

#18A A JOYFUL NOISE AT LAYOFF

REV. H. BOWER

Amen! Amen! Thank you all for coming. ~~Congratulations~~ you. Our souls are full, but our bellies are empty...

*(Moves to exit.)*

...so we have barbecue and lemonade outside. Praise Jesus!

*(THE REVEREND exits swiftly. PARKER enters, drunk.)*

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PARKER

There's something you all should know!

*(Crowd turns to stare at him; he walks up the aisle to stage as crowd murmurs.)*

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I have some terrible news. Please, quiet down, I have some terrible news. It's about Edgar.

*(Arrives at stage; sighs.)*

I was working in my laboratory last night, studying a sample of Edgar's saliva. I made a startling discovery. This morning I rushed to the hospital to see if the state of Ruthie Taylor's wound confirmed my suspicions. Unfortunately, I discovered that Ruthie Taylor died in the night.

#19 ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

*(Crowd gasps.)*

Her death was due to a bizarre and unprecedented infection, an infection caused by Edgar's bite.

MEREDITH

No!

PARKER

I'm so sorry. Edgar is ... deadly. Deadly to Ruthie. And to cattle.

BUD

I knew it! He's the cause of the plague!

*(Crowd murmur builds throughout the following.)*

I'm sorry, Meredith.

PARKER

That girl is dead?

BAT BOY

MEREDITH

*(To BAT BOY.)*

It's not your fault, sweetheart. This must be a mistake.

PARKER

It's true, my love. It's true. I'm so sorry. I've called the Institute in Wheeling. They're coming to take him off our hands.

*(Approaching her.)*

I know it's difficult to accept all this, but we'll get through it together.

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MEREDITH

*(Backing off.)*

The Institute? This is madness.

BAT BOY

I never meant to hurt anybody.

PARKER

*(Still approaching her.)*

Oh, sweetheart, I'll be here for you.

MEREDITH

What are you doing?

PARKER

Don't worry. Our love will get through.

MEREDITH

Get your hands off me!

PARKER

That's right, let it out.