



Episode Name.....	Page Number
1: Yesterday Brought A Bad Tomorrow	2
2: The Farther You Run, The Closer You Get	14
3: Reunion?	Mar 13
4: Desire At The End Of A Blade	Apr 13
5: The Divide	May 13
6: Know When To Make Things Happen	Jun 13
7: Past Present Close Yet Far	Jul 13
8: Hope, Family, and Death	Aug 13
9: SEASON FINALE Pt. 1 ???	Sept 13
10: SEASON FINALE PT 2 ???	Oct 13

# 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. Peirson: “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 ...click .....Snap ...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.

# 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 flashlight on) "Come check out this old door."

Andrya and James both walked over and saw a big metal door with a wheel handle. James tried to turn it open, but it wouldn't budge.

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 round handle) "...I'll push down on this end, you push up on the other side."

James: "Yep, ...one ...two ...three."

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 release 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 then made another attempt at opening the door and this time it swung open. Air released from it with a 'ti-isShhHHh...' sound 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 far side twelve feet in front. James backed into a switch turning on the lights and power, but the door also slammed shut behind them. Sparks shot out of the door on the other side of the room, and it slowly began to close too, 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 somewhat soothing computerized female voice interrupted Danny.

“-WARNING UNKNOWN OUTSIDE PATHOGENS DETECTED -PLEASE, STAY CALM AS CLEANSING IS INITIALIZED. WARNING UNKNOWN OUTSIDE PATHOGENS DETECTED -PLEASE, STAY CALM AS CLEANSING 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 underground fortresses the higher powers of the past -people and governments -privately built. I thought they were just stories."

James: "um, yeah... 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 several 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 forms but look at the date on these -this looks like authentic paper. too"

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

James: "Fascinating, let's see what else we could find."

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

Andrya: "I found a red 'key card' on one of the desks over here, it seems like it could be used in that red card reader on the elevator." Andrya chuckled as she slid the key card into the slot opening the elevator door. "This key card seems to have limited access though and will only allow us to go to one floor only." The door closed and with that, they began their descent.

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

Danny: "Well, there was no chance of survival back there so let's hope we find a way out through here."

The elevator stopped and the doors opened revealing a series of lights flickering outward in response. It ended at the end of the hall revealing a single bench. The hallway was an empty, white-colored space with a few branches stretching out from it. As the three exited the elevator doors closed behind them. Danny tapped his shoulder, Lornn hopped up and perched herself onto it ready for whatever may come.

Andrya looked at a floor map on the wall and shouted out to the guys. "The room straight ahead down the hall is named 'food and plants so it's obvious what we'll find in there. The hall on the right leads to the 'main computer observation deck' so definitely worth checking out. In the hallway on the left over there, T's off in two directions. The one on the left is the living quarters and the one on the right seems to be unmarked."

The three of them picked a direction and went off to explore. They met at the bench to tell each other what they'd found.

James: "The actual observation deck is locked, but the dining room is located right 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. "Danny chuckled and continued "as long as we don't hear from that thing again, we should be good."

James: "What was that about?"

Danny: "I don't know but I think we should see if we can find food in the dining area if there is any left at least; then check the living quarters for anything that may help."

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

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

On the right of the room was a giant glass wall with a few access doors. It wasn't the doors that caught their attention though, behind the glass was a small forest-like area filled with so many plants, bushes, and trees that none of them had ever seen before.

In the center of the dining room was a self-serving food court and kitchen surrounded by different styles of benches and tables. Just with the shelves of food, they could see they knew they were eating well tonight.

On the left side of the dining room was a park-like area made up of sandy and grassy areas depending on where you wanted to walk. Again, it wasn't what was in front that caught their eyes; it was the man-ceiling-to-floor waterfall that stood out.

James: "How is this even possible?"

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

This room was the coolest thing any of them had seen for a long time, so it was a good twenty minutes before they met back up to talk.

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 without being fed by a river, I believe somehow that's the source of power. How did they do this?"

Andrya: "I noticed some strange plants that seem to be medicinal, or for producing food... but most of these I've never even heard of... or should be extinct ...It's odd. The world is filled with a few frozen iced lands and deserts; they are anywhere and anywhere.... There are only a few small areas of grassy land or forests left for that matter... And... Here sits a place... Hiding... Literally underneath you... and you didn't even know it. 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 odd meat called 'Beef' and this odd 'Pineapple' fruit, dig in guys."

After they finished eating the three of them grabbed some of the food 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 focused on the back of the room.

Danny: "Did you hear that?"

James: "What?"



"UerrrrRrraw-RakkI-hEr-Rawr!!"

Danny: "That."

Andrya: "Oh, I heard that."

James: "I think... somethings coming up through the air system."

Just as they armed themselves a metal covering shot off the wall and a huge creature dropped out on all fours and slowly stood up straight, well it stood with a forward slouch but still reached about 6'8" for perspective. Its forearms were the size of the kids alone and its hands brandished huge claws; either one could probably grab all three of them at once. It was very hairy throughout most of its shoulders, back, and chest. It was a huge ugly looking with massive teeth that matched the very hungry eyes it had as it looked at its next meal.

Danny: "Oh, come on..."

The beast then narrowed its eyes onto them and began hysterically running towards them; thrashing and snarling as it moved. Luckily Andrya shot it in the ankle as it jumped in the air towards James because the beast fell just short of him and right near Danny's feet, who was backing up and rummaging through his bag as it got up and began walking towards them limping.

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

Danny: "Lornn!" he said as he dropped his bag and ran towards it.

The beast grabbed Lornn and took a step toward Danny, causing him to fall backward in response. The beast paused while glaring at the three of them, snarling, and biting her head off. Before any of them could comprehend what was happening it finished the rest of her in the second bite.

Danny: "NOW I'M PISSED!"

Danny with no regard for his own life was so filled with rage that he walked right up to the beast lighting and jamming explosives in its mouth as it chewed.

"Danny!!" both James and Andrya yelled as he stood face to face with this thing. It swatted Danny clean across the room but didn't seem to notice the addition to its meal until it let out a bloody "Rawr!" as its jaw blew open and it collapsed dead on the floor leaving a stressful moment of silence as they stared at this beast waiting for it to get up but thankfully it didn't.

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!!"

They walked in silence until they arrived at the living quarters where 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: "Yeah, sure... No problem, man."

Danny walked into Apartment 1 and James and Andrya walked by ten apartments on either side until they reached the end and began their search for where they'd stay.

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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 key card for 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 also maybe talk about how this place seems to be isolated from the outside world, with documents centuries old, and still somehow has creatures as we have on the surface, only bigger... Or doesn't it seem like the people who 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 it's that sometimes there's no talking... or any answers really... There's only room for headaches 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. Yeah, we found the key card to the observation deck."

Danny: "Okay, well I found a key card in an 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: "You know it."

Danny: "Andrya?"

Andrya: "sounds like a plan to me."

James and Andrya shared a quick look as they 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 somehow, complemented by stacks of paperwork from dozens of few half-finished projects.

Danny: "This must've been the doctor's private lab; I can't see more than one person working 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, we don't know what half of this even is, let's not set anything off."

As the boys looked around the lab; a big dusty glass chamber fused with computers and wires caught Andrya's attention. She saw a panel with different categories, each displaying a bunch of numbers and the words 'Vital signs' at the top of all of them. Quickly she rubbed a circle of dust from the glass

revealing the sight of a young girl's face. This is when the boys took notice of Andrya frantically scanning the machine up and down trying to open it.

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

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

James: "Even if she's alive, 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... And besides, look at her and look at us, I think we can chance it."

James walked over, found, and then hit the release button allowing the glass chamber to slowly open and the three of them stared intensely as the girl's eyes fluttered open. Without saying a word, she stepped out of the chamber and started walking forward.

"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 them without saying a word to any of them and began typing up a storm. They watched as she was running through multiple tabs at once, like opening and closing files at superhuman speeds, and then turned off the computer.

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 the levels down below woke up... You already knew that though; you met one in the other room... Nice job by the way Danny."

Danny: "Who are you? And how do you already know my name?"

"How rude of me, my name is 'Momo'. I'm a special project of Dr. Kerwartz and I already know all your names."

Andrya: "Project?"

Momo: "I'm a synthetic life form. One-of-a-kind really... Dr. Kerwartz designed me to aide him during the projects, but he didn't need me, I mostly to keep him company. He didn't relate to others... I'll explain more but we need to move quickly."

Danny: "What do you mean?"

"Uerrrrrrraw 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 funded because a few men tried to find the ultimate cure. It was called 'V13' and well, it only... half worked. It regenerated cells... even dead ones but it changed them too. These discoveries gave them the knowledge to fuse bodies without needing the proper blood types-which, which in turn, has allowed them to create these things... There's no time right now to get into it because there's more than a few of them... there's enough for a small army."

“ehhhRaaHHHer!! UerrrrRraw”

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 safest way to get out of here would take us too long to get to with those things chasing us... wait!! I'm surprised 'Hibos' didn't already tell you the way out."

James: "Hibos?"

Momo: "H.i.b.o.s. -Hyper. Intelligent. Biological. Ordering. 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."

“CraHSS UerrrrRraw!! REahhhher!!”

Momo: "Hibos, update."

Hibos: "THE V13 PROJECTS ARE JUST OUTSIDE OF THIS ROOM -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, BEGINNING COUNTDOWN TILL DETONATION,  
DETONATION WILL BEGIN IN... "

"...180, 179, 178..."

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

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

The others climbed up the ladder before Andrya, she was halfway 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 jumped onto the pile and was able to leap halfway up the ladder but 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 into 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 outside 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 and they started running.

A street camera focused in on them as the cement shifted underneath their feet and the ground erupted -knocking out and throwing the four of them flying through the air along with car-sized slabs of cement.

Before Momo powered down; 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 overhead.