A few hours after being buried alive, I was thrilled when I heard someone digging me out. The rhythmic sound of shovels striking earth resonated through the darkness, a beacon of hope amidst the suffocating silence.

My heart raced at the thought of rescue. I strained against the cold, damp soil, desperate to claw my way back to the surface.

"Help! I'm down here!" I shouted, my voice barely a whisper in the oppressive darkness.

But as the digging continued, a creeping unease settled over me. My joy quickly faded when I realized the sound was coming from under me.

Confusion clouded my mind. Who was digging beneath my grave?

The digging paused abruptly, and for a moment, only silence reigned. I pressed my ear against the cold earth, heart pounding, straining to listen.

Then, I heard it—a low, guttural growl, echoing from the depths below.

Panic surged through me. I remembered the events that led to this horrifying entrapment—a night of reckless pranks and a cruel joke that had turned deadly. My friends thought it would be funny to bury me in a shallow grave, but they never returned to dig me out.

Suddenly, the ground beneath me shifted, and I felt a tremor run through the earth. I kicked at the soil, desperate to escape, but it felt as if the very ground was alive, pulsating with something sinister below.

Then, with a sickening crash, the earth erupted beneath me. A figure clawed its way up, covered in wet soil and shadows. It was a gaunt, twisted thing, with hollow eyes that glimmered with an otherworldly hunger.

I screamed, but my voice was swallowed by the terror that enveloped me. The creature emerged, its skeletal fingers grasping at the edges of my grave, its mouth stretching into a grotesque grin.

“Welcome,” it rasped, the word dripping with malice.

I scrambled back against the walls of my coffin, heart racing, but there was nowhere to go. The creature's fingers dug into the dirt, pulling itself closer, its breath a rancid mix of decay and despair.

It was then I realized—it wasn’t just a monster; it was a soul, trapped in the earth, cursed to roam the depths of the graveyard, forever seeking the warmth of the living.

“You were buried too,” I stammered, my voice trembling with fear.

“Yes,” it hissed, its grin widening. “But I found a way to escape. And now, it’s your turn.”

With that, it lunged for me, fingers outstretched. I turned, frantically trying to push the dirt away, but the ground seemed to close in around me. I felt its cold grip on my ankle, pulling me down into the darkness, where I could hear the whispers of countless others like me—lost souls, buried and forgotten.

As I was dragged deeper into the earth, the last remnants of sunlight faded away, leaving me in a suffocating blackness. I realized too late that I wouldn’t be rescued; instead, I would join the ranks of the damned, forever yearning for the light above, cursed to dig for others, to share the horror of being buried alive.

And in that moment, as I surrendered to the darkness, I understood the true meaning of fear—knowing that the grave beneath was not just a resting place, but a gateway to something far more terrifying.

Jeffrey D Barbieri