

CHAPTER ONE:

'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 red glow that engulfed the entire night's sky. On a small street a chilling harmonic moan broke the silence and a voice could be heard in what seemed like an abandoned factory.

"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."

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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.... So 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 back-up 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's 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."

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As the sun rose, a beam of it's light broke through the boarded window and was shining on the two young boys; abruptly awaking them to their 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 more 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 imaginative 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 gell sanitizer and fluid soaked tissue wick (a crude compression blast of metal staffs for extended reach defence) to name a few.

The bike had it's own compartments but added on was an old coat refitted and draped across the seat to use as a saddle with pockets. It also has some empty jugs strung together hanging from either side on the back end.

When they were all set to go, Danny hopped on the bike and James peered outside through a hole in the steel panelled 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. James stood on his skateboard and zipped up the half empty back-pack. He grabbed onto the bikes back handle while tucking the staff under his arm to use as a lance if needed and they headed over the bridge that arched above the train tracks.

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

James: "What is that?"

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

As they drew closer a dog took notice and started to move towards them. At first just a trotting speed but quickly a full out sprint.

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

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 skateboarding, jousting, projectile of death. Once the rabid dog was about four feet from them it pounced at Danny snapping wildly in mid air, like 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." and James laughed at his own 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's 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, it consisted of the most stores and shops in town. As they reached the last intersection they took a right into the main strip which had been devastated years prior by the outbreak, riots, and panic as everyone tried to leave the town they once called home.

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

James: "I hear ya, so where to first?"

Just then Lornns ears perked up and she took off towards a small corner 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.

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, the same 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" and pointed.

As Danny took notice Lornns 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 passed us."

Before they could turn to see what she was looking at -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 12 years old trying to take off on the bike.

Danny: "It won't go anywhere, I always flip the breaker before I leave it."

The girl was paranoid from being alone in this town and the boys were too close to run from so the young girl's reaction was to give a quick jab to James's kidney. She 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 the young girl before she could run away, she began to kick and punch 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 as her eyes rapidly moved as if scanning his body language, still hostile her breathing began to slow -allowing her to think a bit more clearly.

Danny: "Now, too much time has passed... 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 and there's definitely more to fear than us. You could believe me or not, it's up to you but we'd like to help."

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

"One of two things are going to happen..." Danny continued. "Either I'll let you go and you'll run off facing whatever is out there alone, or you can join us and we'll help each other survive. We have shelter and a bit of food left that you're more than welcome to."

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 store door swung back open and there stood the young girl with a military style back-pack 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 provisions, we'll all take four aisles and I'll take the extra."

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

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

Andrya: "I hear ya,.. " (she smiled) "I wasn't able to get much -my bag is half full of military '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 defence strategies."

Danny: "Did you notice we both have a set of wheels, we can't afford the day light to walk 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's skateboard while 'fruit-booting'?"

"I don't know, do you think your pride can handle another pressure point take-down from a 14 year old girl?" Andrya smirked.

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 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 which -careful with your wording about certain things 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 minimal 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 drains for catching rain."

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

James chuckled. "Well you're in luck, we have a big panelled as 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 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 auto-motive 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 wearing a bloody smock. James took notice as it lunged for him, he fell back knowing he was unprepared for the attack. A 'ping' sound could be heard and the creature dropped to it's 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 the front wagon 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?"

Andrya looked up at James.

"Nothing we couldn't handle." James said 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 we 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 the three friends ride back to the factory -redirecting the imagery to an undisclosed lab hidden from prying eyes.

?????: "Doctor Peirson they are nearing the bridge, we must get 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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By the time the three friends reached the bridge on their way back to the factory.

As they made it half way across the bridge the sound of silence was broken by the all too familiar sound of the cries that come from the darkness.

Lornn jumped off the bike and onto a abandoned car that sat teetering off-side of the bridge between the broken guard wall. 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 these hives of 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 about what he was talking about -a 'moan' broke out and one shadowed figure stepped 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 with each step as the group of shadowed figures massively grew and so did the chilling moan.

Danny: "Since the realization of this outbreak and fall of all control including military, 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 as they rode back.

They reached the factory door.

Andrya: "Well aren't you going to open it? ...Danny ...what's wrong?"

He didn't respond he just sat there on the bike deep in thought, while looking passed the road towards the dead train sitting with about twelve and a half cars visible from the darkness of the bridges 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 movements -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 lost their colour."

Andrya: "So-what's your point? -I mean that's kind of normal for them right? That's what happens when when you die your eyes glaze over and lose colour"

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 what ever 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 back-pack'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 ..wha..?"

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 for the shadowy movement and when it does the 'hiss' sound from the smoke bellowing out will cover our sounds of going inside... 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: "Nno...." he stammered through his snickering.

James: "Not cool man."

Danny got himself under control as he reached into his back-pack -pulling out what seemed to be a long plastic scoop. "No, it's a good idea -I just didn't know we were travelling with a 14 year old G.I. Jane. -You're alright 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 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 back up 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 5 foot 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 old room with a really old generator. Whomever 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 some kind of 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 a 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 no, 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 -was there military background in your family and how far did you come from?"

Andrya: "Well my dad was in the military for a while, then he got into high profile protection. Then freelance work for whom ever could afford it. 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 class children. I came about a weeks walk outside of town from a small piece of farm land. I think my dad knew what was going on before all of this happened because he was acting very odd and nervous after his last job that I remember. Then I began to worry when my parents started to argue seeing as they 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, 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 sounds of the moans and my dad calling out for my mother. Her screams slowly got quiet and the last thing I heard of my parents was my dad fire off shots (BANG! -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.

.....
'clickclicksnap ..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 towards him. As the moans became louder more arms began to break through so Danny continued hacking only to notice 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 the behaviour he was used to seeing so he went back to the closet and slid down the rope.

Danny: "Andrya get that hex key stone you found and grab a few things we're about to find out if there is another way out through there, James give 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 are 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 and they appear to be blocking every exit, since there are way too many of them we have to go 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 allowing the gas to seep into the air -then he closed the closet door and slid down the rope one last time hearing a big crash from the window side of the main floor.

He went up to the generator and plugged in the extension cord and then ran to the open man-hole as one tank exploded after the other, sending a powerful compressed rocket-like fire through the closet door and down the opening of the lower room in a violent stream-like flame -then settled and kept burning, as Danny dropped down the hole -the main floor collapsed over the opening sealing the three friends in darkness.