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YESTERDAY BROUGHT A BAD TOMORROW



The moon, full in shape, hung in the sky with an uneasy closeness over the quiet town of Fort Erie. It was full in shape and had an odd reddish glow that engulfed the entire night's sky. On a small street, in what seemed like an abandoned factory, a chilling harmonic moan broke the silence, and a voice could be heard.

“Danny! ...Danny-Man! ...What the hell? -You fell asleep on watch -Wake up! -We have company!”

Danny: “...Euum? ...James?”

James: “Who else would it be? -Welcome back to reality, now on your feet ‘nd cut the crap -give me a hand holding these boards against the window while I get the drill.”

The boys boarded up the window and continued their conversation.

Danny: “James, do you have the stuff for heartburn?”

James: “Yeah, here.”

Danny: “We’ve boarded up the window, nothing can get in... It’s been three hours of quiet... Well at least from our end. Most of them are still outside not much more than ten feet from us. That eerie - everlasting -undertone moan... It’s enough to drive one mad... I fell asleep -that was my bad, besides that -what happened?”

James: “Sorry Danny-man, it’s been over two months with no power -in this town at least. We finally found a place with a backup generator, so I turned on the light to use the washroom, and the next thing I knew they came from every dark corner as if awaiting that one ripple of sound... Or movement. Then ...well then, I ran and woke you up.”

Danny: “-And Lornn, where is she?”

James: “Oh-no worries, she curled up by her cat food shortly after we blocked up the window.”

Danny: “Well keep an eye out and remember she’s the first one of us to ever know when trouble’s near, we can try to get some sleep, when the sun rises -there will be less of them to worry about.”

As the sun rose, a beam of its light broke through the boarded window and was shining on the two young boys: abruptly waking them with hostile readiness.

“What a bad sleep,” James grumbled as he awoke. “I’m glad I talked you into dragging that scrap wood here with us or we would’ve had to block the window with our skateboards.”

Danny: “Well, good morning to you too... I’m glad we grabbed that electric bike, now that we have a power source to charge it.”

James: “Why is that?”

Danny: “Well skitching with the skateboard will be quicker to get around, I mean it’s a small town but to get to the places we need -everything is a little spaced out.”

James: “Good thinking, well I guess it’s time to go shopping. Let’s make sure the bike is loaded and our weapons are ready.”

The two readied themselves with crude, child-like weapons which consisted of Water-guns filled with lighter fluid (when fully pumped and ignited while sprayed acted as a quick 3-to-5 second flamethrower), a bunch of discarded pill bottles full of match heads, and a gel sanitizer and fluid-soaked tissue wick (a crude compression blast of metal staffs for extended reach defense to name a few. The bike had its compartments, but they added an old, refitted coat and draped it across the seat to use as a saddle with pockets. It also had empty jugs strung together hanging from either side on the back end for some added compartments.

When they were all set to go, Danny hopped on the bike and James peered outside through a hole in the steel paneled door.

James: "Looks, clear man."

Danny: "Okay, we just need our eyes and ears." -with a quick flick of his tongue on the back of his front teeth -a 'Tik-tik' was all that was needed to call Lornn from hiding and she jumped and perched on the bike near him.

With a quick thrust, James pulled the door upward and back down once they were out. He stood on his skateboard and zipped up the half-empty backpack. Once it was secure, he grabbed onto the back handle of the bike while tucking the staff under his arm to use as a lance if needed. And with that out of the way, they were ready and headed over the bridge that arched above the train tracks.

Danny spotted something in the distance as they descended the other side.

James: "What is that?"

Danny: "Not sure but we have to pass it, so keep your guard up and be ready to break as we talked about earlier."

As they drew closer, a dog took notice and started to move toward them. At first, just it moved with a trotting speed but quickly escalated into a full-on sprint.

James: "Danny, I think we have our answer."

Danny: "Just be ready and let go when I say."

They were now close enough to see there was something off about this dog.

"I'll distract it -you take it down, GO!" Danny ordered

James: "Got it."

As Danny began honking the horn James let go of the bike. Turning himself into a jousting, projectile of death. Once the rabid dog was about four feet from them it pounced at Danny snapping wildly mid-air. As planned, at the same moment James came in off the left side and the staff caught the animal in the temple -pinning it three feet off the ground to a phone pole.

"You can keep that." James laughed at his remark.

Danny: "Here take mine, we need to get some new toys anyways."

Danny leaned in to inspect the animal. - "It has the same marks as the others."

James: "There are zombie animals now?"

Danny: "James..."

James: "Yeah... I know... I didn't mean..."

Danny: "I know man -no worries, we should get going -hold on."

The boys took off towards the main strip which consisted of the most stores and shops in town. As they reached the last intersection, they took a right onto the main strip. This was once the bustling core of the town but has over the years been devastated by the outbreak, riots, and overall panic as everyone tried to leave the places, they'd once called home.

Danny: “James -off the board man. The wheels -they're too loud for a place so quiet, we're not equipped for many more surprises.”

James: “I hear ya, so where to first?”

Just then Lornn's ears perked up and she took off towards a small store parking lot about half a block away.

Danny: “What the hell!?” -she's never run off like that before, we have to go after her.”

James: “Do you think that's the best move, I mean chasing a small animal in this mess?”

Not a second after James finished his question, Danny took off after Lornn, weaving around the cars and wreckage.

“Oh, geez-man wait up,” James began running after him. – “I'm on foot patrol remember?”

James caught up to Danny as he was parking the bike. “Really man?” James said while trying to catch his breath.

Danny: “Come on, she went in through that broken window.”

James just stared at him blankly.

Danny: “Come on man, what if something's in there with her?”

James: “.....”

Danny: “We need her...” (his face sank) “...she's a friend.”

“Dammit, man don't give me that look...” James scorned “we have a friend to find. “Danny smiled, they grabbed their things and headed in.

They were greeted by nothing more than silence, darkness, and what appeared to be a huge mess, pretty much the same thing as everywhere else in town.

James: “Thirteen aisles of the dark and quiet unknown -looks fun.”

Just then James noticed a glimmer of two wide eyes looking down at them from the top of a shelf “there she is” he said as he pointed to her.

As Danny took notice Lornn's ears perked up again and her head shifted towards them as they neared.

James: “What's wrong Danny -why'd you stop?”

Danny: “Look.”

A chill ran up James's spine. “What's the problem?”

Danny: “She's not looking at us ...she's looking past us.”

Before they could turn to see -a glass jar fell off the shelf and shattered leaving the lid slowly wobbling on the ground. The uneasy sound of it settling broke the silence and caused both the boys to stand at full attention. As they turned around with their weapons drawn, Lornn leaped over them and darted off into the darkness.

Danny: “What is with that cat today?”

James: “Only one way to find out.”

A bright light broke through the dark store, the front door had been opened -this confirmed it for the boys -Lornn saw something, and it wasn't a mouse. They ran outside to the sight of Lornn sitting ten feet from a young girl who couldn't be much older than twelve, trying to take off on the bike.

Danny: “It won't go anywhere; I always flip the breaker before I leave it.”

Unbeknownst to the boys, she was paranoid about being alone for so long. So, when they were too close to run from, the young girl's reaction was to give a quick jab to James's kidney and without hesitation spun and knuckled a soft spot near Danny's knee, stunning both of them for a minute -not only from the amount of pain but also from being caught off guard from such a young girl. Danny was able to grab her before she could run away, but she was punching and kicking trying to break free of his grip.

Danny: “Enough!” While grabbing both of her arms Danny kicked her feet out from under her pinning her to the ground.

James: “Wait, she could be...”

Danny: “Look at her, she's just really frightened... and all alone man.”

“Now listen for a second!” (Danny shouted as the girl continued to struggle) “Please just hear me out, if I wanted to hurt you don't you think I would've done it by now?”

The young girl's eyes teared up and started rapidly moving as if scanning his body language. Even though she was still hostile, her breathing began to slow down exponentially allowing her to think a bit more clearly.

Danny: “Now, too much time has been wasted... I mean, like us I'm sure you've been out here for long enough to know... we're not the biggest threat out here, there's more to fear than us. You could believe me, or not, that's up to you... but we'd like to help.”

The girl looked at Danny with an unflinching look in his eyes and it showed her the honesty of his words. Not that it would help her young hesitant mind much though. She looked at James -he gave her a comforting smile accompanied by a nod.

“One of three things are going to happen...” Danny continued. “Either I'll let you go, and you'll run off facing whatever is out there all alone, you'll try and attack again, or you can join us, and we'll help each other survive. We have shelter and a bit of food left and you're more than welcome to it too.”

Danny stood up, letting her go, and no sooner she took off back through the store's darkness.

James: “Well, you gave it a good try man.”

Danny: “...(sigh.) Well, we have three and a half hours to grab what we need, we'll need to eat something by then.”

Just then the door swung back open and there stood the young girl, except now she brandished a military-styled backpack and what appeared to be a top-of-the-line pellet rifle.

“My name is Andrya, if you were serious, I'd like to join you.” She spoke softly like she hadn't spoken to another soul for weeks, if not longer.

Danny nodded then looked at James making a slight motion with his head towards the store.

James: “Sounds good. Pleased to meet you Andrya -I'm James and you've already met Danny ...Okay

well we still need supplies. So, we'll all take four aisles each and I'll take the extra."

Fifteen minutes later the three of them came out of the store with various bags and jugs almost full of different liquids.

James: "Well this is a nice change of pace having you with us Andrya."

Andrya: "I hear ya..." (she smiled) "I couldn't get much -my bag is stuffed with military-grade 'ready to go meals' just in case."

Danny: "Well, I need to get a few things from the hardware store so James will take you back to the shelter."

Andrya: "I'll come with you, I can help come up with ideas for weapons and defense strategies."

Danny: "Did you notice we both have a set of wheels; we can't afford to waste the daylight walking there and back."

"No prob..." (Andrya said while reaching into her bag and pulling out a set of personalized roller blades.) "I've been on my own for some time you know."

Danny: "Are you sure you can keep up with James' skateboard while 'fruit-booting'?"

"I don't know, do you think your pride can handle another pressure point take-down from a 14yr girl old girl?" Andrya smirked and James attempted to hold back his smile.

Danny: "Okay keep your guard up then, we'll need to ride through the hot zone and it's a really sound-sensitive area."

Danny took the lead to act as a scout while James and Andrya followed close behind.

Andrya: "So what's with the cat?"

James: "Lornn? She's our eyes and ears -she's how we found you actually... Speaking of -careful with your wording about certain topics around Danny such as Lornn, she may be a cat but she's also what's left of his family."

James and Andrya rolled up as Danny parked the bike.

Danny: "Main rule while we're indoors almost anywhere, try to keep noise to a minimum unless help is needed."

James looked at Andrya "We tend to get most of our surprises indoors." Andrya nodded and they entered the store.

Danny: "This way to the tools and piping department."

Andrya: "Piping?"

James: "It's good for making tons of stuff; for instance, a drain for catching rain."

Andrya: "I kind of wanted to go to the 'auto-motive' section, I have an idea if you have metal doors or window framing at your place."

James chuckled. "Well, you're in luck, we have a big panel for our main entrance."

Andrya: "Perfect."

Danny: "Okay James go with her, and we'll meet here in 25 minutes." The friends split up and went in opposite directions.

While rolling beside James up the aisle, Andrya stopped and pulled out a beefy rubber tire wagon from a stacked mess.

Andrya: “This will help with what I have planned.”

James: “Here’s another if it helps.”

Andrya: “It does, and I already have some rope in my bag to tie them together.”

James: “We can tie them outside, for now, I’ll take one and you take one.”

Andrya: “Good idea.” The two walked farther through the aisle approaching the automotive section.

Andrya: “Here -help me put a car battery in each wagon, I’ll get the cables.”

As he put down the last battery, a figure stepped out of the shadows behind him. It was wearing a bloody smock. James took notice as it lunged for him but fell back knowing he was unprepared for the attack. A ‘ping’ sound could be heard, and the creature dropped to its side next to James.

James: “But... How?”

Andrya: “You should be more careful.” She said as she re-pumped her gun.

James: “Thanks, but even the best pellet gun -fully pumped -can’t break through bone, can it?”

Andrya: “I have no clue, that’s why I shot it through the eye.”

James stood up and looked at her handy work. “I guess that’s effective, well let’s grab the wagons and go to the front -I’m sure Danny’s waiting for us.” Danny was waiting for them outside while looking around scanning the wreckage and rooftops due to an unnerving feeling in the pit of his stomach. James and Andrya came from the store pulling the wagons.

James: “Did you get everything you needed Danny?” Andrya began strapping the wagons to each other while James tied them to the back of the bike.

Danny: “Mostly, I did find more small propane tanks for our camping stove, what about you guys - any trouble with that stuff?”

“Nothing we couldn’t handle,” James said while looking back at Andrya and smiling in response.

Danny: “Well let’s head back, my skin has been crawling with the feeling of something watching us.” As they took off down the street Andrya turned to James. “What did he mean by that? I mean there must be a ton of dead eyes watching us from every shadow.”

James: “To be honest we’re both unsure. All I know is Danny’s instincts have kept us alive in past situations -I’ve learned to just go with it.”

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Somewhere off in the distance, atop a building; a dark, female figure observed the three friends riding down the main street.

Dark figure: “My sweet Andrya -I will be with you again soon. You’re never alone.”

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A street camera also watched them ride back to the factory -redirecting the imagery to an undisclosed lab hidden away from prying eyes.

?????: “Doctor Peirson they are nearing the bridge. We must bring the one named ‘Andrya’ here before anything happens to her.”

Dr. Feirson: “Agreed, but how do you propose we do that sir?”

?????: “Send the father to retrieve her.”

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As they made it halfway across the bridge, the sound of silence was broken by the all too familiar cries that come from the darkness. Lornn jumped off the bike and onto an abandoned car that sat teetering off the side of the bridge between the broken guard walls. Danny got off of the bike and looked over the edge begging Andrya and James to do the same out of curiosity.

Danny: “It’s because of the hives of these walkers all around that makes it much more important to find cover before dark.”

Andrya peered over the edge seeing not much more than overcast shadowing from the bridge -but before she could question Danny -a ‘moan’ broke out and a shadowed figure stepped out from the arched shadow. Then following its second step were eight more figures, then a third step followed with about twenty more. Andrya’s eyes began to widen as the group of shadowed figures massively grew.

Danny: “Since the realization of this outbreak and fall of civilizations; no one has been back for rescue or clean-up... remember we’re alone here so try to keep a clear head because one small slip-up could prove fatal.”

Andrya: “Can we go before we’re seen? Those things are unnerving.”

Danny called Lornn back to the bike before taking off. James and Andrya trailed behind to keep an eye on the wagons until they reached the factory.

Andrya: “Well aren’t you going to open it? ...Danny ...what’s wrong?”

He didn’t respond just sat there on the bike deep in thought while looking towards the dead train sitting with about twelve and a half cars visible from the darkness of the bridge’s heavy shadowing.

James: “Don’t worry about him we’ve been in this too long.”

Andrya: “What do you mean, is he okay?”

James: “He’s fine -just thinking up a plan, look those ‘walkers’ are pouring out from the darkness of the train and bridge.”

Andrya: “So? That’s almost two blocks away, we have enough time to get inside.”

James: “There’s something you’re not understanding, they react to smaller sounds and echoes during the night -do you know why?”

Andrya: “No, I never gave much thought to their movement -I mean I’ve been trying to survive this horror I haven’t really thought about it.”

James: “Understandable, so did we for a while, but if you get up close to one as we have, you’ll notice that their eyes look kind of glazed and have lost all of their colors.”

Andrya: “So what’s your point? -I mean that’s kind of normal for them, right? That’s what happens when you die, your eyes glaze over and lose color.”

James: “Yes, but that can also happen when ‘one’ adapts to night hunting.”

Andrya: “Oh sh-no-so are you saying ...that it may not be a plague, virus, or whatever but a whole new form of life?”

James: “Yes, think about it... If it was reanimation -their sense of smell and hearing wouldn’t have gotten better as they have shown. It would have stayed the same or should have decreased to the point of having no senses.”

Andrya: “So, what you’re saying is we need a distraction?”

James: “To say the least, yes.”

Andrya: “I believe I can help with that.”

Andrya rummaged through her backpack’s side pocket and pulled out two smoke grenades.

A surge of adrenaline rushed through James. “Where’d you get those!? ...What else do you have? ...I mean ...what...?”

Andrya: “Relax, I know what I’m doing.”

James didn’t understand but by looking at her with that ‘determination to help’ mixed with the stern look on her face -James knew he didn’t have to understand, right now he just needed to listen.

Andrya: “These will shoot out smoke to cover our movement and when it does the ‘hiss’ sound from the smoke bellowing out, it will cover our sound... At least from that distance... I think... I just don’t know if I can throw it that far.”

Danny began to chuckle to himself, and Andrya looked down at her feet. “It was a dumb idea; I don’t even have the right to have this stuff, do I?”

Danny: “No...” he stammered through his snickering.

James: “Not cool man.”

Danny got himself under control as he reached into his backpack -pulling out what seemed to be a long plastic scoop. “No, it’s a good idea -I just didn’t know we were traveling with a 14yr old G.I. Jane. -You’re all right Andrya.”

She looked up and smiled. “So, what’s that for?”

Danny: “Well this makes throwing tennis balls for dogs easier or go further, do you follow me?”

Andrya handed Danny the grenades. “You’re not too bad yourself Danny.”

Danny wrapped the grip of the grenade with tape knowing it wouldn’t hold for long -sat it in the cuff of the scooped sling -pulled the pin and flung it in front of the train.

Danny: “Here, keep this one for later.”

Andrya: “Thanks.”

All of a sudden, the tape released, and the grenade began to ‘hisssss’ as the smoke bellowed out.

James: “They’re going for it!”

Danny: “James! ...Door!”

James flung open the door and closed it just as quickly as they entered.

Danny: “Leave the lights out tonight, there’s way too much movement out there -we could get noticed.”

Andrya took one step and bumped into something. “Cozy.”

James: “Hey Danny how about the safe room? We can have the lights on, and we have backup supplies there seeing as we have a new friend and all it’d be nice to celebrate.”

Danny: “...Okay, I’ll meet you two down there, I have a few things to bring down, and James, be sure to give her a hand.”

Andrya heard 4-or-5ft steps and then a door creek open, it was an odd sliding sound of something opening.

James: “Here take my hand and follow me to the closet.”

Andrya: “Your ‘safe room’ is in a closet?”

James: “A week after we came here Danny fell through the closet floor and that’s when we found this room with an old generator. Whoever built this place, rebuilt it and blocked off that room.”

James guided her hand to a rope in the middle of the closet. “Now I know it’s hard to see but there is a bottom, take your time I’ll be right behind you.”

Andrya slid down with James following. She was welcomed to the sight of a huge old, boxed generator, extra supplies, and weapons. Danny was also heating a can of stew on a portable stove with Lornn purring next to him.

While James unpacked a few things Andrya ran her finger along the extension cable up to the huge generator. She was looking around for a company label or date, but she did see a small hexagon shape sticking out from it. Andrya had only touched it when the sound of a tight coil unwinding could be heard as the small hexagon shape popped out and rolled onto the floor.

James: “Don’t break that, it’s all the power we have.”

Andrya: “Sorry, I didn’t seem to break it though. A separate part kind of broke free.”

As Andrya knelt to pick up the item, she saw a reflection of the same small shape across the room. She walked over for a closer look at what seemed to be a large barred square drain with the hexagon shape framed in it. Andrya looked in, and from the angle, she stood, she could see part of a small room with an old metal door.

Andrya: “This seems to be some kind of key... and did you guys notice there is another room down there?”

Danny: “This is our safe room, so we haven’t spent a whole lot of time down here. Don’t worry about that right now -the stew is ready.”

Andrya: “Mmm, it has been a while since I’ve had a warm meal.”

James: “So Andrya, if you don’t mind me asking -is there a military background in your family? And where are you from?”

Andrya: “Well my dad was in the military for a while, then he transferred into a high-profile private protection program, then freelanced work for whoever could afford his services. He knew I snooped around his stuff; I think that’s where the bedtime stories came from... That -and all the handy tips and training he gave me when my mom wasn’t around... she was a tutor for higher classed children. I came about a week’s walk outside of town from a small piece of farmland. I think my father knew a lot more about what was going on before all of this happened than he let on because he was acting very odd and nervous after the last job of his that I could remember. I began to worry when my parents started arguing... seeing as they’d never really disagreed before... until the night we first heard the ‘moans’ ...the house was full of those things... my mom screamed as she...”

Danny: “Andrya it’s okay, you don’t have to...”

Andrya: “No... I want to... My dad gave me a weapon and this bag and told me to find help and as he

was getting me ready my mother screamed. My father told me to run and that's what I did... I ran from the sound of the moans and my dad calling out for my mother. Her screams slowly got quiet and the last thing I heard was the gunshots (BANG! -BANG! -BANG BANG!!!) and I've been on my own ever since."

James: "Damn, I'm sorry to hear that."

Andrya: "Don't be, I'm sure you both have your stories, it's just you asked, and I guess I needed to tell someone that story."

Danny: "Either way it's about time we got some sleep we need to be well rested and ready for tomorrow."

The three friends finished their dinner and soon after fell asleep to the light of the lamp.

'Click ...clickSnap ...Crack!'

Andrya: "Guys, wake up, did you hear that?"

.....

'Crash!'

Danny: "James stay down here with Andrya while I go see what's going on up there."

Danny grabbed a hatchet that was leaning against the wall and climbed up the rope to the main floor. He saw a few dozen arms reaching through the cracks of the window. He quickly crept towards the window and started to hack at the arms reaching in one by one. As the moans became louder, more arms began to break through so Danny continued hacking. He noticed some of them began to flinch away from the swinging hatchet. Right then, he knew there was a whole new game at hand, for this was not behavior he was used to seeing... he went back to the closet and slid down the rope.

Danny: "Andrya grab that hex key thing you found and a few things... we're about to find out if there's another way out through there. James gives her a hand and get Lornn for me, I'll be right behind you."

James: "What's going on man?"

Danny: "I'm not sure, but I believe they're starting to... some-what... think. If I'm right, then we'll have to get outta here now."

James: "Think... What?"

Danny: "They started pulling away when I swung the... and they appeared to be blocking every exit. It could have been coincidental, but it seemed very strategic. Since there are way too many of them, we must find another way."

Danny unplugged the extension cord from the generator, leaving the plug beside it, he untwisted the bulb and carefully but quickly cracked the surrounding glass and screwed it back into the lamp before climbing with it back up the rope.

He could see he was running out of time, these creatures were fighting and stumbling over each other to get through the slowly expanding slits in the window. Danny put the lamp down and began opening the remaining five propane tank valves one by one allowing the gas to seep into the air.

He took a deep breath and looked around at the place they called home one last time, he closed the closet door and slid down the rope before hearing a crash from the window side of the main floor.

He went up to the generator and plugged in the extension cord. Danny barely made it to the open manhole as one tank exploded after the other sending a powerful compressed rocket-like fire throughout the closet door and down into the opening of the lower room in a violent stream-like

flame. It settled and kept burning as Danny dropped down the hole -the main floor collapsed over the opening sealing the three friends in darkness.