

CHAPTER TWO:

'The Farther You Run, the Closer You Get'

James: "Is everyone okay?"

Andrya: "Lornn and I are okay."

Danny: "All seems fine.. (Danny turned his flash light on)... Come check out this old door."

Andrya and James both walked over and saw a big old metal door with a wheel handle, James tried to turn it open.

James: "We're going to need some kind of a pry bar."

Danny: "Already ahead of you... (he slid a long rusted metal pipe through the the round handle) ..I'll push down on this end you push up on the the other side"

James: "Yepp, ...one ...twothree."

The boys put all their strength onto it and the handle barely moved an inch as it creaked and squeaked. A few seconds later the handle gave a little allowing the seal of the door trim to relax and releasing a content breeze.

Lornn walked up sniffing the door and batting at the escaping air, while in the background, embers fell through the darkness from above. The boys took a breather and made another attempt but this time the door swung open. Air released from it with a 'ti-isShhHHh..' sound following prompting Lornn to 'hiss' back in response.

They walked into a very small, dimly lit room with two-way mirrors on both sides and another open metal door on the side twelve feet in front. James backed into a switch turning on the lights and power, soon after that the door slammed shut behind them. Sparks shot out of the door on the other side of the room and it slowly began to close, the three of them grabbed everything and went out the other side before it shut.

Andrya: "What happened?"

James: "I don't know, I just backed into that switch."

Danny: "This room looks like an old...."

An odd, crude but some-what soothing female computerized voice interrupted Danny.

-WARNING UNKNOWN OUTSIDE PATHOGINS DETECTED -PLEASE, STAY CALM AS
CLENSING IS INITIALIZED ...WARNING UNKNOWN OUTSIDE PATHOGINS DETECTED

-PLEASE, STAY CALM AS CLENSING IS INITIALIZED-

The three saw a spark go through the two-way mirror igniting a flame that consumed the small room.

-THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND HAVE A NICE DAY-

Danny: "Okay, did that defective computer just try to kill us?"

Andrya: "My dad told me stories of places like this, I believe this is one of those high-defence underground fortresses the higher powers of the past -people and governments -privately built. I thought they were just stories."

James: "We should keep going and try to find a way out of here. Who knows how long the power in this building will last."

They walked down a long messy hallway with paperwork everywhere. It had small rooms on both sides and an elevator at the end of the hall.

James: "Hey, check this out, I don't understand anything on any of these scattered forms but look at the date on these -this looks like synthetic paper."

Danny: "04/08/2324' ...this place is well over 600 years old!"

Danny and James waledk up to the elevator in front of Andrya and Lornn.

Andrya: "I found a red 'key card' on one of the desks over there, it seems like it would be used inthat red card reader on the elevator" Andrya said this chuckling as she slid the key card into the slot opening the elevator door."This key card seems to have limited access, it will only allow us to go to one floor." Andrya continued as they quickly began there descent.

James: "You do realize we may be trapped underground? -waiting out time 'till we starve or something."

Danny: "Well let's hope we find a way out because there was no way we had any chance of survival back there."

The elevator stopped and the doors opened, a series of lights flickered outward in response, revealing a single bench in an empty white coloured space with a few hallways stretching out from it. As the three walked out the elevator door closed behind them, Danny tapped his shoulder and Lornn hopped up and perched herself onto it.

Andrya looked at a floor map on the wall and shouted out to the guys.

"The room down the hall straight ahead is named 'food and plants'. The hall on the right leads to the 'main computer observation deck'. The hallway on the left over there, T's off in two directions. The one on the left is definitely the living quarters and the one on the right seems to be unmarked."

A few minutes later both James and Danny came back from opposite sides of the room.

James: "The actual observation deck is locked but the dining room before it is open."

Danny: "The unmarked room is locked too but the living quarters are open, I haven't seen anything dangerous aside from that damn computer -as long as we don't hear from that thing again we should be good. I think we should see if we can find food in the dining area, if there is any left, then check the living quarters for anything that may help."

James: "I think you'll be very surprised what's in there."

The three walked in to the dining room, it was a giant room with a ceiling tall enough to make anyone feel small, -almost ant-like -it was hard to take in all at once.

On the right of the room was a giant glass wall with a few access doors, behind the glass was a small forest of assorted plants, bushes, and trees. In the center of the room was a self serve food court and kitchen -surrounded by different styles of benches and tables. On the left side of the room was a half sand, half grass park area -and in the back a man-made ceiling to floor perpetual waterfall stood out.

Andrya walked over to the plants and trees, Danny walked to the food court, and James trailed along the surrounding walls, observing its entirety.

Twenty minutes passed before James and Andrya walked back over to Danny.

Danny: "There must be a constant power source in this place this flash frozen food is still good to serve, I wasn't sure what to make so I just made a bit of everything."

James: "Well I was looking around and that waterfall seems to be in constant motion as long as this place is standing, I believe that's the source of power."

Andrya: "I noticed some strange plants that seem to be medicinal or for producing food but most I've never even heard of or are extinct ...It's odd -The world is filled with a few frozen ice lands and deserts, they are anywhere and anywhere. There are only a few small areas of grass lands or forests left... And... Here sits a place... Hiding. This could possibly rebuild the greener side of the world."

Danny: "We'll for now just be glad we're alive and get to enjoy some new things today, I found an odd meat called 'beef' and this odd 'pineapple' fruit, dig in guys."

After they finished eating, the three of them grabbed their things and headed out to inspect the living quarters. Just as they were arriving at the dining room doors Lornn's ears perked up and her head turned towards the back of the room"

Danny: "Did you hear that?"

James: "What?"

"Uerrrrraw-Ragh!-hEr-Rawr!!"

Danny: "That."

Andrya: "Oh, I heard that."

James: "Somethings coming up through the air system."

Just as the three armed themselves, a metal covering shot off the wall and a huge creature dropped out on all fours and slowly stood up straight. It stood with a forward slouch but still reached about 6'8. His forearm and hands were filled with fur and had huge claws. It was also very hairy throughout most of his shoulders, back, and chest. It was a huge beast with a massive teeth matching the very hungry eyes looking for it's next meal.

Danny: "Oh, come on.."

The beast then narrowed his eyes and hysterically ran towards them, thrashing and snarling, Andrya shot it in the ankle as it jumped in the air towards James and the beast fell short of him and right near Dannys feet. Whom was backing up and rummaging through his bag as it got up and began walking towards them.

Lornn began to 'hiss' wildly and leapt at the beast -scratching and clawing its face.

The beast grabbed her and paused while glaring at the three of them. It 'snarled' before biting her head off and finishing the rest in the second bite.

Danny: "NOW I'M PISSED!"

Danny lit and jammed a couple of explosives in its mouth as it chewed. It let out a bloody 'Rawr!' before its jaw blew open and collapsed dead onto the floor leaving a stressful silence.

James: "That thing looked like the creatures wandering the town... But how is that even possible?... Danny, uh... Thank y..."

Danny: "...Let's go."

Andrya: "....Danny, are you..."

Danny: "I said LET'S GO!!!"

As they arrived at the living quarters Danny stopped and paused at the door for a moment.

Danny: "This place is big... So you two take the other end, I need some time by myself anyways."

James: "Ya, sure... No problem man."

James and Andrya walked passed Danny as he went into the first apartment. They passed ten apartments on either side till they reached the end and began their search.

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Andrya: "This is the last apartment flat we have left to search before we meet back up with Danny. We haven't found anything besides the blue 'keycard' to the observation deck. Are we going to talk about what happened back there? Not only about that creature, but the fact that I've never seen so much anger in a person... Danny fits almost too well in this madness -he doesn't flinch he just reacts like he's

already planned for what may happen next... Let's talk about how maybe this place is older than the length of time they have been walking around up here, or the fact that the people whom built this place... Either ran and left everything behind or just didn't get to make it here in time"

James: "Honestly, Danny gave up on himself long before I met him. I had to convince him to stick with me and keep moving forward for both our sakes -I keep that crazy bastard alive as much as he keeps me alive... If there's one thing I've learned during all of this is sometimes there's no talking... or any answers really... There's only room for headache and even more questions, sometimes the best thing to do is plan your next move and push forward, that is -if we wanted to survive and stay sane."

Danny: "Eh, are you guys almost done here?"

James: "Oh didn't see you there man. Ya we found the key card to the observation deck."

Danny: "Okay, well I found a key card in a apartment belonging to a... 'Dr. Kerwahtz' and I think it's to the unmarked room. I'd like to check it out before we hit the observation deck if you're down."

James: "Sounds like a plan."

James and Andrya shared a quick look as were walking out of the living quarters.

Danny: "Be prepared for anything when I open the door."

James and Andrya readied themselves as the door slid open but they were greeted by no signs of life. It was a small private lab with many computers still running, complimented by stacks of paperwork from dozens of few half-finished projects.

Danny: "This must've been the doctors private lab, I can't really see more than one person working in here."

James: "Look around, see if you can find anything that can tell us how to get out of here or even what this place is. Just be careful not to set anything off, we don't know what half of this even is."

A big dusty glass chamber fused with computers and wires caught Andrya's attention as the boys looked around the lab. She saw a panel reading a bunch of numbers in different categories and then noticed the words 'Vital signs'. Quickly she rubbed a circle of dust from the glass revealing the sight of a young girls face. Andrya scanned the machine up and down frantically trying to open it now.

James: "What are you doing!? Don't mess with that!"

Andrya: "There's a girl in there! We have to help her I can't open it!"

James: "Even so, what if she's infected?"

Danny: "If that girl is still alive we have to help her... I mean, she could be as old as 600 without ever living a day, who knows how long that thing can keep her alive for... I think we can chance it."

James walked over, found, and then hit the release button allowing the glass chamber to slowly open. The girls eyes fluttered open and without saying a word stepped out of the chamber.

"Hi, my name is Andrya -we are friends, we are here to help you, are you okay?"

The young girl walked straight to the computer behind without saying a word and began typing up a storm, running through multiple files at once.

Young girl: "...Sorry just had to check the system to see how you got in, I see the others never made it back. I've been out for a while (she giggled to herself) ... I see a few projects from a few levels down woke up... You already knew that though... Nice job by the way Danny."

Danny: "Who are you?"

"How rude of me, my names 'Momo'. I'm a special project of Dr.Kerwahtz and as you just realized I already know all your names."

Andrya: "Project?"

Momo: "I'm a synthetic life form, one-of-a-kind really... Dr.Kerwahtz made me to aide him during his other projects but mostly to keep him company. He really didn't relate to others... I'll explain more but we need to move quickly if you're going to get out of here."

Danny: "what do you mean?"

Reahaaar! -CraSH!!

Momo: "The project you encountered earlier, lead the others up to this level. I've locked down the Dining room but it won't hold them forever."

Danny: "Projects? How many of those things are there?"

Momo: "This place was started because a few men tried to find the ultimate cure. It was called 'V13' and well, it only... half worked. It regenerated all cells... even dead ones. It gave them the knowlege to fuse bodies together without needing the proper blood types-which in turn has allowed them to create these forms of life without understanding the long term effects or changes over time. So... There's more than a few of them... Enough for a small army."

ehhhRaaHHHer!!

Momo: "That would be our cue to leave, James you have the key card right? Can you go open the door now?"

James just looked at Danny, he looked back and shrugged.

Danny: "At least she's not infected."

James and the others walked over to the observation deck with the sound of 'howls' and 'rawrs' echoing down the hallways. They entered the observation deck -Andrya and Danny looked around the room while James checked the computer that was in the center.

Momo: "The only good way to get out would take us too long to get to with those things just outside of the door. I'm surprised 'Hibos' didn't already tell you the way out."

James: "Hibos?"

Momo: "H.i.b.o.s. -Hyper. Intelligent. Biological. Order. System. -She should have been the first to greet you."

Danny: "Oh, you mean the crazy computer?"

Momo: "Hibos, can you explain?"

Hibos: "HE CALLED ME DEFECTIVE"

Momo: "She's kind of sensitive... Now it may be too late to get out."

CraSSH!! REahhhher!!

Momo: "Hibos, update."

Hibos: "PROJECTS OF V13 ARE NOW JUST OUTSIDE OF HERE -THIS LEVEL HAS BEEN COMPROMISED."

Danny: "Really!?"

James: "Just great."

Danny: "I found an emergency exit hatch up this ladder."

Momo: "No, don't touch that!"

It was too late Danny had already opened it. the door to the room began to bend inward due to the pressure the creatures had been putting on the other side of it."

"WARNING EMERGENCY HATCH OPEN, BEGINNING COUNTDOWN TILL DETONATION. -
-WARNING EMERGENCY HATCH OPEN, BEGINING COUNTDOWN TILL DETONATION,
DETONATION WILL BEGIN IN.... "
"...180, 179, 178, ,...."

Momo: "That's hooked up to a self-destruct command, it's a last option."

Danny: "Too late now, there's no way out of here because of those creatures. Now we need to get out of here before it blows up -come on!"

The others climbed up the ladder before Andrya and she was half way up when the door to the observation deck blew open and dozens of those creatures poured in.

They saw Andrya climbing up the ladder and multiple creatures began fighting to be the first one to her. One was able to leap half-way up the ladder and grabbed her leg. By skill or lucky timing she

kicked it right in the face and it dropped down -perfectly landing on its feet ready for more.

....124,123,122,....

Danny lifted her in to a dark small boxed space as James closed the hatch behind her, then climbed an even taller ladder into a small cylinder space.

James: "Come on climb we're almost out; I can see light."

Momo: "Sorry to say this but with our position and my calculations of the possible blast ratio -even if we were out right now we couldn't run far, or fast enough to survive it."

Danny: "Momo that's not helping."

.....52, 51, 50, 49,.....

Momo shifted the metal cover to the street above allowing the sunlight to shine down through the passage, blinding them for a moment as they all climbed out.

A street camera focused in on the four as they began running down the street. underneath their feet the cement shifted and began to crack and before anyone could speak the ground erupted -knocking out and throwing the four of them flying through the air along with car-sized slabs of cement.

Before Momo blacked out she saw a blueish grey figure in the distance leaping off debris towards them. Everything went black and her system attempted to reboot as a helicopter flew by over head.

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