge pile.

ADELBERT

No, no that's fine; I guess.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nahum returns to his cell and washes in a sink. He folds his clothes and then lays them in a pile on top of his boots.

He lays on his mattress and flips through the tablet. He finds his bookmark and settles into the pillow. He begins to read.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Whitney sits on the corner of his desk and faces Calbrex, who rests in a chair.

CALBREX

The place did need cleaning up.
Dale and Roy seemed to be OK.

WHITNEY

It's not whether it needed to be
cleaned up or not Preacher.

He plays with a tablet in his hand.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Adelbert was all flustered having
Nahum out of jail, standing right
there where this whole thing
started.

He focuses on the tablet, and he continues to explain.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

He ran to the mayor to make sure
everything was all right by him. I
had to explain your suggestion of
using his labor to offset his jail
costs.

CALBREX

And?

WHITNEY

And he was upset.

CALBREX

And?

WHITNEY

And he wants a schedule of where
Nahum's going to be every second of
the day and night.

He hands the tablet to Calbrex.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

He wants me or you to be with him
at all times. Fact is, he wants him
to start right here, cleaning up
and fixing things in this office.

Calbrex looks at the communicate on the tablet.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Then go over to the City Hall and start working there. So clear your schedule for the next few weeks. I think you're booked up.

Whitney smiles.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Truth is I think he was more upset that he didn't think of it.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The place clean and neatly organized.

Whitney places a large stack of papers into a cabinet.

Nahum climbs a ladder holds a clean light cover. He returns the cover to its place, descends the steps and admires his handy work.

NAHUM

What's next boss?

WHITNEY

Not sure there is anything else. I don't think this place has ever been this clean.

He closes the cabinet drawer.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

We could eat of the floor. How 'bout I get us a couple of barbecue sandwiches from the June Bug?

NAHUM

How 'bout you bring back a few beers? You know to help wet the old dry whistle.

Whitney gives Nahum a sad look.

WHITNEY

I thought by now you'd have figured out those bottle demons helped push you into your current situation.

EXT. LITKOSH GENERAL STORE - DAY

Whitney sits on a bench seat against the building.

WHITNEY

Not sure how the mayor bills for his labor. If it matches his incarceration costs; breaks down to about 150 credits a day.

Luke stands nearby. They both watch Nahum pounding nails into the boardwalk.

LUKE

That's outrageous, Whitney you know that. More newcomers are leaving, and he's an unskilled laborer.

Several new wooden planks stand out next to their old faded brothers.

LUKE (CONT'D)

He's a street sweeper at best.

WHITNEY

Funny you should mention that; he swept out the Depot again yesterday. He's not so bad since he's sobered up.

They watch Nahum, covered in sweat, works with diligence and meticulous care.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

He's changing Luke its an interesting thing to watch.

LUKE

I don't care if he changes into a butterfly; you're not robbing me for that degenerate's position.

LATER

A full block of the new boardwalk reflects the sun while it sets. Each board straight and even.

Nahum sweeps the last of the saw and sand dust into a dustpan.

He looks towards the street and smiles.

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - DAY

JIMMY GRANT (50), a well-dressed businessman, walks along the street and sees Nahum paint a building.

A couple of women stroll by and smile at Nahum. He smiles back and tips his head.

NAHUM

Good afternoon ladies, you both
look exceptionally fine this day.

The women giggle after they pass Nahum.

Jimmy scowls, quickens his pace.

CALBREX (V.O.)

I'd be careful if I were you. Not
all women have righteous
intentions.

Calbrex arrives with two water containers.

CALBREX

After all, it was Eve who took the
first bite.

NAHUM

Biting is a bit rough. I was hope
for just a nibble or two.

CALBREX

May I suggest that while you are
not sitting in your cell with only
four walls to dream about,

Calbrex points to the repaired walkway.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

...and you're contributing to the
community in a positive fashion.

He stands between Nahum's gaze and the ladies.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

That you also try to improve your
spiritual outlook.

Nahum finally looks at Calbrex, who nods towards the fast
paced Jimmy.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

It helps others handle and
understand their forgiveness.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY HALL - NIGHT

Giles sits calmly behind his desk. He rocks and plays with a stylus in his hand. Jimmy Grant, stands beside Luke, who is red faced. He spits, and his anger overflows.

LUKE

I will not be robbed for the sake of the city budget Giles. That is not my problem.

JIMMY

He's flirting with women, and you've got him doing work none of us authorized.

Giles calmly sits forward and leans into the men.

LUKE

Work we could do cheaper ourselves. Did the city council even approve this?

Giles calmly sits forward and leans into the men.

GILES

Last Year ten percent of our citizens left without leaving a forwarding address.

He stands to make his point.

GILES (CONT'D)

Many left outstanding debts. Last year our taxes and permit fees fell by twenty-five percent.

Giles moves around the desk towards the men.

GILES (CONT'D)

At the current rate of decline within three cycles, three cycles,

He struggles to control his emotions.

GILES (CONT'D)

Litkosh and everything she offers will return to the sandy wasteland from whence it came.

The men step back.

GILES (CONT'D)

You stand here and suggest the city
is robbing you?

Giles face reddens.

GILES (CONT'D)

I see it as a generous donation
from successful business leaders,
who take the opportunity to,

He continues to walk towards them.

GILES (CONT'D)

beautify and invest in, even
transform this city they love.

The men continue to back to the door.

GILES (CONT'D)

It is men like you who follow this
city's leaders and help build unity
and pride in our outpost.

Giles regains some composure.

GILES (CONT'D)

It is men like you who'll stop this
bitching and pay the two hundred
credits a day for this privilege.

JIMMY

Wait a minute Whitney said the cost
was one hundred fifty credits per
day.

GILES

It was. But certainly you
understand the costs of my staying
in my office to handle even simple,

He points to the two men.

GILES (CONT'D)

complaints must also be factored
into the equation.

Jimmy grabs his hat and storms out.

Luke walks to the door and turns back. He examines the
office.

LUKE

Nice place you have here mayor,
very nice indeed.

He controls his voice and whispers.

LUKE (CONT'D)

You should try to remember you are
an elected official, remember how
you got here, 'cause one day,

Now Luke gets closer to Giles face.

LUKE (CONT'D)

someone else will sit in that
chair. Nothing lasts forever.

GILES

Don't worry about my memory Luke. I
remember everything.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nahum cleans himself in the sink. He washes the sweat and
grime from his body and under his nails.

Calbrex enters with the familiar dinner box in his hand.

CALBREX

Have you ever figured out who your
benefactor is?

He places the box on the mattress.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Why they keep sending soap, clean
towels, and meals to you?

Nahum picks a clean towel, and dries himself.

NAHUM

What ya mean?

CALBREX

When you first arrived only the
cattle and the bar knew you
existed.

Calbrex sits on the other end of the mattress.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Then after an unfortunate situation
everybody in Litkosh knew who you
were, and not for good reasons.

He examines the box.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

These packages started coming every day even after you started working to pay your jail costs.

Calbrex returns the box to its soft table.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I just thought these would have stopped by now.

NAHUM

Perhaps they like my smile and charming personality?

CALBREX

So whom have you talked to and why do they like you?

Nahum dresses and opens the box. He takes out food items and sets them on his mattress.

NAHUM

It is a bit of a puzzlement I will admit. I don't know.

Nahum unwraps the food.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

I can't talk to anybody without you or the Sheriff standin' over me.

He begins to eat and smiles.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

A puzzlement I am glad to be a part of.

CALBREX

But that's the point; you're not the same man you were when you came in here.

Nahum enjoys the deli sandwich.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I just thought by now whoever they are would have had a conversation with you.

NAHUM

Who knows such wonders? Perhaps they have. Perhaps they have.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nahum studies the tablet Calbrex left with him when the door opens.

WHITNEY

Find anything interesting?

Whitney steps into the cell.

NAHUM

Have you ever read these books or writings, whatever they are the Preacher has?

WHITNEY

Reading them is one thing Nahum. It's the living them part most people have a hard time with.

NAHUM

Why it all sounds so simple?

He kicks at the floor, and scuffs the soles of his boots.

WHITNEY

I've been around a little longer than you, and the only one thing I've learned for sure is,

Whitney looks directly into Nahum's eyes.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

... most people do not take the simple path in life.

Nahum smiles back at him.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

They complicate it with self-serving motives that usually hurt somebody else.

CALBREX (O.S.)

Sounds like you and I have more in common than I thought.

Whitney turns to see Calbrex, who stands in the doorway.

WHITNEY
Thanks for coming.

Turning back to Nahum.

CALBREX
Nahum, the mayor's asked for you to start cleanin' And fixin' up around city hall.

WHITNEY
So I asked the Preacher here to come along with us for a day or two.

NAHUM
Why both of you? I don't understand?

He glances between them.

CALBREX
You remember Ms. Lily, Bart's sister?

NAHUM
Ya, she talked at the trial.

WHITNEY
Ms. Lily works for the mayor, and he asked for me to be there to watch you, as I have been.

Nahum dresses for the day.

CALBREX
He asked me to watch Ms. Lily. Just to make sure she's OK and not upset with you being there.

NAHUM
Well, her brother did die because of me. I can see where she might still be a bit upset 'bout that.

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - DAY

Calbrex, Whitney, and Nahum make their way through town towards City Hall. When they pass all the citizens stop and watch.

NAHUM
Why's everybody staring at me?

WHITNEY

Pay them no minds just keep walking.

NAHUM

It's like I'm a circus freak show or something.

CALBREX

You are Nahum. You're a changed man, and not everyone is sure what that looks like.

WHITNEY

Don't worry about them; focus on doing your tasks.

INT. HALLWAY, CITY HALL - DAY

Whitney opens a side door on the city hall and holds it open for Nahum and Calbrex.

WHITNEY

First thing on the list is the storage room.

They walk into the hallway and the stairs.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

You get to clean it out and throw out anything useless or outdated.

Whitney stops in front of a door marked storage.

INT. STORAGE ROOM, CITY HALL - DAY

He opens the door and turns on the lights. Before them, a room of dusty shelves lined with boxes.

NAHUM

So how do I know what to throw out?

WHITNEY

Just start with anything more than twenty years old. I'll get a cart.

Calbrex looks at the shelves. He sees row after row of old papers, posters, and cleaning supplies.

CALBREX

Everything in here is at least twenty years old.

Nahum finds a baseball mitt cracked by the dry weather and time. He grabs it, and a few baseball cards fall out of it.

NAHUM

What's this Preacher?

Calbrex examines the cards.

CALBREX

Looks like some old collectables
baseball cards.

He hands the cards back.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Have you ever played baseball
Nahum?

NAHUM

Don't know what that is.

CALBREX

It's a game where one man throws a
ball and another man, from the
other team, tries to hit it.

Calbrex mimics the bat and swings.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

If he does he runs around bases
until he gets home. The team who
gets the most men around the bases
wins.

NAHUM

Does anyone still play it?

CALBREX

Maybe we should try it sometime.

Calbrex finds some dusty, bent golf clubs. He holds them in position, mimics a putt.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Whitney might like these.

LATER

The storage room now clean and organized. Whitney places the last few boxes on a shelf.

Nahum stands with a smile.

CALBREX

You hungry? I could use a good
lunch about now.

NAHUM

Sure thing.

Whitney, Calbrex, and Nahum climb the stairs and walk towards
an open double wooden door.

The threesome walk across the threshold and step into the
exact room where the trial was held. The chairs now three
neat rows.

WHITNEY

I'll find the mayor, let him know
we'll be back.

Whitney leaves Calbrex and Nahum.

Nahum stands; once again facing the judge's seat.

He looks around and the sounds of the trial echo in Nahum's
head.

ADELBERT (V.O.)

He didn't really say anything
threatening. It was just the way he
stood over me and demanded payment.

WAITRESS (V.O.)

He did drink up most all of his
credits pretty quick; we had to cut
him off.

ROY (V.O.)

I was just there to fill up the
watering trough when I heard this
yell and fighting.

MS. LILY (V.O.)

We thought this would be a good
place for Bart, a quiet place,
where folks care about one another.

NAHUM (V.O.)

My condition and judgment were
impaired by the spirits of the
bottle. I have no defense.

ZALMAN (V.O.)

Nahum Bray, you have been found
guilty of murder by a jury of your
peers.

Nahum grows weak in the knees.

ZALMAN (V.O.)
You are hereby sentenced to die. An
executioner will be assigned ...

He stumbles and he tries to control his balance.

ZALMAN (V.O.)
You will be hanged by the neck
until dead... until dead... until
dead.

Nahum collapses to his knees and weeps.

Calbrex kneels beside him.

CALBREX
Nahum what is it?

NAHUM
Oh dear Lord, I am so sorry...
Please, I don't want to die. I
don't want to die.

Giles and Whitney exit the mayor's office They see Nahum and
the tears.

GILES
What in the world is this?

Calbrex faces Giles and Whitney.

CALBREX
Remorse.

Nahum, on his side in a fetal position; he weeps.

From an open door on the other side of the room, Ms. Lily
stands and watches.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Back in the cell Nahum lays on his mattress with his face
towards the ceiling.

The moonlight beams through the window illuminating him.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nahum sits on his mattress and picks at a small, simple
breakfast, scrambled eggs and toasted bread.

His breath slow and deep. His eyes puffy from lack of sleep.

Calbrex sits on the familiar chair on the outside of the bars and faces Nahum.

CALBREX

Not hungry today or is my cooking that bad?

NAHUM

You once told me charity and service would help cleanse my soul.

He gestures with a fork.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

That by doing all this work I was contributing to the community, making it better.

Nahum looks deep at Calbrex.

NAHUM (CONT'D)

Have I done enough? Have I made this place better?

CALBREX

I am not the eternal judge, Nahum. It is between you and Him to decide that. I have seen a great change in you; a desire to do good works, not just the painting and fixing things up.

He tilts forward.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

You have become a better man by helping others.

Now he looks deep into Nahum.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I know some appreciate not just the work, but also the new man behind the tasks.

Nahum plays with his food some more and sets the plate to one side.

NAHUM

What if there's something else I need to do? Something I can't do here in Litkosh. Someone else I need to apologize to.

Calbrex pauses.

CALBREX

Always someone to apologize to. I could help you write a communicate, see that it is delivered.

NAHUM

What if I need to apologize to someone face to face; to someone who deserves more than I have been?

CALBREX

I'm not sure how to accomplish that without breaking the law.

He chooses his words carefully.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

No matter what good you have done, here or anyplace else, there is still the one big price to pay.

NAHUM

That; I am very aware of and at the right time I will happily pay it. Will you give it some thought?

Whitney opens the door.

WHITNEY

Ready to go?

NAHUM

Another day in paradise.

EXT. DEPOT STATION - DAY

Another transport arrives.

The station fills with a few newcomers, several cargo containers, and new livestock for the city. The ticket agent continues to smile and process claim stubs.

Mayor Giles all smiles with his lovely wife Leigh by his side. He repeats his greeting.

GILES

Thank you, welcome, welcome to our fair city of Litkosh.

The newcomers gather.

GILES (CONT'D)

We may be the furthest outpost from your home, but please consider us all your family and dear friends.

More arrive and listen.

GILES (CONT'D)

Most importantly if you need anything, anything at all come to my office.

He stands tall with his chest out.

GILES (CONT'D)

We pride ourselves in fulfilling your every wish.

He indicates Ms. Lily

GILES (CONT'D)

If you need help finding your accommodations please see my personal assistant Ms. Lily.

MS. LILY again wears her bright light-blue plastic vest over a now more conservative outfit. She still wears her sea-green cowboy boots.

Ms. Lily, is pleasant and courteous.

Calbrex leans on the ticket booth and watches.

Whitney still observes Nahum's actions. He helps unload the cargo containers and places them in order. He follows Adelbert's instructions.

ADELBERT

The smaller personal containers go to the right.

He holds out his left hand.

ADELBERT (CONT'D)

The city containers to the left and the livestock, well you know where they go.

Nahum works hard and places each in the appropriate section.

He takes a long look at one particular large container.

It's well-used and covered with electronic stickers, each reflects another distant journey traveled, and the address sticker bears Calbrex's name.

Leigh approaches Calbrex.

LEIGH

Good Morning, Preacher. Find any new members for your flock?

CALBREX

It's not my flock.

LEIGH

Yes, but for now you are the shepherd.

CALBREX

How's Ms. Lily?

Ms. Lily helps the last few newcomers find their addresses, solve everyone's issues, and hands each the map looking glass.

LEIGH

She has dedicated herself to her work. I think it helps. How about you. How have you fared?

CALBREX

As strange as it may seem, I quite like it here. Like someone once told me.

He clears his throat.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

The people are all good at heart and have simple desires.

LEIGH

Most are good. The others?

Leigh looks towards her husband.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Well, I don't think you know them well enough.

She places a hand on his shoulder and she leaves.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Good day Preacher.

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - DAY

Ms. Lily walks away from the Depot. Calbrex calls after her.

CALBREX

Ms. Lily, may I walk with you.

She hesitates.

MS. LILY

I'm just going to the coffee shop
for lunch.

CALBREX

Then may I buy you lunch?

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Ms. Lily picks at a sandwich, Calbrex a bowl of soup.

CALBREX

How are you doing; since Bart's
passing?

MS. LILY

The first few months were tough,
and no matter what, there is this
hole that can't be filled.

She looks about finds Violet.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

Could I get a refill?

Violet nods.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

He was a big part of my life, in
fact most of my life. I do miss him
terribly.

CALBREX

How do you feel about Nahum?

MS. LILY

How do you think I feel? He killed
my brother.

CALBREX

Forgiveness is the greatest gift we
can give. Whoever he was when he
arrived. He's changed. He helps me
cleanup around the church; he
cleans up the city.

After a moment, Calbrex adds one more thought.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

You should know he keeps Bart's grave cleaned up too.

MS. LILY

I know; I watched him. Cleaning a grave does not bring my brother back.

CALBREX

Nothing will bring your brother back. I can see the pain in your eyes. Forgiving will help relieve the burden you carry.

MS. LILY

What would you know about the pain? Was your brother murdered?

With tears in her eyes, Ms. Lily throws her napkin down and runs out.

Violet returns with a refill and places it next to Calbrex.

VIOLET

Give her some time. It's too tough to hate forever.

CALBREX

But, some people try.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHURCH - NIGHT

With a THUD, a granite gravestone falls into place.

Nahum shovels some gravel, and then dirt fills the sides.

Calbrex releases the straps, which held the stone and pulls back the small robotic lift that has helped carry the weight.

Beside the grave lays the large container.

Finished both men pause and admire the stone.

It reads; "HERE LIES BART JOHNSON, MAY HE CONTINUE TO GIVE JOY AND LOVE TO THE ANGELS AS HE DID HIS FRIENDS, BOTH MAN AND CREATURE. FEBRUARY 14, 2060 - JULY 18, 2088"

NAHUM

Quite nice don't you think?

INT. TRANSPORT SHIP - NIGHT

Calbrex and Nahum place the container in the ship's cargo bay. Nahum locks in the floor anchors. Calbrex taps away on a tablet.

CALBREX
That should do it.

NAHUM
Are you sure about this?

CALBREX
Did you promise me you will come back? Will you keep that promise?

NAHUM
But what if I can't? What if they catch me and hold me there? What if I can't find --

Calbrex holds his hand and interrupts Nahum.

CALBREX
My son, it is my true belief we are all where we are suppose to be in this life. Whatever reason that is.

Calbrex drops two food packages into the open container.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Whether for some lesson we need to learn or for something someone else needs to see or learn.

He places two large water jugs in the container.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Life is about the experiences we have, how we react to them. Remember, I too have unresolved deeds.

He stops and holds Nahum by both shoulders.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
I understand your desire to fix things, make them right.

With a nod of determination and commitment Nahum jumps into the container.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
Here is some food and water to
sustain you.

Nahum lies into a bed of shipping blankets.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
As long as they deliver this old
crate to the right address you will
be fine.

NAHUM
How can I ever repay you?

CALBREX
Just keep your side of the bargain.
Be back in two weeks.

Calbrex positions the lid and locks it. He pats the top
twice.

A KNOCK from inside answers.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Be safe my friend.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

It's empty!

The door swings open and Whitney stands behind Giles.

GILES
How did this happen Whitney?

WHITNEY
I'm not --

GILES
Of course, you're not! But I have a
pretty damn good idea who is behind
this.

He overturns the bed in frustration and storms out of the
room.

INT. NAVE, CHURCH - DAY

The morning light shines through the pane-glass windows.

The red, orange, blue, and yellow streaks shine bright onto
the podium where Calbrex, dressed in his Sunday best, sits
and reads from his tablet.

BAM! The front doors fly open!

Giles storms into the Nave with Whitney close behind.

GILES
Preacher! What the Hell have you
done?

Calbrex stands and meets Giles.

CALBREX
He will be back.

GILES
In time for his execution?

Giles goes beyond mad.

GILES (CONT'D)
Do you have any idea what this will
do to me, to the town, to the trust
in our community!

CALBREX
He will be back, he promised.

GILES
He promised, and you trust him?
He's a convicted killer for Hell's
sake!

He mimics a sissy girl tone.

GILES (CONT'D)
And You think he'll just come
waltzing back at the depot just in
time for his hangin'?

CALBREX
I do.

Giles paces back and forth.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
He has changed. Anyone who knows
him can see it -- He informed me of
his one last redress.

Giles paces faster.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
I felt he deserved the chance to do
whatever he could to amend his
life. He has found peace and he...

Giles grabs the first pew and throws it in the air back towards the other pews.

Giles turns and attacks Calbrex. He punches him in the face several times and knocks him to the floor.

He punctuates each sentence with a kick at the head.

GILES

I don't give a rat's ass about his peace and redress!

Kicks at the body.

GILES (CONT'D)

The execution will be in two weeks!
And I swear to all you find holy,
someone will be in that noose!

Whitney pulls him back.

WHITNEY

That's enough Giles!

Calbrex coughs hard and spits blood. He leans against the podium.

CALBREX

I trusted him, if he does not return; by the law of proxy I will take his place.

GILES

Fine with me.

Giles faces Whitney.

GILES (CONT'D)

Sheriff you heard this man. He freely admitted to helping a killer escape. Go on arrest him.

Calbrex struggles to stand. He holds his wrists out for hand restraints.

WHITNEY

I don't think those are necessary. You're not gonna resist, or anything are you?

CALBREX

Thank you.

Calbrex limps out the door with Whitney behind him.

Giles paces some more then grabs a chair, screams in anger, and throws it through a stained glass window.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Calbrex lays on a thin mattress his face against the wall.

He awakes. His eyes black and swollen. His nose twisted, blood stains on his face and shirt.

He takes a short breath, and winces with pain. He holds his ribs.

The outer door opens. Doc Laurie enters with his bag of remedies.

He stops with his hands together. He surveys the patient now sitting on the edge of the mattress.

DOC LAURIE

Another fine mess I'd say.

He sits and examines Calbrex.

DOC LAURIE (CONT'D)

For a peaceful man, you've caused a whole lotta consternation. Some say you deserved it.

Doc dabs some gauze with a tincture.

DOC LAURIE (CONT'D)

Others say you don't. Most folks can't quite decide either way.

CALBREX

What do you say?

DOC LAURIE

I try not to pick sides in a fight.

He wipes the gauze across Calbrex's swollen cheek.

DOC LAURIE (CONT'D)

No matter who wins I get to cleanup the loser. Anything broke?

CALBREX

I'd guess two ribs, my nose, the rest are just bruises.

INT. BACKROOM, LITKOSH GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Whitney walks through the door and closes it behind him. He finds Ian, Jimmy, and Giles seated at a table. They drink good whiskey.

IAN

If we don't have a hanging what will stop this lawlessness? Our town deserves better.

JIMMY

My wife is afraid to go out of the house. She thinks everyone is out to get her.

IAN

What do you say Whitney?

WHITNEY

I think we need to focus on the facts at hand and not let our emotions, or our fears, run amuck.

Whitney takes a chair at the table, and pours himself a drink.

GILES

What are the facts as you see them Sheriff?

WHITNEY

We have had a legally convicted man escape from our town. Means he's no longer a threat to anyone here.

He looks towards Jimmy.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

You can tell your wife that Jimmy. Second the man who apparently, helped him escape is in jail.

He throws back his shot.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

So I don't see any need to worry or get all riled up, unless this little group has other plans. Maybe worried about being found out.

GILES

He did say he was guilty; that's admitting guilt.

(MORE)

GILES (CONT'D)

He did say he would take Nahum's place at the hanging. By our law of proxy, one person can take another's place.

Giles points with his finger and quotes.

GILES (CONT'D)

"In any business transaction, if all parties agree to that point."

JIMMY

Seems clear to me both parties agreed when the Preacher helped that convict escape.

LUKE

He even offered to take his place. Isn't that right Sheriff?

Whitney speaks slowly.

WHITNEY

I do agree the Preacher helped him escape. I did hear him say he would take Nahum's place at the hangin'.

He leans back from the table.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

But where is the business transaction? What goods or services have been exchanged?

GILES

Their lives are the goods. The trust of this city is the goods. I hope you do not fight me on this one Whitney.

Giles leans into Whitney.

GILES (CONT'D)

We're having a hanging for the safety and security of the people of Litkosh.

WHITNEY

Whose security we talking about here Giles?

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Calbrex sits on his bed reading his tablet. The door opens.

LEIGH

Thought you might be hungry. I hear you're fond of chicken soup.

Leigh walks in and carries the same type meal box delivered daily for Nahum.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Personally I like mine with fresh dumplings. Do you like dumplings, or are you a thin broth man?

Calbrex looks at Leigh. She opens the cell door and walks in. She takes a seat on the mattress and unpacks the meal.

She places a napkin on Calbrex's leg and hands him a large spoon.

She next pulls out a large bowl with a screw on lid. She takes the spoon back and offers Calbrex the bowl.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

Would you mind? I'm afraid my grip is not what it used to be.

Calbrex takes the bowl and easily loosens the lid, hands Leigh the bowl.

CALBREX

I wondered who the benefactor was. You're not who I really expected.

LEIGH

Glad to know I can still surprise somebody in this town.

She blows on the soup and hands it back.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

I guess we both surprise people once in a while. So what happened? Whose little plan was this?

CALBREX

Nahum is a changed man, but I guess you knew that if you were providing for him.

LEIGH

I did get a report every now and then. You made a difference in his life. You should be proud of that.

Between bites of soup he speaks.

CALBREX
Circumstances simply helped him
become the man inside.

She hands him some warm tea.

CALBREX (CONT'D)
It was great to see him become the
measure of his creation.

LEIGH
Was escaping becoming a better man?

CALBREX
I just allowed him an opportunity
to complete some personal business.

LEIGH
Do you think he will come back?

CALBREX
I hope for his honor he will.

Leigh digs into the box and removes a pie box.

She opens it and presents a banana cream pie with cherries on
top.

LEIGH
I envy Nahum for his escape.

Calbrex finishes the soup.

CALBREX
Why would you envy him?

LEIGH
Both of you really, he got to
escape and well, it looks like you
might get away too.

CALBREX
Is life really so bad here?

LEIGH
No pie?

CALBREX
I'm fine thank you.

She repackages the pie and empty soup bowl.

LEIGH

Let's just say I envy those who get away.

Leigh kisses Calbrex's forehead.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

I hope you don't have to die Preacher. I think your the only honorable man in this outpost.

EXT. GALLOWS, HILL - DAY

Coy and Roy carry wood planks. Others build stairs and level the ground.

Whitney and CURIOSITY SEEKERS watch the gallows take shape. Giles comes to his side.

GILES

Looks as if things are progressing nicely.

WHITNEY

You sure about this Henry, I mean the long-term affects on the town may not be what you want.

GILES

People will understand if you break the law there are consequences. It will make them honest people.

WHITNEY

I wonder about that. Seems it will make them fearful people.

They step to the side when two carpenters walk though.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Most folks don't like to live in fear, especially fear from their own laws.

GILES

We need control in order to have order. You more than anyone should understand that.

Whitney tips his hat to the ladies who watch and leaves the hill.

WHITNEY

The best, most effective type of control is self-control. Take that and a strong dose of morality and things generally take care of themselves. You can't force or even scare folks into being good. That's a mind they must set upon themselves.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A few townsfolk plant decorative plants around the building. Others paint and more replace shingles on the roof.

The building and grounds look better.

INT. FOYER, CITY HALL - DAY

Ms. Lily works at her desk. She goes through files, and sorts papers; she works in auto-mode.

She does not see the gentleman approach her.

Tall, thin with a pocked face, long stringy hair, wearing a long black coat, tall boots, and a wide-brimmed hat.

His steps, quiet almost soft with short light strides the opposite of his heavy dark attire.

He stands at the counter for a moment before speaking.

MAN IN BLACK

Excuse me, Ma'am.

Ms. Lily jumps as if the Devil, with breath as foul as donkey dung himself had called her name.

She gasps for breath, her hand holds her rapidly beating heart.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

I do apologize; it was not my intention to add fear to your life.

MS. LILY

Sorry, I didn't hear you walk up.

She regains her composure; clears her throat.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

How may I help you?

MAN IN BLACK

The courts have sent me; I'm
looking for Mayor Heinrich Giles.
Is he available?

MS. LILY

Just give me a minute, and I'll
see.

She looks at a tablet; thinks about it and places the tablet
on the desk. She smiles and walks away.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY HALL - DAY

Giles sits looking over a tablet and speaks into a
mic/earpiece.

GILES

... I understand Jimmy, but that
order should have been here early
last week.

A SLIGHT KNOCK on the door interrupts.

GILES (CONT'D)

We cannot run a business without
proper product.

Ms. Lily sticks in her head.

GILES (CONT'D)

Jimmy do you make a good living?
Are your credits delivered on time?

Giles waves her in and continues his scold.

GILES (CONT'D)

Then is it too much to ask that you
fulfill your assignments as agreed?

He nods his head and listens.

GILES (CONT'D)

Fine, I want to see the transfers
on the next transport understand?

He clicks the earpiece regains a calm attitude and turns his
attention towards Ms. Lily.

GILES (CONT'D)

Ms. Lily, you're looking fine this
morning. What can I do for you?

She shuts the door behind her and almost whispers.

MS. LILY
I think he's here.

GILES
Who's here?

MS. LILY
He said the court sent him.

Giles jumps and throws files into the trash.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)
I don't think he's that guy. I
think he's the executioner.

Giles stops relieved.

GILES
Well then, send him in and see if
you can find some warm sweets,
maybe some cool drinks for us.

She nods and walks out.

He cleans the desk. Giles stands and puts on a suit coat.

Ms. Lily returns with the MAN IN BLACK. She makes the
introduction.

MS. LILY
Mayor, this is the gentleman I
spoke with you about. Sir, this is
Mayor Giles.

She quietly leaves.

Giles steps forward and offers his hand.

GILES
Mayor Giles, I'm pleased to meet
you. Ms. Lily tells me you're from
the court.

Man in Black, takes his time. He accepts Giles' hand and
gives his answer.

MAN IN BLACK
Please to meet you mayor. I
understand we have an execution to
perform.

GILES
Yes, we do. Please sit down, and we
can discuss it.

Giles indicates chairs with a coffee table in front of them. He takes the lead and sits first.

MAN IN BLACK
Anything I should know about.

GILES
There's been a slight hiccup, the convicted man's name is --

Man in Black raises his hand and turns his head away.

MAN IN BLACK
I prefer to not know anything about the person. I just do my job.

He drops his hand and looks back at Giles.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)
I was referring to conditions, the time you have decided the execution will take place.

GILES
I was hoping we could do it in three days; the gallows will be done by then.

MAN IN BLACK
Why not use a tree, or a tall building with a balcony?

Giles uncomfortable, fidgets around this cold man.

GILES
We haven't had much crime in Litkosh.

Ms. Lily returns with sweet rolls and beverages.

GILES (CONT'D)
I was hoping by making an example of this, this, individual it would deter others from following suit.

She sets the items on the table and steals a quick glance at the Man.

MAN IN BLACK
That has been an argument since man began. Everyone believes it, some even hope for it.

He sighs bored with this argument.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

The truth be told, there's no proof
that philosophy ever deters
anyone's actions.

GILES

So you think making an example of
someone is not beneficial?

He glances at the offerings but does not accept them.

MAN IN BLACK

If it makes you feel better, or
bolsters your political rating, it
is beneficial to you.

The Man in Black stands.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

But for the masses, those who stand
by and watch an individual die, it
is not a benefit.

He walks towards the door.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

It is a hindrance on life itself. I
will be at the June Bug for lunch.

He turns back.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

After which I will go to a room the
court has arranged and await the
call for my services.

He tips his hat towards Ms. Lily and exits.

MS. LILY

That man must live on the darkest
side of midnight.

GILES

I guess we're havin' a hangin'.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Calbrex lies on his mattress asleep. He faces the wall and
has a pillow over his head.

Whitney opens the door, and steps inside followed by Ms. Lily
carrying a box. They both just watch for a moment.

CALBREX

Sheriff your keys jingle when you try to take light steps, and Ms. Lily, your pure spirit and perfume light up every room.

He rolls over, and sees their somber faces.

WHITNEY

Seems a man all dressed in black has come to Litkosh. He's come to see the man in this cell.

Whitney steps closer.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Anything I can do for you Preacher?

A peaceful sigh comes from Calbrex when he sits.

CALBREX

Funny, I have been anxious, tried my whole life to satisfy my past, and now I am at peace.

He stands and walks to the bars.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Thank you for your kindness Sheriff, Ms. Lily. How long before I walk?

WHITNEY

Court orders say three more days.

He searches for a better topic.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Some of the folks have been working on the Church cleaning it up and such; even started to paint.

Whitney, uneasy looks about.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

I would be all right if you wanted to stay back at your own place.

CALBREX

I would not want anyone to question your intentions. I'll be fine here; thank those folks for their labors.

Calbrex returns and sits on his mattress.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

The Good Lord willing someone else
will be taking my place.

Ms. Lily steps forward, holds out the box.

She places it on the mattress and opens it.

She reveals a handmade white shirt with blouse-like sleeves
and a three button Henley front. White pants with a button
fly.

MS. LILY

I made these at the women's craft
group, for Nahum. To let him know I
understand sometimes things just
happen.

Ms. Lily holds the shirt, and hands it to Calbrex.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

I thought since you have taken his
place perhaps you would like to
wear them.

Calbrex examines the shirt.

CALBREX

I would be deeply honored.

WHITNEY

Is there anything I can get you,
any last meal?

CALBREX

Nothing-special food-wise for me,
thank you. I would like a haircut
if that's possible.

EXT. GALLOWS, HILL - DAY

The floor drops on the gallows; a weighted sack falls
through, the rope snaps tight.

A crew adds a rail to the stairs and around the platform.

Some of the city's leaders watch the rehearsal.

DOC LAURIE

One would think if we can fly
through space, cure most diseases,

He shakes his head.

DOC LAURIE (CONT'D)
...and live anywhere our hearts
desire, we would be beyond such
barbarous acts.

LUKE
Is this in our nature Doc all this
death and unkindness? Maybe we
can't get beyond this.

GILES
These acts define us as humans; we
will not allow the needless death
of one person to be overlooked.

Giles stands firm.

GILES (CONT'D)
We must have laws and justice that
is what makes us above the beasts.

DOC LAURIE
Not sure we will ever be above the
beasts as long as we do things like
this to each other.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

A transport crosses the stars leaving a wake of heat and
exhaust from its tail.

INT. OFFICE, MAYOR'S HOME - DAY

Leigh stands and looks out the window. She holds a picture of
the younger woman she was. She wears a wedding dress and
smiles brightly.

Tears fall from her cheeks and strike the picture.

She walks behind Giles' desk and opens a drawer. Similar
pictures with other young women in wedding dresses smile back
at her.

Leigh places her picture on top of the desk with the others
to each side.

She pushes a button on a communicate.

TICKET AGENT (O.S.)
Litkosh transfer agent how may I
help you.

LEIGH
I would like to book passage.

TICKET AGENT (O.S.)
To which location may I book you?

LEIGH
Saturn Five in the Orion colony.

TICKET AGENT (O.S.)
We have a transport departing in
two weeks. May I book that for you?

LEIGH
Yes, please.

TICKET AGENT (O.S.)
And will there be a returning
passage?

LEIGH
No, just one way.

Leigh pushes another button on the communicate.

FEMALE ELECTRONIC VOICE
How may I assist you?

LEIGH
I'd like to communicate with Judge
Zalman.

INT. JUNE BUG - NIGHT

The music plays, and the hologram musicians smile and dance.
Most of the chairs remain empty.

The lone BARTENDER cleans glasses, wipes the bar, and
restocks the liquor.

The bartender walks by TWO WAITRESSES. They stand at the end
of the bar, and nurse their own drinks.

WAITRESS
I'm going home early tonight
Stella, no use both of us wasting
our time.

INT. HOLDING CELL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

Calbrex stands and removes his clothes.

His scarred body stands in the moonlight. Battle wounds and
tortured skin twists across his back, arms, and legs.

He carefully washes himself in a small sink. He looks at each
scar and mark.

He wipes the steam from the mirror.

Calbrex shaves meticulously.

He sits in a chair and wears a large towel around his shoulders and the white pants from Ms. Lily. A barber clips and combs his hair.

Whitney sits across the room and watches.

The barber finishes and offers Calbrex a small mirror.

He does not take it.

CALBREX

I'm sure it's fine. Thank you.

The Barber leaves.

WHITNEY

I can see you've not always been a preacher.

Calbrex does not answer. He dresses in the white shirt.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

If it makes any difference, I think, you've changed some people here.

He stands from the chair.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

They've started caring more about each other, less about their own desires.

CALBREX

And what about you Sheriff?

WHITNEY

I always thought you could never teach old dogs new tricks, then again I've been wrong before.

CALBREX

It's never about teaching tricks or changing people. It's just about helping them see what is already inside them. Helping them reach the measure of their creation.

Now clothed, Calbrex rests on the edge of the mattress and faces Whitney.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

At a time like this, most men would want to give a confession of their past deeds.

He folds the towel.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

I'm sure we don't have enough time for that. I would like to offer a few words to heaven before we go. May I?

WHITNEY

Of course, I'll just step outside.

CALBREX

I would prefer you be here.

Whitney nods. Calbrex kneels in the center of the room facing the one high window.

The morning light streams on his face. He looks upward, and smiles.

CALBREX (CONT'D)

Oh Lord, I have not always been a good son. You know of my failings, my living in pleasure, and my various unkind, selfish deeds.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Ms. Lily sits on a bench by the door. Whitney exits the office.

Calbrex, dressed in the white clothes and shoeless, steps into the sunlight.

CALBREX (V.O.)

I pray my broken heart will be mended; my service sufficient, my charity acceptable to thee.

Together they walk the street.

CALBREX (V.O.)

I pray thou will bless this people; they may have food for their bodies, clothes for their backs,

They turn a corner, and continue. A few townsfolk stand in doorways. Others, look out their windows.

CALBREX (V.O.)
 And love in their hearts for one
 another.

After the next corner many folks stand waiting and step in
 behind Whitney, Ms. Lily, and Calbrex.

CALBREX (V.O.)
 May I have the strength to walk
 this road before me, my repentance
 be complete, that I may enter your
 waiting open arms. Amen.

A transport flies low overhead.

INT. TRANSPORT SHIP - DAY

Nahum stands among the cattle and struggles to see out the
 window.

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - DAY

Whitney, Ms. Lily, and Calbrex continue the walk. The crowd
 in silence grows in numbers.

EXT. DEPOT STATION - DAY

PASSENGERS exit the ship, and the cattle unload with Nahum in
 the middle.

He apologizes and pushes past them.

NAHUM
 'cuse me, gotta go.

He steps into the street. The hands of the city hall clock
 hit 12:00. The bell rings out.

BONG!

He panics and runs through the vacant streets.

EXT. LITKOSH STREETS - DAY

Nahum finds the open Sheriff's office door, looks in, and
 steps back out.

The clock rings out.

BONG!

EXT. LITKOSH GALLOWS - DAY

Calbrex and Whitney take their first steps on the gallows.

The crowd has grown it includes most of the town, Giles, Luke, Petros, Adelbert, Coy, Roy, and Doc Laurie. Ms. Lily holds Leigh's hand.

BONG!

Calbrex and Whitney ascend the gallows. Giles and The Man in Black wait at the top. He turns and faces the crowd. Many stand in disbelief.

BONG!

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - DAY

Nahum searches the streets frantic. He sees a crowd move towards the gallows and runs at them.

BONG!

EXT. LITKOSH GALLOWES - DAY

Giles lifts a tablet, and flicks through several documents.

BONG!

He stops and clears his throat. He hands the tablet to The Man in Black.

GILES

I think you'd better read this
since you're the official and all.

The Man in Black, ever the professional, reads.

BONG!

MAN IN BLACK

By the court authority granted by
the council of Amalgamated Planets,
Judge Zalman provided a decision of
guilty for the crime of murder to
one Nahum Bray.

The crowd quiet, transfixed by the words.

BONG!

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)

Who has been ordered to be put to
death for his crimes, at a time and
place made available by the city

BONG!

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)
 of Litkosh and it's good people.
 That time is today, the seventh
 month, the seventh day, at high
 noon, twelve o'clock.

Giles looks at the crowd for approval.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)
 As Nahum Bray has escaped by the
 hand, and aid of one Calbrex
 McGregor, the law of proxy will
 take effect.

The businessmen nod their heads in agreement.

MAN IN BLACK (CONT'D)
 Calbrex McGregor will pay for the
 crimes of Nahum Bray with his own
 life. He will be hung by the neck
 until life passes from his body.

The crowd holds their breath.

BONG!

For the first time, Whitney places wrist restraints on
 Calbrex and holds his arm.

Calbrex stands calm.

The Man in Black steps forward and places a rope around his
 neck.

BONG!

A voice runs in the crowd.

NAHUM
 Wait please wait!! Wait I am here
 There is no Proxy!

No one notices Nahum.

Calbrex sees him. He offers Nahum a smile and a nod.

The Man in Black looks at Giles.

NAHUM (CONT'D)
 You can't do this we made a deal!

Nahum runs towards the gallows.

Giles nods.

The floor drops out from beneath Calbrex. The crowd gasps.

MAN IN BLACK

It is done. The price is paid.

Calbrex's lifeless feet swing back and forth.

EXT. DEPOT STATION - DAY

A transport is being unloaded.

Among the passengers; Judge Zalman and some Security men.

Leigh stands in the busy depot. She wears boots, a jacket and pants. She holds a satchel. Ms. Lily by her side.

MS. LILY

You're sure this is the right thing?

LEIGH

Sure no, but its too late to change.

Zalman sees Leigh and steps to her.

ZALMAN

Good morning.

Leigh holds out the satchel.

Zalman looks inside.

ZALMAN (CONT'D)

Must be a difficult day for you.

LEIGH

Not as hard as you might think. This town has to handle its own issues too. No double standards.

ZALMAN

If you'll excuse me I have a few appointments to keep.

Ms. Lily pats Leigh's shoulder.

LEIGH

Well, I must be off.

MS. LILY

I wish you well and may you find peace in life.

Leigh hugs Ms. Lily, turns and enters the transport.

A young shoeless brown-skinned man, wears a flower-crown, exits the transport and looks around.

INT. OFFICE, MAYOR'S HOME - DAY

Giles stands in the doorway, a glass of old Scotch and ice fill a crystal glass. He is tired.

Giles steps towards the shelves and studies a large crystal vase with a small plaque below it.

Giles steps around the room, and he looks at the accomplishments. He picks one for closer examination.

He walks towards the windows and looks over the town.

He sits in his chair at his desk.

The photo of Leigh in her wedding dress holds the center position.

Giles takes a drink and picks up the picture.

He opens the lowest side drawer and places the picture back with the two other photos, all beautiful women in wedding dresses.

He throws back the last of his Scotch then throws the glass across the room. It shatters on impact.

The communicate DINGS.

MS. LILY (V.O.)
Mayor, Judge Zalman and some
Security men are here to see you.

EXT. CEMETERY, CHURCH - DAY

A new grave mounds rests next to Bart's.

Petros clears away some dead leaves and lays fresh flowers on a new grave. The headstone reads, "CALBREX MCGREGOR, SHEPHERD TO MANY, FRIEND TO ALL."

Several citizens paint and repair the church and the grounds. Some plant flowers and new shrubbery.

Roy and Coy replace the broken stained glass window.

Food covers a table while carnival atmosphere prevails.

Ms. Lily walks to the church activities. Her arm around the flower-crowned young man.

MS. LILY

Looks like I'm missing the fun.
Everyone I would like you to meet
someone special.

The crowd smiles, and gathers around them.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

He has traveled a long way to be
with us, and I hope you show him
our hospitality.

She hugs his shoulders with her arm.

MS. LILY (CONT'D)

I think he may be with us for a
while. This is Seth, Calbrex's son.

Nahum steps forward and takes his hand.

NAHUM

Seth, I was a friend of your
father's.

SETH

Very pleased to meet you sir.

NAHUM

Just call me Nahum.

Petros makes the next introduction.

PETROS

Hi I'm Petros. Are you any good at
games?

Several others introduce themselves.

INT. KITCHEN, RECTOR'S HOME - DAY

One light bulb hangs from the ceiling and lights the bare
scant room.

Through an open window, the soft sounds of SWALLOWS SINGING
wafts into the room.

At the small wooden table sits Nahum, his hair longer with a
full beard.

He eats a meal of bread and chicken soup with dumplings.
Water in a wooden cup, his drink.

Nahum reads from the last few pages of a large book.

He finishes the book, closes it, then replaces it on the bookshelf where only two smaller books rest.

Nahum takes the bowl and drinks the last few drops, then places the bowl and cup in a small sink.

A KNOCK at the door.

He opens it, no one there, only a box covered with a plaid cloth.

He takes the box and places it on the table.

Nahum removes the cloth and finds a box of food, fresh fruit, vegetables, and canned goods.

An envelope with his name carefully centered on it, rest among the items.

He opens the letter and reads.

NAHUM (V.O.)

Dear Shepherd, knowing you has made our life better. We hope this food will help you as you continue to do good works.

He replaces the letter into an envelope and sets it aside.

EXT. LITKOSH STREET - NIGHT

Nahum carries the box and walks along a quiet street. He finds a small home with a broken fence and no light on in the window.

He crosses through the gate and quietly approaches the home. He places the box on the porch and bows his head in prayer.

He knocks hard on the door, and runs in the shadows of the street.

The light comes on, and the door opens.

A thin woman opens the door and looks around.

She sees the box and examines it, and clasps her hands together with excitement.

FADE TO BLACK.