

An excerpt from:

Snow White Zombie: Apocalypse

Scene 4

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Lights up on the FOREST CAMP, night has fallen and crickets chirp quietly in the background. The bodies, breadcrumbs and feathers have been cleared away and the small fire has been lit. SNOW WHITE attends an iron pot of stew or porridge that is cooking on top, and the other three sit around it. RAPUNZEL has a black eye, and is currently nursing it with a piece of uncooked meat. The WOODSMAN leans against the tree, smoking a pipe.

A pause.

Woodsman: They had been tracking me for days...the girl, what used to be the girl was the alpha. They almost got me over lunch...that's how I learned she responded to breadcrumbs.

Prince Charming: Why breadcrumbs?

Woodsman: *(Stokes the fire)* Some kind of instinct. Memory, of what she used to do. They were important things in her life, before...Maybe it wasn't even hers, maybe the breadcrumbs belonged to the Wolf. They all seem to pass on a piece of themselves to the ones they bite. The normal ones are bad enough, but the *wolves*; they're something special. When the others pass into undeath they get slower, clumsier, but not the wolves. They were hunters before, and now they get faster'n meaner. A couple of nibbles and they've made themselves a pack, and then the whole passel of 'em dog you until there's nowhere left to run.

SNOW WHITE ladles out the stew and hands Woodsman a bowl.

Woodsman: Much obliged. *(He doesn't eat)*

SNOW WHITE hands the stew to the rest of the group, saving RAPUNZEL for last.

Rapunzel: I killed one the other day. I think they're learning.

Woodsman: I've killed five. Two of them natural wolves; it wouldn't surprise me.

Rapunzel: What do you think we should do?

Woodsman: You? Run.

Snow White: What about you?

Woodsman: I'm going to kill the alpha.

Prince Charming: But you said—

Woodsman: The girl was just running that hunting party. There's organization behind them, there's a Big Bad out there...and I'm going to get his pelt.

Snow White: Well, you're certainly not going to on an empty stomach.

WOODSMAN glances at SNOW WHITE.

Snow White: Go on, there are starving people who would be happy to have that.

WOODSMAN eats. SNOW WHITE smiles, and ladles herself a bowl.

Woodman: Where did you find her?

Prince Charming: In—

Rapunzel: In a glass coffin.

Prince Charming: I—

Rapunzel: He kissed her.

WOODSMAN cocks an eyebrow. PRINCE reluctantly nods.

Woodsman: Never considered myself to be a judgmental man—

Snow White: Oh it's fine, I was poisoned, cursed really.

Woodsman: You don't say.

Snow White: And my prince woke me up/ with true loves kiss.

Rapunzel: *(Simultaneously)* / With true loves kiss.

The ladies glare at each other, RAPUNZEL makes a face, SNOW WHITE ignores it.

WOODSMAN looks to the PRINCE, he shrugs.

Woodsman: From what I hear, true love's a rare—

RAPUNZEL snorts derisively.

Woodsman: ...and powerful thing. You see you make the most of it.

Rapunzel & Snow White: Trust me he does.

The girls lock eyes for an instant, then move to opposite sides of the fire and do their best to look busy.

Woodsman: What about that one (*indicating RAPUNZEL*) Where did you find her?

Rapunzel: He tricked me, climbed up my hair and broke into my tower.

WOODSAN looks at PRINCE CHARMING who nods sheepishly.

Woodsman: I meant no offense ma'am...by asking him instead of you. Just figured you weren't in the mood to talk.

Rapunzel: I'm not.

Woodsman: Then I'll be sure to leave you off as the subject—

Rapunzel: I'd appreciate that.

Woodsman: of further conversation...I'll just end it with again apologizing for that shiner I left you with—

Rapunzel: It's no big deal.

Woodsman: I'm not a violent man, not where women are concerned—

Rapunzel: How enlightened of you.

Woodsman: Though you seem to know your way around the business end of a fist, not to mention that pistol...

Rapunzel: Thank you. I've had a lot of practice.

Woodsman: I'd say so.

Rapunzel: Thank you.

A pause He turns back to PRINCE CHARMING.

Prince Charming: I didn't really—

Rapunzel: You did.

Prince: I—

Woodsman: (*Holds up his hand*) Like I said, I've never considered myself to be a judgmental man (*Louder*) Sorry for remarking on your lady friend's skill, it's just odd to find that type of art in the possession of a woman.

The hostility becomes more overt and continues to build throughout the following exchange.

Rapunzel: (*advancing*) What do you want?

Woodsman: Nothing.

Rapunzel: Good.

Woodsman: It's just something I consider to be a novelty.

Rapunzel: Well continue to consider it that.

Woodsman: I like to know who my companions are—

Rapunzel: I like to keep my private things—

Woodsman: I've been a hunter all of my life—

Rapunzel: (*Firmly, tinged with violence*) Private.

Woodsman: You could say I've got a bit of the blood hound in me—

Rapunzel: I don't care if you've got a whole litter in there—

Woodsman: It's a flaw.

They are nose to nose, a tense pause.

Woodsman: (*Backing down*) Alright...I'll leave you alone now. My apologies.

Rapunzel: Don't mention it.

RAPUNZEL returns to her place at the edge of the camp. WOODSMAN looks at prince, he shrugs.

Woodsman: (*To Prince Charming*) So, you were telling me the capital has fallen?

Prince Charming: (*nods*) That's where it started. We were there. Zel and I. She'd come in the night before.

Rapunzel: I'd heard about them on the road...tried to warn this one (*indicates PRINCE*), but nobody believed me...till Old Jack Horner passed away of the fever and then refused to stay buried.

Prince Charming: There were only a few of them, /at first—

Rapunzel: / at first.

Prince Charming: Out on the surrounding farms. We kept thinking we'd killed the last one—

Rapunzel: But then they'd crop up again.

Prince Charming: Pretty soon we'd closed off the city—

Rapunzel: And they got in.

Prince Charming: *(Pause)* We tried to save as many people as we could but some of them had been bitten...They turned, and bit a few more. We tried to be humane about it. Tried treating the wounds and when that didn't work we severed the limbs—

Rapunzel: No one lasted more than three days.

Prince Charming: We fell back again, this time we didn't let any refugees in; just nobles, and Zel here...it took a week and a half for the screams to stop.

Rapunzel: Then the whole city was silent.

Prince Charming: We thought we were safe, thought we could wait them out...or maybe tunnel a way underneath. Life almost returned to normal, we were...we were used to ignoring them anyway.

Rapunzel: Then one morning, He appeared on the horizon.

Prince Charming: Like a mountain covered in a lush forest of green rotten pallor and capped with bits of snowy bone he dragged himself to us.

Rapunzel: He didn't move right, like his bones were broken...inside.

Prince Charming: He didn't feel it, He was dead—like the others.

Rapunzel: I don't know what could've killed a thing like that.

Prince Charming: Maybe one of the normal ones got to him, like a mosquito bite.

Rapunzel: Maybe he tangled with something just as big as he was.

Prince Charming: Maybe he just fell.

Slight Pause, RAPUNZEL walks to the other side of the fire and looks out into the night.

Prince Charming: He was at the wall by suppertime, by sunset he'd torn open the keep like the crust of a mincemeat pie.

Rapunzel: (*Dazed, remembering*) I watched him: He stuck in his thumb and pulled out the top half of a plum-robed socialite, then dropped her down his great green gullet... I saw it all, his hands, the blood on her dress; the glinting light of the dying sun cast shadows on his face as he ate—they made him look almost jolly.

A pause.

Snow White: That's awful...

Prince Charming: (*Nods*) We ran. The cities walls and turrets were still clear...mostly. We were able to bypass most of the dead, and the really dangerous districts and then we reached the outer wall and...

PRINCE looks at RAPUNZEL.

Prince: We climbed down.

Slight pause.

Snow White: How?

PRINCE says nothing. Snow White looks at RAPUNZEL, who reaches up and grabs what's left of her hair.

Rapunzel: I had to tie it off to climb down and with no one *living* at the top to untie it, and no time...couldn't very well drag the castle with me could I?

Prince Charming: We found our way onto the road, and disappeared into the woods. We've been running ever since.

A beat. WOODSMAN nods and eats a spoonful of stew.

Woodsman: So what now?

PRINCE doesn't answer.

Rapunzel: What else can we do? We keep running...maybe find somewhere to hole up for a while.

Snow White: (*Somewhat delighted, this makes sense to her*) We're going to find a home!

Woodsman: (*Looks at PRINCE*) That true?

PRINCE returns his gaze. He says nothing.

Woodsman: (*Getting more stew*) I know that look, you're cooking something up there...Feel like sharing?

PRINCE says nothing.

Woodsman: You people have some real trust issues.

Rapunzel: You attacked us!

Woodsman: And now we're all eating dinner and sharing a fire.

Rapunzel: So?

Woodsman: So things are different now.

Rapunzel: We're not telling you anything—

Woodsman: Why?

Rapunzel: We don't want to.

Snow White: Oh, please can't we just—

Woodsman: You gotta do a lot of things you don't want—

Rapunzel: Say's who?

Woodsman: Before you die.

Snow White: Put all of this bickering aside—

Rapunzel: Are you threatening us?

Woodsman: I'm stating a fact.

Snow White: It's tearing this family apart!

Woodsman: Better it than the zombies.

Rapunzel: He's not in—None of us are family!

Prince Charming: (*Has noticed something*) Everyone...

Woodsman: What you don't know can kill you.

Rapunzel: Prodding the wrong person can kill you.

Woodsman: I'm not prodding you—

Rapunzel: Damn right you're not.

Snow White: (*inwardly*) We are so a family...

Woodsman: Tell you what. You don't have to tell me anything. Let me tell YOU a story. See I heard tell that this whole thing was caused by a birthday party. That some dumbassed Prince forgot to invite a fairy, and he and his long-haired doxy ran out on the whole castle when things came to eating each other. Now I hear tell that those two are wandering the countryside, lookin' for that fairy, so that stupid prince can apologize and put things right. 'Cept maybe, they don't know where that fairy is...and maybe I do know. Maybe I know about a castle on the other side of these woods, on a hill at a fork in the river where a fairy is supposed to dwell. A black fairy, said to have a hell of a temper...Now since you're three and they're two, you can't be them, but if you run into that dumbassed prince and that angry longhaired woman. Why don't you tell 'em I'd be willin' to show 'em the way to this particular castle. Think you can manage that?

RAPUNZEL is speechless.

Prince Charming: Listen!

*(Everyone stops. Silence, PRINCE and WOODSMAN begin to pack up the camp
RAPUNZEL draws her pistol.)*

Snow White: Nothing...

Rapunzel: The crickets have stopped chirping.

Woodsman: (*Hefting his AXE*) We're being hunted.

SNOW WHITE runs to pack up.

Prince Charming: We need to get somewhere defensible...a gully, a cave...

Woodsman: I saw a cabin yesterday, about two miles from here. Would've gone in, but, it was...weird.

Rapunzel: And you want to go *there*?

Woodsman: It'll work...in a pinch.

Prince Charming: Can we hold out there? At least till dawn?

Woodsman: It's got walls, and a door. They looked pretty hefty.

Prince Charming: Better than here.

Snow White: Are they close?

Woodsman: Close enough.

WOODSMAN douses the fire, blackout. Quarterlight light up on the camp, WOLF ZOMBIES skitter across the stage, they are hunting in a pack. Slowly ALPHA WOLF walks to the center of the stage, he stands for a moment, surveys the camp, then tosses back his head. ALPHA WOLF'S HOWL splits the air. Blackout.