

ZOMBIE CHICKEN

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CREEK FARMS - DAY

Corn fields. As far as the eye can see. Tall stalks blow gently in the breeze, surrounded by barbed wire fences. Guard towers jut out over them.

A sign on a dirt road reads CREEK FARMS. VISITORS MUST BE REGISTERED.

An old pick up truck drives up the road. Its cab is encased in metal bars, making it a cage on wheels.

EXT. CREEK FARMS COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Barracks, with barred windows, lines one side of the compound. Signs over the doors read BARRACKS A, B, C, etc.

Barns and utility sheds line the other side.

A ladder leads to the roof of each building and to a guard tower. A few are occupied with men, armed with rifles.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

My dad said, in Boston, they fed a guy to zombies for stealing food.

OSCAR (V.O.)

I heard that story when I was six or seven. Ain't true.

INT. CHICKEN COOP - CONTINUOUS

OSCAR (10) and MICHAEL (11) gather eggs in a chicken coop. They walk from nest to nest, baskets in hands. They wear hand-me-downs that don't properly fit.

Michael reaches into an empty nest and pulls out an egg. He puts it in his basket.

OSCAR

It was for stealing a basket of corn, right?

MICHAEL

Yeah. How'd you know?

Oscar reaches into a nest, pulling out another egg. He puts it in his basket and reaches back in.

OSCAR

I hear that story every year. My Dad told me. Uncle Bobby told me. Sheila told me. I don't think it ever happened.

MICHAEL

Serious?

He pulls out another egg and places it in his basket.

OSCAR

Each time, they said it just happened. And they've been saying it for, like, five years.

MICHAEL

How come I never heard it before?

OSCAR

I dunno. But it's just a story. They tell it so we don't start stealing anything... When was the last time you saw one?

Oscar pulls an egg from a nest and places it in his basket.

MICHAEL

A zombie? I saw one last fall in the corn field. Remember?

OSCAR

Get out of here.

MICHAEL

No. Serious. I was in the corn field when one came out of nowhere. Mister Brooks was guarding us and he shot the zombie--

He dramatically pokes himself in the forehead with a finger.

MICHAEL

Per-kow! Right in the head!

He reaches into the next nest. And pulls out a handful of yolk.

MICHAEL

Aww man!

Oscar looks at Michael as he wipes yolk on his pant leg.

MICHAEL
I hate getting eggs. They suck.

OSCAR
I know.

MICHAEL
Well, I won't be doing this much longer. My dad says he's gonna teach me shooting.

OSCAR
(sarcastic)
Sure he is.

MICHAEL
He is! Says he's gonna teach me shooting this July.

OSCAR
He can't! Rules say you can't start shooting until you're thirteen. And you're only eleven.

MICHAEL
I'm turning twelve in seven weeks.

OSCAR
That ain't thirteen! And my dad says you have to wait until you're thirteen to shoot.

Michael reaches to a nest where a large hen sits. The bird jumps up, pecking him. Michael jumps back.

MICHAEL
Damn it...

He shakes his jacket sleeve until it slides over his hand.

MICHAEL
Dad says they're gonna start training more guards soon.

With his sleeved hand, he reached into the nest. The hen pecks at him. He swats the bird away and pulls out an egg.

MICHAEL
And I'm gonna be one.

He places the egg in his basket.

They exit the wire and wood-framed coop. Oscar latches the door shut.

OSCAR

My dad says we don't have enough ammunition to train everyone.

He looks ahead of them.

OSCAR

Is that your brother?

Nearby, BILLY (8) chases a rooster around a barn.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

A rooster zigzags its way along a narrow passage between two large barns. Billy follows it with extended hands.

The bird is cornered at the end of the alley, CLUCKING away. Billy has his hands out, waiting to catch it - a very nervous look evident on his face.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Billy spins around, startled. Michael and Oscar step up, putting their baskets down.

BILLY

Trying to catch this chicken.

MICHAEL

You idiot. That's not a chicken. It's a rooster.

BILLY

It got out of its coop and I'm gonna put him back.

OSCAR

It's gonna bite you. And it's gonna hurt.

BILLY

Chickens don't bite.

MICHAEL

It's a rooster, lame-oh.

The rooster dodges Billy's hands and races around him, CLUCKING. He chases it and bumps into his brother.

MICHAEL
Watch it!

BILLY
Sorry.

Michael grabs Billy by the shirt, ending his chase. The rooster runs off.

BILLY
Let go!

MICHAEL
He'll bite you and you'll start crying.

BILLY
They don't bite.

Michael releases his brother, gently pushing him into a building wall.

OSCAR
They peck! That's how they bite!
And it'll hurt!

MICHAEL
And you can get sick from them.

BILLY
Can not!

OSCAR
Sure you can. You can become a zombie if they peck you.

Michael and Billy both look at him, surprised.

BILLY
That's not true. Only people become zombies.

OSCAR
Sure it is. Right Mike?

Billy and Oscar look at Michael; Oscar winks at him.

MICHAEL
Sure, it's true. If you get bit by a zombie chicken, you become a zombie.

Billy's eyes get real big. Oscar (standing behind Billy) smiles and giggles quietly.

BILLY
You're trying to scare me.

OSCAR
No, we're serious. It happened!

MICHAEL
Someone in the White Plains camp
got bit by a zombie chicken--

OSCAR
He turned and they had to cut off
his head with a chainsaw.

Oscar holds an imaginary chainsaw and waves it at Billy's head, making MOTOR SOUNDS.

Billy watches the two, bug-eyed and nervous.

OSCAR
The zombie chicken got away, too.
Nobody's caught it yet.

MICHAEL
But they think it's coming up here.

BILLY
That's not true--

MICHAEL
Is so! They say it looks just like
a regular chicken but it has no
feathers on its head--

OSCAR
Or skin! You can see it's skull.

Oscar and Michael step toward Billy, menacingly. Billy staggers back into a wall.

OSCAR
And it's eyes are missing. But it
can still see--

BILLY
Mommy and Daddy said only people
become zombies.

MICHAEL

They waited until I was ten before they told me.

OSCAR

Yeah. Parents don't want anyone knowing until they're ten. We'll probably get in trouble for telling you because you're only eight.

MICHAEL

So you better not tell anyone.

OSCAR

Yeah, if I get whipped for telling you, I'm coming after you.

MICHAEL

Me too. We're just trying to save you from becoming a zombie.

OSCAR

A zombie...

Oscar imitates a staggering zombie, extending his arms, showing his teeth and GROWLING.

Billy runs off, up the alley and around the barn. He's gone.

Michael and Oscar wait a moment before they start LAUGHING.

OSCAR

Your brother's such a lame-oh.

EXT. BARRACKS 'B' - NIGHT

The dark barracks corridor is long and narrow with a steel door at the end. A half dozen doors line each wall.

Moonlight shines through the wired glass in the steel door, casting an eerie blue light.

SCRATCHING is heard in the distance.

One of the side doors CREAKS open. Billy sticks his head out, peeking around.

He steps out into the corridor, wearing a linen nightshirt. Frightened, he creeps along, looking and listening.

The door closes behind him. He grabs the door knob and turns and turns. It won't open.

Billy's head spins around wildly. He sees nothing.

Inching toward the steel door, he sees a mist leaking from the space between the door and the floor, illuminated by outside light.

He steps up to the door and passes his hand through the mist and ray of light. He plays with it, smiling.

More SCRATCHING.

Billy spins around, backing into the steel door. His eyes race around, frightened.

Something small is in the corridor. Small and moving. Inching slowly toward him.

It moves partially into the light, dragging one leg. It's a chicken! Its dark feathers lay poorly on its body. A wing hangs loose, dragging along the wooden floor.

The chicken's head enters the light. It's a bare skull! Its beak is jagged and crooked. Dead eyes stare at the boy, only a few feet away. Billy trembles as the bird limps closer and closer.

The two lock eyes and the bird lunges!

Billy SCREAMS!

INT. BARRACKS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy bolts up in his bed, the lower level of a bunk bed, SCREAMING his head off. The only light in the room comes from outside through barred windows.

MOM and DAD (40's) leap from an adjacent bed and to his side.

DAD
Billy? Billy--?

MOM
What's the matter--?

BILLY
Zombie chicken! Zombie chicken's eating me!

DAD
Zombie what?

Mom wraps her arms around Billy, comforting him.

BILLY
It's in the hallway! It's gonna
make me a zombie!

MOM
You were having a bad dream,
Sweetheart.

Billy cries in his mother's arms.

DAD
Zombie chicken? What the hell's a
zombie chicken?

On the upper bunk, Michael lies awake, grinning. Laughing to
himself.

FINAL FADE OUT: