

Darkness

I ran through the deserted market. My face was sweating, hair wet. Snarls echoed through the alleyway behind me. As I vaulted over a stall as the backstreet erupted. Thousands of the monsters scrambled out towards me. I watched in horror. I sprinted into a second alleyway. There was a backdoor; I shoved in through the door. I was saved.

There was an appalling smell inside. The badly wallpapered walls had a black substance splattered all over them. I quickly locked the metal door. "BANG," the door shook. I quickly shoved a green filing cabinet in front of the door. I frantically looked around the room. There were a couple of overturned filing cabinets and an awful lot of crates littered the large room. A pipe must have leaked because there was a 4 inch layer of water on the floor. All of the windows were barricaded, hardly letting in any light. I desperately searched my hiking pack for a canteen and took a few gulps. I checked if the lights worked, they did! This was surprising because not many buildings had power. I checked if it was just the lights, nope all of the plugs and electrical items worked. I checked one of the crates; they were full of food, water and drinks. This was my greatest find, ever! I opened one of the many cans of Pepsi. The sweet, refreshing taste was so good. I was about to have another one when I heard a clunk upstairs. I decided to get rid of the planks blocking the door to the stairway. I had made a big mistake.

I walked slowly up the stairs. They creaked every time I stepped on them, at the top I found the source of the smell. A dismembered corpse lay on the floor surrounded by crusty blood. It looked like something had ripped off all of the limbs and started to eat the rotting arms and legs. I walked down fighting the urge to feel sick. The creatures had given up and gone back to their nests. Nests are placed in basements and old buildings with no light that the creatures went to when daylight arrived. I opened the door and checked the time; it was soon going to be morning. I was not too far from The Hideaway but it was still about a mile away. I had to tell the others about the large food supply that I had found.

I looked around the trashed market, no vehicle was there. I needed a small car to be able to transport at least one crate. I went through the alleyway to the street where there was a small sedan with a missing hood and deflated tyres. I checked the door handle. It was stiff and the windows were covered in so much grime I could not see inside. Vehicles were dangerous, especially when you could

not see the interior; creatures could always be hiding inside. I hit the handle with my hammer. The door popped open...

I stood with blood on my hammer and hands, the dark skinned creature laid on my bloody Nikes. I had finally killed one. All of the rumours from the Hideaway were true. The rumour about 12 inch claws was true, the one about the 4 inch fangs was also true. Only one rumour was a lie, that they were all fast, quiet and thin. This one was one hell of a fat lump. Puss oozed out of the open wound that my claw hammer had made as it entered into the dormant fat bag. I felt queasy and worried about other creatures that might be attracted to the smell. I rushed back into the building and grabbed a crate and a paint scraper off the floor. I put the box of supplies into the back of the sedan and began to scrape the piles of dust, grime and mud that rested on the windshield. A couple minutes later the dirt was nearly gone. I got into the car and hotwired it using my hammer to pop open the keyhole. The engine coughed and showed the fuel warning light. The fuel needle was on empty. Then it cut out. I had to walk to the nearest gas station.

I took a jerry can out of the back of the sedan and started to fill the jerry can. The parasite had spread in a matter of hours even before people could start hoarding food and other essentials. People did not show symptoms until their claws shredded their shoes. Even the police or any other governmental force did not have time to react. All adults were infected and most children, even though they almost immediately died out due to the sheer inability to hunt for other humans. I thought through the past year of the plague. It had started about 3 months ago. I filled the jerry can with gasoline and looked through the stained windows of the Spar gas station. There were an awful lot of tins containing food. The creatures did not know how to eat or open the food that their past selves used to consume. I walked in through the open automatic doors, electricity had long gone in most parts of the city, as I mentioned earlier. A dormant creature was lying on the floor. I stuck the end of my claw hammer into its skull. I started the 5 minute walk back to the derelict sedan.

I emptied a quarter of the 20 litre can into the fuel tank and got in. The crate was still in the back. I tried to remember the training that the drivers in the hideaway had presented to me. I turned the key. Luckily the car was an automatic, a lot easier to start and drive then a more common manual. I pushed the lever into drive and set off for the hideaway, even though the handling was reduced dramatically by the flat tyres and probably rusty steering.

Something was wrong. The guards were not to be seen. There was one heavily mutilated corpse at the gates. I got out of the damaged sedan and tapped the

body of the young boy with my foot. I swear I could have recognised that face, from before the plague. I searched the back of my memory, a name popped up. "Tom" I muttered. He was my best friend from before the apocalypse. I could remember playing CoD with him and owning a whole team. When the Infection had begun he had taken his father's Toyota Hilux off Road package Truck and driven out of our place. I hoped I would find him one day, but not like this. I fought the urge to cry and pushed open the gate. My sedan coughed into the camp...

Bodies everywhere, the place slick with gore. There had been a massacre. I went towards the main buildings of Essington Street. The highest floor of the Job Centre Plus was the only safe place in the whole of the Hideaway. The Toyota Hilux was parked in the Adam's Cars garage facing Broad Street. I knew it was hopeless checking the Safe House (The top floor of Job Centre Plus) because the glass windows were all smashed and the doors had been blow out. I went back to the gate and went through Tom's pockets. The keys to the Hilux were there, as I expected. I slowly approached the Toyota. Due to a bad history with cars (E.g. A couple hours ago) I took out my hammer. As I opened the door, I realised I had nothing to worry about. "Idiot" I said to myself, realising that I was alone. I put the keys into the ignition and started the engine. Fortunately for me, an inexperienced driver, the new model of the Hilux included an automatic gear box and adaptive suspension. I drove out of the gate that I had opened earlier and started my journey to the north of Birmingham.

I had planned to go to the Range Rover Dealership in the north of Birmingham to get a large SUV that was straight from the factory. Most of the cars that the kids had in the Hideaway were fresh BMWs from the dealer on Broad St, however there had been rumours about a large Range Rover dealer up north, so I was planning sneaking there and taking over the place. Apparently there was a Shell gas station nearby that had been just restocked before the parasite started up. I drove on down the road that was connected to the Shell station. I sped past the Peugeot dealer and took a sharp turn. I pulled off the road and coasted to the gas station. The fuel light was on. I hit the brakes, too hard. My head hit the steering wheel. I was knocked out...

The car had hit a metal arch protecting the gas pump. I stumbled out of the smashed door, I could smell gasoline. I already knew what had happened. The driveshaft of the SUV had struck the fuel tank and it had ruptured. Luckily the fuel had not caught fire otherwise I would be dead. I started the painful walk towards the Shell building. I trudged in-between the stocked aisles. There were no infected in the building however two creatures, attracted by the new smell,

had gathered outside, waiting for their prey. I stumbled into the utilities aisle; a few travel medical kits and torches lined a shelf. I grabbed one each and read the med-kit packaging; painkillers, bandages, plasters and a small bottle of antiseptic. I ripped off the packaging and unzipped the bag. I dripped some of the antiseptic onto a wound probable caused by a shard of flying windshield, bandaged my arm where the glass had cut me and consumed two of the painkillers to sedate my severe wound. I grabbed a crowbar off a nearby shelf and walked out of the doors. The infected trudged towards me. I struck one of the creatures in the head with the claw of the crowbar. As it fell to the floor, suddenly lifeless, an indescribable pale liquid spilled out of the wound onto the tarmac. I shuddered and advanced towards the other creature, wielding my weapon. I swiped at the plagued man but I only hit him slightly, a glancing blow. He flinched but continued to advance on me. I swiped at him again but missed. I realised that my wound was starting to weaken my combat skills. I swung again and again, still missing. I started to flee, usually I would have killed him by now but I just couldn't hit him. I tried to run from him. He carried lunging at me. I could feel my anger building up in me. I turned around and raised my crowbar. It swung down with all the momentum my muscles could create. I hit the man with the claw on the crowbar. He collapsed onto the floor in a spasm. Gore spilled onto the pavement, brains, blood and more dribbled out of the horrific wound. The creature shook one more time and then stopped. I slowly walked away towards the Range Rover dealer. I could already see it next to the Mazda dealer.

I stepped past the crossing and eventually reached the dealer and walked into the parking. I looked into a Range Rover Defender with a black paint job and a white decal. It looked like the seats were lined a comfortable black leather and stylish bronze decorations in the interior. I walked over to the garage that was the only visible entrance to the dealer. The gate was left open with a Sport in the building. They probably received a new transport of vehicles; I knew this due to the fact that an unloaded car carrier was parked in the lot. I walked into the dealership; the stylish bright tiles lined the ground and a Discovery was parked inside. To the left there was the servicing room and to the right there was an office. I stepped into the office; it was poorly lit due to lack of electricity. There was a window that let light in but it was about 40 metres away. I looked around there was a corridor next the stairs. A snarl echoed through the office, I turned back towards the corridor. A dark figure was approaching, red eyes, long claws and dark skin. For some reason the eyes light up. I held up my crowbar. The creature leapt. I swung my crowbar. It directly hit the creature's head. Pieces of skull, brains and gore splattered a picture of a Range Rover in a large pond. Blood dripped off office furniture. I shuddered at

the sight of the cadaver. The skull had basically exploded, allowing the hideously large amounts of gore to splatter such a large surface area. I wanted to get the keys to the Defender and leave as soon as possible. I walked towards the door marked PRIVATE which was in the same corridor as the one the creature had leapt out of. It was locked. "I'm lucky I took you" I whispered to my blood stained crowbar. I was finally starting to be lonely. I jammed the crowbar in-between the door and the wall and pushed as hard as I could, straining my muscles. I heard wood splintering and then the crowbar, with the momentum my arms gave, popped out and flew out of my hands. I picked up the crowbar and shone my torch into the dark room. A white rack was lined with keys. I instinctively grabbed the keys labelled "Black Defender with white decals." I walked out of the room and into the garage. I grabbed a carjack and a 20 litre gas-can. I walked out.

The midday sunlight blinded me for a second. I walked into the middle of the parking lot and walked towards the Discovery and rethought the thoughts of making a hideout here. There was no fence around any part of the building or lot. I clicked the unlock button on the keys and the lights flashed. I was not surprised that the battery was still charged because only 3 months ago The Apocalypse had started. I opened the door and sat in the driver seat. I suddenly stopped. I heard footsteps. "Whoever you are come out now" said the voice of a girl. A young girl, about 10 years old, was holding a M1911 and pointing it at me. I stepped out of the Range Rover and dropped my crowbar. I remembered that I still had a knife in my pocket. I walked towards her and asked "What do you want?" I approach her slowly. She bit her lip and replied with "The keys, now." I carried on approaching her. "Behind you" I shouted. She looked behind her, startled, I ran towards her.

My butterfly knife was touching her neck. "Drop it" I shouted. She was sweating as she let go of the gun. I was satisfied, for now. I held the knife to her neck and picked up the Colt. I stood back up and started questioning her. "Why are you here" I asked.

"I am a lone survivor after The Hideaway was destroyed." She replied "I wanted a vehicle for ages after I found that gun in a crashed police car."

"So you are a scavenger?" I carried on questioning. "You must have received training from The Hideaway, how old are you?" She bit her lip. "You are from The Hideaway, aren't you?" I nodded and asked "Yes, do you want to come with me." She nodded and smiled. "My name is Ellie; Can I have the Colt back?" I laughed and replied "Not until you can be trusted, are you getting in" I got into the driver's seat and she got into the back. "I prefer lying in the back, as long as you drive slowly." I nodded and put the Rover into drive.

I put my foot down on the brakes. The Defender slowed down and I started to spin the wheel. The car's front tyres hit the kerb and went over it. I drove onto the other side of Tyburn Road and swerved past an Audi TT that had crashed into a Ford Fiesta. I started to drive up a bridge leading to the M4. "Where to" I asked the girl. "Maybe Shrewsbury" she replied. I turned on the GPS that I had found in the glove-box and pressed down the power button. I typed in Shrewsbury and pressed the button on the GUI labelled "Shrewsbury, Town Centre." I carried on driving on the wrong side of the road as the GPS loaded. It turned on and it told me to carry on driving forward until the nearest roundabout where you had to turn around. I looked at the GPS and noticed that I could turn around where I was. I braked and then span the wheel. As I rammed through the pylons Ellie yelled as she fell off the back seats. The cars suspension bounced as the 2.5 ton SUV crushed the flimsy pylon. I swerved past a Ford Transit that had rammed into the side of the highway. An infected man stood in the middle of the road next to a Passat on its side. I stamped on the accelerator and the engine revved. 70. 80. 90. I hit the man at 98 miles an hour. The corpse was sent flying by the momentum caused by the car. The corpse hit a stationary Range Rover Sport. Blood splattered the passenger doors and the windows were smashed. We drove past the splattered Rover and started to speed up again on the empty road.

We drove down the road towards Meole Brace Retail Park. "We have to go on the pavement" I told her. "I don't mind" she muttered. The car bounced as the suspension hit the kerb. Suddenly the car banked downwards. My head hit the passenger window and it cracked. My head throbbed. The airbags deployed. The engine was smoking as I pushed the door opened. I pick the colt of the floor and crawled out of the ditch. The car had swerved into the bushes and had fallen into a 1.5 metre deep ditch. Ellie stumbled out of the totalled SUV and coughed. "Are you ok" I asked sheepishly. She replied, sarcastically "Oh yes, I am totally fine, idiot." I smiled and pulled her out of the of the ditch. We looked around the road leading to the Retail Park and immediately pulled out the weapons we had. I pulled out the colt and Ellie passed me a few magazines and told me "Use them wisely, I don't have much more." I threw her the butterfly knife, she instinctively caught it and hacked at a woman's face lunging at her. The plagued face erupted in pus, Ellie lunged back and flinched. "She was obviously trained for this type of combat" I thought to myself. I aimed down the modified night sights on an infected head. I pressed onto the trigger. The gun bounced upward and I adjusted to the light recoil that the gun had caused. The man's head erupted with gore as the rest of him dropped to the ground, like a puppet with

its strings cut. I aimed towards another head as Ellie shanked another creature. I smiled as I snuffed out the last of our threat...

We walked out towards the massive TESCO. Stepping into the spacious TESCO, I reloaded the colt. Something was wrong I looked at the side, behind the counter. Two red lights shone there. "Get down!" I yelled. She ducked down. I grabbed the knife out of her hands and threw it at the eyes. The lights disappeared and were replaced with a bloodcurdling screech. There was silence for a while.

Ellie stood up and looked around as I walked towards the dead zombie. My knife was wedged into her chest. The woman's blonde hair was streaked with clotting blood. I pulled out the knife and looked at the aisle I was standing in front of. I clicked the end of my torch. The beam cut through the darkness, illuminating the shelves. I smiled. The whole aisle was completely stocked. Tins containing peas, carrots, beans and fruit were littering the shelf. Suddenly there was a clatter. A shelf collapsed behind me. "Watch out" Ellie shouted. I pulled out my firearm and ran out of the aisle. I leapt out as the shelves behind me erupted. Cans of food fell to the polished marble floor, noise seared the silence that existed a few moments ago. Six dark shapes jumped out of the damaged shelves and charged towards me and Ellie. I fired 2 shots at one of the eyes. A scream echoed through the clattering and blood sprayed on cans and the floor. I retreated backwards as more shapes erupted through the holes. I ran out of the shop. Suddenly an arrow hit the pavement behind me. "Stop now!" shouted a voice. I carried on running. I heard the sound of another projectile. I instinctively combat rolled and crouched on the ground. A sharp dart hit me in the back and I fell to the ground, consciousness leaking out from me.