

Day 0

I miss my family. I've only been away for a week and a half but with all that has been going on recently. These "attacks" it makes me worry about them. All the news is reporting on is how the "infection" is affecting America. I don't even know if this is happening back in England. I have no way of finding out, whenever I phone them up it's just dead... But that could mean any number of things... Right?

James was lying on his bed on the college campus. He had relatively long dark blonde hair which he flicked to the right. He was wearing a black t-shirt, jeans and some trainers. He was lying there, holding back the tears in case someone walked in. He couldn't let anyone see that he was upset. He had been lying there now for several hours with thoughts just spinning round in his head. He was worried but he knew it couldn't be as bad as they said it was on the news. *I just have to wait one more day until we get our flight back to the UK.* He had to think this. Deep down he knew that it just doesn't make sense that anyone would be allowed to leave the country but he had to convince himself to keep his sanity.

There was a knock on the door. James sat up "Yep" he croaked out. He almost forgot how to talk he'd been in his room so long.

The door opened and a short chubby boy came in. He had spiked hair and a tight red t-shirt. It was Sam, James' friend. He was seventeen, the same age as James.

"James, Jacob says he want to talk to us."

Jacob was their teacher. He organised the college trip to America. He was nice, but this time James wasn't keen to talk to him. *The fact that he wants to talk to everyone must mean there's a problem.*

Sam and James walked outside where the rest of their class had formed a group. James walked over to his girlfriend, Ellie. She was tall and slender with blonde hair pulled into a pony tail. James walked up behind her and picked her up.

"Jesus Christ!" she shouts in shock before realising who it is "You scared the shit out of me, don't do that"

"Sorry," James replied "Maybe it's your fault for not paying more attention"

"No," Ellie kisses James, "This was definitely your fault.

Jacob walks over with two other students who get lost in the crowd. Jacob had black hair, going grey in places and was wearing a light blue shirt. He had rectangular glasses with a thick black frame. Jacob continued to walk forwards to the front of the nineteen people who he was temporarily responsible for.

Jacob began to talk but stopped himself. He then took off his glasses and puts his hand on his forehead. "I don't know how to say this," he reluctantly said, "but I've spoken to the airport and..." He stopped and looked at the crowd. They all already knew what he was going to say but he knew that he still had to say it. "We won't be able to leave for a little while." He puts his glasses on and leans up against the picnic bench "I've done everything I can and to be honest, I think it may be for the best. From now on no one is allowed to leave the campus in case they... Get hurt. It's just not safe out there."

Ellie looked at James sarcastically, "I don't care where I am, as long as I have you"

James laughed along with others in the group to hide his inner fear for his family.

Sam then responds by saying, "Oh god, at this rate I think I would prefer to get this infection."

Jacob is usually okay with joking but this was too far for him, "Sam!" Sam looks back at Jacob sharply, "do you know what is happening out there?" Sam looks down at

his feet, "do you? Well let me fill you in. People are attacking other people. When you get infected, you lose all control of your body attack other people. You don't want that! Nobody does! Just... think next time you open your mouth. Anyway," Jacob continued, "For now, we've got enough food to last a while, this place has a stockpile of canned food to last us a few months so that in the worst case scenario, if we do have to stay here for a while, we'll have enough food at least." Jacob then turned and began to walk off "You can go. That's all, I just thought you guys should know."

The crowd then dispersed leaving James and Ellie behind. "Well shit," joked James trying once again to hide his true emotions

Ellie, concerned, asked, "Are you alright? It's just I know you said that you were worried about your family"

They both started walking back inside as James defended his insecurities, "I'm not worried, it's just..." He took a moment to think of the best way to put it, "It's just the not knowing. If I knew that this infection wasn't in England then I'd be fine." James opened the door to the dorm corridor, "If I knew this infection was in England, I'd at least have some sort of idea as to what's going on. James walked up the stairs to his room. "I mean, this thing has to be global. There's no way that no one got on a plane before they showed symptoms. It just doesn't make sense." James stopped himself before he revealed too much of what was on his mind as he walked in his dorm room with Ellie. "Any way, lets see what's on here" James picked up the remote for the TV and turned it on.

The only channels available were news channels which at this point was the only thing they wanted to watch.

It was now dark outside and James and Ellie were still watching he news. *It's just more of the same. Telling people pretty much on repeat that the country is going into crisis. Telling us to get to the major cities and to stay safe. But nothing about other countries. Never anything about other countries. Why? Why? It's the only thing I want to know. Are my family safe?* Ellie was leaning against James' shoulder. James often wondered if she has similar thoughts to him. *Maybe she does. Maybe that's why we are good*

together; because we can relate to each other. Or maybe she is the stronger than me and she can take more. I really don't care, I just like having her around.

"Go to the major cities, military forces will be stationed there and you will all be safe," the news repeated, "It is not safe anywhere else. We are constantly getting more reports in of people being attacked, infected and dying. It is not safe to b..." The news cut off.

They were left with some white noise and a blank screen. Ellie looked at James, "What was that? Was that..." She stopped when the lights to their room turned off.

James stood up and looked out of the window. "It looks like the power grid went down." James sighed.

This is too much. He lied down on the bed. This is too much for one day. First I find out we can't go home then the power goes out which will make things much worse. We're now completely shut off from the rest of the world. We don't know anything that's going on.

Ellie lied down next to James, "Look, this isn't too bad. Things'll get better. They'll fix the power then we'll go back to England.

"But they won't though," James was tired he hardly had the energy to talk, "with all this shit that's going on, do you really think they'll be bothered about a power outage? No, they won't, they'll be busy making sure everyone's safe." James rolled over on the bed. "I just. I just want to go to sleep. Sorry."

"That's fine, don't worry" Ellie walked to the door and opened it. "I'll talk to you tomorrow then. Goodnight."

James was alone now. He could sleep... Except he couldn't. There was too much on his mind. *Without power, we won't be able to talk to anyone. We won't be able to book another flight or been able to find out when we can use the airport. We're fucked. It's going to be a long time before we can go home. This has to be happening in other countries. If it wasn't then the militaries from other countries would have come here and helped us.*

"I know they're dead." Saying out loud just reinforced this thought as it didn't sound like an insane idea when hearing it.

It just make sense. It's the only thing that makes sense. This thing is happening all over the world. It has to be. James some how just knew. Deep down inside him he knew that his family; His

Mum, Dad and Sister, were dead. These thoughts kept whirring round in his head until eventually, he fell asleep.

James wakes up. When he first opened his eyes, he is happy for the start of a new day but that quickly changes when he remembers what happened the day before. He lied there for several minutes before he finally got the energy to move. He slumped out of bed and realised that he was still wearing his grey t-shirt and jeans from the day before. He looked in his already open suitcase on the floor. *I only packed for a week and a half. These are the last clothes I have.* He pulled out a black t-shirt, a dark red shirt and a pair of dark blue pants. He swapped his current t-shirt and pants, when he walked over to the window, opened it and put his arm outside to see what the temperature was like. It was sunny outside. Of course it was, it's July. James was still used to the British climate. This resulted in James putting the red shirt back in his suitcase for another day before leaving the room. *Another day. Let's just get through it.* James walked down the corridor of the dorm. His room was on the second floor. He walked down the stairs and outside. He began to walk to the building opposite where he could see cereals and milk out on the side and where people were lining up and filling their bowls for breakfast. James walked toward them and joined the line before picking up a bowl and a spoon.

"Hey, man" He heard a voice from behind him. "sleep well?"

It was Sam, "Yeah not too bad, what about you?"

"Yeah, same" said Sam

Sam grabbed a bowl from the table next to them. James walked forward as they were now the only people getting food. James filled his bowl with cereal and milk, splashing some over the edge of the bowl. Sam then filled his bowl before grabbing a spoon.

"Did you see the power go out last night or were you asleep by then?" Asked James.

"No I saw it." Sam laughed, "I think it was a sign telling me that I should have been asleep."

They both chuckle and begin to walk outside. Sam's bowl of cereal was hit out of his hand. Milk splashed over him

and the bowl smashed on the floor. Sam looked up to see Michael, a tall muscular man with short black hair. He was wearing a dark green hoodie and jeans. *Ever since we started our class with him, he's been giving Sam a hard time and it always seems worse when Michael's stressed; coming up to exams or deadlines. And to think about it, there really can't be a more stressful time than now.*

"Look, Sam you clumsy bastard," Michael grinned, "You dropped your bowl. You hardly need any more anyway" Michael and his friends Stuart and Barry walked past him to get some food.

James clenched his fist and started walking towards them. "James don't," Sam put his hand on James' shoulder and stopped him. "If we just leave him alone, he'll stop doing this."

"He does this too much. You can't let him push you around like this." James sighed

"I know just leave it though and he'll stop." said Sam "Okay," replied James, "but if he carries on, I'm not just going to stand around watching."

James gave Sam his bowl and went inside to get another bowl for himself.

By the time he had walked across the empty canteen, Michael and his friends were finished and James filled up his bowl. He heard another crash and he turned around to see that Michael had hit the other bowl out of his hand.

"I told you you don't need any more food, you fat cunt" Michael was towering over Sam.

For Fucks Sake! James stormed over to Michael clenching his fists. He looked at Sam who shook his head at him. *I know he doesn't want me to right now but later he'll thank me for this.*

"I said this would happen, Sam." James knew that Sam would thank him later.

James swung his fist at Michael spinning him round with the force. James then kicked him in the back, knocking him on his hands and knees. Everyone stood and watched in shock. No one has ever stood up to Michael before.

Michael was spluttering on the floor "You have no idea what you've started, you fucker!"

"What I've started?" James kicked Michael in the arm, causing him fall flat on the floor, "You started this. And I'm finishing it."

I can't believe I did that. But damn it he deserved it. And what he did on top of all that's going on any way. James turned and began to walk outside. It was done and in a way he liked it. "Come on, Sam. Were done h..."

James was stopped when he felt a punch to his side. He fell to the floor. He could hardly breathe. *Why did I think it would be that easy. He's a big guy, of course it's going to take a lot more than a punch to the face to put him down.* Michael pushed James onto his back with his foot before crouching over him with one leg on each side of his body. James knew this wasn't good. *I chose to do this. I chose to put myself in this position.* Michael lifted his right fist in the air before plummeting it into James' face. The first hit hurt, but as each hit came, they began to hurt less and less. James noticed that next to him there was a fallen small thin tree branch. *At this point, it's all I've got.* He grabbed the branched and pummelled it into the side of Michael's head, causing him to bleed and collapse next to James. James stood up. *Oh god what have I done.* He looked at Michael and noticed blood rushing from his head.

James turned and looked at Sam, "Sam, quickly go and get Jacob. I think I've knocked hi..."

James felt a hand on the back of his head but before he could do anything, his head was forced against the wall next to the doorway to the canteen. Sam ran to get Jacob and Michael's friends stood there watching, still shocked. James' head was repeatedly hit against the wall. After a while, he could see a bloody mark on the wall.

"What the FUCK are you guys doing?" Jacob grabbed Michael and pulled him away from James.

James couldn't hear anything. His vision was blurred but he still had an objective. *Where is that fucker. I'm not finished with him.*

"I'm not finished with you yet!" James said as he stumbled forwards.

He shook his head and grunted before looking forward with Michael in his sights.

"James you need to sit down now before you hurt yourself." said Jacob, trying to defuse the situation.

James managed to dart forward and throw a punch at Michael which hit him right in the centre of the face,

breaking his nose. Jacob pulled James back. Michael looked up, blood streaming from his nose. "Fuck you" He walked forward and threw one final punch at James. Everything was then in slow motion for James. As he spun to the floor, he noticed the crowd of onlookers that had formed. He saw a distressed Sam feeling responsible for this. *It wasn't his fault. He can't feel guilty for this.* Then right before he hit the ground, through the crowd, he saw Ellie running towards him. He was now on his knees, still spiralling downwards until all he saw was darkness.

"You can't feel guilty for this." James heard an echoey female voice.

"But this happened because of me. It's all my fault." A male replied

"He chose to do this," said the girl, "You even told him not to... Look, he's waking up!"

James opened his eyes to see Ellie next to him holding his hand. He was in his dorm room. Band-aides were lying on the table next to his bed. James noticed that next to him on his pillow, a blood stain had formed.

"What happened?" James tried to talk but it was more of a whisper.

"You were knocked out. You've been in here for a day."

Sam looked down at his feet, ashamed before sitting down in the corner of the room.

"Are you okay. You were hit pretty hard" Ellie inquired "I'm fine," James lied, "How do I look. I remember being hit against a wall. That must have fucked me up pretty bad."

"You didn't look too bad from what I saw." Ellie paused, "I mean you did have a cut on your forehead, but Jacob said it would heal and he didn't break your nose, which is more than Michael can say."

"Shit, I bet he's pretty pissed." James had almost forgotten about Michael.

"Jacob said he wants to talk to you about that." Ellie sighed, "I'll go and get him now."

Ellie kissed James on the cheek before walking out of the room leaving Sam and James alone. Silence fell as neither Sam or James had anything to say, or didn't want to say anything.

"Sorry," Sam said after about a minuet of silence.

"You've got nothing to apologise for."

"No, I do." Sam lowered his tone, "I should have stuck up for myself, I shouldn't have let you..."

"I chose to do this." James sat up in his bed, "You told me not to do it, but I did it anyway. This isn't on you. If you really want me to forgive you then fine, but this isn't your fault. This is on me."

"Okay," Sam said, relieved, "I just want you to know that..." He paused, "Thank you."

"Look, Jacob is probably going to be in here soon." James looked at the cuts on his knuckles, "You should go. Thanks for waiting here with me."

they smiled at each other before Sam turned and shuffled out of the room.

What the hell was I thinking. It felt good when I was doing it, but what the hell was I thinking. Especially now. We're not allowed to leave the campus. This is going to make everything harder. Not only have I got to worry about all the shit that's happening in the world, but now I've got to watch my back in case Michael decides he wants to go for round two.

The door opened and a tired looking Jacob walked in. "I've spoken to Michael and a few other people and from what I hear, you were sticking up for Sam." Jacob took off his glasses and looked down at James, "To be honest with you, I don't really care why you did what you did. But it was stupid." James let Jacob finish, "We've all got enough on our minds without worrying about stuff like this."

"That's why I did what I did," James Interrupted, "Sam shouldn't have to deal with Michael on top of everything else that's going on."

"If he had a problem, he could have spoken to me. You can't just start fights." Jacob paused, "Not any more. If you had seriously hurt each other, things could be much worse. We can't phone an ambulance. We can't get you any help." Jacob started pacing in the room, "Jesus, you were unconscious for a day. We're lucky you weren't hurt even worse."

James knew what he's done wrong and he knew he shouldn't have done it however he didn't regret it. He knew that if he was in the same situation again, he would do the same thing.

"Look, I've already said all this to Michael," Jacob continued, "he says that if you keep out of each others way, then he won't have a problem with you." Jacob began walking to the door and putting his glasses on, "Please don't cause any trouble." He turned and took one last look back at James, "for me."

Day 21

A bottle of clothing detergent lay on a freshly cut tree stump. Sitting by the river, James was scrubbing at his clothes in a plastic tub of soapy water. The wound on James' forehead had begun to heal but was submerged within James' almost out of control fringe. He was wearing a dark blue t-shirt with a collage of small diamonds covering it. Ellie and Sam sat to his right with their own tubs. To his left were Ashley and Luke. Ashley had long dark brown hair that flowed half way down her back. Luke had short blonde hair, which like James was now out of its usual form. The five of them sat there, each with a plastic tub of water in front of them with a pile of clothes and a basket of washed clothes.

"Well," Luke broke the silence, "I guess when you spend a month with the same people, restricted to one place and isolated from the rest of the world, you start to run out of things to talk about."

"Yeah, you kinda do don't you?" Sam picked up some pants and began to wash it.

"Lets think of something to talk about then" Ashley started squeezing water out of her shirt.

"Do you guys know how much detergent we have?" Ellie joined the conversation, "Because at some point we're going to run out."

"Nah I doubt it," James added, "We've got so much in there. This thing'll be over before we run out."

"Besides," Luke joked, "we've got more important things to worry about. Like what we're going to do when Sam

runs out of hair gel.”

“You joke,” Sam said, “but I'm starting to get concerned, I only brought a half empty tub with me and it's nearly gone.”

After they had finished, they began walking inside. The river was about a five minute walk from the campus. Jacob only started letting people go to wash their clothes without him after a week. He had heard a lot about this infection before the power went out and it scared him. *It can't be as bad as they say it is. We've had no power for just over two weeks and we still haven't seen anyone with this “infection”. This campus is out of the way, but it's not that out of the way.* On their way back, they passed Michael, Stuart and Barry, all carrying tubs of clothes and baskets.

“They still mad at you?” Ashley said.

“Yeah,” James replied, “Of course they're still mad at me. I hit him with a stick for Christ sakes.”

“Are you still mad at him?” Ellie asked.

“Sort of,” James sighed, “I'm mad at what he was doing before. But he has left Sam alone since it happened, so I guess it worked.”

Sam looked at his feet, embarrassed. *Shit, I forget that he doesn't like it when I talk about this. Who would? I wouldn't want people to talk about me if someone got in a fight because I was too afraid to fight for myself.*

The group continued walking until they were nearly at the campus when Luke stopped.

“Guys,” he said, “do you see that.”

They all looked across the field to see that a man was walking out of the treeline and towards them.

“Maybe he needs help” Ellie rushed to get Jacob.

They watched as the man crossed the field when Ellie returned with Jacob.

“Hello,” Jacob walked toward the man, “Are you okay, do you need help?”

The man didn't respond and continued to approach Jacob. When the man got close enough, Jacob could see it. His eyes. They were white. Empty.

Jacob turned to the group, “Go inside now”

As he turned back, the man sunk his teeth into Jacobs neck. Jacob started pushing him off but was unable until a gunshot was heard, killing the assailant with a shot to the head. Everyone turned to see a tall muscular man in a green tank top and military cargo pants. He was holding an M16 rifle and had a bag over his left shoulder.

"Thank you sir," Jacob put his hand on his neck to stop the bleeding, "You saved me."

Others from the class had gone outside to form a group to see what was going on.

"Saved you?" The man said, "I'm sorry but I didn't save shit."

The class and Jacob stood on shocked and confused.

"You guys don't know? Where the hell have you guys been for the past month?" He took a look around at the puzzled faces and realised that he would have to tell them. "When you get bitten, you get infected."

What! No! Jacob! Why would this happen! You don't deserve this.

"When anyone dies now, you turn into one of those things. If you're bitten, it kills you. The most I've seen someone last is a few hours, but with a bite like that, I'm sorry friend but you've not got long."

He looked around at the faces of these people. He learned long ago about this and had learned to accept and get used to death, but these people had no idea.

"If you want to kill one of these things, you have to destroy the brain."

James looked around, he felt faint. He couldn't believe it.

As he thought about it more and more, he realised that he was crying. If this had been a few days ago, he would have tried to hide it. Not now. He was too sad to conceal it and when he looked around, he realised that most people were with him.

"Who are you? How do you know all of this" Michael was surprisingly upset about this.

"My name is Chris and I learnt most of this from simply surviving, but before I was alone, I was with the military, in the New York safe zone" He looked at the ground, remembering what happened. "It was overrun" He paused "and from the sounds of it, most of the safe zones across the country have fallen."

“What about other countries? What about the UK?” James asked, it was all he cared about.

“Britain?” Chris realised what this meant to them. “I’m sorry, the last I heard, Britain went dark. No power. We were one of the last countries standing. When we lost power, France was still standing.” People looked at him with tearful eyes, “I’m sorry. That’s all I know”

“I’m... gonna die” Jacob stood there, still holding his neck. “I don’t wanna.” He started to panic, “Please! There has to be a cure or something! Please!”

“I’m sorry,” Chris replied, “There’s no cure. All I can do is stop you from coming back.”

“Chris.” Jacob looked at Chris in the eyes, “Protect them. Keep them safe. You can help them.”

“I’ll do my best. How many guys you got here?” Chris looked back at Jacob.

“Nineteen” Jacob started to slur his words “There are nineteen. Please protect them. Teach them how to protect themselves,” Jacob looked at the class, “You... You need... You need to...” Jacob collapsed and fell to the floor. Sarah ran toward him, her tears hidden under her jet black hair. “Get back!” Chris grabbed Sarah and stopped her from getting any closer until she collapsed to the floor in tears, too weak to fight back.

Chris looked up at the class and recognised their pain. The first person Chris lost was the hardest. He turned around and looked at Jacob’s body where his hand had begun to twitch. Chris lifted his gun and aimed at the corpse. The body sat up and when his eyes opened, that was the green light Chris needed. As soon as he saw the milky white eyes, he knew. He pulled the trigger, killing Jacob for good.

“I’m sorry.” Before now, Chris had no purpose other than surviving. His family was dead, his safe zone had fallen, but now he had a duty. He had to protect these kids.

“We need a funeral.” Ashley wiped her eyes.

“I’ll bury him.” Chris looked down at the corpse, “Then y’all can come over and say some words for him.”

“I just can’t believe it” James was in his dorm room with Ellie, “I just... It’s been a day and I still think that he might

just walk in here and make sure everyone's safe or 'doing okay'. I just... can't believe it."

"I know what you mean." Ellie lent on James' shoulder, "He was just such a nice and caring person. He didn't deserve this."

"At least he was shot in the head." James added, "If what Chris says about these things is true, then I wouldn't want to be one. I mean, what if you are still conscious after but just lose control of your body. I wouldn't want that. I'm just glad that..."

"Oh God!!!" a male voice was heard from outside the room.

James and Ellie ran out to see what it was.

"Oh shit!" Ellie ran out if the room first

"What? What is it?" James then looked down the corridor and saw it.

Callum was stumbling down the corridor, shaking with fear and blood gushing from his arm. James ran to help him.

"Get away from me!" Callum pushed James away, leaving a bloody stain on his t-shirt.

The outside door then opened where Chris burst in with students behind him. "Shit! What happened?"

Before Callum could say anything, Anna walked out of the room next to him. She lunged at Callum, snapping her teeth. Chris saw it again. Those white, cold eyes. He aimed his pistol at her head and pulled the trigger before she could bite Callum again.

"I'm dead!" Callum started to panic, "I'm fucking dead!"

"Maybe it'll be different with you" Sam tried to console him.

"No it won't." Callum looked at his bite and muttered. "I'm Fucked." He then looked up at Chris, "How did this even happen. Why did this happen. Was she bitten?"

"No," Chris answered, "Look at the cuts on her arms. I guess... After yesterday... It was just too much for her."

Callum calmed down and realised there was only one thing to do. "Your gun," He said, "Can I... Borrow it."

Everyone knew this was the only way. Nobody tried to stop him. After Chris gave him his gun, everyone let him walk past and outside until a single gunshot was heard.

James along with everyone else was stood in the hallway frozen. *Is this the world we live in now? Jacob yesterday and then Callum and Anna today. Is this our world now? If this is our world. I don't know if I want to live in it any more.*

"Everyone," Chris said, "In your dorms. I'll bury them next to Jacob then you can say a few words later."

The group of people dispersed into their rooms as Chris began to pick up Anna's body to drag her outside.

A week passed and James and Ellie were outside, lying down in the sun.

"Look," Ellie said, "another one."

James sat up to see one of the infected walking out of the treeline and toward them. In the past week, they'd been coming a lot more.

"I'll get Chris." James stood up and walked toward the canteen where Chris was inside sharpening his knife. On his way, he passed Michael on the way. They stared at each other until James was inside. *He still hates me. James wasn't surprised. He still hated Michael. As long as we keep our distance, we'll be fine.*

"Chris," James said, "another one just walked out of the woods."

Chris stood up and held his knife firmly before jogging over to Ellie who was keeping watch of their unwelcome guest. Chris was used to this. He'd done the same thing several times a day for the past week. That's why James and Ellie were there. Chris doesn't let a single minuet pass by without someone looking out for anyone or anything approaching.

When they got there, Chris turned to James, holding the knife so that the handle faced James. "You wanna do it?"

"Wa...Who... What?" James stuttered. "Me? No. I don't wanna..."

"It wasn't meant as a question," Chris put the knife in James' hand, "Jacob told me to teach you how to protect yourselves." He nudged James forward, "You gotta learn sometime."

James looked down at the knife in his hand. He knew he had to do this. No matter how scared he was, he knew he had to do this.

"How do I do it?" James' voice trembled.

"Get em' on the floor first," Chris said, "Kick their knees then, when they're on the floor, put the knife right in their eye."

James began to walk toward the the man. *You can do this.*

Just kick his leg then stab his eye. Not that hard. As he got closer,

he realised what this meant. This was the first person he

would kill. He was sure that he would kill more people like

this in his life but this is where it all starts. When he got to

it, he did just as Chris said. He kicked the man's leg to

make him fall on the floor. The leg bent backwards and

the crunching of bone could be heard. *Oh shit. This isn't right.*

I can't kill this man. He looked at his victim as it began to

crawl towards him. James looked into its eyes. Looked into

it's soul and that's when he realised. This isn't killing.

There is nothing in there. No person is in there. Only an

empty vessel wandering with the sole purpose of eating.

This made it easier. Seeing it like this made him realise

that killing it would be only for his own protection and for

mercy.

"You okay over there?" Chris called over.

"Yeah fine!" James had zoned out and had been standing

there for a while.

He knelt down and looked in it's eyes one last time before

he plunged the knife into it's eye. He was expecting the

knife to go in easier, but after he applied some more

force, it slipped in. He put his left hand on it's forehead

before he pulled the knife out. He stood up and walked

back to Chris.

"See," Chris said, "that wasn't so hard."

"Yeah," James replied, "I guess not."

"You know you had me worried for a second there," Chris

joked, "When you stood there looking at it, I thought you

were goin' in for a kiss."

"I was tempted," James laughed.

I can't believe I just laughed. I just killed that thing and now I'm

laughing about it. This is so fucked up.

"Anyway," Chris turned around, "I'll be inside if you need

me."

He walked away, leaving James and Ellie alone, once

again.

"How was it," Ellie asked.

"Hard," James was honest, "At first, I mean. After I stood there looking at it for a while, I could see that there was nothing resembling a person in there. After I told myself that, it wasn't too hard."

"I hope I don't have to kill any." Ellie looked at the corpse in front of them. "I know I probably will, but I don't want to. I don't want to ever hurt anything, even if it is like that. I mean, when you think about it, they're just like animals. They still have some sort of brain which tells them to get food. The way I see it, they're just animals."

"Dangerous animals," James interrupted.

He justified what he did by saying it didn't know or feel anything. This just made killing it seem like the wrong thing to do. What if it could feel. *What if there was someone inside of it and it could feel everything and I just killed it.*

James thought about it a lot that night. He couldn't sleep. Every time he did, he just saw it's face. Looking at him. It came alive and began to scream. "You killed me! Why! Why did you kill me?"

James woke up, sweating. *Did I do the right thing? What if they're just sick people? What if there's a cure and I just killed a sick person? The military could come here any day and if they do and come with a cure, I'm a murderer.*

All these thoughts would haunt him and over the coming weeks, it would make it a lot harder for him to kill them. After everyone else in the group started killing them and James killed them more, he got used to it. His doubts changed. He would give them chances. He would immobilise them and wait. Talk to them. Warn them that if they don't stop that he'll kill them. Every time he would have doubts but he got on with it. His friends didn't have any doubts. *Am I wrong for thinking like this?* Maybe they thought the same things but kept it to themselves, like he did. James only really shook the doubts after a month when Ellie said she was okay with it. *If she thinks that they don't know or feel anything, then I trust her. She made me have these doubts in the first place. If she doesn't think like this any more, then maybe everyone else is right. I have to stop thinking like this.* He managed to convince himself that he was doing the right thing.

Doing this would prepare him for the years to come. If he didn't change his views of them, he would be left behind. Doing this would move him forward.

Day 63

James woke up and carried out the routine he had followed for the past two months. He selected his clothes from two neat piles on the floor. One for t-shirts, one for pants. He then walked across the room where he put on some socks and a pair of shoes. He walked outside his dorm and into the bathroom where he used a nearly empty can of shaving foam and a razor to clean up any stubble that had grown the previous day. He then walked outside where Dan and Zack were keeping watch for any infected. He walked past them and to the nearby river where, using shower gel, he washed his body and using shampoo, he washed his recently cut hair. Just like any other day. But this wasn't any other day. This day would change his life.

After he had finished, he walked over to the canteen where a box of oats was on the side next to a pile of bowls. He grabbed a bowl and began to pour in the food. *We're running out of food. We've gone through all the food we actually like and now we're left with oats and we're starting to run out of that. Chris says we're doing fine and that we'll have enough for another few months, but I'm not buying it. He's saying that to avoid panic. I've been out back and I've seen what we've really got.*

"Hey," Ellie was sitting at one of the tables with Luke, Ashley and Sam.

"Hey," James replied, "I'll be there in a minuet."

James poured out a glass of water from a jug. They'd been gathering water from the river and boiling it for drinking. James then picked up his bowl and glass and sat down

with his friends. Chris walked in the canteen afterwards and poured himself some food. As always, he had his machine gun on a strap over his shoulder. He never went anywhere without it. He gave his pistol to whoever was on guard at that time but he always kept the machine gun. Maybe he felt safer with it, maybe he felt it wouldn't be any use to anyone else there, which to be honest it wasn't. No one there knew how to shoot. They were all given a gun when they were on lookout, but they were never really told how to use it. It was only really there just in case some. The past few days had been rainy so keeping watch was more than undesirable but today it was sunny. James went through his usual daily routine, he went down to the river to wash his clothes, he hung his clothes out to dry for the next day. He helped with gathering water to boil. He chopped some wood for a fire.

As evening fell, it was time for James to keep watch. Sam decided to join him this day as Ellie said she wasn't feeling too well. They'd been there for a while when they saw an intruder walking across the field.

"Do you wanna get this one?" Sam asked.

"Sure, I'll get it." James noticed another one walking out from the treeline. "Wait. Do you see that."

"Yeah. I'll get that one."

James and Sam picked up their knives and began walking towards them. This was a daily routine now. James had become an expert at killing these things. He kicked it in the leg causing it to collapse on the ground. He then took his knife and stabbed it in the eye. He looked up to see that Sam had done the same. He then picked up and dragged the body to the side of the field where a pile of seven other bodies lay. This is where they would put the bodies before they burn them the next morning. Sam dragged his body over after James and lay it down on the pile.

James heard a sound in the woods in front of them. "Do you hear that?"

"Hear what?" Sam asked.

James heard a snap of a twig. He was sure of it this time.

"One minute," He said before walking into the forest, knife

in hand.

He only had to walk for a few seconds before he saw what was making the noise. An infected woman was standing there behind a tree, slowly stumbling her way toward the campus. James killed her by once again kicking her leg and stabbing her eye. He stood up and saw Sam walking off with an infected man behind him. Following him. The man got close to Sam. Close enough to bite. Before it could do anything, James charged at it, tackling it to the ground. James very quickly realised that he had made a mistake here. He was on the ground lying on top of one of them. All he could do in a panic was hold it's head down. He struggled with it for a second.

"Sam!" He shouted

Sam was frozen there, unable to think, but James shouting snapped him out of it. He slid down toward the assailant before stabbing it in the temple.

"Jesus dude," James rolled himself off of the corpse and lay down. "That was fuckin' close."

"I'm sorry man," Sam wiped his forehead, "I froze. You coulda died."

James stood up and began to pick up the body. As he did, he looked at the campus. He couldn't believe it. Killing these four was only the start. He looked on as hundreds of infected people walked out of the forest and into the campus.

"Fuck," That's all James could say.

Sam hadn't realised yet and turned around in horror.

They both stood there looking at their home being overrun, knowing there was nothing they could do. They stood there too long, not realising one of them coming out of the woods behind them. It put it's hands on Sam's shoulder causing them both to fall on the floor. James reached into his pocket and pulled out Chris' pistol. He darted down and aimed it at the monsters head before pulling the trigger. Blood splattered on Sam's face. *Maybe this was a messier approach, but at least the gunshot might wake Chris up so he can come out here and kill them.* James helped Sam up and checked him for bites.

"Was I bit? Please say I wasn't bit." Sam panicked and

checked over his body.

"No," said James, "You weren't. We need to go in there and get Chris."

The two of them ran toward the dorm building to find Chris and get him to help. On their way, they saw him at the gate to the road.

"Chris!" James called over, "We need you!"

Chris looked back at James before turning and walking off. He had a bag on his back and his rifle in hand.

"What the fuck is he doing?" Sam said, fearful.

"He's gone Sam." James knew he wasn't coming back.

He's not going to risk his life for a bunch of students who he's only been with for a month. He hasn't even spent much time talking to us, he's kept mainly to himself. He has no real attachment to us but even so, how could he do this. How could he walk away knowing that we could all die here.

"Fuckin' hell!" James was furious, "We'll have to go inside and help anyone who needs it."

Sam agreed and they both ran inside the dorm building.

The door on the opposite side of the building had been knocked down by the swarm of the infected so the hallway was already filled with them. James lifted his gun and began to shoot any that got too close. He didn't shoot any at range as he knew he would miss and he needed every bullet to count. They got to the stairwell after firing seven bullets and killing seven of the infected. As they started to run upstairs, the herd began to follow them. One of them grabbed Sam's foot.

"Get it! Get it!" Sam tried to kick it off but it's grip was too firm.

James pointed the gun at it and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened.

"Shit!" James pulled the trigger again.

It was out of ammo. He flipped the gun round and used hit the monster over the head repeatedly until it's head caved in and it died. Seeing this made James feel sick. In normal circumstances, he would throw up, but the fear in him and the adrenaline rushing through his body made him hold it in. They ran upstairs and began calling out for anyone. James realised that going inside was a bad idea. All it did was put them in danger and bring the infected

upstairs. A door opened and Ashley peered through. Seeing who it was she opened the door and hurried them in. Inside was Ellie, Lucy, Cameron and Luke.

"Ellie," James ran and hugged her. "I was so worried."

"Me too." Ellie said, "They came in downstairs and they got Zack. What happened?"

"Me and Sam were out there and we killed a few of them."

James replied, "When we turned around, there were hundreds of them."

"Where's Chris?" Cameron asked.

"He's... He's gone." James said, "He just left. I called him over. To help us. Then he just walked off."

A silence fell over the room as they all realised how much trouble they were all in. Suddenly the silence was broken by a bang on the door.

"We're fucked." Ashley was close to crying.

"No. Right now, we're okay. They don't know we're in here. Right now we're fine."

"We need to jump out of the window." James looked out to see infected walking through the campus. "We can make the jump and there's not too many out there."

"Are you crazy?" Luke snapped, "If we jump out there, we'll die."

"It's not much safer in here!" James raised his voice,

"We've got a shitty door between us and them, how long do you think that'll hold for"

"You guys can do it." Luke said, "but I'm staying here"

as he said that, the bangs on the door became louder and more forceful.

"Look, we can stay in here and wait for them to come in, or we can at least try to get out." James tried to convince them, "If you want, I'll go first and you can see how it turns out."

"Okay." Luke realised that staying in the room would only be delaying the inevitable.

"Now" James said, "When we jump, we should run to the canteen so the infected don't build up at the bottom of the window so the next person can jump down. After we've all crossed, we'll have to go to the transformer building. There's a ladder on the side so we can go to the top. I don't think these things can climb so we'll be safe

up there.”

“Sounds like a plan,” Cameron agreed.

“James,” Ellie kissed him, “Please be careful.”

James opened the window and looked down.

“If I don't make it,” he said, “Ellie, I want you to know I love you.”

He took one last look at the people he loved before he jumped. When he landed, he felt the impact in his legs, it hurt slightly but he could still walk. He ran across to the canteen where he looked back. Sam landed underneath the window and began to run toward him. An infected woman, crawling on the floor, grabbed Sam's hand. Sam tried to pull away but she held her grip. James ran towards it and stabbed it through the top of the head. He tried to pull the knife out but it was stuck. He looked at Sam's hand. Blood was dripping off of it.

“James?” Sam began to cry, “am I gonna die?”

“No Sam,” James hugged him then looked him in the eye, “You're gonna be fine.”

Sam knew this wasn't true but if he was told the truth, he would have given up there and then.

“Oh fuck, Sam,” Ellie had run over and seen the bite.

“What are we gonna do?”

“We carry on.” James said stubbornly.

“We can't just carry on,” Ashley arrived and had seen the bite, “This isn't something we can ignore.”

“We carry on,” James wouldn't hear it.

The group looked back at the window to see Lucy jump down. As she landed a snapping sound was heard. She let out a cry as she held her leg. She looked down to see it bent backwards. Infected around her heard her cries and began to surround her. Before anyone could do anything, she was being eaten alive. The monsters bit her and pulled out her insides and began to eat them over her, all while she was still alive and screaming. Eventually the screaming stopped and the group were left shocked, not knowing what to do. James looked up at the room where Cameron and Luke were unable to leave. Behind them, the door burst open and infected poured in. James watched helpless as the two of them were pulled down and eaten.

"We have to leave." James turned, "We have to get to the power building and get on top. We'll be safe there."

The group agreed and ran behind the Canteen and past the second dorm building toward the power room. Just before they got there, they were cut off. A group of infected wandered around the corner, blocking the way they needed to go to get to the transformer.

"Here," Ellie gives James her knife, "I'm useless with it." James, Ashley and Sam get ready to attack the group of eight. James kicks one to the ground as Sam stabs another in the head. Ashley pushes one over and manages to stab it in the eye. James pulls another toward himself and pushes his blade through it's jaw and into it's brain. One of them almost bit him as he did this but Sam killed it before it did. Ashley pushes one back and stabs another James kicks one in the leg and stabs it while it's on it's knees. Ashley kneels and kills one on the floor. As she pulled the blade out, another grabbed her arm and ate a chunk out of it. James pushed it against the wall and stabbed it repeatedly in the face until there was barely anything that resembled a face left. *This is all my fault. All my fucking fault.*

"This doesn't change anything!" James remained stubborn, "We stick to the plan. You might not turn." James and the group stayed to the plan and continued on to the power room. When they got there, infected were surrounding them and closing in. James went up the ladder first. He began to climb but as he was halfway up, the rusty bolts at the top unhinged and the ladder fell back. James hit his head and through blurred vision saw the hoard rapidly approaching. He shook his head and stood up panicked. *This is all my fucking fault. We're all going to die because of me.*

"Sam and James," Ashley said in a hurry, "You're stronger than us, I'll give you a foot up to the top then you can pull us up. First she pushed James up the wall and on the roof, then Sam. The circle around them was getting smaller and smaller. James and Sam grabbed Ellie's hand as she was also boosted up by Ashley. The circle around them was closed. James looked down as he saw one of them sink his teeth into Ashley's face, biting off her cheek. She

screamed in pain, attracting the attention of others who tore her apart. Ellie still wasn't on the roof so James and Sam had use all the strength left in them to pull her up. Just before she was in the clear, James saw it happen. He saw one of them grab her leg. He pulled as hard as he could but it wasn't enough. He was exhausted. Even with all the adrenaline running through him he just didn't have the strength. He watched almost in slow motion as it bit into her ankle, blood dripping from its mouth. She managed to wriggle her leg free but it was too late. As she pulled away, her skin was stretched until it snapped, leaving a hunk of meat in the monster's mouth. James and Sam pulled Ellie up and they all knew. They'd seen it. James just sat there looking at her. Knowing that this was the last day he would ever speak to her. Knowing that this was his fault.

"I'm so sorry," he said, "Both of you. I made this happen. We should have stayed in the fuckin' room. I fucked up... And everyone else had to pay for it."

"No," Ellie said, "You can't blame yourself about this. We decided to leave that room. You didn't force us to leave. We left because at the time it was the best idea we had." All three of them sat there crying until James lied down and looked up at the sky. *I know what I did. I know this is my fault. If I was keeping watch properly I would have seen all of these things before they got to the campus and I would have been able to warn everyone. This is my fucking fault no matter what way you look at it. In some way, I am to blame.*

"Cameron, Luke, Ashley, Lucy. They're all dead because of me," James let the tears flow out.

"No you can't say that," Ellie said

"Now you two." James said, ignoring Ellie, "This is all my fucking fault."

James wasn't only sad because he knew that he had killed his friends. He was also sad because he knew that he would be alone in a world where people are hard to come by. James looked over at Sam who has been very quiet.

"Sam," said James, "How are you doing?"

He knelt down next to Sam and looked at his pale face.

"I... I'm not feelin' too good." Sam struggled to speak.

"I know man, I know." James looked at the consequences

of his actions. "I'm gonna miss you man."

"I'm gonna..." Sam whispered, "I'm gonna miss you too." the end of his sentence trailed off as he exhaled for the last time.

James fell back and lent on his hands. "I did this. I killed my best friend."

He searched his pocket looking for his knife. *Shit, it must have fallen out down there in all the panic.* James didn't want him to turn but he couldn't stop him. He put his foot on Sam's back and rolled him off the edge of the building into the herd below.

"James..." Ellie sighed, "you can't blame yourself for this. If we had stayed in that room, we all could have died. The fact that you survived means something. I want you to live the rest of your life. Enjoy it as much as you can because otherwise, you survived this for nothing."

She's right. I survived this, I shouldn't just survive though. I should live.

"I'll try." James lied down with her for the last time.

"James," Ellie's voice sounded weak, "I'm sorry for leaving you like this."

"No," James said, "this isn't your fault."

"I know," she said, "but I ... You'll be alone. Be..."

Ellie stopped talking and closed her eyes.

"Be what?" James' tears began to drip on her.

"Oh," she replied, "never mind."

She closed her eyes and James began to shake her to wake her up.

"Please. Please. Don't go. I love you." James knew she wasn't going to wake up.

James once again lent back and rolled her off the edge of the building. He then lay on the rooftop alone. It was on this day that he realised what this world really was. This was a world where you can't get close you can't get close to anyone because if you do, you'll have so much to lose.

I shouldn't just survive. I should live. This was the only thing keeping James from jumping off the building. *Ellie wanted me to live. That was her dying wish. I will live. For her.*

James spent the rest of the night on the roof. He couldn't sleep with the undead just a few feet away from. Even if they weren't there though. He wouldn't be able to sleep.

So he just lay there. Not moving. Just thinking. *All my friends*

are dead. Everyone I ever cared about is dead. And I have to live. Why do I have to live?

James stayed on the roof until midday when he sat up and looked around. The infected had somewhat dispersed. Some had moved on, some were still lingering but the important thing was that there wasn't enough of them for them to be a problem for James. He could deal with these ones. He lent over the building looking for a weapon when he saw a water pipe. He began to unscrew it from the wall, the sound attracting the attention of the undead. When he had finished, he looked down off the building where he saw a familiar face. Sam began walking towards him. James had some unfinished business with him so he jumped off of the building and waited for Sam to come to him.

"Sam," he began to cry, "I don't know if you're in there and you can hear me... But I'm sorry."

James lifted the pipe over his right shoulder and swung it with all of his force. James heard a pop as Sam's skull caved in and he fell to the floor. It was then that he saw Ashley. She was on the floor and had been eaten from the waist down. Her ribcage was exposed and her insides were hanging out. James turned and threw up. He had never seen a more gruesome thing in his life. He looked back as Ashley attempted to crawl towards him. One of the other creatures got too close for James' comfort so in one swing, he span around and hit the woman with the pipe. He wasn't as accurate with this swing and didn't manage to kill it. It turned its head back and its jaw was now hanging off. James lifted his pipe up and plummeted it down through the top of the woman's head, killing her for good. He then turned back to Ashley who continued to crawl closer. With a single swing down of his pipe, she was dead. Looking around, James still had one question, *Where is Ellie?* He wandered around the campus, avoiding the undead, looking for her for about half an hour. *I've searched every inch of this place. She's not here. She must have walked off.* This deeply affected James. He couldn't bare to think of her as one of them. Eventually after his efforts to look for her failed, he decided to move on. *I need to get out of here. Into the*

city. That's where the safe zones were, they'll have food and water there.
Before James left for New York, he searched the kitchen behind the canteen and filled a rucksack with what was left of the oats, which was only a few boxes at this point. He filled eight bottles of water with the last batch of water they boiled and set off on the road.

Day 66

After spending the night in an abandoned house, James had been walking for another day. It was nearly evening and James was tired. *I just need to get in the city, get some supplies then I can leave this place.* He managed to get into the safe zone where wire fences had been pushed over. Soldiers lay dead on the floor, crawling their way towards James. *I need to be quick with this.* James ran into the nearest house to look for supplies. He opened cupboards and rummaged around. He found several tins of food, three bottles of water and a can of soda. He grabbed everything he could and put it in his bag before running to the street outside. He hears a quiet groaning sound gradually getting louder. He couldn't quite make out what was making it until he saw it. A mass of the undead wandered around the corner towards their next meal. *They're blocking where I need to go. I can't turn around now. I need those supplies.* James decided to push through them. He ran towards the closest apartment building where the infected were getting worryingly close. When he kicked open the door to go inside, a hoard of them was already inside, waiting for him. *Shit. What do I do?* James turned to run back but he had already been cut off. *This is the end.* James had one escape route to the alley behind him. He ran until he reached the wall at the end. He tried climbing it but it was too steep. He looked around, panicked until he noticed a door to a building. *Please don't be full of those things.* As the hoard approached, James knew that this was his only way out. He tried the handle. *It's locked. Fuck, fuck, fuck.* James kicked the door,

trying to force it open but it wasn't budging. At first James began swinging his pipe at them, killing any of them that got too close until he realised that there was no point. He just watched as hundreds of them swarmed into the alley with him. He lowered his pipe and let it drop to the floor. He knew what would happen but he wasn't scared. He was happy. Everyone he ever cared about was dead. After that what exactly is the point of living. James dropped to his knees and let them approach. Before they got to him, the locked door was swung open and a small man emerged from inside.

He fired a pistol at the undead, "Get in there now!" James did what he said. He stood up then darted into the room before the small man followed him and closed the door.

"This way" said the man, running out the back of the building.

James followed him out to another alley where more of the undead were attracted towards them.

"Up here!" The man started climbing a ladder to the rooftop of one of the apartment buildings, James closely behind him.

When they reached the top James and the man sat down to catch their breath.

The man looked quite young, in his mid-twenties. He had white skin, short dark hair and some stubble. He was wearing a thick brown jacket with a shirt underneath. On his back was a large duffel bag bulging with supplies.

"I'm Pete," said the man.

"James," replied James.

"Where are you... Where have you been living?" asked Pete.

"I..." James didn't know. Where does he live now?

"Nowhere, to be honest. I was staying at this place with my school but... A few days ago..." He couldn't say it. He couldn't say what happened. It hurt too much.

"Sorry, I'm guessing you lost some folks," Pete said, "If you want, I'm living with a few people in a nearby town. We've blocked off a road with cars and it's pretty secure."

"Yes," James didn't even have to think about it. "Yes please."

These last two days, I've been so lonely. Left to my own thoughts and after surviving what I survived, my own thoughts aren't good for me.

"Your lucky I found you. Usually I like to stay away from the city, but today we came here to get these." Pete opened his duffel bag and revealed several rifles and even more pistols laying on a sea of ammunition.

"Shit dude," James was stunned, "I never even thought of guns, I've been fine with my pipe until now."

"We decided that most of the time we won't use these," Pete said, "but just in case there are a lot, we've got to be prepared."

Pete stood up and looked over the opposite side of the roof to the ladder.

"It's clear on this side and this building's empty," he said, "If we're quick, we should be able to run out of here and get to where my car is."

Pete opened the roof access door and began to run down the stairs, James following. They had no more issues as the dead thought they were on the other side of the building still. After running for a while, they reached Pete's car which was parked under a bridge.

"Working cars are hard to come by now," said Pete, "Thought it would be best if we hid it under here in case someone found it and wanted it." Pete opened his car and sat in the drivers seat.

"How many people are in your group?" James asked, entering the car.

"Uhhh..." Pete counted it out, "fifteen. Yeah, fifteen including me."

Pete started the engine and drove off.

After driving for about an hour, they arrived at Flemington, where Pete was living. The sky was black as tar, leaving James and Pete with only the headlights. Two trucks were used on either side of an estate as walls.

"Jesus," James said, "You really weren't joking about the it being secure."

Pete and James got out of the car and began to walk towards it. After picking up his duffel bag, Pete opened the door to the truck cab and slid across and opened the door on the other side. James followed him and closed the door

behind him. On the other side of the truck, a line of cars was also blocking the way to stop any that crawled underneath.

"I'm back," Pete called out, "And I've brought a guest." A tall man with short black hair walked towards them. He was wearing a grey tank top and cargo pants.

"Hello there friend," said the man, "I'm Dan and welcome to... this. I don't really know what to call it. Welcome to this half of the street."

"Hi, I'm James," said James as he reached out and shook hands with Dan.

"Look, everyone's gone to sleep already, I'll introduce them to you tomorrow." Dan continued, "In the meantime, that's the only empty house we've got. If you want to sleep in there, we can talk in the morning. Are you okay for food for now?"

"Yeah, I'll be fine for the night," James was lying but he didn't want to be a nuisance on his first day. "I think I'll just go to sleep for now."

"Okay then, I'll see you tomorrow then," said Dan.

"Goodnight Dan," said James.

"G'night," replied Dan before walking inside his house. James looked around to see that Pete had also gone inside. There were ten houses in the street, six on one side of the road, four on the other. James began walking to the house he'd been given. It was right next to one of the trucks which made James a little anxious. *It may be right next to it but if anything comes in and gets in my house, I'll have the doors locked and if anything manages to knock the doors down, I'll hear it.* James went inside to a bedroom upstairs. He shut every door behind him, not taking any chances. He then lay down on the double bed in the middle of the room. He looked up at the ceiling and began to cry. He didn't know why. Were these tears of joy? Was he still sad about Ellie and Sam? Was he happy for the future? Was he scared about the future? Maybe it was a mixture of all of these things, either way, he was lying there crying. He didn't think he would be able to sleep but after walking for nearly two days, James was only lying there for a few minutes before he fell asleep.

When James woke it was already light outside. He stood up and got out of his bed to look out of his window. Outside in the road were a small cluster of people gathered around a fire. James turned and walked out of the bedroom, downstairs and out of his house. When he walked out of his house, the light blinded him and he took a second to readjust before walking toward the rest of the group.

"James," Dan stood up, "I was just going to see if you were awake."

"Well," James replied, "I'm here."

"Anyway," said Dan turning to the group, "Let me introduce you to everyone."

First there was Amanda, Dan's wife and Emma, his daughter. Amanda was slender blonde, white woman with deep blue eyes, she looked like she was in her forties, like Dan. Her daughter looked very similar but younger, around thirteen James thought. The only difference with Emma was her brown eyes, like her Dad.

Dan then introduced Susie, a short white girl with long brown hair, she looked a similar age to James.

Next was Joe and his daughter Sarah. Joe was white, blonde with an overgrown, untamed moustache. Joe was in his fifties and his daughter was a similar age to Emma. She was short with brown hair cut to shoulder height.

James was then introduced to Austin. He was a bald white man with a big dark beard. He was wearing a big pair of dungarees and was sat next to a rifle.

Next up was Abigail, a small black woman in her thirties with a small afro.

Then there was Daisy, a pale ginger girl in he early twenties.

Pete was sitting next to his brother Tom. Tom had black hair like Pete but Toms hair was slightly longer and Tom was clean shaven.

James then met Brian and his daughter, April. Brian was a tall black man in his fifties with a shaved head and stubble. His daughter was mixed race with dark hair tied into a ponytail. She was in her twenties.

Brittany was a short white woman in her forties with short blonde hair.

Finally, there was Bill. A quiet man who only greeted James with a grunt. Bill was a skinny black man with dreadlocks and looked James' age.

After eating beans that had been cooking over a fire in a barrel, Dan stood up.

"If anyone wants to know how to shoot," he said, "I'll be happy to teach you in a minuet. I know it's been a while since I was in the military, but I'm still the best qualified to teach any of you." Dan picked up Pete's duffel bag from the night before. "Thanks to Pete's trek into the city, we managed to get enough guns and bullets to win a war. We'll have to go to a nearby field as we don't want to attract any biters to this place."

Amanda, Emma and Sarah stayed behind with Austin who could already shoot. Everyone else left with Dan. When they were just outside the wall, Brian sees a biter next to the truck and approaches it with a hammer. He lifted it in the air but before he could swing it down, two more undead crawled out from under the truck. Startled, Brian fell over on his back, hitting his head. Brittany saw this and ran toward him with her baseball bat. He hit the standing biter first, killing it with one blow. She then turned and smashed the head of one of the ones on the floor. Before she could attack the third one, it had sunk its teeth into her leg. Brian saw this and swung his hammer at it, crushing its head. The rest of the group ran over, seeing the chunk of flesh missing from Brittany's ankle. "I... I might not turn." Brittany cried, "I might be immune or something! Please."

Maybe she is immune. Maybe she won't turn. We'll just have to wait and see. No one actually went out to practice shooting that day. After something like that, they all just went back inside the walls and tried to make Brittany as comfortable as possible because after a few hours, the fever had set in and she was slowly dying.

"How's she doing?" asked Abigail.

"She's..." Dan said walking out of Brittany's house, "She's not good. If you want to... If you wanna say goodbye... Now's your time."

Abigail ran inside and left the group as they had been. They'd been sitting outside in silence for the past few

hours, not knowing what to do. It had been a while since anyone from this group had been bitten.

"She..." said Brian, "This is my fault... She saved me 'cause I fucked up and now she's gonna die."

Austin cut him off, "No, you can't blame..."

"Yes I fucking can!" Brian raised his voice, "She fucking died because of..."

Brian stopped when a gunshot was heard from inside Brittany's house. The group sat there, looking at the door of her house, not knowing what happened. After a few minutes, Abigail walked out holding a gun.

"She turned," she said, dropping the gun at her feet.

The next few weeks were weird. No one had died in Dan's group for a while and this changed the mood but after nearly a month, everyone was back to normal or what ever the closest thing to normal was these days. James had settled in with his new group of fellow survivors and everything was getting better for him. *This is what Ellie wanted. She wanted me to live. I am living.* For the first time in a long time, James was happy.

Yet another gun practice session was taking place and James was getting the hang of it. He had good stance, good aim and was hitting every can lined up on the other side of their makeshift firing range. He was the best out of everyone else who started shooting when he did. James was always a fast learner though. Even at school, he would always understand everything very quickly, a trait that nowadays is key to survival because if you can't learn fast, if you can't adapt, you will die.

"Ey, James," said Dan, "You're getting' good at that, see if you can hit a moving target."

Dan put his hand on James' shoulder and turned him around so that he was facing an approaching biter.

"I'll try," James said.

I can hit cans no problem but this is a moving target and there is more pressure. If I don't hit it in time, I could die.

"Remember if it gets too close, you can always back up."

Dan reassured him.

James lifted his gun and lined up the shot as he had done

with the cans. The biter was walking with a limp so it's head moved from side to side, making it a harder target. James took the shot, hitting it in the shoulder. It stumbled back before turning and walking at James.

"Shit," James muttered.

James lined up the shot, waiting until the biters head was in the centre of his iron sights before pulling the trigger. The biters head was flipped up as blood spurted out of it. It stood there for a second before falling backwards with a thud. James lowered his gun slowly, *I can't believe I did it. I managed to kill it with a gun. This will change everything.*

"Nice one, James," congratulated Susie.

"Okay everyone," said Dan, "The biters have started to walk here so that's it for today then. Let's pack up and go home."

The group of ten then began their twenty minuet trek across the town. When they arrived back, they saw a biter that had nearly managed to crawl over the hood of the truck. *I can do this now.* James raised his gun and lined up the shot.

"No," Dan lowered James' gun, "We don't want to attract them here if we don't have to."

Dan then pulled out the machete that was sheathed on his belt. He pulled the biter off of the truck and on to the floor before swinging once with the machete into it's head. Dan looked up on top of the truck where a sleeping Austin was meant to be keeping watch. Dan climbed up on top of the truck and threw the rifle on the floor at Austin. The bearded man spluttered to life in shock before looking around and realising that the area was clear and it was just Dan.

"What the fuck man!" Dan said angrily, "You had one job, to look after everyone here and make sure the kids are safe inside."

"They're fine," defended Austin.

"Yes," Dan snapped, "They fuckin' might be right now but if I hadn't got back when I did, that biter could have climbed over the truck and gotten in."

Austin was silent.

"What?" Dan knelt close to Austin, "Got nothing to fuckin' say?" Dan turned and walked off, "Pathetic."

Later that night, the group were gathered around the fire, eating various canned foods.

"I still don't know how all of you guys met each other," James said, "I mean, I know that Dan and his family lived here and fortified it then Austin showed up to help, but how did the rest of you get here?"

"Me and Tom me most everyone in the New York safe zone," began Pete, "I met Brian and April, Joe and Sarah, Susie and her parents..." Pete didn't think what he was saying, "Sorry, I didn't mean."

"No it's fine," said Susie, "They're dead. We tried to save them but we couldn't. Don't be sorry."

"Everyone else came together," Pete finished.

"Yeah," Abigail added, "me and Daisy are friends from long ago. We had just been walking for a long time. Across loads of states. After a few weeks of walking, we found Brittany and Tony who... He didn't make it. A few weeks before we got here, we found you." She turned to Bill. "I uhhh..." Bill looked down at his feet. "Yeah, I met up with them and came here."

"What about you James?" Dan asked, "We don't know where you've been for the past few months."

"Well, a week before this all started, I came here with my school for like a field trip then..." This was harder to talk about than James thought it would be, "me and my class stayed there for a while. My teacher, Jacob... He..." James swallowed a lump in his throat, "This other guy, Chris showed up. He was with the military. He was in the New York safe zone and he managed to find us. He protected us for a while until a few days before I met you guys." James realised that he had been through more than anyone else here. *Bill seems like he's been through a lot. I can just about talk about what happened to me. He can't even do that, I don't even want to know the shit he's been through.*

"Me and my friend were on watch and a few biter showed up." James continued, "We killed them and got rid of the bodies like we had before but after we moved the bodies... We... The place was swarmed with them. I ran to get Chris but... He just... He saw me. I called at him to help and he just... He just walked off." James realised he was crying, "I ran inside to try and help anyone I could

and we got trapped. Everyone... I was..." James could barely speak, "They're all dead because of me. I made the plan. I made the call and said what we should do..." The rest of the group were silent, not knowing what to say. "I managed to escape but. Only me. The next day they'd cleared out and I walked to New York where I met Pete." James looked around at the shocked faces. He no longer wanted to be there. All he wanted to do was go inside and try to sleep, hoping he wouldn't wake up. James decided that this is exactly what he would do, so he stood up, wiped his eyes and walked to his house.

He'd been laying in his room for what felt like hours when he heard the door to his house open. He heard footsteps walk upstairs and up to the door of his bedroom. He grabbed the knife that was on the table next to him. *What if this is a biter that has managed to climb over the truck?* The door opened and Dan, Susie and Pete walked in but they were different. Their eyes. They were white.

"No! What happened!" James said as they approached his bed, "Not you as well!"

He started to lift his knife but stopped. *I know what I promised to Ellie but what life is worth living without people.* He dropped his knife and let the three of them approach. Pete bit into James' arm when he realised that this wasn't what he wanted. *Fuck no. Why did I do this? I don't want to die.* James then pushed off the reanimated corpse of Pete screaming. After looking around for a few seconds he realised that Pete wasn't there. He checked his arm for bites but there were none. He had dreamt the whole thing. His t-shirt was sticking tightly to his skin due to the sweat dripping from him. James didn't sleep for the rest of the night so went outside to keep watch for any biters that might get to the trucks.