

The Silence

By

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The short story 'The Silence' by Jennifer. R. Povey

EXT. STREET - DAY

BETSY is walking down the street. She is a teenaged girl, perhaps fourteen years old, wearing jeans, a worn flannel shirt, old boots and a Nike baseball cap, on backwards. She has one hand on her gun.

ZOMBIE CHILD darts into an alleyway between two houses.

BETSY

Hell.

ZOMBIE WOMAN attacks Betsy from the side.

Betsy knees the woman in the groin.

The woman falls away, breathing hard, looking at her with dead eyes.

Betsy shoots the woman in the head. She falls.

Betsy walks away. She does not look back.

INT. OLD SCHOOL BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

Betsy and CLINT are talking. Clint is an older man, slender in build, with worn features. His clothes are in poor condition. Betsy removes her baseball cap.

CLINT

Successful trip?

BETSY

No. I swear, the Silents are scavenging stuff.

CLINT

What would they need with it?

BETSY

Some of them do wear clothes. I'm guessing there might be some who remember how to use a can opener, too.

CLINT

You should stop scavenging on your own.

BETSY

I hate being with other people all of the time.

(CONTINUED)

CLINT
Get used to it. You're lucky we let
you out at all.

BETSY
I'm careful.

Clint regards Betsy, sighing, starting to turn away. He
changes his mind.

CLINT
Use any ammo?

BETSY
One.

CLINT
Okay. Go get cleaned up.

Betsy walks away, shaking her head.

BETSY
We need to get more of the immunes
together. Somehow.

EXT. BY THE GARDENS - MORNING

Betsy is talking to WINSTON. Winston is a big man, well
built and heavily muscled. She is mostly facing him.

WINSTON
Betsy, we're planning something
big. Want in?

BETSY
What's up?

WINSTON
Going to ride out to the mil base,
fill a wagon with ammo. It's, what,
twenty-five miles?

BETSY
Something like that. Good. I'm in.

WINSTON
I knew I could count on you...for
now, anyway.

BETSY
They won't ask me to marry anyone
for another two years.

(CONTINUED)

WINSTON

You're lucky. Your daughters will be married by fourteen. Things will descend before they rise, believe me.

BETSY

I still don't want many kids, but we don't have the choice.

WINSTON

How do you think I feel? I don't even like girls.

BETSY

I'll marry you. I won't care if you have a guy on the side.

WINSTON

Heh. We'll see. Maybe you'll fall in love.

Betsy shakes her head at Winston.

BETSY

When do we leave?

WINSTON

Two days. Bring a spare weapon, just in case.

BETSY

And I mean it. You aren't a Neanderthal.

WINSTON

Hey. They used to think the Neanderthals had more equality, not less.

Betsy punches Winston's arm.

BETSY

You know what I mean!

WINSTON

I do. But what choice do we have?

BETSY

None, unless we can find a cure.

(CONTINUED)

WINSTON
Yeah, and if pigs could fly...

BETSY
I'll see you, Winston. I got some
stuff I gotta do.

EXT. THE LIVESTOCK PENS - AFTERNOON

Betsy is checking on a cow, examining it carefully.

Zombie child is seen in the trees. It almost seems to be waving at her.

EXT. THE ROAD - MORNING

Betsy is riding a small horse, not much more than a pony. Next to her, Winston drives a wagon drawn by two draft mares.

Zombie kid is seen following the wagon.

BETSY
Should have shot him.

WINSTON
Who?

BETSY
Silent kid. Following us. Didn't want to waste a bullet on him the other day.

WINSTON
Meh. Don't worry about it. He would have attacked already if he was going to.

Almost in the moment Winston says that, GROUP OF ZOMBIES attack. They come from all sides.

ZOMBIE BOY stops in Betsy's path.

Her horse shies.

Betsy draws a gun, aims at the zombie boy.

Zombie boy tries to grab the reins.

Her horse bolts, trampling a zombie.

It runs quite a way before stopping. Now she is alone.

EXT. THE STREET - AFTERNOON

Clint is staring Betsy down, very close to her. She is not flinching.

CLINT

What do you mean...organized Silents?

BETSY

They were working together, they wore clothes. One of them tried to grab Talisman's reins.

CLINT

Are you sure they were Silents?

BETSY

Like sane people would fake it? One of them did try to talk, but he couldn't.

CLINT

They generally don't try. <pause> Early infection. The thing's spreading again.

BETSY

And I'm exposed and now you're exposed.

CLINT

So, the two of us have to investigate. We can't take anyone else.

BETSY

I'm armed.

CLINT

Let me get a gun.

EXT. THE ROAD WHERE THE AMBUSH TOOK PLACE - LATE AFTERNOON

Betsy riding a bay horse. It keeps spooking. Clint next to her on a chestnut, a rifle across the saddle.

CLINT

Was it here?

(CONTINUED)

BETSY

Yes.

Clint dismounts. He examines the muddy ground carefully. At one point he picks up a torn piece of cloth.

Clint points off to the side.

CLINT

They went that way. Silents don't abduct people...

EXT. SILENT CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

A camp. Various tents and makeshift shelters. The wagon is parked there, with the draft mares picketed nearby.

The draft mares both lift their heads and whicker to the new arrivals.

NEIL and two other Silents stride towards them.

Clint raises his gun.

The Silents lift their hands.

Clint shoots one of them in the shoulder.

Winston rushes out of a tent.

WINSTON

Dammit!

Neil throws a knife.

The knife hits Clint in the throat.

He falls backwards off his horse.

The horse bolts.

Neil retrieves his knife.

Betsy holsters her gun.

BETSY

You have to go. You'll infect those who are still healthy.

The Silents simply regard her, almost surrounding her.

(CONTINUED)

BETSY
You have to.

SILENT
No. Don't.

BETSY
I won't shoot you if you leave.

The Silent spreads his hands, indicating the camp.

BETSY
You're going to lose all of it.

SILENT
No.

BETSY
You know how this thing works.

Winston and SILENT GIRL approach.

SILENT GIRL
Help us.

BETSY
I can't.

SILENT GIRL
Why did you kill him, Neil?

NEIL
Shoot.

SILENT GIRL
Idiot!

BETSY
We can't help you. There isn't a
cure.

SILENT GIRL
Yes. There is.

SILENT CAMP - A LITTLE LATER

Betsy and Winston, to one side of the camp, amongst the
trees.

BETSY
I don't understand.

(CONTINUED)

WINSTON

They're getting better, Betsy. The kids first.

BETSY

That's not possible.

WINSTON

Remember what the scientists got out before they were all Silenced.

BETSY

It was meant to be temporary. Except it wasn't. It ate people's brains...

WINSTON

Except it didn't. People are getting better.

BETSY

So it was temporary after all...that makes me a murderer!

WINSTON

You ever shoot one that wasn't coming right at you?

BETSY

No...

WINSTON

Then it was self defense, not murder. Clint, on the other hand.

BETSY

Clint was for shooting all of them. But it's a logical conclusion...

WINSTON

He'd have shot you, after.

BETSY

I know. What are we going to do?

WINSTON

Rebuild.

BETSY

And how do we keep it from happening again?

Silence.

Fade out.